

## FOR THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Gospel: Saint Luke 7: 11-16

On those who have given up the spirit of their state,  
and the means they must take to regain it

### 68.1 First Point

Today's Gospel relates that a young man from the town of Naim, whose mother was a widow, was being carried out to be buried.<sup>451</sup> This Gospel admirably portrays the plight of those who have lost the grace of their state.

The deceased was a young man, who by his tender years represents for you those in whom piety has not yet struck deep roots,<sup>452</sup> and whose hearts are not yet firmly set on what is good. This makes them think without good reason that they will easily save themselves elsewhere, that they have spent enough time away from the occasions of sin, and that when they are again exposed to them they will be strong enough not to succumb.

A person dies quickly when, being ill, he does not believe he is really sick, or when he imagines he can cure himself by his own effort and without any medicine. This is what the devil ordinarily suggests to those who fall into this kind of temptation, all who are not docile to the advice of their superiors. They sink into such an extremity that their malady becomes incurable, and they cannot help abandoning the holy state which they had embraced.

Have you not sometimes been, or are you not now, in this deplorable disposition? If so, grieve before God on account of it, and beg him earnestly to rescue you as quickly as possible, because the remedy for this illness needs to be applied promptly.

### 68.2 Second Point

They were carrying the young man out to be buried.<sup>453</sup> The end result and the final effect of this spiritual death is to bury the soul attacked by it.

These souls think of nothing but the earth, that is, of the world and the things of the world, because they no longer have any taste for God and for what leads to him. To hear God spoken of is for them a torture; to spend time in prayer is a martyrdom; Communion is insipid; they stay away from confession because they do not want to make their sickness known.

They are guided only by their own light and their light is false. Thus all the means which help to maintain the life of the spirit are useless in their case because they reject them. This results from their having lost the spirit of the life which they once possessed, which is the spirit of their state.

The crowd of people who accompanied the dead man as he was being carried out to be buried<sup>454</sup> is a figure of those who urge you to go back into the world. Bereft of grace, what good advice can they give you? Yet some persons believe what these people of the world say and follow the action they propose all the more readily because what they are trying to advance is the more agreeable to the inclination of corrupt nature. Oh, what a sorry state! Oh, what a sad situation! Beg God fervently not to abandon you to such an extent.

### **68.3 Third Point**

Jesus Christ, drawing near to the dead man, touched the litter, and those who carried it stood still. Then he said to this young man, I bid you, get up. Immediately the dead man sat up, uncovered his face, and began to speak. Then Jesus gave him back to his mother.<sup>455</sup>

These words make known the means to recover the grace of our vocation. The first is to resort to prayer, in order to bring Jesus Christ near to us. The second is to stop the flow of all the thoughts which have led us to the brink of the precipice. The third is to listen to the voice of Jesus Christ who speaks to us through our superiors. The fourth is to raise ourselves up to God as soon as we hear his word.

In this way little by little we recover the spirit of our state and begin again to fulfill the duties expected of us. Then Jesus will give us back to our mother, which is our community, to which we have committed ourselves. The community will again look upon us as beloved children and we will be for our Brothers a source of consolation and edification.

This is what should be done by those who have lost, or who have put themselves in danger of losing, their vocation, and as a result God's grace, and of falling into a disorderly life, the inevitable consequence of this loss.

451 Lk 7:12

452 Mt 13:21

453 Lk 7:12

454 Lk 7:12

455 Lk 7:14-15