

Unedited Emotions

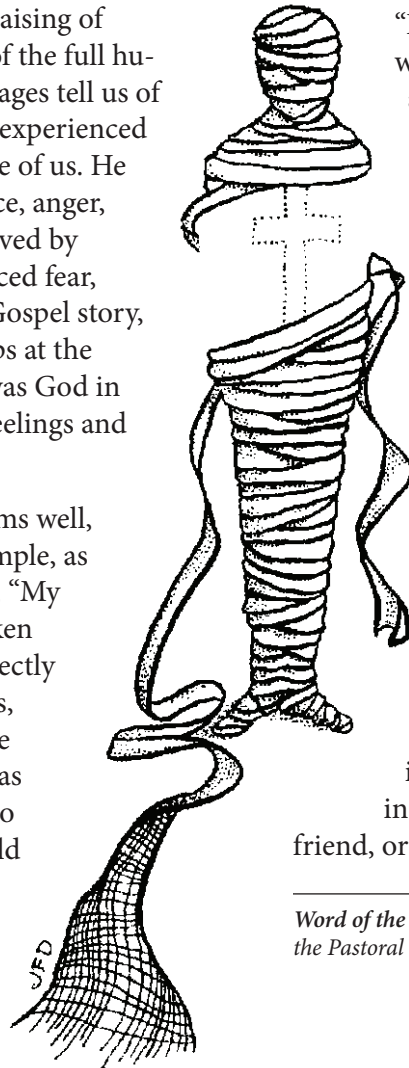
This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Ezekiel 37:12-14 - Promise of resurrection
- ▶ Romans 8:8-11 - The flesh and the Spirit
- ▶ John 11:1-45 - The raising of Lazarus

Although not all Catholics will recognize the first reading from Ezekiel in which God promises to raise the dead from their graves, most, if not all, Jews of Jesus' time would have been familiar with it. Certainly, Jesus knew of this prophecy, and so would his friends, Mary and Martha, who perhaps had this reading on their minds when their brother Lazarus died. In the second reading, Paul also wrote about physical death and his trust that God will raise the dead. All three readings, then, point to a reason for hope and belief that death will not have the final word.

This excerpt from the story of the raising of Lazarus gives us further evidence of the full humanity of Jesus. Other Gospel passages tell us of the normal human emotions Jesus experienced because, indeed, he did become one of us. He was not above feelings of impatience, anger, or tenderness. At times, he was moved by pity, felt compassion, and experienced fear, sadness, and even despair. In this Gospel story, he is deeply disturbed, and he weeps at the death of his friend Lazarus. Jesus was God in human form, but he experienced feelings and reactions typical to all of us.

As a good Jew, Jesus knew the Psalms well, and he quoted them freely, for example, as he cried out to God from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt 27:46) which is taken directly from Psalm 22:1. Like the psalmists, Jesus trusted that God could handle the unedited versions of what he was thinking and feeling. (The story also shows us that the human Jesus could handle the unedited versions of what other people were thinking and feeling—he does not chide Mary for her blunt accusation



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“You shall know that I am the Lord when I open your graves and have you rise from them.”

Sheepish Question:
In what ways do I need to strengthen my belief in God's power, particularly in the truth of resurrection?

“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”) We only do ourselves a disservice if we think we have to deny our true feelings to come before God. If we believe God knows us better than we know ourselves, we can't hide what we are feeling anyway. So let's give God the benefit of the doubt and trust that God can work with whatever we bring in its most raw form, just as Mary brought her honest response to Jesus.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Do you find it helpful to think of Jesus in human terms experiencing the full range of human emotions? Why or why not?
- 2 What emotions or feelings might these readings and reflections be inviting you to admit and express more fully in this coming week: to yourself, a trusted friend, or to God?