

Coming to Believe Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time Friday, July 29, 2016
8:15 AM Jer 26:1-9; **Jn 11:19-27** St. Martha (Already then, already now, already in
the future Jesus is the resurrection.)

“I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.”

We see in this dialogue that John the evangelist is showing his audience, his congregation, that **the coming of Christ is a progressive thing**. It's not that he has come but that he is coming. This is very important: **Christ is still coming into the world**. Sometimes our grammar betrays a certain sort of present perfect mentality, something that has been finished. But it has not been finished; It has only been started. Christ is coming into the world, begun brilliantly in the person of Jesus, the incarnation in the womb of the Blessed Mother; that's just the beginning. **It promises to enlarge and grow and become the center of a whole new creation**, a new heaven, a new earth beyond the scope of our imagination, which St. Paul made very clear in Corinthians: we don't see, we don't hear, and we don't imagine what it really is.

And sometimes we should stop trying because we are sent to be servants of this, not the designers. I often get the idea when reading certain Christian books, well-intentioned as they may be, that the authors seem to think that getting the right ideas is what's really important, well, not really. **Ideas can be helpful, but just as often they are an obstacle**. Some religious sisters in the present day seem to think, for example, that science is really the basic model for understanding the whole movement of God into the world. How they get to here, I do not know because if you actually look at science, it says nothing hopeful about the future of the world. It says we are expanding in the universe and basically cooling off and eventually losing all our energy to become a big empty void. That is the vision of science, physics. There is nothing hopeful there. As far as how we got here, that's not too hopeful either nor is it purposeful. Everything just happened by chance and here we are.

What the gospel to trying to get us to see is something more: a vision of God at work, not explaining too much, intimating this and that, but eliciting our cooperation. That's what's essential, that we cooperate with this new vision that Jesus embodies, a vision of what he calls the kingdom, where we actually live on earth as sisters and brothers, **where we actually**

live in relationship with God and one another in a sense that we belong. Science doesn't tell us this. **This is something we need to learn from the Spirit.**

Martha here is given to us as an example of coming to believe because it isn't simply a matter of facts again or doctrines or propositions; **it's a matter of coming to realize what God is doing.** Doesn't happen all at once, doesn't for anybody. **We are all coming to believe or we are stuck not coming to believe.** But if we are working with the Spirit, we are coming to believe, we are coming to realize, we are coming to cooperate with, we are coming to trust in something far more remarkable than anything that's gone before. We are moving onward, and in a very important way we are part of what is coming. **Our wills our desires our convictions our commitments—all are important in this new creation.**

Now Martha was a little confused. She said, well, "If you had been here, then my brother would not have died." Well, how does she know? She is thinking about a God who fixes things. And **Jesus was not a God who fixes things.** That is not the real God. **The real God enters into and suffers with all that happens.** And God's commitment is absolute and total. Jesus, the God-man, poured out his blood on the cross. That's total commitment. **The Eucharist is the sign of God's total commitment to us** and to a new world for us where he will be with, in communion, with all of us. That's his vision as we can faintly see it. So Jesus had to correct her and say, well, Martha, "your brother will rise." She already believed in the resurrection of the dead. That was the belief of many pharisaical people, that meaning those who belonged to the Pharisee party. And he says, well, that's not what I mean. "I am the resurrection." To see to this, **already then, already now, already in the future Jesus is the resurrection.** And when we are with him and in union with him, we are already sharing in some mysterious way in this life that God is.