

13. February 2025

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN
“I am the Resurrection and the Life”

Jn 11:17-27

Now when Jesus came, he found that Laz'arus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary sat in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world.”

Jesus finds great faith in Martha, the sister of the dead Lazarus. Her sadness is palpable, but so is her hope as she rushes out to meet Jesus. Martha is convinced that if Jesus had been with them, her brother would not have died. He would certainly have cured him of his illness so that he would not have died.

She did not imagine that the Lord would perform an even greater sign than that of curing her brother's sickness and thus preventing his death: a sign that would reveal His glory and prove all His words. Even at that hour, when Lazarus' sisters and the people who had come to mourn him regarded his death as an irrevocable end, Martha uttered those words which expressed her deep faith: *"Even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you"*

Even now I know... Even now, in this situation that seemed hopeless and in which only pain remained, Martha felt that the coming of the Lord was transforming reality. Even

though she could not yet imagine what was going to happen, she clung to Jesus: *"whatever you ask from God, God will give you"*.

Jesus must have rejoiced to see Martha's faith, and, just as He rejoiced for His disciples, He must have rejoiced that she would see a great sign when He restored her brother to life.

Jesus said to her, *"Your brother will rise again"*, Martha could not yet understand these words. She responded with her open heart and her love for Jesus in the context of her faith, thinking that Jesus was referring to the resurrection of the dead on the last day.

But the Lord wanted to go further in her faith. She had to understand that with His coming into the world, the resurrection of the dead had already taken place, the resurrection that everyone experiences when they meet Jesus and believe in Him. It will also be He who will resurrect us in the flesh on the last day: *"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first."* (1 Thess 4:16).

But even during his earthly life man can be resurrected from sin and perdition. Whoever accepts faith in Christ passes from death to life and finds in Him a place for eternal life, which only the Lord can give, as the Apostle Paul teaches us:

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Col 3:1-4).

Jesus wanted Martha to understand that in Him, the Messiah, all the promises she knew from her Jewish faith were fulfilled. This requires an open heart, and Martha has one. Even though she was not yet able to grasp all that the Lord meant by the resurrection of the dead, she listened to his words with an open heart: *"I am the resurrection and the life,"* Jesus said to her, *"he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die"* To Jesus' question, *"Do you believe this?"* she answered decisively, *"Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world"*.

When faith is awakened in us and we encounter the One who is the Truth, when the Heavenly Father has drawn us to His Son (Jn 6:65), when the Holy Spirit has enabled us to give the testimony we heard today from Martha, then the light of God can penetrate us ever more deeply and teach us all that the Lord has entrusted to His Church.

If we assimilate this Gospel passage, we can rejoice with the Lord at the great sign He will perform by raising His friend from the dead, strengthening the faith of those who already believe and awakening it in those who have not closed themselves to Him.