

Easter Vigil 2021  
 Ezekiel 37: 1-14  
 Can These Bones Breathe?  
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 April 3, 2021

Blessings this night.

The temple has fallen, 587, Jerusalem is gone. The Babylonians rule and we are a people of the exile, a tribe of despair.

I was in a valley, a desert valley filled with desiccated, dry, white, light dead bones—all around—where I looked, where I walked. I stopped moving, for I could not bare the snap, crack and pop of the bones as my foot pressed down on them.

A voice said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?”

“Only you o Lord know, I do not.”

The voice said, “Prophecy to the bones, say to them, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, The Lord said I will cause breath to enter you, I will lay sinews, muscles and tendons upon you, skin will cover you. I will put breath in you, so that you may live. And so I said, all I had heard.

There was a noise, a rattling, not the sound of bones breaking, but of them mending, joining, knitting back together: bone to bone, sinews and flesh, skin covering. Then they stood, they stood before us, but there was no breath, no life. So the voice said to me, “Prophecy Mortal, call on the four winds, breathe on these O breath of God.

There they stood, a whole multitude, breath came into them and they lived.

But they had no being, for they had no future, no hope. Then the Lord said, “I will bring you back to land of Israel, I will put my Spirit in you and you shall live.”

Now more than ever we live in a valley of bones more than five hundred and fifty three thousand, nine hundred and fifty five people gone. Imagine their bones piled all around.

We are living in a valley of bones, a catastrophic time, it takes my breath away.

I Cannot Breathe...said  
 George Floyd  
 Eric Garner  
 Manuel Ellis  
 Elijah McClain.

“Say to them O Mortal, ‘I shall put my breath upon you and you shall live.’”

And you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken. Hear the Word of the Lord.

We stand here, gathered here this evening, though we are in a desert now, we know that God has acted before— And God will act in the future and God is acting now, thru us. Through us mortals.

What I know from God in the past, we cannot just be with these bones, we cannot just bare silent witness to these bones, we must talk to the bones, prophesy to the bones, remind them of our God, how our God has acted in the past:

Rescuing the Israelites from slavery and bondage in Egypt  
 Saving Hagar in the desert,  
 Joseph in the hole,  
 Ruth with no food or friends  
 Daniel in the Lion's den  
 Esther with her people  
 Mary with her Child  
 The Woman at the Well,  
 Lazarus and his sisters.

We have to prophesy and talk to the people and remind them of how God has acted in the past:

Harriet Tubman and her railroad  
 Thurgood Marshal and his cases  
 Malcom and his power  
 Martin and his movement.

God has acted. We must love these dry bones and live into the future with them. For now, in this moment, God prepares on this most Holy Night to act again. Offering all of us not just salvation history, but a Salvation future.

Can these bones live? Will you persevere in resisting Evil and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

I will, with God's help.

Can these Bones live?

Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

I will, with God's help.

Can these Bones live?

Will you seek and serve Christ, loving your neighbor as yourself?

I will, with God's help.

Can these Bones live?

Yes Lord, you know they can, and we will.

Amen.