Fifth Sunday of Lent (A)

Gospel text (*Jn* 11:1-45): Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill"... When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world"...

Christ pulls down the wall of death

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today we listen to the "voice of faith" from the lips of Martha, Lazarus' sister. Jesus repeats: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live". This is the true newness which abounds and exceeds every border! Christ pulls down the wall of death and in him dwells all the fullness of God, who is life, eternal life. Therefore death did not have power over him and the raising of Lazarus is a sign of his full dominion over physical death which, before God, resembles sleep.

However there is another death, which cost Christ the hardest struggle, even the price of the Cross: it is spiritual death and sin which threaten to ruin the existence of every human being.

—To overcome this death, Christ died and his Resurrection is not a return to past life, but an opening to a new reality, a "new land" united at last with God's Heaven.