

Homily for April 9, 2000
5th Sunday in Lent Cycle A

By Father Charles Bowes

Ezekiel 37:12-14
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:1-45

God calls us to stand, to rise to new life.

What brings us to our feet? What makes a crowd go crazy to the point that folks in the rear call out: "Down in front!" A famous person passing by?

The Pope? A great performance? The winning run of a tied ball game? But other things bring us to our feet...the doctor comes from the surgery with the latest news. A bride and groom stand and say, "I do." An alien becomes a citizen and says for the first time, "I pledge allegiance..." A crawler becomes a toddler. The people who are to be baptized and received into full communion are called by name to stand within our midst. And do we not stand with them, bless them? Kneeling is not enough, for we are meant to rise again...we are children of God, and that dignity requires that we stand. "Oh my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them, and bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and have you rise from them, oh my people!"

And Lazarus didn't crawl out of that tomb bound hand and foot: "Lazarus, come forth...and he came forth."

Do not our Elect for the sacraments of Easter remind us of the dignity we all share – our common calling? We are not to remain entombed or dead...even if our legs fail us...that is not our ultimate destiny...even if our life should fail us...we lose only our limitations when we die. Is not our God the God of the open grave, the empty tomb? When we descend into the grave, countless times in life or ultimately in death, we find out that God is God "as advertised," the God who raises us up and has us stand tall and straight. "I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord."

I will invite Mrs. Klich, our Pastoral Associate, to call our Elect to stand so that we might follow their good example.

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