

## **EASTER-2024 RENEWED**

### **OPENING STORY: IRENA SENDLER**

In the early 1900s, a young woman named Irena Sendler lived in Warsaw, Poland. During World War II, when the Nazis occupied Poland and implemented the Jewish ghetto system, Irena worked as a social worker and used her position to help Jewish families.

Risking her own life, Irena joined an underground organization called Żegota and began smuggling Jewish children out of the ghettos. She would go into the ghettos, often disguised as a nurse or carrying a toolbox, and convince families to let her take their children to safety.

Irena devised a remarkable system to keep track of the children she rescued. She wrote down their real names and placed them in jars, burying them in a friend's garden. If the Nazis ever captured her, she hoped that the children's true identities could be revealed, allowing them to be reunited with their families after the war.

In total, Irena is estimated to have saved around 2,500 Jewish children from the horrors of the Holocaust. Sadly, in 1943, she was arrested by the Nazis and brutally interrogated. Despite the torture, she never revealed any information about the children or her underground activities.

Irena was sentenced to death, but members of Żegota managed to bribe a German soldier, and she was released. Irena went into hiding until the end of the war, and after Poland was liberated, she dug up the jars with the children's names and tried to locate their families. Sadly, many had perished in the Holocaust, but Irena was able to reunite some survivors with their loved ones.

Irena's story remained largely unknown until a group of students from Kansas discovered her heroic actions in 1999. They wrote a play about her, and Irena's story gained international recognition. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, and although she didn't win, her legacy lives on as a symbol of courage, compassion, and selflessness in the face of unimaginable evil.

Irena Sendler's incredible bravery and determination to save the lives of innocent children in the darkest of times serve as a reminder of the power of the human spirit.

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## **STORY LINK**

Deep within the human spirit lies the ability to TRANSCEND our faults, flaws, and frailty to achieve something more significant, to have FAITH that the impossible can be true, and to find HOPE that there is way more to our lives than we may see in our current circumstances. And in that transcendence, faith, and that hope, love beyond ourselves.

**Our human spirit was formed after God's character. And sadly, it has been eroded by circumstance and corroded by attitude.**

**When it comes to our human spirit - we need some revival and renewal.**

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## **JESUS DOES THE RENEWING**

### **John 14:6**

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

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## **THERE IS POWER IN THE RENEWAL**

### **Ephesians 1:18-20**

*I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.*

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## **THE LOSS:**

### **THE POWER TO TRANSCEND CIRCUMSTANCE**

From dust, we were created to display the character of the divine. (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7)

Genesis 2:7

Then, the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.

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## **THE POWER OF FAITH**

(To See the Unseen as Reality)

Made from dust but made to be the curators of life.

### **Genesis 1:28**

*Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."*

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## **THE POWER TO HOPE**

When all is lost, it is not lost at all. The power to hope comes from God's promises.

### **Genesis 3:15**

*And I will cause hostility between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.*

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## **THE GAIN:**

## **CONSIDER THE WORK OF JESUS**

### **Mark 2:16-17**

*16 When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw [Jesus] eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

He came for those who had lost the ability to see past their current circumstance, those who had nothing left to give, nothing left to hope for, dream for, or imagine—those who had been caught up in the disease of hopelessness, blame, and shame.

Those whom others despised—Jesus loved—accepted!

**He made it possible to say this:** I'm a miracle. I have been living a lie; I have cheated, stolen, and allowed myself to be distracted by all the wrong things. But because of Jesus' renewal, I am a new creation. He didn't just make a better version of the old me. He made a new me, a completely different me. I can see past my past and current circumstances - I have a future.

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## **CONSIDER THE CROSS OF JESUS**

### **1 Peter 2:24**

*He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.*

*...you are renewed*

*...you are transformed*

*...you are empowered*

*...you are freed*

*...you are made whole*

## TRANSCEND OUR CIRCUMSTANCE

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## **CONSIDER THE BURIAL OF JESUS**

It was the busiest sabbath of Jesus' existence. It was during the sabbath that he took care of fear and restored our hope.

### **1 Peter 3:19**

So he went and preached to the spirits in prison—

Those who never saw the promise deserved to know the truth of God's promises. Even those who died without believing in Him got to be taught and hear His words.

He is helping people realize His promise is true.

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## **CONSIDER THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.**

### **Acts 3:15**

*You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. (Peter)*

### **Hebrews 11:1**

*Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.*

We don't just celebrate a risen King today; we celebrate a risen YOU!

## **THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF JESUS.**

Romans 3:22

*<sup>22</sup> We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.*