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SERMON – SAINT JOSEPH PARISH
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“I am the Resurrection and the Life”, Jesus tells us...“Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live”...the comforting opening words of hope we hear at the beginning of the Requiem Mass. “We are called to BELIEVE...so we might LIVE!

Jesus performed many healing miracles during his time on Earth...especially gripping are those involving children. There are also accounts in Holy Scripture of others raising people from the dead.

In the First Book of Kings we read the story of Elijah raising a widow’s young son who got sick and died. In the Second Book of Kings we read the story of a young boy who was working on the family farm with his father and suddenly dies. Elijah’s successor, Elisha, brought the boy back to life.

Acts of the Apostles tells the story of a young girl whose Aramaic name was *Tabitha*...in Greek...*Dorcas*...meaning *gazelle*. One day she got sick and died. Peter was nearby and Tabitha’s family asked him to come...when he saw Tabitha lying dead on her bed...he told her to get up...and she did. Today in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula there is a subspecies of gazelle called the Dorcas Gazelle.

Also in Acts...Paul was preaching the Good News to a crowd...a young boy sitting in a window fell asleep and fell three stories to the ground. Paul embraces the boy’s body and restores him to life...and gives him back to his family.

Saint John records Jesus being moved to tears when he learns of the death of Lazarus in Bethany. He said to Lazarus’ sister Martha, “I am the Resurrection and the Life...those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.” He asked Martha if she believed what he said was true...she said yes she did...he told Lazarus to come out of his grave.

The children and young adults in these stories who met sudden and unexpected death were restored to mortal life...but they were not resurrected from death to eternal life. We can assume they lived the rest of their lives to the fullest extent God intended before

experiencing physical death again. Resurrection to eternal life comes later.

We should not conclude these events are any less miraculous than the many real-life events we see on TV or the Internet. We hear today about heroic efforts made by trained professionals who successfully perform CPR on someone whose vital signs have ceased...restarting their hearts...restoring their lives...giving them back to their families.

Today’s Gospel tugs at our hearts...the story of a widow taking her only son who has died to his grave. Parents aren’t supposed to bury their children. They are supposed to outlive us. Without her son to support her...or a sympathetic friend to take her in...she faced a bleak future. Jesus is about to change things...for the better...and in a way she and the others in this funeral procession couldn’t have imagined.

God does not like to see his people suffer. He wants our lives to be whole and complete. When Jesus sees the funeral procession for the young man...his heart was filled with pity. He didn’t wait to be asked to help...he took the initiative. He tells the mother to stop crying...and he tells the young man to get up from his casket. When the boy begins to speak...Jesus gives him back to his mother. Her despair and sorrow have been transformed into joy.

Jesus demonstrates repeatedly he has ultimate power over sin and death and power to restore people’s lives and make them whole again. He didn’t leave the widowed mother from Nain without hope and he doesn’t leave us without hope either...hope for a better life now...and hope for everlasting life in heaven. Jesus offers us life...not death!

While God is the source of all healing...Jesus tells us in John’s Gospel...those who believe in him will not only do the acts he does...they will do even greater things...like the healing miracles of Peter and Paul...like the healing miracles of medical professionals today. God can and does work miracles through people.

“I am the Resurrection and the Life,” Jesus tells us...“Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.” “Today...we are called to BELIEVE...so we might LIVE!

