

Daily Devotion For February 28, 2023

Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me."
John 11:41.

This week the world paused to remember the 2nd anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As it was one year ago, it is so sad to see that so many people are continuing to go through such a difficult time. Some continue to mourn and grieve the loss of loved ones, many continue to be displaced and homeless, and we wonder when all of this will come to an end.

In John 11 we see one of the most striking things about Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead. Jesus' human connection of friendship, caring, and grief with Mary and Martha over Lazarus's death shows that Jesus is like us. Jesus built friendships. He expressed feelings and emotions. He experienced sorrow and empathy. Further, when Jesus cried out for Lazarus to come from the tomb, that cry rose from a grief not only for his friend but also for all humanity stuck in death's grip. As he stood before that tomb of death, Jesus' heart broke for you, me, and even the senseless deaths of the people in Ukraine.

But death and grief don't win the day here. They don't have the last word. God is the one whose breath animates every living thing. And Jesus the Son is so intimately connected to the Father that there's no doubt about the Father hearing his prayers. Jesus prays aloud for the benefit of those around him: "Father, I thank you that you have heard me."

Thought For Today". Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. With the power of God, Jesus looks death square in the face without fear, though he knows how frightened we are by it. Jesus can stand at the graveside with gratitude because he knows God's plan to bring us life through his own death. Thank God that the grave is not the end of our lives. Through Christ, we are raised to eternal life as we trust and believe in Him. I pray that this will be good news for the Gota family at this difficult time of Dr. Cary's passing.

Today's Prayer Focus: Pray for those who mourn and grieve the passing of their loved ones. Pray that God will comfort the people of Ukraine, grant them peace, and fill them with the hope for the days ahead as well as for the hope of eternal life. Pray for the Gota family. Pray for Aikimi Irino, Setsuko Yamanishi's brother who fell and has an infected arm. Deo Volente.