

In the awareness that not everything around us can be controlled, that sometimes some events bring us to our knees and some situations must be accepted and in front of man's need to give himself answers capable of consoling the restless heart, St. Augustine, with his always very current teachings, this is how he expresses himself: "Either evil is what we are afraid of, or the evil thing is that we are afraid" (Confessions, VII).

Such were the reflections that stirred the poor spirit of Augustine, still searching for the truth. However, being in the Catholic Church, he had faith in himself firm, the faith in Christ, Lord and Saviour; a still very uncertain faith, but of which, by now, his spirit could no longer do without, rather he imbibed himself more and more.

In the spirituality of the Apostolic Movement we have always been told that "in order not to be afraid one must have a great Love for Jesus".

"But when the body gives in, the human is afraid." And this is natural in man.

«Then, you embrace His Cross and you know you are not alone. You know He is with you. He cannot abandon you. It is your faith, your love and your hope. Then, fear disappears... » (Maria Marino, Exhortation words, 1 October 2001).

Surely in fear we perceive our limit, our

vulnerability, fragility and impotence; but the awareness of not being alone is our faith, the joy of knowing that we are listened to is our hope and in the fullness of His Mercy is our love.

St. Augustine confirms us on these certainties, in his speech 38: "Yes, the man that passes is like a shadow. Yes, like a breath he hurries, accumulates and does not know who is the one that collects. Now, what could I expect, Lord? My hope is in you». (Ps 38.7-8). Thus St. Augustine exhorts us: "There you have to start believing, where your trouble started."

And he continues showing us the way: "You are troubled, you think you are facing an insurmountable difficulty (...) Don't worry (...) God is faithful in his promises. To do this we must believe, we must awaken faith. The rest is unnecessarily disturbing. Why are we unnecessarily upset?"

While Christ slept on the boat, the disciples were about to shipwreck. Jesus slept and the disciples were troubled. The winds were blowing furiously, the waves rose and the ship went down. Why? Because Jesus slept. So it is with you too. When the storms of temptations rage in this world, your heart is disturbed, as if it were your boat. Why this, if not because your faith sleeps?

In fact, that's what the Apostle Paul says "Christ lives in your hearts through faith."

Therefore, awaken Christ within your heart, let your faith be watchful, let your conscience be quiet and your ship will be freed.

The time of faith is exhausting. Who dares to deny it? It is tiring, but this is the effort of which the vision is the reward. Therefore, let us lend faith to God».

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, grant us a firm faith, a firm hope and full charity in Christ her Son.

**Stefania Tolomeo**



## Lord, if you had been here ...

We are in Bethany, on the road that Jesus travels towards the house of Lazarus. His friend has been in the tomb for four days by now. His sister Martha goes to meet the Master: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!" (Jn 11:21).

The sincerity of her not perfect, but firm and delicate faith shines through. Martha has a certainty: Jesus is also Lord over death. She associates the saving power of the Lord with his presence: if he had been present in person, the Lord would have known about Lazarus' illness and would have had the power to save him.

In Martha's words - also shared by the other sister Mary - there is a positive attestation of her faith. Her invocation has the value of a testimony and does not contain any kind of regret or reproach for the fact that Jesus was not present at the crucial moment. She has nothing to complain about, because you had nothing to expect. The eventual presence of Jesus would have been a grace for her, not a right. Grace cannot be demanded.

But now the Master is here. Now his presence can operate. And yet, how far can the work of the Lord go if Lazarus is by now a prisoner of death? Not even the slightest hope that death is only apparent: four days... he already sends a bad smell. Martha's request is respectful, delicate, but it is also audacious and dares to rise above all resignation: "But even now I know that whatever you ask God, God will grant it to you" (Jn 11:22).

Marta doesn't explicitly ask. She knows that in history God has already granted

some of his servants the grace to resurrect a dead man. But her faith dares not pronounce itself. However, she knows how to manifest the presupposition of every grace of salvation: there is no limit to what God can grant you, if you ask it of him, Lord. Martha does not tell the Lord what he should ask God, does not trace the ways through which the Lord comes to meet her faith. You can, Lord: it is enough for me to know this. It is enough for me to confess this to you.

Later, some Jews intervene: "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?" (Jn 11:37). The murmur of those men clashes with the delicacy of Martha's testimony. They do not speak to attest to the power of Jesus, but to insinuate inconsistency in his works and unreliability in what is said about him. Not knowing the thoughts of the Lord, Martha and Mary had stopped at their great respect, unable to think about anything bad. Instead, their fellow citizens, not knowing the thoughts of God, intend to impose their own. Their comment, meditated or superficial as it may be, discredits the fame of Jesus, obscures the light that his words and signs have spread in the people, confuses the faith of the more simple listeners. Faced with the subtle power of murmuring, only the sign that Jesus is about to perform will powerfully restore the testimony of the truth.

May the Mother of the Redemption help us to be authentic, respectful and grateful witnesses of the history of salvation that the Lord has made known to us.

**Father Francesco Brancaccio**

### Movimento Apostolico

Non-profit Apostolic Movement Weekly.  
Free distribution. Publisher: Apostolic Movement  
Responsible Director: Costantino Di Bruno.

With ecclesiastical approval of the  
Archbishopric Curia of Catanzaro-Squillace.

Authorization no. 75 of 8-2-1990 of the Court of Lamezia Terme.  
Directorate, Editorial, Administration: Via B.Musulino, 23/E, Catanzaro.

Internet: [www.movimentoapostolico.it](http://www.movimentoapostolico.it)  
e-mail: [info@movimentoapostolico.it](mailto:info@movimentoapostolico.it)

Printed by the press office of the Apostolic Movement

## Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary on the granting of special Indulgences to the faithful in the current pandemic

(...) So that all those who suffer because of COVID-19, precisely in the mystery of this suffering, may rediscover "the same redemptive suffering of Christ" (ibid., 30), this Apostolic Penitentiary, ex auctoritate Summi Pontificis, trusting in the word of Christ the Lord and considering with a spirit of faith the epidemic currently underway, to be lived in a spirit of personal conversion, grants the gift of Indulgences in accordance with the following disposition.

The Plenary Indulgence is granted to the faithful suffering from Coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfil the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible.

Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus according to the words of the divine Redeemer: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15: 13), will obtain the same gift of the Plenary Indulgence under the same conditions.

This Apostolic Penitentiary also willingly grants a Plenary Indulgence under the same conditions on the occasion of the current

world epidemic, also to those faithful who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.

The Church prays for those who find themselves unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the Viaticum, entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a Plenary Indulgence on the point of death, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended (cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum*, no.12).

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of the Church, Health of the Sick and Help of Christians, our Advocate, help suffering humanity, saving us from the evil of this pandemic and obtaining for us every good necessary for our salvation and sanctification.

The present Decree is valid notwithstanding any provision to the contrary.

Given in Rome, from the seat of the Apostolic Penitentiary, on 19 March 2020.

**Mauro Card. Piacenza,**  
*Major Penitentiary*

**Krzysztof Nykiel,** *Regent*

**The  
Lord's Day  
ROMAN RITE**

**EVERYONE WHO LIVES AND BELIEVES  
IN ME WILL NEVER DIE  
(V Sunday of Lent Year A)**

**I WILL HAVE YOU RISE FROM YOUR GRAVES (Ez 37.12 to 14)**

Before the Lord, in the valley of the nations, the people of Israel are like a field of dry bones with no life. The Lord asks his prophet: "Might these bones live again?". The Prophet replies: "My Lord, you know it!". Three times, on the Lord's command, the prophet invokes the Spirit of God from the four winds. The Spirit comes and the bones return to be living persons. From the vision the promise arrives. The Lord will come with the power of his Holy Spirit and will create his people again. He descends into the valley of the nations with his almighty knowledge and wisdom and his people resumes its way back to the land that was once promised to Abraham and his descendants. If the Lord does not come down in our history, we remain forever dry bones with no life. The Lord comes and the man returns to be a man. The One who created us is the one who always recreates us. It is an immutable truth.

**THE SPIRIT IS ALIVE BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Rom 8.8 to 11)**

The baptized has become a new creature in Christ. He was released from the bondage of sin and delivered to the Spirit, so that he lives only for justice in Him. The way to operate all righteousness is the uninterrupted communion of Word, grace, dwelling and growth in the body of Christ and perfect communion with the Spirit of the Lord. If only one of these supernatural realities is missing, we pass from justice to injustice and from light into darkness. Today it is impossible to live justice. The Christian has altered the Word. He transformed it from pure Word of God into an unclean word of

men. He can celebrate a thousand Masses a day, it serves no purpose. It is urgent to give all the splendour of the truth to the Word. Without preserving the Word in its entirety of truth and light, no justice will be possible. Justice begins with obedience to the Word and it is consumed in obedience to the will of the Father communicated by the Holy Spirit.

**I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE (John 11,1-45)**

Baptized in the Holy Spirit, in his fire of love, truth, justice and eternal life, the man resurrects. He becomes an adopted son of the Father and the body of Christ, from which the Spirit must always be poured for the resurrection of every other man. If the Christian, as the true body of Christ, does not pour the Holy Spirit, the result of his perfect obedience to the Word and the Spirit, the world remains a valley of dry bones, but the responsibility is of the disciple of Jesus. He must give the Spirit giving the Word of Jesus. It gives the Spirit if you are donating the Word of Jesus even as the fruit of his heart and his soul. The Word is given by turning it into our flesh. Made our flesh, we make it become our breath, our voice and as the voice of the Word of God transformed into our flesh, we become the vehicle that carries the Spirit that converts hearts and attracts them to the Lord Jesus. Jesus gave the Word and the Holy Spirit as the true fruit of his humanity obedient to the Father in everything. Even the Christian must give the Word and the Holy Spirit as a result of his most pure obedience to the will of God.

*by the theologian,*  
**Msgr. Costantino Di Bruno**