

Death

For most of us, probably the number one topic to avoid

We have to distinguish between the two types of death

Physical and spiritual

Each of us will face our physical death at some point

It may be soon

It may not be for a hundred years

But we will all face it

So we have a choice

We can try to hide

We can try to avoid any association with it

We can try to build up false fronts

We can work out

Do things we think will protect us

Or we can be honest

We can see death as what it truly is

A passageway from this life to eternal life

It is not something we should seek

But with faith, it has no hold over us

But there is also spiritual death

Again, one we seek to avoid

This is the death the serpent spoke of with Eve

**It is the death St Paul speaks of when he said there are 2 types
of sin**

One that leads to death

And one that does not

Our readings invite us to reflect on death

Not in a morbid, fearful way

But as Christians, filled with hope and trusting in God's mercy

In our reading from the Book of Kings

Elijah, the prophet, is in a foreign land

He had been forced from his own land

By his own people

He is staying with a Gentile widow and her son

After he arrives, the son becomes ill

And he dies

Like many people in her day

And even some still today

She thinks God is punishing her for her sin

But Elijah says no

He takes the child

Prays over him

And he is restored to life

**This illness and death were not to punish
But were to show the glory and power of God
It was to prove to the widow that Elijah was a man of God
And it was to give confidence to Elijah
Proof that despite his own people turning against him
God still walked with him**

**We have a similar story in our Gospel
Jesus and his disciples are on a journey
They come to the city of Nain
There is a funeral procession
Again, a widow has lost her only son
Jesus' own mother was a widow
One who would lose her only son as well
And his heart was moved with pity
It wasn't that he felt sorry for her
He was not saddened that her son had died
It went so much deeper
For a woman in that time
Everything depended upon a male relative
A father
A brother**

A husband

A son

Only males could hold property

So losing her husband, she had only her son

All their money and property would have been in his name

With his death, it would revert to her husband's family

She was out

Penniless and defenseless

So Jesus steps forward and touches the coffin

Young man, I tell you, arise'

Here again, Jesus showed disregard for social customs

Touching a dead person made you unclean

You had to go through a series of ceremonies before you could enter a

Synagogue

Before you could be in normal society again

Ignoring this, Jesus touched the coffin

The young man got up and began to speak

Fear seized them all

And in this fear, they cried out to God

This is the fear and amazement that so often go together

We draw back and at the same time are drawn in

We need physical health

But we also need spiritual health

It is our spiritual death Christ came to prevent

We know that it is good to exercise

It is better to practice our faith

One builds up our body

The other builds up our spirit

Have you ever had a good exercise routine?

You get injured

Something comes up and takes you out of your routine

And you notice how difficult it is to get back on track

The same thing can happen spiritually

We can have a good spiritual life going

Then we begin to take things for granted

Perhaps we are tempted to miss Mass on a Sunday

We are tempted against chastity or purity

We are tempted to take something from school or work

Whatever it might be

And we fall

We rationalize

We make an excuse

We think this doesn't apply to me because I really love this other person

After the first fall

The second is much easier

Like Eve, we see we didn't die physically

We see so much of our physical life didn't change

And so we conform to sin in our lives

We become like the widow's son

And like the widow's son

Christ desires us to live

He reaches out and touches us

How?

In many ways

Through the sacraments

Through the Mass

Through Sacred Scripture

Through our friends and family as well

Often a simple conversation with another will be the spark needed

Sacramentals can help as well

Images of the saints in our homes and businesses

Prayers

God works through all of these and more

He desires our salvation

Yes, we know He loves us as we are

But He loves us too much to leave us where we are

With this in mind

The month of June is devoted to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The Family Life committee has acquired packets for devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary

I would like to invite Verna (Ann) up to tell you a bit about the packets in the pews

After which we will conclude with a blessing