

### FOR A + LIFE ARISE!

When I lived in Toronto, I accompanied a couple whose nine-year-old daughter was diagnosed with widespread cancer. I can still hear the mother's heart-wrenching cry: *"It's not fair; she's just a child! If God exists, He wouldn't allow this..."*



This mother's painful story reflects the experience of many of us who are utterly devastated by the illness or death of a loved one. Faced with the mystery of suffering and death, who can offer us a way out of the shroud of pain that envelops and suffocates us?

In this Sunday's Gospel (John 11:21), we can echo Martha's words to Jesus: *"Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."* She reproaches him for his absence. The two sisters had informed Jesus of their brother's illness: *"Master the one you love is sick,"* and were waiting for him. We know that Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were good friends of Jesus. They had often welcomed Jesus into their home and believed in him and his mission.

Despite her disappointment at Jesus' late arrival a few days after her brother's burial, Martha expresses her complete faith in Jesus: *"But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."* Jesus said to her, *"Your brother will rise."* Martha was open to accepting Jesus' words because she believed *"in the resurrection on the last day"* (John 11:24).

In response to Martha's faith, Jesus affirms, *"I am the resurrection."* We are in the present. **He is now the resurrection.** He is the resurrection because he is God: *"I Am."* And he adds: *"Whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die."*

How can we understand this? The term *"resurrection"* brings all kinds of ideas to mind. Let us remember that the word resurrection corresponds biblically to an everyday reality: that of *"standing up"* as we get

out of bed in the morning or rise from the table. We could rewrite Jesus' sentence as follows: *"I have come to lift you up, to set you on your feet and to give you true life today, stronger than death."*

Through this story of Martha, the Gospel questions us about our own faith. Certainly, as Christians, we believe in heaven and we all hope to go there after we die. But what about the resurrection of Jesus **today, in our lives?**



Brought back to life, Lazarus remains mortal, but he is now a man who stands upright: risen from the tomb, freed from his bandages and shroud, he can walk freely. All around us, in our families, our societies, in the world, so many realities imprison us, individually or collectively, in tombs where we feel like prisoners, bound with bandages, our eyes covered with a shroud...

But no matter how hopeless the situations we find ourselves in may be, God is willing and ready to untie us and bring us out of the darkness of the tombs if only we dare to believe in Jesus, in the resurrection and in life, like Martha. For He alone has the power to restore all the impossible losses in our lives. "Do you believe this?" (John 11:27).

Jesus does not come to explain suffering and death to us; through His Resurrection, He comes to tell us: **If you believe in Me, you will experience that Life is stronger than death. You will see the Light of the Risen One triumph over all forms of darkness. I am very close to you, even if you think I am absent. Take my hand, stand up, and my love will transform you into a living being. Then your path, even if it is difficult, will become a path of growth. Will you trust me?**

Winter always comes to an end, and the sweet, flower-filled spring always amazes us, for

**I AM THE GOD OF THE LIVING.**

***Sr. Louise Madore, DW  
Province of Canada***