



My Beloved Ones,

In the Epistle for this Sunday, St. Paul instructs the Corinthians about Christian giving: *"...he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully"* (2 Corinthians 9:6) However, this does not mean we are to give solely out of fear of punishment, or in hope of a reward. Our Lord instructed His disciples to give without accepting payment, so we also must give in imitation of Christ.

As St. Paul emphasizes, *"Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever'"* (2 Corinthians 9:7-9). To my mind, this quote from Psalm 112:19, *"He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his*

righteousness endures for ever", also recalls the Gospel reading for this Sunday, which deals with a miracle that demonstrates God's mercy.

Our Lord comes to the town of Nain, and as He prepares to enter the city, a funeral procession passes on its way out. The dead man, St. Luke tells us, was the only son of a widow, and understandably, she was full of grief. Christ takes pity on her, before commanding her son, *"Young man, I say to you, arise"* (Luke 7:14). Immediately, the son is resurrected in front of all the surprised people, and he is reunited with his grateful mother.

We read that the people say things such as, *"A great prophet has arisen among us!"* and *'God has visited his people!'* (Luke 7:16) Keeping the Epistle in mind, we are meant to view the miracle as one of the great demonstrations of our Lord's righteousness. This woman, who was without her husband or her son, would have needed to rely on the charity of her neighbors. In every sense, she was poor: in financial security, but also in spirit; but our Lord showed mercy upon her, and in doing this, he uplifted the hearts of the people.

Though we might not experience great miracles such as this daily, I am certain that you can recall an event in your own life, in which our Lord invisibly revealed His presence to you. As we meditate on the things He has done for us (whether they are small or great) we should also consider how we can give back to Him through service to others. If the journey of our lives is to be united with Him in *theosis*, then we should try our best to give as we are able, with joy and love. This indeed, is the purpose of our lives on this earth: to try to show to others the love and righteousness that He has shown and will continue to show to us.

+ALEXIOS

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