

**06/05/16 ..... 10 C**

-- Perhaps there is nothing worse for a parent than to lose a child, even an adult child. A number of you have had that experience, and you probably felt like you should have died before them.

-- Yesterday, the funeral Mass for my sister's mother-in-law was celebrated. Four and a half years ago she lost one of her sons, my brother in law. Unlike the widow in the gospel, she had other sons, but it was still devastating to her and her husband.

-- Jesus comes upon this scene while entering the town of Nain. Unlike most towns of Galilee mentioned in the gospel, few pilgrims go there now, since it's a completely Muslim town with no Churches in its borders.

-- This woman is probably weeping as much for herself as for her dead son. He was her only means of support. If she was lucky, a relative might take her in, but most relatives would have other family obligations.

-- Undoubtedly that young man had died earlier that day, since it was their custom to bury the dead within 24 hours. She and the others with her were still in shock. Those of you who've lost loved ones suddenly know that feeling.

-- Jesus stops the procession and tells the woman not to weep. That's a strange thing to say. I wouldn't dare try that with someone who has suddenly lost a loved one. I'd probably get mean stares in response.

-- He touches the coffin, and the young man sits up at his command. It's told in a matter-of-fact manner, as if this was the normal thing for Jesus to do.

-- The first emotion of the crowd is not joy and jubilation but fear. They wonder who this is in front of them. It's almost like what happened when Moses went up the mountain to talk to God and there was thunder.

-- The crowd may well have recalled the story of Elijah restoring life to the son of the widow at Zarephath in the scriptures. This is the story we heard in our first reading. So they called Jesus a great prophet.

-- Of course, we know Jesus is more than a great prophet. The one who raised this widow's son would himself be raised from the dead by his heavenly Father. And that would be after three days in the tomb.

-- This gospel passage can give hope and consolation to people who have lost sons or daughters. Even though they are not raised back to earthly life, we trust they will receive new and eternal life from God.

-- But there's more to it than that. Here Jesus shows his compassion and mercy, but he also shows us that he is the Lord of life and death. Jesus walks with us through our pain, no matter what that pain happens to be.

-- If we stay with him on this journey, he brings us to a new life, a life that will not end. This is a life where the pains and trials of our earthly life will fade away. It is a life where the love and compassion with God will rule all things and conquer all sin.

-- We must persevere on this journey. And while we are on the journey, we should do our best to reflect the mercy and compassion of Jesus. For he calls us to follow him along the way he walked.

-- When we do, we will not fear death. For it will only be the gate to a greater life, an eternal life where we will share happiness with the Lord and with our loved ones.