

10TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, JUNE 5, 2016

1st Reading: I Kings 17:17-24 [See, your son is alive!]

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 30 ["I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me"]

2nd Reading: Galatians 1:11-19 [I received the gospel through a revelation of Jesus Christ]

Gospel: Luke 7:11-17 [Young man, I say to you, arise!]

♪ I am the Word that leads all to freedom, I am the peace the world cannot give.
I will call your name, embracing all your pain, stand up, now walk and live!
Do not be afraid, I am with you. I have called you each by name.
Come and follow me, I will bring you home; I love you and you are mine. ♪

Anna When the people in the village of Nain saw Jesus raise the widow's son from the dead, they said, "God has visited his people." Those are probably the most profound words in today's Gospel. Jesus was God's presence in that village. He embraced the pain of the widow - who was left without support or resources in that culture, since both her son and her husband were gone.

Jesus reached out with compassion and said, with his actions as much as his words, "Do not be afraid, I am with you ... I love you and you are mine."

Peter Jesus was not only the presence of God, he was the compassion of God,
the Mercy of God

We will hear these words in the preface which begins the Eucharistic Prayer today,

*"He made himself a neighbor to the oppressed ...
he proclaimed that you, Father, are a loving parent and care for all your children."*

It is not easy to know what to say in the presence of death and grief.

What is there to say when the anger that is part of grieving comes out at you - the way the woman verbally attacked Elijah in the first reading?

Many of us have been in that situation.

Sometimes we may be tempted to avoid it,
because we think there is nothing we can do to fix it.

Sometimes the only words we have are platitudes like "I'm sorry for your loss."
Sometimes all we have to give is our **presence**. And that is usually enough.

Neither Jesus nor Elijah avoided death, they were both present. Jesus even went so far as to touch the litter that carried the dead son of the widow - an action that would have made him ritually impure & excluded him from Temple worship for a time.

In this Gospel passage, Jesus was present with compassion - as Elijah was before him. He shows us what kind of persons we are called and empowered to be.

We are called to be present with **compassion**
for those who are grieving, oppressed, sick or imprisoned.

We may not be able to change a situation the way Jesus or Elijah did,
but we can be the presence of Jesus in that situation,
just as he was the presence of God for the widow and the mourners.

That is how disciples of Jesus act.

Anna I met Peter's friend, Bill & his wife Pat, in Compton, CA. He was someone who trusted in the love of Jesus and was his presence to those in need.

Bill was African-American - not very tall (about my height) and he lived in Compton, CA - a dangerous neighborhood just outside of L.A. He had been injured while playing football for Ohio State and told he would not live very long.

He was also afflicted by progressive M.S. However, by the grace of God, he lived a long life. Despite his small stature, he was a force to be reckoned with. For many years, he was called on to negotiate between rival gangs in the area where he lived. When Fr. Peter & I visited him in his home - and got lost in Compton - we were a little scared, but knew that all we had to do was to mention his name and we would be safe.

He and his wife were the first black couple on the national board of Marriage Encounter. He was an electrifying preacher. Whenever Peter spoke with him - in person or on the phone - he would always begin his greeting with the words, "Good Morning" whether it was morning, noon or night.

You see, he was much better able to function in the morning because of his M.S., and he chose to live the way today's responsorial psalm puts it: *"at nightfall, weeping enters in, but joy comes in the morning."*

He lived all his hours - until he died at a ripe old age - as if it was morning, and he was always filled with joy and compassion.

We, like him, can choose to live in the **JOY** of God's presence,
& choose to do acts of mercy & compassion as Jesus did.

We are God's presence in our world.

Our culture might hold up power, control & strength as ideals. But the strength that Jesus models is **compassion** for those in pain, **mercy** for those who are oppressed, **love** for the powerless & grieving, and even for his opponents.

Peter Today we rejoice that God has visited us through the Word we have heard & the Eucharist we celebrate. We are invited to experience the presence of Jesus to our deepest pain, and the pain of our world. We are sent on mission to be present to our families, our neighbors and our world with compassion, truth and love, and so to help others share in some part of the resurrection of Jesus in our world.

We can be the song he still sings:

♪ I am strength for all the despairing, healing for the ones who dwell in shame.
All the blind will see, the lame will all run free, and all will know my name.
Do not be afraid, I am with you. I have called you each by name.
Come and follow me, I will bring you home; I love you and you are mine. ♪

