

Every once in a while I get this overwhelming feeling that the pace of our lives is our undoing. I feel sometimes like somehow things are moving so quickly that I can barely stay on top of them. – And that there's an everpresent and underlying anxiety, that I've missed or forgotten something -- something very important that will come back to haunt me at a time I least expect it or need it to.

Have you ever thought that – or felt like that?

I think that sometimes our lives become overwhelmed and smothered by the demands of the unnecessary: We have so much to do and so little time in which to do it that we soon find ourselves rushing here and rushing there — And all the while, the stress of our constant rushing takes its toll. And the demands (*many of them legitimate*) pull at us from all sides threatening to dismember us..

And in order to survive the pace of our lives we sometimes try to escape.. We turn to superficiality -- we drown our stress by consuming things — we try to escape with more activity — but eventually what we end up with is a dry dusty passionless ordinariness. *We end up with dry bones..*

- Things become ordinary and we end up with broken hearts, wasted hours and an insatiable desire for more. *We end up with just bones..*
- And we don't lose our faith; we just forget what it was like to be lost. And we don't have time or energy to find out again. *Dry bones..*
- And we grow so accustomed to reciting The Lord's Prayer that it becomes ordinary and we ignore the words; Worship becomes so ordinary and commonplace that we don't show up. With the passing of time, the cross becomes so shrouded and cluttered that we're safely out of reach of any change. *Dry bones*
- And we don't lose our homes or our families -- something worse happens they get ordinary — covered with drabness. Evening gowns are replaced with bathrobes; nights on the town replaced with evenings in the recliner; romance replaced with routine. The wedding pictures in the hall get so covered with dust that they become another couple from another time. *Just dry bones..*

We stand in a valley of dry bones.. I close my eyes, and I see it: Sightless skulls, here and there.. scattered ribcages lying about.., tibia and fibula in disarray.. pelvic bones bound.. Scapulas strewn.. The scene of ultimate dismemberment.

But into that valley, comes God's word:

"Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel..."

Can these bones live? Yes, somehow through God's grace these bones live. Like the song says,

*The toe bone connected to the foot bone,
The foot bone connected to the ankle bone,
The ankle bone connected to the leg bone,
The leg bone connected to the knee bone,
The knee bone connected to the thigh bone,
The thigh bone connected to the hip bone,*

and so on..

The bones become reconnected to one another and receive new life.

That which was **DIS**membered becomes **RE**membered, through God's grace.

It's that way with our lives, too.

Somehow, through God's action, things get put back together for us, when we accept God's help.

And the process of putting it all back together, fixing dismembered lives begins by re-membering. By telling the stories of God's promise, telling the stories of who Jesus is, and what he did. It includes re-membering our baptisms, our own entry into Jesus' resurrection. It includes actually acting out some of the things he did and asked us to continue: Coming together as followers of Jesus, regardless of which faith community -- sharing the story and the custom -- baptizing new members -- eating bread, drinking wine, and sharing fellowship.

The process of putting it all together begins with re-membering: Concentrating on the things that tie us together, as individuals, as families and as faith communities - not the things which will push us apart. The process of being "*one as Jesus and the Father are one*" begins here and continues elsewhere with our reaching out in so many different ways to those around us -- not only in our words, but in our actions and in our hearts.

This is Lent. A time to very literally, "REMEMBER," in all senses of the word. To slow down -- to turn down the volume so we can hear what God is calling us to do -- to turn down the glare so we can see God's wondrous action all around us -- and to remember. To somehow put it back together so we can focus on those things in our lives that are truly important:

Kindness shown, love shared, and life and time spent together in generosity and forgiveness.

In short, as Paul would describe it,

Life lived in Christ

Amen