

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen

Who is the saint that you are remembering today? Perhaps it is a grandparent or maybe a parent. Perhaps it is somebody even closer to you than that. Maybe it's not even a relative, but there are saints in our lives that are on our minds much more than others.

I think so often about my Grandpa on my mom's side often. He died on my sixth birthday, so I really don't have a lot of memories of him except that I knew and still feel the love that he had for me. I would follow him all over his yard...You would think that I would have driven him crazy, but I didn't. What I really remember so vividly, even today, is how many times I would sit on his lap and he would give me a piece of red licorice. I still love red licorice, and I suspect it has something to do with my grandpa.

I have an idealized version of my grandpa in my mind, I know that. I also know that my grandpa was a complex person who got some things right and some things wrong. I know my grandpa was not on speaking terms with his brother who I never got to know because of that. I also know that my grandpa's neighbors relied on him to help them with threshing, filling silos, and even milking if they were to be gone. I have heard stories about his team of horses had helped so many people, including pulling out a school bus once. I know my grandpa was not perfect: he was incredibly complex, but it's this saint in my life which I wish were around in my life today.

We all have saints that we may have idealized in our minds, and yes, we know they are not quite perfect. They are really human. And that's what I love about our text today. There is so much bluntness in this text. It starts right away with Mary blaming Jesus for being late. "If you'd only been here, then everything would be fine. But no. You dilly-dallied around too much. It's your fault you know."

Then Jesus sees her weeping, and those around her were weeping, so Jesus wept also. This is a sad situation, if for no other reason, to see that others are so sad. Jesus feels bad for them all.

Then there is a little blame on Jesus again. "Hey, this man healed the eyes of a blind man, he certainly could have kept this man from dying." That seems like a big stretch to me. Jesus heals a blind man, and so these people think Jesus can keep somebody from dying...really. It sounds to me that some people's anger is a little misdirected, huh?!

And there's the stench. Does it ever amaze you that the Bible is so incredibly real here? Lazarus has been dead for four days, so yes, there would be a stench already. Do we really need to be reminded of that though? It just seems to me that this would be a better read if I were not reminded of this awful stench. But this is reality, reality to the fullest.

Jesus reminds Mary that if we all believe, we all would see the glory of God. And then Jesus lets us all know that that this is really happening and that in seeing what is happening, that we may also believe that we might also be raised from the dead some day. I just hope and pray that I don't wake up some day looking like a wrapped up corpse and stinking. I sure hope the stench goes away fairly quickly after you come alive again. Okay, we need to move on...this is getting icky!

Lazarus did come out. The man, dead for four days, came out of the tomb. He was a human. Yes, I suspect he was a good man, maybe idealized by some people, but also a human with some rough edges, just like the rest of us. Just like Mary, I want my grandpa to be with God. I know he has some rough edges as well. It might not be just the edges that are rusty either, but I know from the book of John that I am to hear that all who believe get to see the glory of God. My grandpa believed. His actions weren't perfect. Jesus doesn't notice those...he just notices that Grandpa trusted Jesus. I am good with that, and I don't need to have an idealized Grandpa.

Yes, our saints that we are thinking about are in good hands too. We don't need to idealize them. They don't need to be perfect. They could have made some huge mistakes. God's got them through the work that was done for all us by His son. Yes, all of us. Yes, that means you too. You don't need to be idealize yourself or show God how good you are. Just trust that God loves you and the work that has been done for you through Jesus Christ. Yes, maybe parts of your life stinks too, but Jesus wants you to hear and believe that you, too, will see the glory of God. Amen