Prophet
Ezekiel 37:1-14

The hand of the LORD
came upon me,
and he brought me out
by the spirit of the LORD
and set me down
in the middle of a valley;
it was full of bones.

2 He led me all round them;
there were very many lying in the valley,
and they were very dry.

3 He said to me,
'Mortal, can these bones live?'

I answered,
'O Lord GOD, you know.'

4 Then he said to me,
'Prophesy to these bones,
and say to them:
O dry bones,
hear the word of the LORD.

5 Thus says the Lord GOD
to these bones:

I will cause breath to enter you,
and you shall live.

6 I will lay sinews on you,
and will cause flesh to come upon you,
and cover you with skin,
and put breath in you,
and you shall live;
and you shall know
that I am the LORD.'

7 So I prophesied
as I had been commanded;
and as I prophesied,
suddenly
there was a noise,
a rattling,
and the bones came together,
bone to its bone.

8 I looked,
and there were sinews on them,
and flesh had come upon them,
and skin had covered them;
but there was no breath in them.

9 Then he said to me,
'Prophesy to the breath,
prophesy, mortal,
and say to the breath:

Thus says the Lord GOD:
Come from the four winds, O breath,
and breathe upon these slain,
that they may live.'

10 I prophesied
as he commanded me,
and the breath came into them,
and they lived,
and stood on their feet,
a vast multitude.

11 Then he said to me,
'Mortal,
these bones are the whole house of Israel.

They say,
"Our bones are dried up,
and our hope is lost;
we are cut off completely."

12 Therefore prophesy,
and say to them,
Thus says the Lord God:

I am going to open your graves,
and bring you up from your graves,
O my people;
and I will bring you back
to the land of Israel.

13 And you shall know
that I am the Lord,
when I open your graves,
and bring you up
from your graves,
O my people.

14 I will put my spirit
within you,
and you shall live,
and I will place you
on your own soil;

then you shall know
that I,
the Lord,
have spoken
and will act,
says the Lord.'

Epistle
Romans 8:*18-21,* **22-27**

18 I consider
that the sufferings of this present time
are not worth comparing
with the glory about to be revealed to us.

19 For the creation waits with eager longing
for the revealing of the children of God;

20 for the creation was subjected to futility,
not of its own will
but by the will of the one
who subjected it,
in hope
21 that the creation itself will be set free
from its bondage to decay
and will obtain the freedom
of the glory of the children of God.

22 We know
that the whole creation
has been groaning
in labour pains
until now;

23 and not only the creation,
but we ourselves,
who have the first fruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly
while we wait for adoption,
the redemption of our bodies.

[24]For in hope
we were saved.

Now hope
that is seen
is not hope.

For who hopes
for what is seen?

[25]But if we hope
for what we do not see,
we wait for it
with patience.

26 Likewise
the Spirit helps us
in our weakness;
for we do not know how to pray
as we ought,
but that very Spirit
intercedes
with sighs too deep for words.

[27]And God,
who searches the heart,
knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit
intercedes
for the saints
according to
the will of God.

Reading the Prophet this Week

Let's take the choice offered by the RCL for Pentecost:
Ezekiel 37:1-14 instead of Acts 2:1-21
To allow a Hebrew scripture vision
Not only of resurrection, but of Spirit

Few of us are very familiar with the rest of Ezekiel
The work of a first-wave exile in 597BCE
Prone to psychotic vision, paralysis, raving PTSD
We would not relate to him well on purity or gender

This passage plays heavily on *ruah: (ruach)*
wind, breath, spirit – compare English translations
expressing active divine presence

The slain bones, scattered to 4 corners of earth
Are gathered in one valley, assembled into a *hayil*
Army, legion, host – compare English translations

As in Genesis' breath into clay,
This breath, into the rebuilt bones, ligaments, flesh, skin
Gives life back to the carcases made from bones

This prophecy is for the 'house of Israel',
Not to one individual
A promised return in this world, not the next

What will you make of this vision on Pentecost?
How does *ruah* inspire human spirit?
How is this like, or unlike, your idea of resurrection?

Reading the Epistle this Week

Again, let's take the choice offered by the RCL for Pentecost:
Romans 8:22-27- next week on Trinity, the preceding v12-17
Another figure of body or bodies birthed, raised from death

This is the whole creation, *ktisis*, not John's *kosmos* world
What 'futility', 'bondage to decay' needs putting right –
and how is it effected by divine act through human change?

We tend to universalize the text, removed from context
To apply it to any human pain,
At bedside and graveside

I take Romans to be a late product from Paul,
Express audience Rome, en route to Spain,
Implied audience the whole Roman world –
A summary of his theology, not an *ad hoc* newsy note

Romans is pivotal for Reformers, Calvin and Luther,
Source of slogans about justification by faith
Barth revisited it after WWI, rejecting liberal theology –
It's not our subjective belief, but divine faithfulness

The *Pneuma* Spirit is capitalized,
And we freight it with trinitarian theology

Sōmaton hēmōs body of us –
individual or collective body?

We focus on the character traits of patient hopefulness –
Anchored in what vision of hope, beyond wishes? (Nouwen)

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

26 'When the Advocate* comes,
whom I will send to you from the Father,
the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father,
he will testify on my behalf.

27 You also are to testify
because you have been with me
from the beginning.

'I did not say these things to you from the beginning,
because I was with you.

5 But now I am going to him who sent me;
yet none of you asks me,
"Where are you going?"

6 But because I have said these things to you,
sorrow has filled your hearts.

7 Nevertheless, I tell you the truth:
it is to your advantage that I go away,
for if I do not go away,
the Advocate* will not come to you;
but if I go, I will send him to you.

8 And when he comes,
he will prove the world wrong
about sin
and righteousness
and judgement:

[9]about sin,
because they do not believe in me;

[10]about righteousness,
because I am going to the Father
and you will see me no longer;

[11]about judgement,
because the ruler of this world
has been condemned.

12 'I still have many things to say to you,
but you cannot bear them now.

[13]When the Spirit of truth comes,
he will guide you into all the truth;
for he will not speak on his own,
but will speak whatever he hears,
and he will declare to you
the things that are to come.

[14]He will glorify me,
because he will take what is mine
and declare it to you.

[15]All that the Father has is mine.
For this reason I said
that he will take what is mine
and declare it to you.

Reading the Gospel This Week

I've added the gospel appointed for Pentecost –
We've tried before to navigate John on this:
Paraclete – which I call Parakeet
Advocate – Teacher – compare English translations

I'd prefer to avoid the *Paraclete* this year,
Preferring Ezekiel's *Ruah* and Paul's *Pneuma*
I'd welcome your wisdom
On this pneumatology of divine and human spirits

If you do engage this text –
Is the 'Spirit of truth' different than the Parakeet?
Why is it masculine, rather than feminine?

How does the Spirit talk to you?
Is it a different voice than Jesus'?
What guidance to you get in prayer?