

22

Mar

Redemption Road

Renewed in Mercy

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, YEAR A

However you approach this constellation of passages, pay attention to how they point your congregation toward the redemption road, the road that leads us toward the cross, resurrection, and into the whole world.

REFERENCES

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

COLORS

Purple

On this last Sunday before Holy Week, we encounter a constellation of texts that, when put together, offer a description of the road we travel—the redemption road. We encourage you to find ways to incorporate each text into your service in some way. Perhaps you sing a version of Psalm 130 as a preparation for prayer. Examples include “Out of the Depths I Cry to You” (*United Methodist Hymnal* 515), “Out of the Depths” (*The Faith We Sing* 2136), or a setting by Thurlow Weed and Christopher Webber found [here](#). You could also use a simple setting of Psalm 130, such as Ruth Duck’s in *The Faith We Sing*, to weave into the reading of the gospel lesson, juxtaposing the raising of Lazarus with our cries of lament and our hope for healing.

Romans 8:6-11 is, like many of Paul’s letters, quite dense. Yet, there are opportunities to pull prayer responses from the passage. During a prayer of confession, you might paraphrase verse six as a

congregational response. Verse 11 would make a great start for a benediction. So, whether you read the whole passage or not, there are threads from this epistle that can be incorporated into worship.

Ezekiel 37:1-14 is often included in Easter Vigil services, and for good reason. The description of dry bones coming to life is a potent image of resurrection. Yet, in the context of Lent, the dry bones can also speak to us of the weariness of holding out hope and our need for the Spirit's breath to keep hope alive, to inspire us to continue on the redemption road. If you read this passage in worship, I encourage you to recruit a couple of percussionists ahead of time to play underneath the scripture reading. As the passage begins, have them start quietly and grow in sound and intensity as the bones come together and receive the breath of life. You might even let just the percussion play for a bit after reading verse ten. Then, let the drums go silent as the reader finishes with verses eleven through fourteen.

However you approach this constellation of passages, pay attention to how they point your congregation toward the redemption road, the road that leads us toward the cross, resurrection, and into the whole world.

//

[Notice at collection](#)

[Your Privacy Choices](#)

