

XVI Trinity 2022
Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish
Father Craig Looney
St. Luke 7.11-17



Our friends Saint Luke and Saint John record the eyewitness accounts of three people Jesus raised from the dead during his earthly ministry. He performed these miracles before his own Passion, Death and Resurrection.

This morning's Gospel from Luke records the first resurrection Jesus performed. He has just healed a Roman officer's sick servant in Capernaum. He and his disciples and a large crowd following him are now heading south toward Jerusalem.

Along the way they pass through the small village of Nain. Nain still exists today. It is located in the Jezreel Valley, also called the Plain of Megiddo, about 50 miles north of Jerusalem. It is a fertile area where many kinds of crops are grown and sheep and cattle are raised.

As they enter the village, Jesus, his disciples and the large crowd encounter a funeral procession for the only son of a widowed mother. The Gospel doesn't give us any details about the mother...not even a name.

We also don't know anything about the dead man. He was probably young and his death was unexpected. We can only imagine what the dead man's mother was thinking. Her entire world had just come crashing down around her. Parents aren't supposed to bury their children. Who would take care of her now?

When Jesus saw her, his heart was "filled with pity". Jesus, in all his humanity, was grieving along with the dead boy's mother. He was going to do something...it was time to take action.

Jesus says comforting words to the grieving mother, "Don't cry". He then touches the boy's casket and says, "Young man! Get up, I tell you!". Jesus, confronted with the boy's death, commands him to get up. The boy sat up and began to talk. Wouldn't it be wonderful to know what he said?

Luke also records the second time Jesus raised a person from the dead. A man named Jairus, an important leader at the Synagogue

in Capernaum, came to Jesus and begged him to come and heal his 12-year old daughter who was dying. When they arrived the house, they were told the little girl was dead. Jesus took her hand and told her to get up! He gave her back to her father and told him to get her something to eat.

The third person Jesus raised from death was his friend Lazarus, Martha's brother, who lived in Bethany. The town is located on the Mount of Olives about 2 miles from Jerusalem. When Jesus arrived at Martha's house, he told her he is the resurrection and the life...those who believe in him...even though they die will live. These are the same words of hope we hear at the beginning of the Burial Office. Jesus wept real tears when he was shown Lazarus' grave. God cries when he sees death. Jesus commanded Lazarus to come out of his grave and gave him back to his sister.

The Gospel accounts of Jesus raising three people from the dead have temporary happy endings. The three people went on to live their lives but they did experience death again. They have yet to experience what the writer of Hebrews tells us we all hope for but have not yet seen...resurrection into eternal life and glory...the same resurrection into eternal life and glory Jesus experienced.

Jesus, God's Son, doesn't like to see people suffer. When he saw the grieving mother about to bury her only son...he experienced all of the emotions we experience when a friend or relative dies. He cried for the mother. He cries with us.

Funerals are by their very nature sad events. But they are not without hope. We believe, like Martha believed, Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He took the overwhelming grief of a widowed mother and transformed it into overwhelming joy. He does the same for us.

The crowd who witnessed Jesus raise the young man from death said a great prophet was among them. We know the truth...it is Jesus, God's Son, who came among us, to bring us life now and forever in heaven.

That's a message we can't keep to ourselves.

