

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Sep 22nd 2018**

The first reading today exhibits St. Paul's legal, balanced, "if this, then that..." style of communication. He begins with the restatement of a question, "how are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come back?" As a professor, his next statement makes me shudder. "You fool!", he begins. At least he got my attention. After reading the passage, I began to think of our complex modern view of death. Nearly all of us are conflicted by the crushing reality of the physical death of a loved one. We are uplifted by God's promise of the spiritual beauty that awaits us. The sorrow we feel is not necessarily that our loved one's life has been lost, but for our own loss of the person. The prospect of rising again as an "incorruptible, glorious, and spiritual" antithesis of our earthly self is too much to immediately internalize. Perhaps, we feel our earthly loss so strongly that we cannot accept, or conceive of, the glory that awaits all that live in the Lord. We clearly bear the image of the earth, and we naturally return to it. St. Paul reminds us, very clearly, that we also bear the image of God, and that our spiritual, glorious body will be raised again. We will walk with God.

The gospel (LK 8:4-15) provides us with an easily visualized example from nature of the fates that may befall us as we encounter God's word. Jesus did not often explain each line of his parable. This time, however, he underlines some possibilities we may experience when we hear God speaking to us; these range from ignoring God's words, and failing to live spiritually, to embracing his message completely, and thriving. When reflecting on this, it seems that most of us have experienced our own rejection(s) of God. We are sometimes tempted by the "weeds" that we feel support us, only to discover that they are slowly destroying us. True spiritual nurturing and stability can only be attained by hearing, and acting, on God's word. Now, as the psalmist writes, "I know that God is with me. In God, in whose promise I glory."

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