

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

Luke 7:11-16

And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited His people. (KJV)

Crosses are a part of life. The widow of Nain experienced her cross with the death of her only son. She was already a widow. She had lost her husband and was dealing with death of her son. The widow was not alone. Jesus Christ was present in her life.

The Lord Jesus Christ is always present in life! Jesus Christ is present during times of sorrow, times of joy and in all moments in between. Jesus' reassuring presence exists in every moment of life.

The widow of Nain experienced Jesus Christ's healing presence when He restored life to her son. Jesus Christ is present to restore life in every person dead in sin.

Sin is a form of death. Sin reduces the joy and growth possible in life. Sin infects and limits the mind. Sin has a negative effect upon the body. Believers not conscious and united with Christ limit their life experiences.

Jesus entered the woman's life. Christ enters each person's life. The widow opened herself to Christ's comforting words to not weep. Christ offers comfort to each person with ears to hear and eyes to see.

Jesus proceeded to restore the dead son to life. Jesus restores life to each person rejecting death in sin and receiving Christ in the heart, mind and soul. Joy replaces sorrow when Christ replaces death with life.

The Psalmist said: "Be still, and know that I am God:" (Ps. 45/46:10) Believers find and experience God in stillness. God is deep within the heart, mind and soul. The challenge for believers is to look deeply within the self to know God.

God's Holy Church brings the Gospel to believers to consider the teachings and life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church introduces and educates believers on the joys of life and the way to experience that joy.

Jesus Christ is always present in the Church. Believers need only be open to Christ when coming to church. Open hearts, minds and souls receive Jesus Christ abundantly in the Church.

Personal attitudes and expectations have a profound affect on the joy found in God. Believers seeking God with openness benefit from the fulness of joy. Skeptics and doubters limit their experiences.

A life polluted with sin affects the experience with God. The active life in God is always voluntary. God is always present. Individuals choose the degree of active participation.

The widow of Nain did not reject Jesus' comforting words and presence. She was accepting of Jesus. She came to know the resurrection power of Jesus. The Church teaches and celebrates Jesus' Resurrection.

Learning about Jesus and appreciating the Resurrection is constant throughout life. Growth in life is limited only by the limits established by the believer. Jesus is ever-present for all to continue to grow.

Apostle Paul set the goal for each person in these words to the Ephesians: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."^(Eph.4:13)

Each Divine Liturgy is a growth experience for active believers. Each moment of life has the potential for growth in Christ. Jesus Christ is ever-present for persons opening their hearts, minds and souls to Him.

The life in Christ brings peace, love and joy. Continuing to choose Christ keeps the person grounded in the presence of Christ. Continuing to choose Christ leads the believer to the Kingdom of God and life eternal.

The widow of Nain learned a lasting lesson from Jesus. The son of the widow of Nain personally experienced Jesus' power over death. At the Divine Liturgy believers are exposed to the lesson of Christ's power over death.

Every Divine Liturgy is an opportunity for believers to partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Christ. Jesus Christ is very much alive in the Divine Liturgy. Resurrection joy continues to the present day!

Today is the day to commit to keeping the heart, mind and soul open to Jesus Christ. Now is the time to open the eyes and ears to Jesus Christ's presence. Be thankful for Jesus Christ always being present.

Seek to reach out and remain united with Christ. Cultivate the desire to grow in Christ. Be fervent in holding on to Christ. Ward off thoughts that contaminate the soul.

Thank God for the Church. Thank God for the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Thank God for knowing of Christ's power over death demonstrated to the widow of Nain. Always thank God.

The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost. Holy Martyr Terrance, St. Arsenius of Srem, Archbishop of Serbia. October 28/November 10, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

