



## Wednesday Prayer

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – When our faith falters, God gives life

**So they [Mary and Martha] took away the stone. Jesus looked upward and said,  
“Father, I thank you for having heard me.”  
John 11:41**

Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, are people of great faith, but they each show doubt within their faith when, at separate times, said “Lord, if you had been there, my brother would not have died.” Their faith has faltered, doubting that Jesus is able to do anything four days later. And again, when Jesus tells them to roll away the stone, their doubt surfaces when they voice concern about the stench of death. But at his urging, they rolled the stone away. Jesus first gives thanks, then commands, “Lazarus, come out!” The man who was dead was now alive, free from the bonds of death.

Children and youth come to our homes, sanctuaries, youth and educational programs with any number of barriers that keep them from being free to grow in healthy ways. Even a lack of understanding of how perpetrators groom vulnerable youth so they can exploit them can be a barrier. We also have our doubts and think that we’re not capable of removing those barriers, or we feel there are too many barriers, or we wonder if it will do any good if we see the youth as someone who is already beyond hope. Our faith has faltered.

During our Lenten journeys, as we look more closely at our true selves, we may see our doubts bubbling up. Like Mary and Martha, even if we have faith, we may also doubt our ability to roll away the stones, or we doubt that doing so will do any good, so youth living in darkness can come out into the life-giving light. But bringing new life out of death is not up to us. If we continue to follow God’s commands and encouragement, if we accept God’s invitation to participate in resurrection, we will see God’s power. We can participate in God’s activity in bringing those imprisoned by exploitation from the darkness into the light. Rather than acting as one doubtful person, one congregation, one organization – we can come together with our prayers, educational programs and advocacy to help roll those stones away one at a time. As we push at those stones, even in our doubt, we can look to God, give thanks, and know that God will bring new life.

**God of resurrection, you invite us to participate in your life-giving grace, but too often, our doubts hold us back. Give us hearts that eagerly accept your invitation in spite of our doubts, and trust in you to grant new life to all those living in darkness. Amen.**

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Written by Kay Kinkel, MSW, LICSW, a Behavioral Health Professional with LSS, a member of the Cherish All Children Advisory Board, and a member of St. John’s Lutheran in Shakopee, MN.

Join us each week for our [Lenten Prayer series](#), to keep children and *all* who provide support to youth in our prayers as we journey through this season of Lent.