

But I Don't Know Anybody Who Lives There!

Tenth Sunday of Ordinary Time – Luke 7:11-17

In 2005, I suggest to my mother, Catherine, that she might consider a move to Mt. Vernon. Her initial comment to me was, “But I don’t know anybody who lives there!” I chuckled and said, “Well you know me.” The idea of this major life change was very difficult for my mom since she and my dad had lived in the same house for over 50 years. However, my father’s passing in 2002 was a drastic change which had taken its toll on her.

Now she was facing a new life dilemma, moving to a new home, a new church, a new town with new neighbors. And, she would be doing all of this as a widow. In the end, she found the strength (along with Bill and my prodding and support) to make the leap of faith. For my mother and for me (and the rest of the family) this life change was nothing short of pure gift. We had five great years of her as a very real presence in our lives. For me, this is the story we hear about in the gospel for this week.

Jesus appears in the village of Nain. He encounters a funeral procession in which, **“a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.”** At the time of Jesus, women were very dependent on either their husbands or their sons for financial security. To lose one would have been difficult but to lose both might have been a death sentence for this poor woman. Jesus realizes the severity of this dire situation and responds with compassion.

“When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her ‘Do not weep.’ He stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this the bearers halted, and said, ‘Young man, I tell you arise.’ The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.”

In my personal situation, Jesus responded to me and my mother with the same compassion. There was a need. She needed to arise from the death of my father and the burden of being alone. I was in the thick of my new role as PLC, and I can say today, Jesus knew that I needed my mom back. The miracle of the gospel is my miracle. It is your miracle. It plays out in our lives every day.

We are all like my mom in some way. There are daily situations in which we feel we don’t know anyone or we don’t belong. The truth is that when we know Jesus, then we are never alone. The challenge then is to imitate Christ, to be Christ’s compassion in a broken world. We are called to be the Real Presence that we consume at every Eucharistic celebration.

I can say that my mom was one of my greatest evangelizers. Her faith was deeply imbedded in her. She shared that openly and honestly with me for all my life. I am sure she was filled with fear and doubt when she moved to a new place. I am sure that as time passed she, too, saw the miracle unfold before her.

Response to Jesus this week by those who witnessed his miracle was to give glory to God. This is our commission as well. We are to give glory to God thanking him daily for the many blessings we have been given. We are then commissioned to go forth and tell the world that the one we truly know is Jesus Christ.

Blessings!
Sup Schettler