

- First of all: in the second reading St. Paul calls the apostle James “the brother of the Lord”.
- This does NOT mean “brother” in the sense of another son of Mary, whom the Church teaches was “ever-virgin”. And certainly this James was not a son of Joseph.
- In the Israelite culture, extended family were often called “brothers and sisters”, and this is such a case.
- The Greek word “adelphos” used here for “brother”—like the English word “brother”—can mean anything from blood brother to simply someone with whom one has a loose affinity...and anything in-between.
- But we know there are two apostles named “James”. One is certainly the brother of John and the son of Zebedee, and the second apostle James is likely a relative of Jesus. In another place the Gospels record this James’ father as Alphaeus, not Joseph...and while his mother’s name was also Mary, the scriptures make it plain that James’ mother is not Jesus’ mother.

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- Now our Gospel story is one of the most beautiful in all the Gospels.
  - A woman who had already lost her husband had now lost her only son, perhaps her only child. And as the male in the family, he would have supported her through her old age.
  - And now...no one upon which to care for her.
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  - This translation of the Gospel says that Jesus stepped forward and touched the “coffin”, but it really would have been a platform upon which they would have been carrying the body wrapped in cloth to its burial place. They didn’t normally use actual coffins.
  - And the beauty of the scene is Jesus’ spontaneous compassion.

- The woman does not look at Him... does not beg for a healing... does not say a word...and may not even know who He is.
  - But Jesus sees the woman's great distress and brings the young man back to life for her.
  - This shows us that God gives His grace and mercy even to those who may not know Him, or know how to ask for His mercy.
  - Her plea was the sorrow of her heart...a mother's love...which He would not refuse.
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  - It is fortuitous that we have this reading this year on the weekend of our patronal feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
  - No one was there to save Jesus from death. At His crucifixion, no one was there to pity the poor widowed mother losing her only Son.
  - One might imagine that Jesus...knowing what Mary would suffer at His death, and seeing an image of that pain before Him in this episode...brings solace to this poor woman almost in compensation for the sorrow that Mary would endure.
  - And the joy of this woman also foreshadows the joy of Mary at Jesus' own coming back to life in His resurrection.
  - The young man would have eventually died regardless; he was simply resuscitated. But Jesus lives forever in the true resurrection...a resurrection that we, too, will realize if faithful to Him.
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  - Saint Ambrose compares this widow's tears to those of the Church, who weeps for those sons and daughters who die in sin.
  - But in life, the Church does not abandon her children, but rather intercedes for them and this, too, moves Jesus' heart to compassion.
  - So let us never lose heart for those for whom we pray...knowing that Christ sees our tears for them as well...and, perhaps if they are open to Him, they, too, will come back to life at His touch.
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- Finally, this weekend we celebrate our patronal feast day of the Immaculate Heart of Mary...which refers not so much to her physical heart, but to her holy interior life, her joys and sorrows, her virtues and hidden perfections...and yet, above all, her love for God, her maternal love for her divine Son, and her compassionate love for all people.
- When we venerate Mary's Immaculate Heart, we are considering the beauties of her soul and her compassion—for Jesus first, but for us as well...this perfect mother given to the world by God Himself from the Cross...she who watched with Him to the very end of His crucifixion...and now does so with Him in Heaven.
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- At the end of Mass today, we'll hear a very short testimonial about the value of watching with Christ in our 24/7 adoration chapel—a great source of grace not only for those who adore Christ there, but for their families, for our Church and for the world.
- The power of prayer and fidelity to God should never be underestimated. The Archangel Gabriel told Mary: “Nothing will be impossible with God”...and it is IN prayer we ask for what may seem impossible...for Jesus tells us that through prayer mountains can be moved.
- Where better to pray than before the Real and True Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist?

**Reading 11 KGS 17:17-24**

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Elijah went to Zarephath of Sidon to the house of a widow.  
 The son of the mistress of the house fell sick,  
 and his sickness grew more severe until he stopped breathing.  
 So she said to Elijah,  
 “Why have you done this to me, O man of God?  
 Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt  
 and to kill my son?”  
 Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.”  
 Taking him from her lap, he carried the son to the upper room  
 where he was staying, and put him on his bed.

**Elijah called out to the LORD:**

“O LORD, my God,  
 will you afflict even the widow with whom I am staying  
 by killing her son?”

Then he stretched himself out upon the child three times

**and called out to the LORD:**

“O LORD, my God,  
 let the life breath return to the body of this child.”  
 The LORD heard the prayer of Elijah;  
 the life breath returned to the child’s body and he revived.  
 Taking the child, Elijah brought him down into the house  
 from the upper room and gave him to his mother.  
 Elijah said to her, “See! Your son is alive.”  
 The woman replied to Elijah,  
 “Now indeed I know that you are a man of God.  
 The word of the LORD comes truly from your mouth.”

**Responsorial Psalm PS 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11, 12, 13**

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**R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me clear  
 and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.  
 O LORD, you brought me up from the nether world;  
 you preserved me from among those going down into the pit.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones,  
 and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger lasts but a moment;  
 a lifetime, his good will.

At nightfall, weeping enters in,  
 but with the dawn, rejoicing.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;

O LORD, be my helper.

You changed my mourning into dancing;

O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

**Reading 2** GAL 1:11-19

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I want you to know, brothers and sisters,  
that the gospel preached by me is not of human origin.  
For I did not receive it from a human being, nor was I taught it,  
but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

For you heard of my former way of life in Judaism,  
how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure  
and tried to destroy it, and progressed in Judaism  
beyond many of my contemporaries among my race,  
since I was even more a zealot for my ancestral traditions.  
But when God, who from my mother's womb had set me apart  
and called me through his grace,  
was pleased to reveal his Son to me,  
so that I might proclaim him to the Gentiles,  
I did not immediately consult flesh and blood,  
nor did I go up to Jerusalem  
to those who were apostles before me;  
rather, I went into Arabia and then returned to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem  
to confer with Cephas and remained with him for fifteen days.  
But I did not see any other of the apostles,  
only James the brother of the Lord.

**Gospel** LK 7:11-17

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Jesus journeyed to a city called Nain,  
and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him.  
As he drew near to the gate of the city,  
a man who had died was being carried out,  
the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.  
A large crowd from the city was with her.

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 he said, “Young man, I tell you, arise!”  
The dead man sat up and began to speak,  
and Jesus gave him to his mother.  
Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming,  
“A great prophet has arisen in our midst,”  
and “God has visited his people.”  
This report about him spread through the whole of Judea  
and in all the surrounding region.