

# A TRUSTWORTHY FRIEND

Fifth Sunday of Lent – Year A

Ezekiel 37:12-14; Psalm 130;  
Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45



Who among us hasn't experienced at least once the dismay of the Apostles during the storm at sea, when the Lord was asleep and it seemed as if their boat would sink? Who would not have cried out as they did in such a life-threatening situation: "Don't you care if we die?" The question touches on the mystery of why God is silent in the face of the calamities that threaten our fragile existence as human beings, called to plough the furrows of history. And yet, on this Fifth Sunday of Lent, with Holy Week looming on the horizon, we confront an even bigger question, namely: if the Lord is really our friend, then why doesn't he do anything to save those he loves from suffering, sorrow and death? How many times, like Martha and Mary, do we cry out in disillusionment because the Master is not around at the right moment? The problem is his apparent silence, remoteness and failure to act. What kind of friend is he?

And yet Jesus is indeed our friend because he comes to give us not what we want but what we need. Like a true and supportive comrade, he doesn't shield us from life's problems but instead shares them with us. He does not eliminate death, but participates in it on the same footing as everyone who suffers. The Gospel of John opens with the account of two disciples of John the Baptist who ask Jesus where he is living so that they can stay with him, and the Master's last sign before his passion is to go and see where his friend Lazarus has been buried. His tears give us a glimpse of the Creator's grief. In his words to Lazarus, we hear the authoritative command of the Son of Man, who will pull down once and for all the wall of sin that separates us from God because sin is death. Christ does not spare us from death; instead, he pulls us out of its clutches with the compassion of one who lived the same experience in all its drama and transformed it.

Christ asks us the same question he asked Martha of Bethany and we too are blessed if, after having been tested in the crucible of tribulation, we respond like she did with trust in the Son of God, our faithful friend. Believing in him, there is no death from which we cannot rise... And living in him, there is no sin from which we cannot get up again. What other kind of friend would we want?

## PRAYER



*Lord,  
you love life  
and you are our friend.  
Give us the grace  
to persevere with trust  
even in the night of sin and death.  
Help us to continue  
to hope against hope  
in your love!*

Fr. Massimo Tellan