

Homily For Tuesday of the 24th Week of Ordinary Time- Year II

St Peter's 8:30am Mass- Sept. 18, 2018

1 Cor 12:12-14,27-31 "In the one Spirit, we were all baptized into the same body."

Psalm 145:8-14 "We are his people, the sheep of his flock."

Luke 4:38-44 "The dead man .. began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother."

Intro

Part of the Good News is that Nain is a village very close to Nazareth. This is a real event very close to Jesus' childhood home. As always with the Good News of Jesus Christ, we are reminded that these events are historical fact. They did take place.

Main Points

Jesus comes upon a funeral procession. A young man is dead. His widowed mother has lost her only son, whom she loves.

Touching the pallet is a shocking gesture- it would make Jesus ritually unclean for a week. This impurity (which symbolizes sin) is overturned dramatically with the word 'arise'. "By bringing the dead to life again, he eliminates the very cause of legal defilement and therefore its undesired effects."

It says that Jesus gave the man to his mother, a phrase taken verbatim from Elijah's healing of the son of the widow at Zarephath. Jesus gives the son back to his mother, restoring that relationship, of course.

But Jesus also restores the mother to her place in the community. She would have been supported. It is not as if she was a second class citizen after that. It just means that she would have to be more dependent on her friends, family and neighbours. So Jesus restores her to her former relationship with the community. This community prefigures the one Paul talks about, where there is one body in Christ, which has many members through Baptism and faith in Christ.

Conclusion

We need to remind ourselves to take great courage in the facts of the Good News. And, we need to tell the world that the events of the Gospels are historical. On Sundays, we have Mark telling us that Jesus did this, and then he went there and did that, one after another in succession. These weekdays, we have Luke

continuing to roll out for Theophilus, and for us, his "orderly account", from eyewitnesses, "so that (we) may know the truth of what happened concerning Jesus."

And the story of this son returned to life and to his mother, and this mother returned to her community, does not just tell us Jesus' power over death, as important as that is. It means much more for us. It foreshadows THE great events of salvation history.

For, who else do we know who had a son, a gift from God, whom she loved, but then she became a widow and, later, had to watch her son suffer and die.

Who else do we know who was given into the care of a very close personal friend of the son's and so was to live in that dependency, into the care of the disciple whom Christ loved, which is really all of us.

And who else do we know who was restored to her relationship with her son because he was raised to life after dying.

Yes, the unnamed widow and the unnamed son foreshadow for us a mother and a son whose relationship took on much more in salvation history.

Commentators often cite St. Augustine: "The widowed mother rejoiced at the raising of that young man. Our Mother the Church rejoices every day when people are raised again in spirit. Jesus seeks us out who knows us to be dead spiritually; only he can bring us back to life."

Let us conclude by looking prayerfully at key words in the last part of the story.

Fear seized them at what they saw. Because of this, they glorified God, saying "A great prophet has arisen among us, and "God has looked favourable on his people." Mary herself declares:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord. And my spirit has rejoices in God my saviour. For he has looked favourably on his lowly servant. From this day all generations shall call me blessed. The almighty has done great things for me and holy is his name. He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation ... He has come to the help of his servant, Israel, for he has remembered his promise of mercy ..."