

Lifting the Spirit: [Ezekiel 37:1-14](#)

One part of the Holy Communion service which I particularly love is the opening call and response of the Eucharistic Prayer: “The Lord is here. His Spirit is with us.”

Whatever we have been through, however we are feeling, whether full of joy or broken with grief or somewhere in between, this simple exchange reminds us of God’s presence. His Spirit is with us.

In our reading from Ezekiel, the prophet is brought into the middle of a



valley full of bones. The vision looks hopeless, for the bones are “very dry.” In human terms, there is nothing here to give any promise of hope. How can dry bones have any life?

Ezekiel and many of his fellow Jews have been exiled to Babylon. They

grieve their loss: “Our bones our dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.” They are from home, with no obvious way of returning to Israel.

Yet, just as for us, so for Ezekiel and the exiled people of Israel: “The Lord is here. His Spirit is with us.”

The Hebrew word for “breath” with which God promises to fill these dry bones can also mean “spirit”. In English, we talk about people being “inspired”; those whose ideas seem to be filled with life and encouragement, or even just a little “off the wall”. We enjoy listening to “inspirational” speakers, those who can give us the spirit of confidence and energy to do more than we might ever imagine.

God’s Spirit is more than just a good pep-talk, however. God brings life and wholeness into those situations where all appears hopeless. He is the creator God; who made the heavens and earth out of nothing. The powerful image of “the Spirit of God-hovering over the waters” at the start of the book of Genesis is a reminder that his Spirit is poised to bring everything to life. He loves his creation.

God loves his creation so much that he gave his only Son Jesus to die for us. This Fifth Sunday of Lent is the beginning of the period known as Passiontide, where we begin our focus on Jesus’ journey from his

triumphal entry to Jerusalem to his death on the cross. It may seem as if this journey is one which can lead only to death and despair, but instead it draws us to lasting peace and hope.

We are in a period of great uncertainty. I am sure, like me, many of you are missing being in company with others, worshipping and sharing Communion together. It may feel as if our spirits are but dry bones.

But this is not the end! The Lord is here. His spirit is with us.

As we travel into this period of “deep Lent”, let us dwell on the promise of God’s spirit with us. Let us be inspired with his love, and inspire others, so that the dry bones come back to life.

Rev’d Vicky Barrett

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine;
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

Edwin Hatch

[Listen to "Breathe on me Breath of God"](#)