

April 2, 2017 Lent 5
Reflection Wilderness Training: Back To Life
Rev Emma Chattin, Preaching

First Reading ~ Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of God came upon me, and brought me out by the spirit of God and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. God led me all around them — there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry — and said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?”

I answered, “O God, you know.”

Then God said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of God. Thus says God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am God.”

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then God said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.”

I prophesied as God commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then God said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am God, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, God, have spoken and will act, says God.”

Second Reading

~ adapted from Macrina Wiederkehr in “A Tree Full of Angels: Seeing the Holy in the Ordinary”

Do you remember when you were born? What did you have to boast of then? What freedom! To be so little that you protested not when good was being done for you! You did not refuse when gifts were being given to you. There was such a moment of receptivity. That was long ago at your beginning, from the moment of your conception until your birth, and even after your birth, until you were no longer content with being little. At that point, you were no longer able to experience your poverty with acceptance. You began to fight it and despair of it, and so your littleness lost its tremendous power and meaning. It became something to deny and run from rather than a way of being, a stance of life to be embraced and understood, thus making it possible for you to live with open hands, as a beggar, waiting for each moment's new gifts.

Every gift we receive feeds the little flame that we are. Recognizing the need for our littleness to be fed turns us into grateful people. We learn at a very early age to take off our shoes and stand in wonder. It delights God to see our tiny flame yearning to be fed, to be ignited.