

HOMILY

We hate to let go of what we love. Kids grow up and leave home. Someone drops and breaks an heirloom. Friends move away. Feet ache. Sometimes tragedy steals what we love. We just hate letting go.

Other times we need to let go of what we love too much--the busy-ness in our lives, addictions, associates who lead us into trouble, the extra clothes which clutter our closets, the desire to own what is newer, larger, cleaner, or has more memory. Often we need to let go.

Separation is not pleasant. Sometimes it is forced on us against our will. Sometimes we choose it by sheer force of will.

Mary and Martha hated to let go of Lazarus. They sent for Jesus, then scolded him for coming too late. Jesus let Lazarus die, but he did so in order to reveal God's glory. We let lesser things die--a bad habit, a failed relationship, or a sick pet, so that life can continue happier and stronger.

When letting go is something we choose we can grow from it immediately and immensely. The household budget you cut hurts right away, but before long you see the benefits. But when letting go is forced on us it can make us angry, bitter, and resentful. ^{these emotions obstruct growth} However, by raising Lazarus, Jesus showed that death is not the end. In God's marvelous plan, sadness ^{disheartens} merely ^{leads} sets the path of God's love, which leads to life.

Throughout the season of lent we practice fast, abstinence, prayer, and charity in order to let some bad habits die. Our catechumens and candidates ask for our prayers in these weeks that they may die to their former way of life, and join our Catholic faith. As Easter draws near we all ask God ever more fervently to let our sin die like Lazarus, that our new selves may rise like Christ.

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