

Untie Him and Let Him Go

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Psalm 130:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45 or 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

The grave can't hold us! God boldly proclaimed that truth through Ezekiel in the bone-strewn valley of Israel's exile. But it was in the life of Jesus that the truth of the tomb's impotence was fully manifested. It's a message God earnestly desires to communicate.

"O my people," God says, "I will open your graves. . . . I have promised, and I will do it" (Ezekiel 37:12-14). It doesn't get much clearer than that. But wait—it does!

Jesus confronts the tomb not with promises, but with action. Moved to tears by the oppression of death, Jesus assumes the authority that was his from all eternity and taunts death with the simple words, "Come out." Death's undoing has begun. Yes, Lazarus will die again and reenter the tomb, but it won't be in darkness this time. When Lazarus dies again the light of Resurrection will surround him and the rulers of the night won't dare draw near him. That light will emanate from another tomb, in a city quite near to Bethany. In Jerusalem, Jesus, too, will enter a tomb and its darkness will embrace him, but it won't hold him for long. The burst of light that will emanate from the moment of his release will glow forever, penetrating every tomb—those six feet under and those in the recesses of our hearts—fulfilling the promise God made so long ago. Oh, but there's a catch: all this will be fulfilled only if we allow God's Spirit to dwell in us!



" . . . if only the Spirit of God dwells in you"
(Romans 8:9).

SHARING FAITH

- ◆ Israel was in exile when Ezekiel spoke this prophecy. In what aspects of your life are you "in exile" from your true self?
- ◆ God promises to raise the people from their graves and put life and spirit into them. Where has death invaded your life? Where do you most need God's Spirit to bring you back to life?
- ◆ We often cling to the large and small losses we experience. We hold grudges, engage in self-pity, and fail to live fully. Jesus asked Martha if she believed that he was the Resurrection and the life. Do you believe this? How can your faith help you live more abundantly?

LIVING THE LITURGY

- ◆ Jesus went and shared in the grief of Mary and Martha, even to the point of tears. Send a note of comfort to someone who has experienced loss during the past year. The surprise of an unexpected communication could prove especially healing.
- ◆ You know someone (perhaps yourself) who needs to be freed from the bondage of sin or addiction. Read the second half of this Gospel story every day this week as a prayer for someone who needs the grace and liberation Jesus promises.
- ◆ Mary and Martha interceded with Jesus to heal Lazarus. Our Baptism calls us to the priestly duty of interceding on behalf of others. Invite your family to pay special attention at Mass to the Prayer of the Faithful, or petitions. After Mass, see if your family can recall all of the intentions for which you prayed.