

Sunday 5th (A) of Lent

Gospel text (Jn 11,1-45): There was a sick man named Lazarus who was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was the same Mary who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair. Her brother Lazarus was sick.

So the sisters sent this message to Jesus, «Lord, the one you love is sick». On hearing this Jesus said, «This illness will not end in death; rather it is for God's glory and the Son of God will be glorified through it». It is a fact that Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus; yet, after He heard of the illness of Lazarus, He stayed two days longer in the place where He was.

Only then did He say to his disciples, «Let us go into Judea again». They replied, «Master, recently the Jews wanted to stone you. Are you going there again?». Jesus said to them, «Are not twelve working hours needed to complete a day? Those who walk in the daytime shall not stumble, for they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, for there is no light in them». After that Jesus said to them, «Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him». The disciples replied, «Lord, a sick person who sleeps will recover». But Jesus had referred to Lazarus' death, while they thought that He had meant the repose of sleep. So Jesus said plainly, «Lazarus is dead and for your sake I am glad I was not there, for now you may believe. But let us go there, where he is». Then Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, «Let us also go that we may die with him».

When Jesus came, He found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. As Bethany is near Jerusalem, about two miles away,

many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to offer consolation at their brother's death. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him while Mary remained sitting in the house. And she said to Jesus, «If you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you». Jesus said, «Your brother will rise again». Martha replied, «I know that he will rise in the resurrection, at the last day». But Jesus said to her, «I am the resurrection; whoever believes in me, though he die, shall live. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?». Martha then answered, «Yes, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, he who is coming into the world».

After that Martha went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, «The Master is here and is calling for you». As soon as Mary heard this, she rose and went to him. Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her, also came. When they saw her get up and go out, they followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to weep. As for Mary, when she came to the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, «Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died». When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews also who had come with her, He was moved in the depths of his spirit and troubled. Then He asked, «Where have you laid him?». They answered, «Lord, come and see». And Jesus wept. The Jews said, «See how He loved him!». But some of them said, «If He could open the eyes of the blind man, could He not have kept this man from dying?».

Jesus was deeply moved again and drew near to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across it. Jesus ordered, «Take the stone

away». Martha said to him, «Lord, by now he will smell, for this is the fourth day». Jesus replied, «Have I not told you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?». So they removed the stone. Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, «Father, I thank you for you have heard me. I knew that you hear me always; but my prayer was for the sake of these people, that they may believe that you sent me». When Jesus had said this, He cried out in a loud voice, «Lazarus, come out!». The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips and his face wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, «Untie him and let him go».

Many of the Jews who had come with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw what He did.

«I am the resurrection»

Fr. Johannes VILAR
(Köln, Germany)

Today, the Church presents us with a great miracle: Jesus resurrects a defunct that had been dead for several days.

Lazarus' resurrection is a “prognostication” of that of Christ, which we are soon going to commemorate. Jesus tells Martha that He is the «resurrection» and life (cf. Jn 11:25). He asks all of us: «Do you believe this?» (Jn 11:26). Do we believe that God has given us a new life through the Baptism? St. Paul says that we are a new creation (cf. 2Cor 5:17). This resurrection is the foundation of our hope, which is not based upon an uncertain, future and false utopia, but upon a fact: «The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!» (Lk 24:34).

Jesus says to them: «Untie him and let him go» (Jn 11:44). Redemption has liberated us from the chains of sin that we were all suffering from. Pope Leo the Great said: «Mistakes were defeated, authority mastered and the world gained a new start. Because if we share in his sufferings we will also share in his glory (cf. Rom 8:17). This gain is not only prepared for those smashed in the name of the

Lord, by those godless. Because all those who serve God and live in Him are crucified in Christ, and in Christ they will receive the crown».

We, Christians, are called to live in our earth this new supernatural life that allows us to get credit for our luck: Always ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks us for a reason for our hope! (cf. 1Pet 3:15). It is logical that these days we try to follow Jesus Master closely. Traditions as the Via Crucis, the meditation of the mysteries of Rosary, the texts of the Gospels, all this... may and must be a great help for us.

Our hope is also deposited in Mary, Jesus Christ's Mother and also our Mother, who, in turn, is an icon of hope: at the foot of the Cross she awaited against all hope and was associated with the deeds of her Son.