

Saint_Thomas_on_the_Gospel_for_the_15th_Sunday_after_Pentecost

And it came to pass afterwards, that he went into a city that is called Naim; and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow: and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, he said to her: Weep not. And he came near and touched the bier. And they that carried it, stood still. And he said: Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up among us: and, God hath visited his people.

CYRIL; The Lord joins one miracle upon another. In the former instance He came indeed when called for, but in this He came self-invited; as it is said, And it came to pass the day after that he went into a city called Nain.

THEOPHYL; Nain is a city of Galilee, within two miles of mount Tabor. But by the divine counsel there were large multitudes accompanying the Lord, that there might be many witnesses of so great a miracle. Hence it follows, And his disciples went with him, and much people.

GREG. NYSS. Now the proof of the resurrection we learn not so much from the words as from the works of our Savior, who, beginning His miracles with the less wonderful, reconciled our faith to far greater. First indeed in the grievous sickness of the centurion's servant, He verged upon the power of resurrection; afterwards with a higher power he led men to the belief in a resurrection, when He raised the widow's son, who was carried out to be buried; as it is said, 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.

TITUS BOST. But some one will say of the centurion's servant, that he was not going to die. That such an one might restrain his rash tongue, the Evangelist explains that the young man whom Christ came upon was already dead, the only son of a widow. For it follows, And she was a widow, and much people of the city was with her.

GREG. NYSS. He has told us the sum of misery in a few words. The mother was a widow, and had no further hope of baring children, she had no one upon whom she might look in the place of him that was dead. To him alone she had given suck, he alone made her home cheerful. All that is sweet and precious to a mother, was he alone to her.

CYRIL; These were sufferings to excite compassion, and which might well affect to mourning and tears, as it follows, And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, saying, Weep not.

THEOPHYL; As if He said, Cease to weep for one as dead, whom you shall soon see rise again alive.

CHRYS. But when He bids us cease from weeping Who consoles the sorrowful, He tells us to receive consolation from those who are now dead, hoping for their resurrection. But life meeting death stops the bier, as it follows, And he came.

CYRIL; He performs the miracle not only in word, but also touches the bier, to the end that you might know that the sacred body of Christ is powerful to the saving of man. For it is the body of Life and the flesh of the Omnipotent Word, whose power it possesses. For as iron

applied to fire does the work of fire, so the flesh, when it is united to the Word, which quickens all things, becomes itself also quickening, and the banisher of death.

TITUS BOST. But the Savior is not like to Elias mourning over the son of the widow of Sarepta, nor as Elisha who laid his own body upon the body of the dead, nor as Peter who prayed for Tabitha, but is none other than He who calls those things which be not, as though they were, who can speak to the dead as to the living, as it follows, And he said, Young man.

GREG. NYSS. When He said, Young man, He signified that he was in the flower of his age, just ripening into manhood, who but a little while before was the sight of his mothers eyes, just entering upon the time of marriage, the scion of her race, the branch of succession, the staff of her old age.

TITUS BOST. But straightway he arose to whom the command was made. For the Divine power is irresistible; there is no delay, no urgency of prayer, as it follows, And he that was dead sat up and began to speak, and he gave him to his mother. These are the signs of a true resurrection, for the lifeless body cannot speak, nor would the mother have carried back to her house her dead and lifeless son.

THEOPHYL; But well does the Evangelist testify that the Lord is first moved with compassion for the mother, and then raises her son, that in the one case He might set before us for our imitation an example of piety, in the other He might build up our belief in His wonderful power. Hence it follows, And there came a fear upon all, and they glorified God, &c.

CYRIL; This was a great thing in an insensible and ungrateful people. For in a short time afterward they would neither esteem Him as a prophet, nor allow that He did aught for the public good. But none of those that dwelt in Judea were ignorant of this miracle, as it follows, And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea.

MAXIM. But it is worthy of remark, that seven resurrections are related before our Lord's, of which the first was that of the son of the widow of Sarepta, the second of the Shunamite's son, the third which was caused by the remains of Elisha, the fourth which took place at Nain, as is here related, the fifth of the ruler of the Synagogue's daughter, the sixth of Lazarus, the seventh at Christ's passion, for many bodies of the saints arose. The eighth is that of Christ, who being free from death remained beyond for a sign that the general resurrection which is to come in the eighth age shall not be dissolved by death, but shall abide never to pass away.

THEOPHYL; But the dead man who was carried without the gate of the city in the sight of many signifies a man rendered senseless by the deadening power of mortal sin, and no longer concealing his soul's death within the folds of his heart, but proclaiming it to the knowledge of the world, through the evidence of words or deeds as through the gate of the city. For the gate of the city, I suppose, is some one of the bodily senses. And he is well said to be the only son of his mother, for there is one mother composed of many individuals, the Church, but every soul that remembers that it is redeemed by the death of the Lord, knows the Church to be a widow.

AMBROSE; For this widow surrounded by a great multitude of people seems to be more than the woman who was thought worthy by her tears to obtain the resurrection of her only son, because the Church recalls the younger people from the funeral procession to life by the contemplation of her tears, who is forbid to weep for him to whom resurrection was promised.

THEOPHYL; Or the dogma of Novatus is crushed who endeavoring to do away with the purifying of the penitent, denies that the mother Church, weeping for the spiritual extinction of her sons, ought to be consoled by the hope of their restoration to life.

AMBROSE; This dead man was borne on the bier by the four material elements to the grave, but there was a hope of his rising again because he was borne on wood, which though before it did not benefit us, yet after Christ had touched it, began to profit to life, that it might be a sign that salvation was to be extended to the people by the wood of the cross. For we lie lifeless on the bier when either the fire of immoderate desire bursts forth, or the cold moisture breaks out, and through the sluggish state of our earthly body the vigor of our minds waxes dull.

THEOPHYL; Or the coffin on which the dead is carried is the ill at ease conscience of a desperate sinner. But they who carry him to be buried are either unclean desires, or the allurements of companions, who stood when our Lord touched the bier, because the conscience, when touched by dread of the judgment from on high, often checking its carnal lusts, and those who unjustly praise, returns to itself, and answers its Savior's call to life.

AMBROSE; If then your sin is so heavy that by your penitential tears you can not yourself wash it out, let the mother Church weep for you, the multitude standing by; soon shall you rise from the dead and begin to speak; the words of life; they all shall fear, (for by the example of one all are corrected;) they shall also praise God who has given us such great remedies for escaping death.

THEOPHYL; But God has visited His people not only by the one incarnation of His Word, but by ever sending It into our hearts.

THEOPHYL. By the widow also you may understand a soul that has lost her husband in the divine word. Her son is the understanding, which is carried out beyond the city of the living. Its coffin is the body, which some indeed have called the tomb. But the Lord touching him raises him up, causing him to become young, and rising from sin he begins to speak and teach others. For before he would not have been believed.

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