

## HOMILY FOR THE TENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR C

1. Miracle in today's gospel is unusual
  - a. Most of Jesus miracles, people approach Him asking for His help
  - b. In today's gospel as Jesus comes into town of Nain, He meets a funeral procession
    - i. The only son of a widow
  - c. Jesus moved with pity asks her not to cry, then He goes to the young man and raises Him
2. Similarly, the first reading has unusual aspects beside raising a dead man
  - a. This during a famine and Elijah is staying with a widow in a foreign land
  - b. He son has died, and she freely complains to Elijah about God taking her son
  - c. Elijah is not defensive, indeed in his prayer he is more explicit in complaining to God
  - d. He has no fear in asking God to do what seems impossible, to bring a dead man to life
3. Important to realize that in biblical times there was no sense of a societal obligation to vulnerable and helpless
  - a. This was a patriarchal society and the expectation was that the oldest man was responsible for his family
    - i. He could depend on the assistance of other members but he was responsible
  - b. In case of these widows losing their sons was not just emotionally devastating
    - i. Even as they struggle with the loss of a loved one, they were losing all sense of security
    - ii. They were now going to become charity cases, they would have to beg for help
    - iii. Widows and orphans were very common, the prophets regularly proclaimed to those better off, that they needed to care for widows and orphans in their communities
    - iv. So these widows were facing major devastation
4. As the psalm proclaims God rescues them, through His prophet Elijah and through Jesus
  - a. There are two messages I can take from these readings
  - b. First of all as the Psalm encourages we have reason to praise God
  - c. St. Paul speaks about the wonder of His gift of faith
    - i. Although he was undeserving, in fact was opposing God's people, God called him to become the great witness to the faith
  - d. Each of us has received our own gift of faith
    - i. Perhaps grew up in active Catholic families and trained by sisters in Catholic school
    - ii. Some may have come to faith by studying the teachings of the Church and seeing the beauty of the Church
    - iii. Some have dramatic experiences in which God moves them from destructive behavior to a sense that God loves them
5. Another aspect is to realize God works through persons
  - a. Elijah and Jesus each bring God to the widows, they ask God to work through them and great wonders happen
  - b. Because we have the gift of faith, we are part of the body of Christ
  - c. We are the hands, feet, mouth of God
  - d. Although it is unlikely we will do wonders like raising the dead physically, our caring and reaching out to other may bring some to life spiritually
  - e. Often we do not need to be doing much different from everyday careers or jobs
    - i. our daily work is part of the ministry of Jesus; Not just a way for us to get ahead in life but actually serving God and his people
  - f. in daily lives we are prophets like Elijah bringing life and hope to those most in need