

share what we experience. What we experience forms us as Christians and in turn brings others to experience for themselves the love, peace and hope of eternal life . When we begin to be channels of God's love in whatever way we are gifted by the Spirit then we begin to realise that in **Knowing Jesus** we can be involved in **making Him known**.

Ministry Musings (2nd April 2017)

“Ezekiel connected dem dry bones,
Ezekiel connected dem dry bones,
Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones,
Now hear the word of the Lord.

Toe bone connected to the foot bone
Foot bone connected to the heel bone
Heel bone connected to the ankle bone
Ankle bone connected to the shin bone
Shin bone connected to the knee bone
Knee bone connected to the thigh bone
Thigh bone connected to the hip bone
Hip bone connected to the back bone
Back bone connected to the shoulder bone
Shoulder bone connected to the neck bone
Neck bone connected to the head bone

Now hear the word of the Lord.

Dem bones, dem bones gonna rise again.

Dem bones, dem bones gonna rise again.

Dem bones, dem bones gonna rise again.

Now hear the word of the Lord.”

No ~ I'm not being flippant ! This is the fifth week of Lent and we are entering Passiontide which of course leads us to the Easter Feast on 16th April. During Lent we reflect on all the times that we do not behave as part of the Body of Christ in whatever way draws us away from walking closely with our God ~ how God offers us His Son to enable us to eliminate all those distractions from our life and come into relationship with Him once more. So what has the Spirit revealed to you about the way you treat or live your faith this Lent? What are you going to do about being part of Christ's Body in this place? The letter to the Romans tells us that *“The mind governed by the flesh is death but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace”* We all know the truth of that ~ yet avoid changing our lives whilst wanting peace ~ we can't have it both ways!

Our Gospel reading today recalls the raising of Lazarus and his sister's emotions and reactions to their brother's death and Jesus response.

God, through His Son and our Saviour, Jesus Christ offers us new life and, through the Holy Spirit facilitates us living that new life to the full.

As we approach Easter ~ what are you waiting for ~ **Knowing Jesus ~ making Him known** ~ is our task as the Body of Christ in this place so what part of the body are you?

Ezekiel 37: 1-14 OT page 820
Romans 8: 6-11 NT page 153
John 11: 1-45 NT page 101 5th Sunday of Lent

Today sees the commencement of Passiontide ~ we journey through the week that leads us to Palm Sunday and then on through Holy Week. This is possibly the clearest account of pilgrimage in the New Testament ~ we journey with our Lord as He shows us just what limits He will reach to show us the Love of the Father and the relationship that God desires to have with each of us. In today's readings we hear first why God's Love has to be shown to us so clearly ~ Ezekiel the prophet is taken to view a valley of dry bones that represent the people of Israel and their attitude to their Lord (creator God). Ezekiel is told to tell the bones that the Lord will breathe into the bones and give them new life ~ God does not want to give up on His children ~ always prepared to give another opportunity for them to worship and honour Him and to return into relationship with Him.

Sadly the children of Israel could not maintain a consistent response of thanksgiving to God's Love and so we have the Passion of Christ, the incarnate Son of God to give us the once and for all opportunity to return into the loving embrace of the Father. Paul writes to the church in Rome that we need to recognise God's love and prevent ourselves from putting up any barriers that will hinder that relationship ~ he talks of minds that are governed by flesh being destined to destruction and death and minds that are governed by the Spirit of God being destined for life and peace. He reiterated this by reminding us that whilst living in the realms of the flesh we cannot please God. Archbishop Justin expands on this in Dethroning Mammon as he sets out to explain that what we give we gain ~ he looks at the burial of Jesus and the role of two of the fairly unknown followers of Jesus in this event. Both gave and gained and they give us examples of recognising what motivates and drives our behaviour and attitudes. When we understand how we tick then we are more likely to be able to be governed by the Spirit

rather than by the flesh! Very often this is a conscious decision on our part ~ starting with our accepting Jesus as Lord and growing from that decision and commitment. We can be very generous and give abundantly from whatever little we have ~ we do not need to be affluent or particularly financially well off ~ but we do have to recognise that we can only give from what we have and not make that the excuse not to bother to make a start ~ we have to take the first tentative step to make the pilgrimage at all!

One of the most significant of the Passiontide events is recorded in our gospel today ~ that of the death of Lazarus, the attitude of Jesus and the attitudes of Lazarus' sisters to both their brothers death and their friend Jesus in the way He responds. Throughout Passiontide Jesus continues to each and set examples ~ He desperately desires that the people should know their God and understand that they have access to Him.

The raising of Lazarus is no exception to this desire to teach the people of God's Love and that we need to place our trust in that Love.

Lazarus will humanly die as every normal human being does ~ but for now he becomes the visual aid to knowing new life. Lazarus is raised from the tomb 4 days after dying ~ the impossible is possible with God.

We need to remember the cultural practices of the day, the lack of any woman to have a value in her own right within the Jewish Nation and thus the important of men to the women folk for their security.

We also need to grapple with the attitude of the authorities who cannot respond to change that is not of their making and although their Scripture shows God provides miracles simply cannot handle this man ~ a carpenter turned Rabbi ~ being the channel of God's work! This is the pivotal antagonist deciding the authorities and setting their hearts on plotting to have Jesus destroyed. ~ and so we journey, seeking to learn from Jesus all that He has to reveal to us and respond to it . Our Lord wants us to know him and to