

The Resurrection and the Life

John 11-12

What We Found

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, so he stayed two days longer: the delay was inside the love, not against it. By the time he arrived, Lazarus was four days dead, past every hope, and both sisters met him with grief's oldest sentence: Lord, if you had been here. Martha professed the resurrection as a doctrine for the last day, and Jesus corrected her tense: I AM the resurrection and the life, our fifth great I AM, a person, not an event. Then the shortest verse in the Bible: Jesus wept, shuddering with indignation, at death itself as the Church has always heard it, even though he was about to break it, and legitimizing every Christian's grief forever. At the tomb he gave thanks before the gift, cried Lazarus, come out, and a dead man heard the voice of the Son of God, exactly as promised. Then: unbind him, and let him go, the raising that is Christ's alone, and the unbinding he hands to his Church. Our sign tally, open since Cana, closed at seven on the traditional count we have kept, and the seventh sign is life from the dead.

And the seventh sign signed his death warrant. The Sanhedrin met, and Caiaphas the high priest, speaking pure political arithmetic, prophesied despite himself: one man should die for the people, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the scattered children of God. At Bethany, Mary poured out a year's wages of nard and the house filled with fragrance while a thief objected in the vocabulary of piety. The city waved palms at the humble king of Zechariah 9. And then Greeks, the nations themselves, came asking to see Jesus, and at that news the sentence we have tracked for ten sessions finally turned: the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself. All. We tested the hard verses about those who could not believe and found the door open in the same paragraph: many even of the authorities believed; the hardening ratifies persistent refusal, and no one at our table is disqualified by decree. The public ministry has ended. The Hour has come.

Voices of the Church

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Ambrose of Milan, On the Death of His Brother Satyrus

Preaching at his own brother's funeral, Ambrose defended his tears with the Gospel's shortest verse: we incur no sin by weeping, for Jesus wept, and wept knowing he was about to raise his friend. Hope does not forbid grief; it accompanies it. Christians do not grieve less than others; we grieve with a horizon.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo, Tractates on the Gospel of John, Tractate 49

Christ alone cries the dead man out, for only God raises the dead; but the risen man comes out still bound, and the unbinding is given to the disciples: unbind him, and let him go. So it remains: the Lord raises the soul by his own voice, and hands the raised to his Church to be loosed, the ministry

she has exercised in every absolution since.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH: St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Romans 4

On the road to his execution, Ignatius begged the Roman Christians not to rescue him: I am the wheat of God; let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. The grain of wheat was not poetry to him; it was his itinerary. He chose the falling, and the Church he fed is still eating the fruit.

Live It This Week

- **Say it to his face.** Martha and Mary both got to say if you had been here directly to Jesus, and he received it, wept, and answered. Once this week, in real prayer, say your version out loud, unedited. Lament is not unbelief; it is grief walking toward the right address.
- **One act of nard.** Do one deliberately uncalculated act of generosity this week, time, money, or attention, sized to make your inner accountant object. Let some house fill with fragrance.
- **Pray at the tombs.** Visit a cemetery this week, or simply pray for your dead by name, and say John 11:25 over them: I am the resurrection and the life. Then the Church's ancient prayer for them: eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Memory Verse

John 11:25-26 (RSV2CE)

Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

Before Next Session

Read John 13. Session 11: He Loved Them to the End. The doors close, the basin comes out, and we are inside the last night. Bring your sealed guess with you; its week has almost arrived.

Catechism References

CCC 605, 607, 994, 1037, 2604.