

Trinity XVI 2021

“Young man, I say unto thee arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak.”

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

During my retreat last week, the retreat master spoke at great length on the matter of anger and sorrow, that is, just how powerful these emotions can be and how easily they are brought on. As priests, we address these pretty much on a daily basis with those to whom we minister.

Anger is an emotion that all of us have experienced. It is a danger to our physical and spiritual well-being. But it can also be contagious. One person's outrage can easily affect an otherwise calm group with often disastrous results.

Sorrow is another emotion that all of us have experienced but there's definitely a difference. Whereas anger is directed outwardly and usually strikes at others, sorrow is directed inwardly with the person experiencing the sorrow striking out at themselves.

In today's Gospel, we see an encounter between Jesus and a woman filled with sorrow. A widow already, death has now taken her only son.

There's nothing, that is no storyline leading up to the encounter between the widow and our Lord. In most Gospel accounts there is some interaction, but not this time. Jesus says only two words to her, "Weep not."

Interesting. Jesus approaches her. As we know, it's usually the other way around. We don't know how long it had been since her husband's death or how he died. Since Jewish tradition was to bury on the same day as death, the son presumably would have died earlier in the day. And now this large crowd, this "much" people, is accompanying her to the place of burial.

Try to imagine the scene: The widow and her crowd, meeting Jesus who is also traveling with his crowd enroute from Capernaum to Nain. Unlike other miracles, there will be nothing subtle or secretive about this miracle. It will be well-witnessed and attested to.

I'm sure it would have been easy for Our Lord just to keep going. Very common at the time, Jesus would likely have seen hundreds of such processions. But this time he chooses to stop; to intervene. Perhaps this reminded him of his own impending death and the sorrows his blessed mother, also a widow, would endure.

Whatever Our Lord is thinking, he stops the procession. To those witnessing this encounter, “Weep not” would have been strange, if not insulting words. After all, weeping was expected and precisely why professional mourners were often employed. But then it happened. Something no one would ever have expected. Jesus raises this man from the dead and gives him back to his mother, to the amazement and wonder of all those present, Life conquered death. What I always find striking and certainly gives me hope, is the compassion of Jesus. Just as he had compassion on this mother and in all of the miracles he performs, he shows us that same compassion.

We know well the words of St. John’s Gospel: “For God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

You see, he saw our need in sin and healed us, raising us from the dead, so to speak, since we would have died eternally without him. Through His word he has called us to eternal life and made us heirs of glory with him.

This Gospel give us the hope of a like resurrection experienced by this young man. At some point, at the time of God’s choosing, this

same young man would again die a physical death. But he would again be raised to glory just as you and I will be some day.

This passage speaks to each of us during times of pain and sorrow saying, “weep not.”

It teaches about just how much Our Lord cares for us, something we often forget about because of life’s rough edges; because of the pain, and tragedies, and sickness, and violence, and war. To be sure, God’s compassion is something to embrace in those darkest hours. The Greek for “Compassion” means literally “moved in his guts”. This was not some abstract, academic notion, but in fact the same compassion you feel during any tragic event.

Always remember this: Jesus knows how you feel. Better yet, he knows how you should feel. He understands loss, grief, and sorrow. After all, he’s been there.

BUT, he doesn’t fear the way we do. He never did because he was never without hope. Still, he understands. He has compassion.

He was certainly under no obligation to stop and care for the pains of this widow. Surely there were countless opportunities to do the same for others, where he did not. But he did for this one. He showed his

compassion for her and sent a message to all who witnessed the miracle.

During our darkest hours, Jesus is always there. In his Word, in the Saints that have gone before us, and with His True and full Presence in the Holy Eucharist. Each time we receive Our Lord's Body and Blood, we receive Sacramental Grace that enables us to endure our most difficult trials. This does not mean that we will necessarily be spared from pain or that our faith will not be genuinely challenged. But in all of these he says, "weep not".

In every trial we may trust that God knows our needs and responds. It may not be in a way we expect. Crosses are not meant to be light. But God causes all things to work together for the good according to His will and purpose and is always by our side.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.**