

*That we might be filled with all the fullness of God*

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In today's Gospel, we see how the love of God overcomes and surpasses the breadth, length, depth, and height of human limitations. Last week we heard in the Gospel, *be not anxious for your life...what you shall wear...or what you shall eat.* The Gospel this morning continues the theme, *be not anxious for your life*, as we see how the Divine Mercy and Pity of Jesus Christ reach out and into death to call the Widow of Nain's son back to life and shows us how Jesus can raise us up into new life today. Remember that in those days the death of a widow's only son was a death sentence. Her life would be plunged deeper into poverty and misery. And so the widow and the others mourned not just for her dead son but for this poor mother. But as she leads her son's funeral procession, Jesus was passing by and took notice, and instead of joining in the procession stopped it. The widow and all those who mourned with her were overwhelmed and awestruck by God's love as her son was revived and sat up to participate at his own funeral in a remarkable new way.

It reminds us of another widow, this time from the Old Testament when hundreds of years before Jesus the Prophet Elijah through the power of God raised a son from death also, a sign of things to come. Now we might be tempted to shrug both of these miracles off, and say, *Oh, yes, yet another garden variety resurrection from the dead--that Jesus surely was something.* We might find ourselves thinking, *That was back in the old days when people really believed that sort of thing could happen -- the man was probably just in coma--what can this story possibly have to say to us now?* But for the Christian Faith, the Resurrection of Jesus is what everything depends upon. To the world this is all foolishness, but to the Christian believer it only makes sense, that Jesus who says, *I AM the Resurrection, and the Life*, would also raise others from the dead, and promises to raise us all from the dead at the end of the world. And we are not just talking about a spiritual resurrection but a physical resurrection. And in raising the widow's son Jesus also restored the widow's family and provision, which points to another truth of the Resurrection of the Dead, that it is not just the dead raised to life, but the dead raised to life and restored. It will be the restoration of our bodies to what they were always intended by God to be, and the restoration of families once and for all.

And so this morning we are presented with what for some is an uncomfortable truth, a God Who in His great love raises the dead and restores all things. Our God is far more powerful than the god who is the benevolent grandfather in the sky, setting the world in motion and watching as it twists and

turns by the movements of fate. We are presented with the real God who Himself is Love and not the kind of idealistic and utopian love, grounded in no reality. This is not a God that is worshipped by popular culture in search of superficial thrills. The love that we encounter in Jesus Christ is the kind of Love that transforms lives, the kind of love that requires a response, the kind of love which accepts no counterfeits and no rivals.

The question soon follows, and it is not out of place, "Well, if God's love is so great that it surpasses all understanding, that its breadth, and length, and depth, and height is immeasurable, then how can we finite creatures be filled with all of its fullness? St. Paul prays that each one of us will be filled with the fullness of God's love, that we comprehend its depth and length and height, and he acknowledges that it is beyond our intellectual capabilities to even know such love to the point of describing it. Instead of explaining what we can do to help this process along so that this love might become our own, he entrusts it all to God, who he says is able to do *exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think*. It is impossible for us to get there on our own. We are not even able to love God perfectly, and yet St. Paul prays that God can fill us with His love. He prays that God will resuscitate hearts deadened by hatred and sin and make them into vessels of His love.

As we prepare to come to this Altar this morning, let us ask ourselves if we are truly ready to be filled with the fullness of the fire of God's Love. The fire that cannot be quenched and will purify us by burning off our sins and uniting us to our brothers and sisters in Christ. For this is true love, love that knows no boundary, and no limit, which cannot die, and reaches beyond the grave. This Love revives hearts deadened by sin to newness of life. Let us pray, *Fountain of goodness, Jesu, Lord and God, cleanse us, unclean, with thy most cleansing blood; Increase our faith and love, that we may know the hope and peace which from thy presence flow.* Amen.