

*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 the Gospel for the anxious, *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 raises the widow's son from the dead. This is the Gospel for those who suffer and mourn, for when Jesus saw the Widow that He had *compassion on her and said, weep not*. That word "compassion" is translated from the Greek word *splagxna*, the word for innards, in this sense it reveals that Jesus felt heartfelt love for the woman. He shared in her sorrow. A sorrow that cut all the way to His core. We are reminded that Jesus is not immune to our anxieties, our sorrow, nor our suffering.

But is this what St. Paul means when he writes that he prays that *we may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God*. We might wonder how we can comprehend Jesus Christ, and His love, which is incomprehensible to us. We may also wonder how we can be filled with the fullness of God when God is infinite and uncontainable. It is similar in a way to the bread and wine of Holy Communion; how can Jesus be spiritually present in something so ordinary as a single tiny host and a sip of wine? How can something so ordinary and small contain so much?

How do we comprehend and know the incomprehensible and the infinite? By Jesus dwelling in our hearts by faith, through the power of the Holy Spirit, strengthening the inner man. St. Paul is not referring to a scientific fact or intellectual awareness. He prays for us to have a revelation, a divine gift that illumines and transforms our hearts and intellect. He prays also that we have a personal bond with the personal God, who reveals Himself to us through communion with Him. He reminds us again that we can entrust our cares to Him, as He is able *to do exceedingly abundantly all that we ask or think*. God's work goes far beyond what we envision, above all that we ask or think. We can comprehend and know God's love for us, the breadth, depth, length, and height, by the working together of our faith, and love with God's power and Spirit in us.

But this may be where the faith of some breaks down, and for some this is an uncomfortable truth; a God Who in His great love raises the dead and restores

all things. Jesus knew in a moment the widow's sorrow and felt her pain. He does not use long prayers like Elijah, but simply lays His hand on the stretcher and speaks to the dead son, and he sits up. And in that moment two lives are restored; the son is brought back to life and the widow's mourning is turned into joy. Jesus makes the point, regardless of our history or sins He is God who sees us and cares about us, who wants us to bring Him our problems, who longs to forgive us of our sins past. This is not a God who is the benevolent grandfather in the sky, setting the world in motion and watching as it twists and turns on its own. It was not by chance that Jesus went into the village of Nain, it was not by chance that He meets the funeral procession on His way into the village. For Christ arranges both His path and ours and arranges that they meet. He is never too soon nor too late. He knows not only when our troubles come, but how heavy they are, and He is at hand to make the burden light.

The Lessons for this morning present to us the nature of the real God who Himself is Love and not the kind of idealistic and shallow love celebrated by the world. 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. This is a God who is not just concerned about our anxieties, our sorrows, or our troubles, but offers to share them with us so that He can help us to rise above them. We must remember that just as the Lord saw the Widow of Nain and in a moment knew her sorrow and grief, so He does the same with us. The Lord sees, He has compassion; but best of all is it when we can hear His comfortable words, "*Weep not.*" Jesus has a heart to love, to sympathize, and to beat with ours. Learn to believe in the heart of Jesus, for never was a greater sorrow, never a kinder Comforter. His pity is continual. His compassions fail not.

As we prepare to come to this Altar this morning to receive bread and wine which has been consecrated by the Holy Spirit, which contains in themselves Jesus Christ, 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 of our sins and unite us to our brothers and sisters in Christ. This is that revelation and personal communion that St. Paul prays that we will each experience, that will enable us to comprehend and know the love of God. For this is true love, love which purifies us of sin, love that casts out all fear, love that knows no boundary, and no limit, which cannot die, and reaches beyond the grave. Amen.