

GOSPEL

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

The sisters Martha and Mary sent this message to Jesus, 'Lord, the man you love is ill.' On receiving the message, Jesus said, 'This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified.' Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judaea.'

On arriving, Jesus found that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him. Mary remained sitting in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'If you had been here, my brother would not have died, but I know that even now, whatever you ask of God, he will grant you.' 'Your brother' said Jesus to her 'will rise again.' Martha said, 'I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said: 'I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she said 'I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.' Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, 'Where have you put him?' They said, 'See how much he loved him!' But there were some who remarked, 'He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man's death?' Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb: it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, 'Take the stone away.' Martha said to him, 'Lord, by now he will smell; 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 took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and said: 'Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me.'

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, here! Come out!' The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him,

let him go free.' Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

29 March 2020

Jesus had friends. He loved them all, but He had friends with whom He had a special relationship, as one does with friends, of greater love, of greater trust... Very, very often, He stayed at the house of these siblings: Lazarus, Martha, Mary... And Jesus felt pain for the sickness and death of His friend. He arrives at the tomb and is deeply moved. He asks, very troubled: "Where have you laid him?" (see Jn 11:34). And Jesus breaks out in tears. Jesus, God and man, weeps. There is another time in the Gospel that says that Jesus wept: when He wept over Jerusalem (see Lk 19:41-42). With what tenderness Jesus weeps! He weeps from the heart. He weeps with love. He weeps with His friends who weep Jesus' tears. Perhaps He wept at other times in his life, we do not know; certainly on the Mount of Olives. But Jesus weeps out of love, always.

He is deeply moved and very troubled, and weeps. How many times we have heard this emotion of Jesus, with that repeated phrase: "His heart was moved with compassion" (see Mt 9:36; Mt 13:14). Jesus cannot look at the people and not feel compassion. His eyes are connected with His heart. Jesus sees with His eyes, but He sees with His heart and is capable of weeping.

Today, faced with a world that suffers greatly, many people who suffer the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, I wonder: Am I capable of weeping, as Jesus would certainly have done and does now? Is my heart like Jesus'? And if it is too hard, [even if] I can speak and do good in order to help, if my heart is not entering in and I am not capable of weeping, ask the Lord for this grace: Lord, that I might weep with You, weep with your people who are suffering right now. Many are weeping today. And we, from this altar, from this sacrifice of Jesus, of Jesus who was not ashamed of weeping, let us ask for the grace to weep. May today be for everyone like a Sunday of tears.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/
Homily?



Head: What are the areas of suffering you see in the world around you?



Heart: How do you feel about the suffering which you see in the world around you?



Hands: How can you become closer to those who suffer and weep with them?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.