

Trinity XVI

September 15, 2024

Ephesians 3: 13-21 & Luke 7: 11-17

We serve a God who always shows us how different he is from other gods. Our God doesn't only demand from us praise and worship. He is also aware of our needs and life's struggles. God knows the pain and sadness we go through, the challenges that we face, and our inability to overcome them. He knows it all!

An example of this reality is given to us in today's gospel. The story happened in a tiny town called Nain. Two processions met at the gate of this town. On one hand, Jesus and His disciples were approaching the town gate, followed by a large, excited crowd. These people followed Jesus because they saw some of the miracles he did earlier. But as they approached the town, they met another procession. A large crowd with a dead body of a young man. We are told that his mother was a widow, and the relatives and friends came to mourn with her.

There are two points to make about this story. The first thing to note is the great compassion that Jesus shows by this and other miracles. Jesus does not need to show by miracles that he is the Messiah and the Son of God (though they do have this effect as well for those who have faith). He performs miracles because he feels sorry for people. The three occasions recorded in the Gospels when Jesus raises someone from the dead certainly show this. Jesus raises the young man at Nain from the dead because of his pity for the widow. He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead because he had compassion for her parents. He raised Lazarus from the dead because he was a very dear friend, and because he felt compassion for his two sisters, Martha, and Mary.

The other point I would like to make is that Jesus had compassion for the widow, not for the boy. Our salvation is not just for us only, but also for the sake of those around us.

You see, this event of Nain is recorded in the Bible for a reason. To tell us that the gifts that we have received from God are to be used for the sake of those around us.

God uses the church to reach out to the world. The church is the visible sign of the presence of God in the world.

What is it that we learn from this story today?

The first lesson that we learn is that our God is compassionate, meaning he is not happy when we suffer. He suffers with us (com-passion). He might not solve your problems the way you want him to do them; he might not put an end to your trials and tribulations of the moment; you might even feel or think that he is absent; but he is right there on your side. Remember what David said in Psalm 124, "If the Lord had not been on our side...the enemies would have swallowed us

alive.” (Ps 124: 2-3) So, when you too are going through your things, remember that the Lord is on your side.

The other lesson that we learn from this story is that we are not alone. God not only stands beside us, but he also “leads us the green pasture, beside quiet waters, and he refreshes our souls” (Psalm 23: 2-3) And that green pasture is the community, the family, the Church that we are part of. My friends, here at St Alban’s, you are surrounded by your brothers and sisters who love you, who care about you, people who will be there for you in your challenging times and will be your support system with their presence and prayers.

Listen, God is not so busy or concerned about the group, or the church that he will forget about you as an individual. Our God stands with our Church St Alban’s. He also stands with you as an individual.

You may be going through a challenging time right now, Jesus is telling you today, “Weep not.”

Let me assure you, the Lord is there to wipe those tears from your eyes. God has brought you to a family, his people, whose duty to you is to provide support. My friend, you have the presence of God, and you have the support of your spiritual family. That’s all you need.

Remember what the Lord said to his disciples, “I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Mathew 28: 20)

May the Lord help everyone of us on his journey!

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we don’t know what will come our way today, tomorrow, or the rest of our life. However, we commit it all to you. Please give us strength and courage to get through the joys, the happiness, and the challenges of our days. Through Christ our Lord. Amen!