I remember a few years back when I first entered the seminary to begin my studies. I was filled with excitement. I couldn't wait to experience what it would be like to study and become a priest, like the missionaries who came to my village from overseas. They were kind, inspiring, and strong leaders. I admired them deeply, and I wanted to be like them.

But three years into my formation, something happened that I never expected. I was asked to leave.

In that moment, everything collapsed. The dream I held onto for so long suddenly disappeared. I felt lost. I drifted for a long time. It was one of the hardest periods of my life, especially because both of my parents had already passed away. I felt alone. And deep in my heart, I began to wonder: *Where is God in all of this? Has He abandoned me?*

That question—*Where is God when we are hurting?*—is not just my question. It is a question that many people carry in their hearts.

Look at our world today. Since the beginning of the year, we have seen so much suffering—war in the Middle East, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, natural disasters, and unrest in many parts of the world. Closer to home, many of us have experienced loss, sickness, emotional burdens, and struggles that weigh heavily on our hearts.

And in those moments, when we most need to feel God's presence, He can seem distant. Silent. Absent.

Why?

That is the same question Martha and Mary ask in today's Gospel.

They loved Jesus. They believed in Him. They knew He had the power to heal. When Lazarus became sick, they sent word to Jesus, trusting that He would come immediately.

But He didn't.

Jesus intentionally delayed. He waited. By the time He arrived, Lazarus had already been dead for four days.

From a human perspective, this makes no sense. Why would Jesus, who loved them, choose not to come? Why would He allow His closest friends to suffer like that?

Because Jesus had something greater in mind.

He could have healed Lazarus before he died. That would have been powerful—but it would have been just another healing among many.

Instead, Jesus chose to reveal something far greater: His power over death itself. He didn't just come to heal Lazarus. He came to raise him.

And this reveals something important about God.
We often want God to fix things quickly. We want Him to remove suffering immediately. We want Him to act according to our timeline. But God sees beyond what we see. He is not only concerned with temporary relief—He is working toward something eternal.
Yes, God could have prevented wars. He could have stopped natural disasters. He could remove every pain we experience. But when He allows suffering, it is never meaningless. He is always working to bring something greater out of it—even if we cannot see it yet.
That is difficult for us to accept. From our perspective, suffering feels senseless. We struggle to understand how any good could come from it. But God sees the full picture. He sees what we cannot.
Some things, with time, we begin to understand. We look back and realize that even painful moments shaped us, strengthened us, or led us somewhere we never expected. But other things—we may only understand when we stand before Him in Heaven.
So what are we called to do in the meantime?
We are called to trust.
And this leads us to another reason why God sometimes seems silent—because He is strengthening our faith.
Think about how parents raise their children. When children are small, parents rush to help them at every moment. But as they grow older, parents begin to step back. Not because they don't care—but because they *do* care. They want their children to grow, to become strong, to learn how to face life.
God does the same with us.
As we grow in faith, He allows us to face challenges—not to abandon us, but to strengthen us. He asks us: *Can you trust Me even when you don't understand? Can you believe in Me even when I seem silent?*
Martha gives us the answer. Even in her grief, even in her confusion, she says to Jesus:
"Even now, I believe that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."
That is faith.
Not faith when everything is going well. But faith in the darkness. Faith when God seems silent.
And we must never forget—Jesus Himself experienced that silence.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed in agony. He begged the Father to take away the suffering. But the Father was silent.
On the cross, Jesus cried out:
“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”
No one has ever felt the weight of abandonment like Jesus did in that moment. And yet, He remained faithful. He trusted the Father completely.
And because of that, the story did not end in death. It ended in resurrection.
That is the promise given to us.
Jesus says to Martha:
“If you believe, you will see the glory of God.”
God may seem distant at times. He may seem silent. But He is never absent. He is always working—often in ways we cannot yet understand—to strengthen us, to deepen our faith, and to lead us toward something greater.
And here’s the beautiful part.
After we pass through our own darkness, we become a light for others. We are able to walk with those who suffer. We are able to say, not just with words but with our lives: *God is still here. He has not abandoned you.*
Because every suffering we endure is, in some way, a form of death. But in Christ, even death is not the end. It becomes the beginning of something new.
And I see that in my own life.
Looking back now, I realize that the moment I thought God had abandoned me—when I was asked to leave the seminary—was not the end of my story. It was part of God’s plan. A plan I could not see at the time.
Because today, I stand before you as a priest.
Something I never imagined during that dark period of my life.
God came through.
And He always will.
So whatever you are going through right now—whatever burden you carry, whatever silence you are experiencing—hold on to this truth:
God has not left you.
He is working.
He is preparing something greater.
Trust Him.
Because if you believe… you will see the glory of God.