

Lazarus. Come Out!

5ALent

Lazarus Story has special meaning to me. – Dad
“Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty he’s
free at last.”

I believe in Resurrection because of stories
like those we have heard during Lent.

- Samaritan Woman at the Well.
- The Paralytic at the Pool of Siloam
- The Blind Man cured by Jesus on the Sabbath
- The Raising of Lazarus

I believe in the possibility of Resurrection because of
A Samaritan Woman – an outcast in her community
A failure 5 times in marriage.

A Samaritan Woman – who was raised to a new
vision

of her own worth and potential
through a personal encounter with Jesus
who offered her the living water of Faith.

I believe in the possibility of Resurrection
because of a crippled man –
unable to get himself the help he needs to reach the
pool

that promises healing . . .

but - touched by Jesus and given a second chance
at life

on the Sabbath.

I believe in the possibility of Resurrection because of a man born blind – condemned to a life of darkness by what he and his community believes are the sins of his heritage.

A man who sees the light - for the first time - through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ – who risks breaking convention – and cures the man on the Sabbath.

And, I believe in the possibility of Resurrection because of a man named Lazarus –

- already dead for 4 days
- bound in burial wraps and entombed.

But out of compassion . . . the dead man is given a second chance at life by Jesus Christ who had the power to command that Lazarus be freed of the bonds of death and set free.

These stories from the gospels of Lent Cover the gamut of second chances at life prayed for in this parish church today.

For in our midst – and in ourselves is the dis-ease of

- broken marriages and relationships,
- broken spirits, broken hearts,
- Dry bones – craving living water and a second chance at life and happiness.

For in our midst – and in ourselves are broken bodies,

- physically and spiritually
- dis-eased and addicted, tired and lonely

- waiting for the intercession of caring hearts willing to help us into the pool of second chances.

For in our midst – and in ourselves are hearts

- blinded by sin
- blinded by self righteousness
- blinded by anger and hatred
- unable to find the way to reconciliation and hope
- unable to restore our faith and friendships.

And, in our midst today, are

- dead men and women walking
- dead souls living – but in need of God's Spirit.
- Baptized, but in need of re-birth
- Dry bones in need of raising.

It is for those among us who are . . .

estranged, broken, blind and spiritually dead
that the Church offers these Lenten gospels.

It is for those of us who need

- a second chance,
- who need a spiritual make-over

that the Church offers this opportunity

to look into the mirror of our lives

and find at our side

the person who has the power

to help us lay down the burdens

that have bound us

and rise from our tombs into new life . . .

now, today, on this Sabbath . . .

and at the time of our earthly death.

That person is Jesus Christ.

And, only in him, will our souls find healing, peace, and new life.

This Lent, Bishop Clark has invited us to walk with him and tens of thousands of Roman Catholics in our Diocese in search of a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ, so that we might be raised and our Spirits might come alive.

During the next two weeks, the Church and our parish Will offer many opportunities to help our Spirits - Come Alive.

1. On Wednesday night, following an Irish meal prepared and served by our parish staff, we will experience the very powerful witness of singer Renee' Bondi.

Renee's video presentation is entitled "Back on My Feet Again" a story of how, with Christ's help, she was able to find hope and spiritual healing after a sudden paralyzing accident.

2. Next Saturday at Noon, you are invited to a two-hour mini-retreat with Bishop Clark right here in our Church.

3. Then, at 2:30 p.m. we'll celebrate our Lenten Communal Reconciliation Service.
(St. Gabriel's will celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation on Monday, March 17 at 7 p.m.)
4. Next Sunday, we enter into Holy Week by listening to the reading of the Passion and through it experience the anguish and pain suffered by the innocent Christ
so that we might be freed from our sins and rise with him.
5. During Holy Week, through our prayer, fasting, almsgiving and the profound liturgies of the Triduum, there are so many opportunities to experience personally our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ . . .

For it is only Jesus Christ, who has the power and desire to heal brokenness, heal our blindness, quench our thirst for meaning, and bring our dead spirits to new life.

This is the God and Savior Ezekiel speaks of in today's 1st reading. Listen as this same Jesus speaks to your heart.

“O my people!

I will open your graves and have your rise from them.

I will put my spirit in you that you may live. . . .
thus you shall know that I am the Lord.

I have promised, and I will do it says the Lord.”