

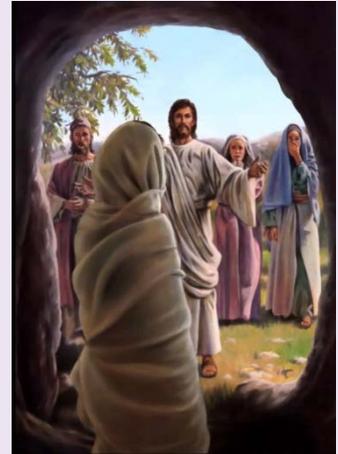
## *Where there is dominion/submission, let me sow mutuality*

**Sr. Joan Kobe, DW**

The Gospel for the fifth Sunday of Lent pictures for us Jesus calling Lazarus to come forth out of the tomb. And Lazarus does so. Yet he is still wrapped up in the burial cloths. Jesus engages the people around by telling them to unbind him. Only when they do so is Lazarus on an equal footing with his neighbors.

We do not usually use words like dominion and mutuality. However, we can use being bound or wrapped up, and equal footing to carry the same images.

Many years ago I lived in San Diego. On the way to work I was in an accident in which the car was totaled and I nearly was as well. After several weeks of healing, I was in need of a ride to the hospital for a progress check-up. A woman from the parish was to take me. Instead, she parked herself on the couch. I was stretched out on the other shorter couch. I could neither see straight, hence could not read –a tragedy in itself- nor could I walk but with a walker. Much as I pleaded, Julia refused to budge. She saw next to me a loose leaf binder from a workshop I had on a method of studying the Scriptures with adults. Julia's comment was "You have no right to keep your knowledge of the Scriptures to yourself." We were both in power and dependent situations. So we traded. Julia gave me a ride and when I was able to return to work, we began a two-year group adult study of the entire Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.



This spawned a second section in another location and a third in our local parish as well as a workshop to train other facilitators in the method. A member of the group meeting in Chula Vista was diagnosed with AIDS from contaminated blood. The group decided that their study of the Bible required them to respond to her and care for her which they did until she died. The Scriptures which they unwrapped impelled them to ministry and mutuality.

It has been my privilege to witness this again and again in the lives of people in different situations.

We as people need others to both call us forth, to unbind us; and we in turn call others forth and unbind others.

Currently, I see this among women who see no other option but to stay in situations of oppression because of lack of documents or language or funds. Some men hold women in thrall with threats of losing their child or being reported to immigration for deportation. A very real possibility for this exists in our present political climate. Nor only for women is this a danger. Some men work in fear of both their employers and those around them.

Seniors whose spouse has really been the dominant one are often very lost when the spouse dies. I have some women I care for who cannot manage their finances or their health care. One I see regularly panics and ends up tied in knots and unable to function. Unbinding for her is sometimes as simple as saying, stop, take a deep breath and then she is able to manage.

As we enter these last weeks of Lent, we have an opportunity to listen to Jesus calling us forth to be unbound. We can also listen to Jesus telling us to unbind others. Thus we make a reality the life and love of the kingdom of the one God whose beloved son or daughter we each are.