



CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation

June 9, 2013

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Gospel reading Luke 7:11-17 *[To be read aloud]*

Jesus journeyed to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, "Do not weep." He stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this the bearers halted, and he said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!" The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming, "A great prophet has arisen in our midst," and "God has visited his people." This report about him spread through the whole of Judea and in all the surrounding region.

Brief commentary:

Ordinary Time is a time dedicated to the proclamation of Jesus Christ and of his Gospel about the reign of God. It is a time devoted to the meaning and implications of following Jesus Christ; the significance of Christian discipleship. Moreover, following the Ascension of the Lord and the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost, it is the time of witness and mission for the Church as a whole and for each of her members. In today's gospel we find Jesus as we often do, on a 'journey with his disciples and a large crowd accompanying him'. He is a "great prophet" on a mission, the apostle of the Father, the physician who heals, and 'God who has visited his people'. At the gate of Nain two realities meet. One is the reality of loss and grief. A widow mourns the death of her son. She has lost those closest to her. She is joined in her mourning by friends, neighbors, and relatives. But this is no ordinary day at Nain; for, in contrast to this sad scene, Jesus of Nazareth draws near, and thus new possibilities emerge where all options and solutions were exhausted. He is a commanding presence with authority that inspires hope, and even the power to raise the dead. Yet his humanity is also best expressed in moments like these when "he is moved with pity for her." In this gospel we have something characteristic of the mystery of Jesus' humanity and divinity. The story of raising of Lazarus in John's gospel is a very similar account: Jesus arrives at Bethany, encounters mourners, feels compassion and weeps, but moments later calls the family to have faith and then raises the dead man. We meet a daring man in today's gospel who, contrary to the purity laws that considered the visiting of cemeteries, touching of the dead or coffins as an impurity, "stepped forward and touched the coffin." Here we meet a Jesus who "steps forward" and is not hindered by social or even religious laws. Instead, he comes with great love and compassion to encounter us in our sorrows, mourns with us, touches our sufferings, and raises us from the dead at the touch of his compassionate hand and at command of his mighty word. Jesus is the bearer of the good news, yet, he himself *is* the good news: "God has visited his people," and because of this nothing will ever be the same, not in Nain and not in our lives. Today Jesus comes to our gates, our towns, to our parishes, to our communities and families. He comes with mercy to meet us in our struggles and to powerfully raise us up that we may accomplish the great works of God in the world.

Today's reading offers significant messages:

- As we resume Ordinary Time, a time of witness and mission, we encounter Jesus on his mission to the people, proclaiming the kingdom of God and healing. As his disciples we too journey with him as he continues his mission in the world in and through the Church.
- The raising of the widow's son is an act of Jesus' compassion. His humanity and divinity reveal the life-giving power of merciful love.
- God has visited us in the humanity of Jesus. He has come to encounter us in our sufferings and to raise us up by the power of his love.

For our shared or personal reflection:

After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.

- What Nain's do I visit, and who are the suffering ones I encounter with compassion?
- What barriers do I break in order to be a witness and instrument of God's love?
- How can I be a sign of hope in sorrowful or desperate situations?

Suggested readings: Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 1716-29