



A family of saints to help us grow in Eucharistic love

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The siblings Martha, Mary, and Lazarus had a special friendship with Jesus. This holy trio can help us grow in love for Jesus in the Eucharist.

July is the month that the Catholic Church devotes to the Precious Blood of Jesus. It a good time to seek the intercession of a family of saints who knew Jesus personally, a family that has much to teach us about how to honor His Precious Blood through love of the Eucharist.

Sisters Martha and Mary, along with their brother, Lazarus, dwelled in a house in Bethany. They were dear to Jesus as they frequently opened their home to Him, as the Gospels describe. Jesus lovingly weeps with Martha and Mary at the tomb of Lazarus. The feast of Sts. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus is July 29. Let these July saints help you grow in love for the Eucharistic Lord and therefore His Precious Blood through the witnesses of their lives, the words they spoke; and the words addressed to them directly by Christ.

The story of three saints

Sts. Martha and Mary are famous chiefly for the story in Luke's Gospel in which Martha welcomes Jesus into her home but then grows anxious about serving, while Mary sits at Christ's feet and listens to Him. Lazarus is famous for being raised from the tomb by Jesus, four days after his death. According to ancient tradition, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus later left Judea and settled in Provence, France, preaching the Gospel. Some accounts say they were dispatched from Jerusalem by their enemies by being placed into a boat without a sail, rudder or oars, and abandoned in the open sea in the midst of a storm.

Art history reflects the ancient traditions. There's a 17th-century tapestry in Conques, France named The Arrival of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus at Saintes-Marie-de-la-Mer. Multiple churches in France, complete with holy relics, affirm that this was the final earthly home of the three siblings from Bethany.

St. Lazarus

St. Lazarus was the first Bishop of Marseilles, and serving in that position he converted many people to the faith. His skull is a relic at the Cathedral of Saint Mary Major in Marseilles.

St. Martha

St. Martha is the patron saint of the town of Tarascon, France. She is said to have conquered a dragon there, the "Tarasque." It was likely a vicious wild creature or a demon; in either case it was St. Martha who subdued it! A crypt in the church of St. Martha in Tarascon was built on the location of Martha's house there.

St. Mary

St. Mary of Bethany preached for a time and helped convert many in Provence. She is then said to have entered a hermitage in a cave within the mountains, living the last years of her life deep in contemplation, prayer and penance. A chapel was built over this cave. When her tomb was first exhumed, a beautiful scent of perfume wafted forth, as fragrant as the perfumed oil with which she had anointed Christ (Jn 12:1-8).

Here are three quotes from Scripture inspired by the Bethany family that will lead us to greater love of the Precious Blood, through devotion to the Eucharist.

"The teacher is here, and He is calling for you." (Jn 11:28)

Martha sent this message to her sister while Mary was at home mourning and Martha was at Lazarus's tomb. When she received this message, Mary rose quickly to go to Jesus. But did you also know that this verse of Scripture is sometimes inscribed on or near tabernacles? It is a reminder that we should hurry to Jesus, too, who is "calling" for us, in the Eucharist. Daily Mass, Adoration, a quiet visit to the church to pray before the tabernacle... such moments put us in the Real Presence of the Teacher of all teachers. We can bring Him our problems, our heavy hearts. Under the gentle instruction of His Presence, Our Eucharistic Lord will teach our souls.

"Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" (Jn 11:40)

These words were spoken by Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus. It was just after Jesus had said, "Take away the stone," (Jn 11:39) and Martha observed there would be a stench since Lazarus had been dead four days. Jesus responds, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" Eucharistic Adoration is an act of faith, hope and love. We must be reminded Jesus' words, realizing that our belief in the Eucharist allows us to gaze upon, though veiled, the glory of God. And some day, God willing, thanks to our love of

Our Eucharistic Lord and the graces we have received from Him, we shall see His Holy Face in all His unveiled glory.

“She has done a beautiful thing for me” (MT 26:10)

A dinner was given for Jesus after the raising of Lazarus. (John 12: 1-7)

“They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair; the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.” Judas angrily objects, saying that the oil could have been sold to feed the poor. “He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions” (Jn 12:6). The episode is also mentioned in Matthew 26:6-13.

How can we follow Mary’s example and do a beautiful thing for Jesus? How can you receive Him with more love? How do we prepare our souls before receiving; do we make frequent use of the Sacrament of Confession that the Lord may enter a clean heart when we receive Him? Do we dress for church with modesty, neatness, cleanliness and the dignity befitting a child of God? Do we receive Him in a way that is filled with maximum gratitude, humility and love? Do we pause long enough in prayer after we receive Him to truly lavish Him with love? These questions are worth asking throughout our lives.