
Word of Life

January 2025

Do you believe this?

(Jn 11:26).

Jesus was on his way to Bethany, the town where Lazarus had died four days earlier. When Martha, Lazarus' sister, heard that Jesus was coming, she was filled with hope and ran out to meet him. John's Gospel states that Jesus loved her very much, as he did Lazarus and their sister, Mary.¹ Even in the pain of her loss, Martha demonstrated her full trust in Jesus. She told him that if he had been present, her brother would not have died, but that nevertheless she was certain that anything he asked of God would be granted. Jesus affirmed, "Your brother will rise again" (Jn 11:23), and then asked her:

Do you believe this?

Jesus clarified that he was not referring to the life that awaits every believer after their death, but rather to bring Lazarus back to life right then and there. He asked Martha if she believed in him, not only that he could perform a miracle, but also, to give her and all believers, a sense of a new life in resurrection when he tells her, "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25).

The faith he asks of her is rooted in a deep personal relationship, an active and dynamic relationship. Believing is something that transforms and permeates our daily lives. Faith is something that requires us to examine constantly.

Do you believe this?

How do we answer this question? Jesus invites us to live a new life now. He invites us to experience it every day knowing that he brought this life to us. First, by seeking us out and then he came to dwell among us.

Let's look at Martha, the sister of Lazarus. In dialogue with Jesus, she made a full profession of faith. The original text in Greek expresses this very powerfully. The Greek words used for "I believe" signify "I have come to believe" or "I firmly believe" that "you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world,"² with all the consequences this faith entails.

The Lord asks us the same question. He asks us, too, to trust firmly in him, and to fully accept his way of life, based on generous and concrete love towards all. Our faith will mature through perseverance and will grow stronger. Each day, as we put into practice the words of Jesus, we will see how true they are. Furthermore, this will have a positive impact on our daily actions towards others. At the same time, we can pray as the apostles did: "Increase our faith!" (Lk 17:6).

Do you believe this?

Patricia from South America tells us, "A government agency had closed, causing my daughter and all her colleagues to lose their jobs. As a form of protest, they set up an encampment in front of the main office. I tried to support them by participating in some of their activities, bringing them food or simply stopping by to talk to them.

"On Holy Thursday, a group of priests who supported them decided to hold a ceremony, during which there was time to listen to one another, followed by a reading from the Gospel and an enactment of washing the feet of others, as Jesus did on the night before his death. The majority of those present were not religious people, but it was, nevertheless, a moment of deep unity, fraternity and hope. All felt welcomed, and were moved by this act, as they thanked those priests who had accompanied them in their uncertainty and suffering."

This Word of Jesus was chosen for the theme of the 2025 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Therefore, let us pray and work to ensure that our common belief as Christians may be the driving force in the search for fraternity among all people. This is what God desires – and proposes – for all humankind, and yet it requires that we play our part. Prayer and action will be effective if they are based on our firm trust in God and by living in a way that is consistent with our belief.

Do you believe this?

By Silvano Malini and the Word of Life Team

Each month the Focolare chooses a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. The commentary, originally written by founder Chiara Lubich (1920–2008), is written by an international commission drawing inspiration from the Spirituality of Unity and, translated into 96 different languages, reaches several million people worldwide.

Distributed in Japan by Focolare www.focolare.org/japan

Tokyo: 03-3330-5619 / 03-5370-6424 e-mail: tokyofocfem@gmail.com

Nagasaki: 095-849-3812 e-mail: foc.nagasaki@mxm.cncm.ne.jp

1.Jn 11:5

2.Cf. Jn 11:27

