

## Luke: 7:11–17

### From Catena Aurea:

11. And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12. 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, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. 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.

GREGORY OF NYSSA. (Tract. de Anima et Res. Post med.) Now the proof of the resurrection we learn not so much from the words as from the works of our Saviour, 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 BOSTRENSIS. 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.

GREGORY OF NYSSA. (de hom. Opif. c. 25.) He has told us the sum of misery in a few words. The mother was a widow, and had no further hope of having 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 OF ALEXANDRIA. 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.

CHRYSOSTOM. (Tit. Bost.) 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 OF ALEXANDRIA. 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 BOSTRENSIS. (non occ.) But the Saviour is not like to Elias mourning over the son of the widow of Sarepta, (1 Kings 17) nor as Elisha who laid his own body upon the body of the dead, (2 Kings 4) nor as Peter who prayed for Tabitha, (Acts 9:40) 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, (Rom. 4:17) as it follows, And he said, Young man

GREGORY OF NYSSA. (ubi sup.) 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 mother's eyes, just entering upon the time of marriage, the scion of her race, the branch of succession, the staff of her old age.

TITUS BOSTRENSIS. 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.

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA. 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 Judæa were ignorant of this miracle, as it follows, And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judæa.

MAXIMUS. (non occ.) 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, (1 Kings 17) the second of the Shunamite's son, (2 Kings 4) the third which was caused by the remains of Elisha, (2 Kings 13) the fourth which took place at Nain, as is here related, the fifth of the ruler of the Synagogue's daughter, (Mark 5) the sixth of Lazarus, (John 11) the seventh at Christ's passion, for many bodies of the saints arose. (Mat. 27.) 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.

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.

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 unto 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 vigour of our minds waxes dull.

AMBROSE. If then thy sin is so heavy that by thy penitential tears thou canst not thyself wash it out, let the mother Church weep for thee, the multitude standing by; soon shalt thou 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.

THEOPHYLACT. 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.

### **From Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture:**

#### **7:11–12 The Setting**

##### **The Dead Restored to Life.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Observe how he joins miracle to miracle. In the former instance, the healing of the centurion's servant, he was present by invitation, but here he draws near without being invited. No one summoned him to restore the dead man to life, but he comes to do so of his own accord. He seems to me to have purposely made this miracle also follow upon the former. Commentary on Luke, Homily 36.

##### **The Virgin's Son Meets the Widow's Son.**

Ephrem the Syrian: The Virgin's son met the widow's son. He became like a sponge for her tears and as life for the death of her son. Death turned about in its den and turned its back on the victorious one. Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron 6.23.

##### **The Dead Man Meets the Life and the Resurrection.**

Cyril of Alexandria: The dead man was being buried, and many friends were conducting him to his tomb. Christ, the life and resurrection, meets him there. He is the Destroyer of death and of corruption. He is the One in whom we live and move and are. He is who has restored the nature of man to that which it originally was and has set free our death-fraught flesh from the bonds of death. He had mercy upon the woman, and that her tears might be stopped, he commanded saying, "Weep not." Immediately the cause of her weeping was done away. Commentary on Luke, Homily 36.

## **7:13–15 The Compassion and the Miracle**

### **The Church, the Sorrowing Mother.**

Ambrose: Although there is grave sin that you cannot wash away yourself with the tears of your penitence, let the mother of the church weep for you. She who intercedes for all as a widowed mother for only sons is she who suffers with the spiritual grief of nature when she perceives her children urged on to death by mortal sins. We are heart of her heart, for there is also a spiritual heart that Paul has, saying, “Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.” We are the heart of the church, since we are members of his Body, of his flesh and of his bones. Let the pious mother grieve, let the crowd, too, help. Let not only the crowd but also a multitude feel pity for a good parent. Already at the funeral you will arise, already will you be released from the sepulcher; the attendants at your funeral will stand still, you will begin to speak words of life, all will be afraid; for very many are corrected by the example of one. They will praise God, who has bestowed upon us such great help for the avoidance of death. Exposition of the Gospel of Luke 5.92.

### **The Holy Body of Jesus Brings Salvation.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Christ raised him who was descending to his grave. The manner of his rising is plain to see. “He touched,” it says, “the bier and said, ‘Young man, I say unto thee, arise.’ ” How was not a word enough for raising him who was lying there? What is so difficult to it or past accomplishment? What is more powerful than the Word of God? Why then did he not work the miracle by only a word but also touched the bier? It was, my beloved, that you might learn that the holy body of Christ is productive for the salvation of man. The flesh of the almighty Word is the body of life and was clothed with his might. Consider that iron when brought into contact with fire produces the effects of fire and fulfills its functions. The flesh of Christ also has the power of giving life and annihilates the influence of death and corruption because it is the flesh of the Word, who gives life to all. May our Lord Jesus Christ also touch us that delivering us from evil works, even from fleshly lusts, he may unite us to the assemblies of the saints. Commentary on Luke, Homily 36.

## **7:16–17 The Response of the People**

### **The News Spread Everywhere.**

Cyril of Alexandria: Let it be known to people everywhere that the Lord is God, and even though he appeared in a form like us, yet has he given us the indications of a godlike power and majesty on many occasions and in a multitude of ways. He drove away diseases and rebuked unclean spirits. He gave the blind their sight. Finally, he even expelled death itself from the bodies of men, death that cruelly and mercilessly had tyrannized humankind from Adam even to Moses, according to the expression of the divine Paul. That widow's son at Nain arose unexpectedly and wonderfully. The miracle did not remain unknown to everyone throughout Judea but was announced abroad as a divine sign, and admiration was upon every tongue. Commentary on Luke, Homily 37.