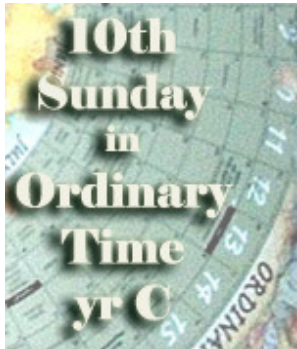


Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)



Luke 7:11-17

11 Jesus went to a town called Nain, accompanied by his disciples and a great number of people. 12 When he was near the gate of the town it happened that a dead man was being carried out for burial, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable number of the townspeople were with her. 13 When the Lord saw her he felt sorry for her. 'Do not cry,' he said. 14 Then he went up and put his hand on the bier and the bearers stood still, and he said, 'Young man, I tell you to get up.' 15 And the dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16 Everyone was filled with awe and praised God saying, 'A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people.' 17 And this opinion of him spread throughout Judaea and all over the country side.

Other readings: 1 Kings 17:17-24 Psalm 29 (30) Galatians 1:11-19

There are only a few accounts of the raising of the dead in the four gospels. Matthew, Mark and Luke record the raising of the little daughter of the synagogue official, Jairus. In John chapter 11 the raising of Lazarus from the dead provokes growing antagonism to Jesus as his death draws near. The raising of the son of the widow of Nain in Luke's gospel has particular features. The evangelist stresses the large number of people who witness this mighty deed and he emphasises the compassion of Jesus. This woman is already a widow, and now she has lost her only son, who presumably would have been her only support.

The first words of Jesus are to the woman herself. He addresses her with the simple command 'Do not cry.' In John chapter 20 the risen Jesus says to Mary Magdalene 'Why are you weeping?' Tears shed at the loss of the beloved are wiped away by the joy of the resurrection. Jesus' words to the young man are brief and straightforward: 'Young man, I tell you to get up.' Literally, 'Young man, I tell you, be raised up.' When he raises the dead, Jesus points towards the resurrection.

Jesus' first concern continues to be for the mother: 'Jesus gave him to his mother.' He comes to confront sin and death, but also to heal the broken-hearted.

The reaction of the crowd is to proclaim Jesus a prophet. The raising of the young man by the prophet Elijah in the first Book of Kings is our first reading. In the verses following our gospel reading Luke records the question of the messengers sent by John the Baptist: 'Are you the one who is to come?' (7:20) Jesus replies: 'Go back and tell John what you have seen.....the dead are raised and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor.' (7:22)

Do I realise that the gospel is a message of life for all?

How might I reflect the compassion of Jesus in my life?

Pray for the bereaved, especially those who are without the support of family and friends.

Pray for those who care for the dying that they may do so with sensitivity and compassion.