

## 10C

On the sanctuary walls of St Michael's Chapel in Rivelin, three paintings depict Jesus raising people from the dead, Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus and the widows son of Nain. The fourth one has St Peter raising a person to life.

These raisings from the dead foreshadow Christ's own resurrection and ultimately ours at the end of time. Death is the due punishment for sin but since Original Sin has been washed away in baptism our true destiny is to live forever with God and share His life. St Paul says that our true homeland is in Heaven. He also reminds the Galatians that the gospel which he preaches is not a human message but has been revealed to Him by God. There is a great danger that we might overly concentrate on what is human and transitory in place of that which eternally endures. This even happens at church services.

I get the feeling that the Liturgy of the Mass after Vat 11 moved more towards the human than the divine. Gregorian chant, for instance went out the window even though the church never sanctioned this and silence throughout the Mass became practically non-existent. Pope Benedict through the introduction of the revised Missal in 2011 laid emphasis on restoring the balance. And I notice that last week Cardinal Sarah who is the liturgical watchdog in Rome suggests that the priests should not hesitate to say Mass '*ad orientem*' which is facing east and with his back to the people apart from the liturgy of the Word. Vatican 11 never forbade this.

Earthly liturgy is meant to be a foretaste of heavenly liturgy. This comes out particularly in the singing of the Sanctus or 'Holy, Holy'. All the angels and saints in heaven unite their voices with ours in proclaiming the glory of God.

By raising people from the dead in his lifetime, such as the

widow's son Jesus was reassuring us of life beyond this present one, something we should never forget. Remember the harrowing story of the foolish bridesmaids. Fools in the gospel are not those intellectually challenged but those who live their lives without thinking of God or their ultimate destiny. Psalm 14 put it succinctly, 'the fool says in his heart there is no god above'

Even at Catholic funerals these days the emphasis seems to have moved away from praying for the happy repose of the soul of the deceased to celebrating their life. I get the distinct feeling that church funerals, are becoming less catholic and more humanist. We're not saying you say nothing about the person who's died but the church actually advises priests not to give long-winded, over the top eulogies. To me that makes sense.

One of the prefaces for the Mass for Lent sums it up poignantly in these words, "may we so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things which eternally endure". If we take these words to heart, we can't go far wrong.