

Second Part

The friend of the spouse exults and rejoices in the voice of the spouse (Jn. 3,29)

Listening to the Messiah in the New testament

(Once upon a time) Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi met (the prophet) Elijah, who was coming down from heaven as a precursor of the Messiah, [...]. He asked Elijah: «When will Messiah come?»

He answered him: «Go and ask him yourself!»

Rabbi Jehoshua said: «But where is he?»

Elijah answered: «At the gates of Rome»

«And how will I recognize him?»

«He is sitting among the poor who are suffering from diseases, and all of them take the bandages off all their wounds at the same time and put new ones on; but each time he takes off just one bandage and puts anew one on (each in turn), for he says to himself: “It may be that (unexpectedly) someone will have need of me, and so there must be no delay”¹».

Then Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi went to the Messiah and greeted him with the words:

«Peace to you, my Lord and Master!»

He answered: «Peace to you, son of Levi!»

He asked him: «When will my Lord come?»

The Messiah answered: «Today!»

Then Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi returned to Elijah, who asked him: «What did Messiah tell you?»

He said: «Peace to you, son of Levi!»

And Elijah asked again: «Did he promise you and your father the life of the world to come?»

Then Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi said angrily: «He lied to me; for he said: “Today I will come, and still he has not come!”»

Then Elijah said to him: «You did not understand. What he meant was: *Today, if you listen to his* [i.e. God’s] *voice* (Ps. 95:7)».

[TB Sanhedrin 98a]

In this ancient midrash two motives appear significant. The first concerns the presentation of the Messiah to the sick and the poor as their companion. Sharing their life situation he prepares them for his coming as Messiah. These records indicate that the advent of the kingdom of God and the Messiah do not manifest themselves as a spectacular phenomenon; rather the Messiah is the one who redeems the poor as one who knows their suffering and needs. The second reason concerns the disappointment expressed by Rabbi Jehoshua ben Levi (mid-third century. A.D.) who says: "He lied

¹ He thinks that God can call him at any moment to redemption, and he is always ready.

to me because he said: Today, I will come, but he has not yet come." The disappointment about the coming of the Messiah expresses a misunderstanding in which it is considered crucial to know the time of redemption in order to be partakers. The answer of the prophet Elijah explains that the Messiah was referring to an exhortation from the psalm: *Today if you hear his voice* (Psalm 95.7). The question of the coming of the Messiah is not chronological in nature, but of the human willingness and readiness to welcome the voice and the manifestation of God.

This characterization of the Messiah and the messianic redemption, which requires listening as a fundamental condition for acceptance, shows remarkable correspondence with the proclamation of the Gospel and offers even more relevant determination in this regard.

In the presentation that follows I examine four motives from the New Testament on listening as the primary attitude to recognize today's messianic redemption and to become disciples of the Risen Lord, to bear fruit in the kingdom of God, to enlighten and nourish faith in the church. The teaching of the New Testament awakens the praise and the joy of listening to the Messiah who has come to usher in human history a new world that is alive for God.

I. Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing!

The comparison between the messianic expectation and the actual work of Jesus raises some questions by John the Baptist (cf. Lk 7.18-30; Mt 11.2-15). In fact, while he announced the coming of one who is stronger than he (Lk 3,16) and with overwhelming power who would bring about the judgment of God and the deliverance of Israel, Jesus does not seem to resemble this image. Therefore, John the Baptist, through his disciples, asks Jesus the question: *Are you he who is to come?* (Lk 7:20). Jesus' answer is, first of all, in some healings, and then he sends word to John that their salvation lies in concrete saving gestures in which they find the authentic revelation of the Messiah, according to the great prophetic promise of messianic redemption in which the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the dumb speak, the dead are raised and prisoners are released (cf. Is 29.18-19; 35.5-6; 26,19). It is to the poor that the good news is proclaimed (Is 61.1) of the saving power of the Messiah who will work in their favor, liberating them from evil, oppression, exclusion, making them protagonists of the new world in the kingdom of God.

The acts of salvation in Jesus the Messiah reveal that the expected year of grace, the Jubilee, the time when God puts an end to the suffering and misery of his people (cf. Is 61,1-2, Lv 25,8-54) is present and active, as Jesus teaches in the synagogue of Nazareth, inaugurating his mission: *Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing* (cf. Lk 4,16-21). Those who have the word of God in their ears, those who, listening accept the prophetic word that God speaks, see in the works of Jesus the coming of God, not as something great and triumphant, but as salvation through a life-giving power that protects and raises the humble and the lowly (cf. Lk 1.47-55, 10,21).

The disciples of Jesus the Messiah are blessed and are recognized, precisely because they see the day of redemption; they have the privilege to see and hear the wonders of this coming of the kingdom of God, that many prophets and kings and the righteous have hoped for (cf. Lk 10.23-24 Mt 13,16,17). In addition, the disciples, according to the synoptic story of the transfiguration², which prepares them for their passion and anticipates the experience of the resurrection, is reserved for the divine testimony concerning the identity of Jesus and the exhortation to listen. In the version of the story reported by the evangelist Luke, the disciples are invited to understand the exodus of Jesus (Luke 9:31), which is being realized in Jerusalem and establishes the messianic redemption in human history, the manifestation of divine sonship which reveals the Father. And, at the same time, they are called to listen to the Messiah because his word is that of the Father, *'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!* (Lk 9,35; Mk 9.7; Mt 17,5).

This dynamic is expressed similarly in John, in which only those who base their existence in God, the one who listens to the words of God, the Father, and, as taught by the prophets (cf. Is 54:13; Jer 31,31-34), learn from him, can grasp the identity of the Messiah and believe in him (cf. Jn 6:45; 8.47). And the words of Jesus Christ are those of the Father who sent him (cf. Jn 3:34; 12.49-50, 14,24) they are words that bring life and salvation, they are the words of life forever (Jn 6:68, 12:50).

At this point, it is possible to make three considerations:

1) The message of the Gospel, in the Synoptic and the Johannine traditions, makes it immediately clear to see that the presence of the Messiah and his contemporaries become necessary to enter deeply into the perspective of God and to be taught by his teaching in order to be able to discern the messianic work of redemption breaking into human affairs.

² Cf. Mc 9,2-10; Mt 17,1-9; Lk 9,28-36.

2) By listening to God speaking in the Messiah, one learns to understand the correspondence between the acts of God and those of the Messiah, or in theological Johannine language, between the Father and the Son, in which Jesus the Messiah experiences the Father (cf. Jn 12:45).

3) This perspective into the active listening to God enables us to see the fulfillment of the divine promises in the messianic redemption, and to develop the perception and understanding of the acts of human history in light of an unfolding of history which is the advent of the revelation and current work of the Messiah.

II. Listening makes disciples, friends and family of the Messiah

II.1. Listening to become disciples of the Messiah and to have life

Following Jesus the Messiah requires the acceptance of his words:

whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, has life forever [...] has passed from death to life. (Jn 5:24)

What is already present, in the present moment, deciding life and death, is listening to the word of the Lord, more precisely the response given in this listening. The faith that leads to life is to trust in the received word. In this perspective, life and death do not indicate simply a natural phenomena, but a relationship established or interrupted, here and now, with God. Welcoming Jesus is decisive for having life, that is, the wisdom and the full meaning of life is to live for God and of God (cf. Jn 6:57).

The reason for following Jesus is presented by John in a unique way through the parable of the Good Shepherd (Jn 10.1-18).³ The trusted relationship between the shepherd and his flock is developed on the basis of the relationship of closeness and trust that he has with his sheep (Jn 10,3b-5). He calls and knows each one, and his voice is heard, while guiding them safely to where there is food. So Jesus is the one that offers direct access to the fullness of life (cf. Jn 10.7-10), is the only shepherd, and he also gives his life for his sheep (cf. Jn 10.14-18).

Listening from this point of view, in this case to mutual understanding, shared life, and belonging, distinguishes Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who takes care of those who follow him, and this same

³ The image used to represent the ideal of the good governor is taken and developed in a theological content, in particular, in the texts: Psalm 23; Ez 34.

concern must also be implemented by community leaders by rejecting false shepherds who are always lurking around.

Another significant example is given in the hospitality Jesus receives in the house of Martha and Mary (Lk 10,38-42). The story in the Gospel of Luke, is a counterpoint to what just precedes by the teacher of the Law / Torah (Lk 10,25-37)⁴ who tests Jesus with the question: *Teacher what must I do to inherit eternal life?* (Lk 10:25). Jesus responds by returning the expert teacher of Scripture and its interpretation: *What is written in the Torah? How do you read?* (Lk 10,26). The teacher responds by quoting, as the essence and synthesis of divine teaching, the commandment of love of God (Dt 6,5) and the commandment of love of neighbor (Lv 19:18). Jesus agrees and confirms: *You have answered right; do this and you will live* (Luke 10:28). The teacher then asks another question, in the custom of debate among teachers, to clarify, in this case, the identification of the neighbor to be loved. Jesus responds by proposing the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.30-35) which, at first glance, breaks the usual interpretation for whom the concept of neighbor was limited to those who belonged to the same religious group, and then concludes, reversing the question: *whom do you think was neighbor to the one who fell among robbers?* (Luke 10:36). The question is thus reformulated in terms of who draws nearer, approaching and responding to the needs of others, beyond the barriers of religion, culture and society. The teacher welcomes this new definition of neighbor as the one who has compassion, and Jesus invites him to take action, *Go and do likewise yourself* (Luke 10:37).

At this point follows the story of Jesus being welcomed into the home of Martha and Mary, which gives rise to a dispute between the two sisters. Mary sits at the Lord's feet and listens to his word, while Martha, who is engaged in the active service of hospitality, complains to Jesus: *Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me!* (Luke 10:40) It is noteworthy that the historical interpretation of these two, Martha and Mary, was often explained in a symbolic way,⁵ but the story shows its importance when taking into account the whole narrative of the plot as well as also the problems of the apostolic community.

⁴ Cf. Mt 22,34-40 and Mk 12,28-34.

⁵ A few examples: Marta represents the Synagogue, Mary the Church (Clement of Alexandria, II sec.); Marta, the active life and Mary the contemplative life (Origen, III sec.); Marta represents life on earth, Mary the life of the kingdom (Augustine, V sec.).

One issue within a typical Christian community is the relationship between listening to the Word and diakonia,⁶ which comes through the two sister protagonists, and has been placed in the context of the question posed by the teacher of the Law on eternal life (Luke 10 25). With Mary and Martha there are at the same time two expressions of hospitality, while elsewhere one follows another, as in the story of the three individuals in the hospitality tent of Abraham to Sarah who is first engaged in the service of the guests (Gen 18,2-8), and then hear the word of God's promise (Gen 18.9-15). The intervention of Jesus, prompted by Marta demonstrates his appreciation of her service though, without opposition, teaches what is a priority and not to be lost: *only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the better part that cannot be taken away* (Luke 10:40). What must I do to have life (the question of doctor of law), achieves efficiency and finds its raison d'être in the only thing that matters: a personal relationship with the Lord. It is the practice of listening, without losing sight of the fundamental and distinctive attitude of the disciple. Listening is the condition which springs up and culminates in every action of active service. Mary's attitude which stops to hear the word of the Lord, therefore, constitutes an exemplary representation in the path that the evangelist teaches about the love of God and neighbor. The action of Mary, who listens to the Lord, shows us the realization and the assertion of the primacy of God: *You shall love the Lord your God* (Dt 6,5), a teaching that is expressed with the partial quote, referring to the doctor of Law, and opens with the exhortation *Hear, O Israel* (Dt 6,4).

It is also significant that the evangelist Luke addresses the entire question beyond the rigid distribution of roles and gender discrimination, and teaches the Christian community that standing at the foot of the master as a disciple is essential for man (cf. Lk 8 , 35) and for woman, Mary is an example for us, as well as the generous hospitality of the two sisters, which later will be done again by Zacchaeus (Luke 19,1-10).

II.2. Being friends of the Messiah

In his relationship with the disciples another important passage is the one in which they are called "friends" by Jesus. According to the teaching recorded in the Gospel of John, if the disciples accept and practice the commandment to love one another in the love of Jesus, for whom he gave his life,

⁶ Cf. also the situation of the community and the institutional measures adopted in At 6,1-7.

then they truly become his friends: *you are my friends if you do what I command you* (John 15.12-14).

This gift of love and friendship of Jesus and of calling, if accepted by the disciples, causes a change; it allows them, in fact, open access to revelation: *I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you* (John 15:15). So Jesus reveals in a transparent manner the Father to his disciples - his "friends", communicating and letting them know what he has heard from the Father. In this way, they can also place their lives in the perspective of the gift of communion, of the power and action of love, the same as between the Father and the Son (Jn 15.9-11).

II.3. Becoming the family of the Messiah

Listening not only discriminates those who become disciples and friends, but also those who are the family of the Messiah.

In the Gospel of Luke there is the account of the woman in the crowd, who is excited by the teaching of Jesus, and speaks words to praise his mother (Luke 11:27). Jesus responds by shifting the attention rather on those who hear and keep the word of God: *Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it* (Luke 11:28). And Mary, the mother of Jesus appears, first of all, as an icon of reflective listening on the works and words of God. Since the birth of the child, before the divine announcement and the visit of the shepherds, who establish and spread the news of the advent of the "savior", Mary is portrayed as one *who keeps all these things and ponders them in her heart* (Lk 2:20) in reflection and in anticipation of their unfolding.

Elsewhere in the episode in which Jesus was referring to the presence of his mother and relatives who tried to see him but could not because of the crowd, he said: *My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice* (Luke 8,19-21; Mt 12.46-50; Mk 3.31-35). His reply surely does not intend to belittle human family relationships, but rather opens them to the realization of a familiarity on a more profound and wider level in the logic of the kingdom of God. Indeed, the acceptance and practice of the word of God are acts that unite and make family members with Jesus the Lord, and at the same time provoke new relationships and bonds of

brotherhood and familiarity among believers,⁷ whose center of cohesion is the person of Jesus, precisely because he speaks the authoritative word of God.

III. Pay attention to how you listen

Listening to the word of God in the Messiah implies that it is welcomed with trust and that it be implemented with constancy and perseverance to build-up human existence and to bear fruit. It is not enough to recognize Jesus as a teacher and Lord in an invocation, in a liturgical acclamation, or in a merely verbal profession of faith. In fact, listening to the Word is true when it is realized and put into action. Then the implementation of the divine word, placed in the heart, is the foundation of a solid life.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [...]

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was its fall. (Mt 7,21.24-27; Lk 6.46-49).

The parable illustrates two possible ways of accepting the word by comparing two builders, and with respect to each house that he has built, one wise and the other foolish, based on the version of Matthew. The wise man chooses a sure foundation for its construction, the rock; while the foolish man builds on a much more fragile terrain, sand. The result is that the house of the wise resists the impact of natural phenomena, the storms, however, that of a foolish is overwhelmed.

The parable teaches that listening does not make any guarantees, does not prevent a catastrophe. Only those who put into practice the word of Jesus (literally act) build a life on the safe and solid foundation, which enables one to withstand the storms of life.

⁷ The same congruence occurs in the invocation of God in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6,9).

Another significant aspect is the fact that those who let the word of Jesus transform their life are also those that produce fruit. The parable of the sower, reported by the Synoptics (Mk 4.1-20; Mt 13.3-23; Lk 8.4-15), is the first parable in the Gospel of Mark, almost implying that it is the key to all others. It is a strong metaphor for the event of the kingdom of God at work in the ministry of Jesus.

With respect to the actions of the sower who went forth to sow, the parable follows and focuses on what happens to the seed according to the soil that receives it. Three soils are unsuitable: the paths in which the seed is destroyed, the stony ground in which the bud dries up, and the thorns in which the growing plant is stifled. In these unsuccessful soils comes the contrasting extraordinary fertility of the soil good. Despite the risk of failure or of lack of success, it is guaranteed a good outcome.

After exploring the parable and before offering an explanation, a conversation is reported between Jesus and the disciples on the relationship between the announcement of God's plan and parables. The proclamation of the kingdom of God in parables intends to subvert any false understanding, misunderstanding or human refusal. According to the words of Jesus, God communicates to his disciples the mystery of the kingdom, that is, the divine plan of salvation, which is what Jesus himself says and does. The divine gift, however, demands and requires a decision and the voluntary human acceptance to recognize in Jesus the active presence of the kingdom of God. Parables are models of the word and teaching of Jesus openly and directly to each one who listens, but at the same time, require an explanation. Indeed, given the radical newness of the message that he communicates, and which is identified with the reality and the person who sends it, only those who really are in tune with Jesus can understand the meaning of the parable and his words.

At this point of the argument, according to the custom of the prophetic circles and teaching of the masters of Judaism, Jesus reserves for his disciples an explanation and application of the parable of the sower. In explaining that the seed is the word of God, the good news of the Gospel, the three main impediments to receive it are: a) distraction (the word does not have time to touch the heart because it is immediately distracted, cf. Mk 4,15, Mt 13:19, Lk 8:12); b) the inconstancy (this is perhaps a welcome enthusiastic, but rootless and unable to overcome inevitable difficulties, cf. Mk 4.16-17, Mt 13.20-21, Lk 8:13); c) the preoccupied (the fact that the word has no place to settle down, while other passions and interests, such as the desire to get rich, end up suffocating it, cf. Mk 4,18-19, Mt 13:22, Lk 8:14) . The positive situation is represented by a fourth group of people:

Still others are the ones sown on good soil: they are those who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit: some thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. (Mk 4:20)

The seed sown on good ground is the one who hears the word and understands it; these bears fruit and yield a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Mt 13:23)

The one on the good soil are those who, after having heard the word with a perfect and good heart, yield fruit with perseverance. (Luke 8:15)

The variations between the different versions of the Synoptics emphasize that listening to the word is accompanied by an interior acceptance, through an understanding as the complete acceptance of life, especially its practical implementation, faithfully guarding the word so that it can penetrate into the depths, and forming a new center in the life of the human person. Then finally it can bear fruit in abundance.

The kingdom of God was inaugurated in history and is operationally present in the words and deeds of Jesus who has all the potential of life and salvation, and its saving power is unstoppable despite the current obstacles and refusal it meets. The parable contains a pressing invitation to live consciously and firmly the experience of faith, which starts by listening to the word of God and which calls for a faithful commitment in responding responsibly by the listener. In fact, next to the action of the Lord, who gives his word and knowledge, it emphasizes the need for human action. Everything hinges on the relationship between the person and the word of the kingdom. The effectiveness of the word appears to be conditioned by the kind of reception with which listeners receive it. Through the situations of the seed, as described in the parable, one re-reads the four situations within the community of believers, which recur in every generation. The intent is an exhortation to believers who hear the word of God, to not accept false guarantees or initial enthusiasm or belonging to the community only formally, but bravely face the difficulties and risks that the Christian experiences. For every believer it is essential to translate into a practical and operational dimension the reception of the kingdom, through a constant and firm commitment to responsibly collaborate in spreading the current manifestation of salvation and liberation in the events of human history.

This explanation of the parable, which insists on welcoming perseveringly and collaboratively the human operation in salvation is expanded in the two versions of Mark and Luke (Mk 4.21-25, Lk 8.16-18). The first is the lamp which by its nature has to be placed on the lampstand, so is the

teaching of God's kingdom that exists to be expressed, to come forth and to spread. The other comparison is made by the image of the measure by which the listener understands, increases one's judgment, the extent that one opens up and is willing to accept it, like the wise, in the sapiential tradition, who increase in knowledge as one remains determined to learn (cf. Pr 9.9). So it is crucial that the attitude of listening in the text is accentuated with the strong appeal:

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear! [..]

Pay attention to what you hear (Mk 4,23.24)

Pay attention to how you listen (Luke 8:18)

In fact, the quality and extent of one's attention and commitment, decides the salvific efficacy of the word that announces the kingdom. The two images reaffirm the essential active involvement of the listener, so that the potential life of the teaching of the Messiah can become manifest. There is a direct responsibility of believers to make manifest the coming of the kingdom of God, in making effective the experience of salvation that liberates the daily events of human history.

IV. Faith comes from ecclesial listening

A great awareness which characterizes a typical Christian community is represented by the New Testament faith in the Messiah which comes by hearing the word of the Gospel.

In particular, the assertion of Paul, that faith comes from hearing and hearing comes through the word of Christ (Rom 10:17) is located within the discussion of the apostle on the rejection of a large part of Israel to recognize Jesus as Lord, having had the benefit of listening to the prophets and the proclamation of the Gospel (cf. Rom 9.30-10.21).

In the Acts of the Apostles Peter, in the assembly of Jerusalem, opened his speech by saying:

Brethren, you know that long ago, God who has been among you, chose that the nations hear the word of the Gospel and come to the faith through my mouth (Acts 15.7). Peter recalls his mission to the Gentiles with reference to the encounter with the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10), where he learned that God does not discriminate against people but accepts anyone who fears him and acts uprightly.

Again, in his letter to the Colossians, the author exhorts the community of believers, having shared in the redemption through forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God through the work of the Messiah, to remain firmly rooted in the faith and hope of the Gospel which they have heard (Col 1:23).

These examples illustrate a practice that developed inside the apostolic community in the transmission of messianic salvation through the testimony and preaching of the gospel. Catechesis, liturgy and missionary activity, which express this transmission, and we could add here the same "school of the Lord's service" and *lectio divina*, consist in tireless and creative proclamation of the word of the gospel, through listening on and being nourished by continual faith in the Messiah, as was for the first disciples. In fact, the witnesses and the generations of witnesses do nothing but immerse themselves in faith and engage others to accept it as well, first through listening to the wonderful events present in the Messiah, to make room through their choices and actions for the blessings of His coming into human history.

V. Concluding Remarks

Let everyone be quick to listen and slow to speak. So exhorts the Letter of James (1:19) and promises to those who fix their gaze on God's word, the word that has been *planted in you and can bring you to salvation*, [...] *the law of freedom*, the word of revelation, and the faithful as a listener who puts it into practice, will be blessed through their actions, will be blessed in their doing (1.21-25).

Listening is as important as speaking, listening is important before one is able to speak. All learning comes from listening.

In the context of the coming of the Messiah, to listen is to respond. It is the human act of appropriation of revelation and messianic redemption. Listening to the word of God and the Messiah allows one to understand the unfolding of God's plan, to recognize the features of the present salvation of the Messiah, to discern the meanings of the eruption of the kingdom of God in the course of human history. Listening to the word challenges and involves every person and the community of believers to be in communion, as revealed between the Father and the Son, and by the concrete realization of the kingdom of God. Hearing the word gives depth and sharpness to see their own existence and human life before God.

From what has been done so far on listening to God in the Old and New Testaments, which can be seen as one book after another, from one stage to another in the history of revelation, the exhortation to listen resounds everywhere. And by applying the question of this theme, you may ask what is found in the last chapter of the Rule of Benedict: "What page or what word of the Old or New Testament [...] is not the truest guide for human life?"(RB 73.3) Each page, especially those focused on this subject, offers a glimpse into how to learn from and to listen to God.

Listening emerges as a complex space for communication through words and silence, application and reflection, processing and interpretation, learning and knowledge, acceptance and commitment, discernment and dedication, interiority and action, seeking and waiting, and much more.

Listening is a dynamic process that involves change and transformation, in which the hearer of the word is open to the presence of God, the Lord, in a lively and personal dialogue. It is emblematic in this sense what is happening to Mary Magdalene in the garden, before the empty tomb, while crying about the absence of Jesus (Jn 20.11-18). Jesus appeared to her but she is unable to recognize him, and thinks that he is the guardian of the garden. Only when she hears him call her by name *Mary*, does she recognize, in the voice that she hears, the voice of Jesus, finally saying, *my Teacher!* Listening to this voice, she recognizes the living Jesus, she sees Jesus the Risen One. So she is no longer facing the grave and the past, but is now in the direction of life, and also learns a whole new dimension in her relationship with and in the presence of the Teacher, the Lord.

Listening to and staying in the word of the Gospel, each one of us, again, can hear him pronounce our name, and turning in the direction of that voice, we can "see" the Lord, the Living One, who every time, he leaves us (cf. Jn 10.3) also leads us to life.