



## Christ's compassion brings life out of death

An address for the Cosmic Mass ● 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2008 ● Rev Kate

*Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men; but what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience.*

*For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.*

*2 Corinthians 5:11, 14-17*

I want to read to you from Luke 7:11-17. We are going to look at the metaphysical meaning of this story, so it would be good if you engaged your imagination and entered into the event. Visualize what takes place. Hear the sounds. Be aware of the feeling it awakens, as well as your thoughts.

*Soon afterward he went to a city called Na'in, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large crowd from the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." And he came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." And the dead man sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" And this report concerning him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country.*

*Luke 7:11-17*

The story is literally about life and death. It is about noise and busyness and silence. It is about sorrow and joy. I am sure you could add to that. In the words of the song from the Book of Ecclesiastes that we sang today, we find an array of experiences expressed which take us from beginnings to endings and from one state to another and allow us to see the richness that is in between. The successes and failures, the falling down and the getting up.

I was reminded of the philosophy of the I-Ching which is a book of great Chinese wisdom. It speaks about the increase and the decrease, the yin and the yang. We are all familiar with that symbol. When you throw 12 tortises then that's very exciting and it is time for the increase, but when you get the little iron pot which is full of worms in decaying material, it is the time of the decrease. However that time is just as valuable and useful.

Returning to the story. We'll take each of the symbols in the story and look at its meaning to you metaphysically. The first thing is the gate. The gate is always taken to mean the way into a new phase of life. We speak of it as being on the threshold of a new revelation, which can be about our ordinary everyday life or about the life of our spirit.

You are here and you are given this story today to integrate into your life. What is this gate for you? You might not have words or ideas about that yet, but if you are conscious of it then it will reveal itself to you. These symbols are not just words on a page. They come alive in your soul and you express their reality through your spirit and through your consciousness. We are always adventing something new because your imagination is alive in you.

The gate is often the threshold of initiation which you are about to undergo. It does have that feel in this story, as the young man is dead and is about to be revived and his life take on new meaning.

As Jesus and his apostles approach this gate, they meet a crowd. If you were listening carefully you would have heard a great deal of noise, wailing and crying and people beating their breasts in lamentation. There would be music accompanying the procession, drums and flutes and percussion instruments. Some Middle Eastern people still do this at a funeral procession.

It is obvious that the crowd in us represents the many busy thoughts and memories that clutter our mind. We have developed our mind to such an extent that it is very difficult to stop the activity. We all know that, don't we? It has a dominance now in us which the Ahrimanic forces love and encourage.

But what does Christ do? He touches the bier of the dead youth and there is stillness. Silence gradually falls on the crowd. It is a beautiful and central moment in the story. Stillness and silence is very important to the life of Spirit and the health of the soul; our physical too needs stillness and silence. Our world, however, would have us believe otherwise. The demands of our material world are like the crowd in the story - taking up all the time and all the space.

I would like to share with you something Mario shared with me at a full moon reading. He had asked us to come up with the word or image of the month ourselves, instead of receiving it from the priest. I happened to get Mario that night and my word or image was silence, and this is what he said to me.

*Silence is the creative space where God moves in you.  
Be silent in your times of devotion, and peace will be given to you.  
Silence will dispel the darkness of your mind, and drive away your doubts  
and fears.  
Be often in this place and let your I AM be filled with him whom you love.*

Now it is important to recognise this moment in the story which cries out in you for this sense of silence and stillness in your life. For it is only when you make this a part of your life, when you are in the silence, that Christ can communicate with you and you with him. This habit of silence then develops within you. becoming part of you, even in times of busyness. Then it is surprising how moments occur in midst of your busyness when the Christ impulse bursts forth.

In this silence, we learn that the power that is flowing from Christ is compassion for this widowed woman whose son has died. In the silence of your being, you also recognise that you experience that compassion flowing towards you.

What of this very young man who has died prematurely? Because it is a man then it points to our thoughts, or the way we are thinking which need to be re-awakened, revived, given new life. What is it about your thinking that needs to be given new life, as Christ gave it to this young man?

Our thoughts can surely give us life or they can kill life in us. They can give life to others, or kill life in others. Negative, destructive thinking will gradually drain the life of our mind and flow through the soul and into our physical being, with deadening effect.

The mother is symbolic of your soul and your feeling level. Your soul has its own language and its process of communication. Feelings give life and strong energy as they flow into your mind and enliven and inform your thinking. Your emotions, which come from your astral nature and which are shallow and changeable and come from without, can also influence your thinking,

Mario has an interesting section in his commentary on Book of Revelation where he says:

*We must not act always from our astral level, from our own emotions. They are often wrong. We have to express from the inner beingness which is sometimes contrary to the outer. Where our emotions may speak one language, and our soul beingness (and I add, where our feeling level works) may speak something different. The secret is to listen and to be able to express the opposite of the emotional levels.*

I found that interesting advice and very hard to do. For our emotions do drown out our true feeling levels.

This woman is full of pain and sorrow coming from her inner being and Christ is deeply affected and filled with compassion. It is his loving response to the cry of her soul. It is a moment to savour, to let into your consciousness, this dialogue between the soul and Christ, and his compassion for you.

This compassion is a rare jewel. It is part of the mystery of the Incarnation, that a God can suffer. The word compassion comes from two Latin words - *passus*, which is the verb to suffer, and *com* which means with. This God could experience the suffering of this woman and it drew forth that intense love which gives life. The quality of such suffering we can only wonder at, as we wonder at his love on Calvary.

He raises the young man up into his I AMness, his true self. That is a very important moment to contemplate in this crucial time in evolution. Let us take it into ourselves, because the most important faculty we have is thought, and unless it is under the influence of our I AM then it is dead.

In the reading from 2 Corinthians, Paul says, "If any one is in Christ, he/she is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come." Notice that he speaks in the present tense. Not "he will be a new creation", not "the old will pass away". Paul dwelt in the new consciousness. He was seeing a reality.

Let us go back to the first line of the song from Ecclesiastes: "There is a season for all things, time for every purpose on this earth." For now this is true, but we are a new creation when we are in Christ. If I look back ten years, fifty years or back into some of my past incarnations, I can say that in the present tense. I am a new creation. You can say that and know that it is true, that in you the new consciousness is dwelling in an infinitely tiny seed, and that eventually there will only be one purpose on this earth.

The crowd get a glimpse of this. The new life given creates awe and reverence. It says the crowd was seized with fear - a fear like the shepherds felt at the birth of Jesus, or the apostles at the Transfiguration.

They glorified God because they could see the works of God in him. "God has visited his people," they cried. Compassion brought about a real transformation in the crowd.

I thought I would finish with John's vision of what compassion brings about. Remember it has already happened, we are gradually learning to see it.

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."*

*And he who sat upon the throne said, "Behold I make all things new:"*  
*Revelation 21:1-5*

Works from Rev Mario Schoenmaker  
Used with permission  
Antoinette Schoenmaker ©

The Centre in Melbourne  
The Independent Church of Australia ©  
email: [melbournecentre@ica.org.au](mailto:melbournecentre@ica.org.au)  
web: <http://www.ica.org.au/melbourne>