

## **Quasimodo Geniti, A ✕ D 2010**

### **John 20:19-31**

*In the Name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

1 Can the dead raise themselves? Can dead bones live? Can doubting Thomas believe? Can you by your own reason and strength believe in the Lord Jesus Christ or come to Him? Can dead hearts be willed into having faith. Can bone come to bone and join themselves together, can they grow sinews and skin, can they breathe life into themselves? Can ten apostles huddled together in fear talk themselves out of being afraid? Can the dead raise themselves? No.

2 Quasimodo Geniti, as newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk. Seemingly even before American pastors ever thought to lament the precipitous decline in attendance from Easter to the Second Sunday in Easter, the Church devised Quasimodo Geniti as a call to the newly baptized, newly confirmed, newly initiated, as well as to those who have been through innumerable Easters: crave pure spiritual food. Eight days after their baptism and confirmations, the new converts would hear this exhortation along with the old-timers and life-longers: crave pure spiritual milk of the Word of God, that by it you may mature into Christ.

3 Thomases full of doubt, crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word of Christ. Hear and believe. The Word dispels doubt. Disciples locked away for fear of the world, crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word of Christ. His peace, His shalom, is forgiveness, which quells fears. Women, frightened by the absence of your Lord's body in the grave, startled when the prophecies come true, crave the pure spiritual milk of the word of Christ. Faith comes by hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. Men on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, men hearing the word Christ speaks but disbelieving, not understanding for the preconceptions you bring the that word, men hearing but never submitting to the word, crave the pure spiritual milk of the word of Christ. The word opens hearts to receive faith, opens eyes to see and ears to hear. New Christians, struggling with the depth of the faith, crave the pure spiritual milk of the word of Christ, that by it you may mature in Him who has given you this new life. You born again in Holy Baptism shortly after your first birth, continue to crave the pure spiritual milk of the word of Christ that you may continue to grow in faith and knowledge. That which does not grow is dead.

4 The Word of the Lord came to the valley of dry, dead bones. At His Word, bones joined together; tendons grew to hold them together; muscles fleshed them out; organs grew in their cavities; and skin packaged them into recreated bodies. Then the Spirit-breath of the Lord blew life back into them. No wonder the Introit exhorts you to crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word. The Word gives life. And there was an exceedingly great army.

5 The Word came to the fear-filled apostles, trapped in fear and dead in sin. The Word Himself spoke to them, "Peace be with you." Dead bones rattled and came together and were covered with flesh and skin. Life came to the dead. And He breathed His Holy Spirit on them as He delivered His word of forgiveness: Peace. He who died a violent death to redeem these men from their sin, to deliver them from their decay of death gives them by His spoken word the gift of life. His death on the cross was for them. His taking human sin upon Himself in order to give to sinners worthy of death His righteousness and life was for them. Peace to you. Life

to you. Suddenly, there was life where there once was only death; there was forgiveness, where there once was only sin. There was hope where there formerly had been only fear. And there was an exceedingly great army, ten men in all.

6 Then the Word came to dead, faithless, doubting Thomas. The Word made Flesh bade Thomas stick his unbelieving finger into the nail holes and shove his faithless hand into the spear wound. Quit unbelieving and believe. The Word called Jesus showed Himself to Thomas the dead, Thomas the doubter, and with a word, spoke faith into his unbelieving heart, spoke life into his dead bones.

7 These eleven men went forth to bring the Word of Life to those dead in their sins. The Word comes to you, as well. In the midst of your fear, in the midst of your unbelief, in the midst of your despair over sin, the Word comes to you. And through these men and their successors, He speaks the same word of life to you: Peace be with you. Peace is delivered to you. The peace won through the violent death of Jesus on the cross is delivered to you in the peaceful waters of Holy Baptism. There, your dead bones were rattled to life and had the breath of the Holy Spirit breathed into them. The death and resurrection of Jesus became yours in the otherwise ordinary waters of Holy Baptism. Do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried into His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. And there was an exceedingly great army.

8 The Word made flesh has sent these men who have sent their successors to speak this very same word to you. This is the word of forgiveness, the word of Holy Absolution, the word which brings bone to bone and gives life to those dead in sin. Jesus wants so much to deliver to you this life-giving word of forgiveness that He created this Office on the day of His resurrection to deliver the forgiveness of sins. This is how you live: in the forgiveness of your sins. There is the benefit of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus for you. So live, dry bones and doubting Thomases. Be forgiven you denying Peters and despairing women. Do not disbelieve but believe. God loves you and wants to give you life in the forgiveness of sins. He has created the Office of the Ministry for you, for your benefit. He is risen from the dead. He is risen and wants to give you life and resurrection. And there is an exceedingly great army.

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Pastor Jeff Hemmer