

Lent 2023

"Resilience through Love."



Opening Song: [I Am the Resurrection and the Life](#)

John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

Grieving the loss of a loved one can be a long process that takes time to heal. It is natural for many to turn to God in these times and at the same time ask many unanswered questions sometimes with anger, disappointment in God or the people who did not do something to save lives.

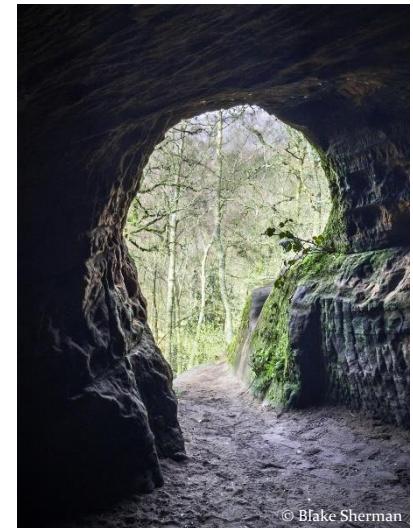
Mary and Martha are not exceptional. They are sad to have lost their beloved brother, Lazarus. They informed Jesus about the illness of their brother, but Jesus did not respond quickly and comes four days after his burial. When Jesus arrived Martha expresses her feeling of disappointment, exclaiming that *"If you had been here, my brother would not have died"* she does not stop there, she expresses her faith in Jesus, declaring, *"But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask"*.

Not long ago residents of Blantyre Chilobwe in Malawi were awakened in the early hours by the roaring sound of mud and water by the storm cyclone Freddy. Many people have lost their loved ones. They must be asking many questions. It must be hard to tell the story of resurrection to people experiencing loss of a loved one.

In the conversation of Jesus and Martha, she acknowledges that their brother will rise on the last day but then Jesus tells 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 answered, *"Yes, Lord. I come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."* At the tomb Jesus said, *"Take away the stone."* Martha, said to him, *"Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days."* Jesus said to her, *"Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?"* So, they took away the stone.



In our lives, we too experience these moments when fear and doubt fill our hearts. The story of Lazarus conveys a significant message to all of us. It invites us to trust in Jesus even at those terrible moments when we experience extreme sadness or fear.



Reflection Questions:

- ***What situation in my life is blocking me from believing in the resurrection?***
- ***Are there persons I know in my neighborhood who have lost hope?***
- ***Jesus is asking you and me: Do you believe?***
- ***What is the stone in my life that I need to let Jesus remove so that I can experience the resurrection?***

“Charity, with its universal dynamism, can build a new world, because it is not a sterile sentiment, but the best way to achieve effective paths of development for all. Social love is a force capable of creating new ways of facing the problems of today's world.”

Fratelli Tutti § 183

Closing Prayer

by Joyce Rupp

God of Hope, come!

Enter into the lives of those I hold dear, the ones whose lives are marked with pain, struggle, and deep anxiety, those whose lives bear ongoing heartaches, those whose difficulties threaten to overwhelm them with helplessness and despair.

Come and gift them with a deep belief about you and your never-ending faithfulness and companionship.

God of Hope, come! Enter into every human heart that cries out for a glimpse of your love, for a sigh of your welcoming presence, for a taste of your happiness.

Be the one who calms the restless and gentles the aches of the human journey.

Amen.



Teresa Aura RSCJ
Incoming Responsible for the Novitiate of UGK-TCH-RDC

