Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother [Lazarus, who had died]. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.”

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise."

Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and anyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God,
Neither Martha nor Mary had any idea of the magnitude of Jesus’ words to them...“Your Brother will rise.” After all, their frame of reference was rooted in what they had been taught from the time they were little girls: Yes, there would be a resurrection. It would occur at the end of time during which all people would be raised, together. But that’s not Jesus’ plan. “I am the resurrection and the life...”. They were about to experience something absolutely incredible. Jesus was going to raise their brother, Lazarus, here and now from the dead! As the result, everything would be changed forever.

Food for your Journey

When I was living in Guatemala back in the ’80s, I spent some time with missionaries up in the Highlands. Over the desk in my room was a framed newspaper photo. It showed a group of young children standing close together with their arms straight out from their sides. I thought about it several times during my stay with them, so I finally asked what it was and why they had it on their wall.

The husband said there was a custom among the indigenous Ixchel Mayan people who were Christians. Whenever they felt bad or sorrowful or in pain, they would put their arms out, imitating Jesus on the cross. That way they felt as if they were bringing Jesus’ suffering into their own. The Jesus who could weep for them and die for them took their own individual sufferings up into his, and they were then no longer alone. They could feel Jesus totally identifying with their pain and, in a magical, cosmic, spiritual way, their pain was lessened.

I said something like, “Wow, what on earth was going on in the picture that all of them at once could be making the gesture of the cross?”

He moved me over closer to the picture and asked, “Do you see that long black shadow on the ground?” I did. He said, “That’s a rifle barrel. There are about 20 others right in back of it. Someone in this town was thought to be a rebel, and the military wanted to make an example of them so others wouldn’t do the same. So just outside of the range of the picture, army troops had lined up. And just after this picture was taken, they fired and killed all
the children in the village. They all died. They were buried in that pit you see just in back of them. The children all knew they were going to die, but when they held out their arms, they could feel Jesus identifying with them ... and they weren’t afraid.”

—Stan G. Duncan

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear God, You sent Your only Son into this world to be the resurrection and the life. He gave His life so that I have the promise and hope of living forever in Heaven. Lord, with the help of Your Grace may I live the way of His Gospel faithfully. Amen