

TRINITY NEWS

PENTECOST III RENEWAL OF LIFE AND ITS CHALLENGES Luke 7:11-17

Luke tells us that one day Jesus saw a man being carried out the town of Nain for burial. We are told that this was the only son of his mother and she was a widow. He has compassion on her and tells her to stem her tears. He touches the stretcher or coffin on which the young man was being carried and tells him to wake up. He sat up and began to speak, though what he said is not recorded. All of Jesus healings are also parables about the compassion of God which is continually renewing people. It is the love of God that drives the compassion. The woman had not only lost a husband, she also lost her means of support in her only son. Tragedies are always waiting in the vestibule of our lives. Unexpected love and compassion also await their opportunities because they are the answer of our heavenly Father to such tragedies. Paul the apostle met the risen Christ one day on the Damascus Road and that experience changed his life. He interprets this experience in Romans 8:35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" He asserts that nothing can separate us from the love of God that we have in Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 8:39).

The starting place for all Christian theology is the love of God. We are prone to hedge that love around with all sorts of rules and regulations. Any law that is not derived from love and respect for humanity will eventually turn into hateful repression. No one can speak for God with a heart full of hate and bitterness.

I have met some very loving people in the Philippines. They ride roughshod over no one and are more concerned about their own inadequacies than the sins of others. The most basic sin is to forget God and to make self-assertion the prime mover of our life.

We then lose contact with the deeper source of our life and the most lasting model of what love really means. In spiritual terms, the only one who is able to make comments about the sins of others is someone who is acutely aware of "falling short of the glory of God" in their own lives.

We need to love well and to live well and end well. When we really love God we will be looking for the lame and the destitute and the troubled in spirit because then we are seeing life more through the eyes of God. Jesus had an enormous capacity to love God and he demonstrated this one day at Nain.. We are not told of what happened to the young man, but it is safe to say that he would have been mindful of the care of his mother for the rest of her life. Jesus did that one day at Calvary when part of his Last Will and Testament was to care for his mother and to protect her well-being.

Bishop Arthur Jones

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

- 2 Samuel 11:26-12:10,13-15
- Psalm 32
- Galatians 2:11-21
- Luke 7:36-50