### LSW

children

How did Jesus bring Lazarus back to life? *By calling him out of the tomb. Note the miracle within the miracle --- dead people cannot hear but Lazarus did.*

Jesus called himself the resurrection and the life. What did he mean by that? Discuss how Jesus said that those who believe in him will never die but will live forever. Explain that Jesus has promised us eternal life in Paradise. For children less easily satisfied, you may need to use images of misery for death and images of happiness for life. If you have the time, you may wish to explain the other symbolisms in the reading as found in the adults leaflets but make sure they are not beyond the children’s capacity to understand.

*Discuss the significance of new life in baptism. Recapitulate the lessons of the last two Sundays. During baptism by immersion, the person to be baptised is immersed under water and re-emerges as a new person with a new life, a Christian. After being baptised at the Easter midnight mass, the newly baptised neophyte lights his candle from the Paschal candle. You may wish to refer to previous weeks’ leaflets. Also we all get Easter eggs, eggs to symbolise new life; and Easter bunnies, rabbits having their young in spring.*



###### BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God’s children?

**I do.**

Do you reject the glamour of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin?

**I do.**

Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

**I do.**

Do you believe in God, the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

**I do.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

**I do.**

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

**I do.**

Year A

# Fifth Sunday in Lent

# Images

Life of men

# Points to note

We have returned to using the Gospel reading. The account of the raising of Lazarus has a vividness that can only be captured by an eye-witness. The richness of detail and action will also appeal to children. To be viable as a children story however, an adapted short form of the reading is used.

The imagery used for the last three Sundays centres around the baptism. For this Sunday, the imagery is rather abstract, that of life. It is, of course, the ultimate goal of baptism. An appropriate object, if one has been used in the last two Sundays, would be a flower.

Much of the symbolism of Lent is lost on anyone who lives in the tropics. Spring, the meaning of the word ‘Lent’, is the season when seemingly dead trees that have shed its leaves in winter come back to life and flowers blossom. Spring is also the time when many animals like sheep and rabbits have their young. If this is explained to the children, care must be taken to ensure that the children do not get confused or lose their orientation.

**Liturgy**

## Acclamation before the Gospel

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;

Who ever believes in me will never die.

Glory and praise to you, O Christ!

##### Reading

Explain to the children that Lazarus was a close friend of Jesus and he had two sisters, Mary and Martha. Do they remember any story about them? Refer to Lk 10:38-42, if necessary.

The Lord be with you.

*All:*  And also with you.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St John

(Jn 11: 1-45)

Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus sent this message to Jesus, “Lord, the man you love is ill.” On receiving the message, Jesus said, “The sickness will not end in death but in God’s glory.” Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, but yet when he heard that Lazarus was ill he stayed where he was for two more days before saying to the disciples, “Let’s go.”

On arriving at Bethany, Jesus found that Lazarus had died and had been in the tomb for four days already. When Martha heard that Jesus had come she went to meet him and said, “If you had been here, my brother would not had died, but now I know that, even now, whatever you ask God, he will grant you.” Jesus said:

“I am the resurrection and the life.

Anyone who believes in me will live even if he dies,

and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

So you believe this?”

“Yes Lord,” she said. Mary then went to Jesus, and as soon as she saw him she threw herself at the feet of Jesus, saying, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not had died.” At the sight of her tears, Jesus said with a sigh that came straight from the heart, “Where have you put him?” They said, “Lord, come and see.” Jesus wept; and the Jews present said, “See how much he loved him!” But there were some who remarked, “He opened the eyes of the blind man, could he not have prevented this man’s death?” Still sighing, Jesus reached the tomb; it was a cave with a stone to close the opening. Jesus said, “Take the stone away.” Martha said to him, “Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day.“ Jesus said, “Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. Then Jesus lifted up his eyes and prayed:

“Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer.

I knew indeed that you always hear me,

but I speak for the sake of all these who stand round me,

so that they may believe that it was you who sent me.”

When he had said this, he cried in a loud voice, “Lazarus, here! Come out!” The dead man came out, his feet and hands bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, let him go free.”

Many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary and had seen what he did believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Dialogue**

When you look at an egg, does it look alive? *Helps if you have an egg handy.* *Make sure it is hard boiled of course.*  What happens if the mother hen sits on it for three weeks? *Discuss how things that look dead can come to life. Any other examples?*

In the reading, was Lazarus dead? *Stress that Lazarus was dead for four days by the time Jesus arrived. He was bound up like a mummy and place in a tomb. Explain that the tomb was not like the cemeteries that we have. It was a cave with a huge boulder rolled over its opening as a door.*

Jesus seemed to have taken his time to arrive at the home of Lazarus. This was to make sure that he had a dead body to bring back to life so that everybody could see God’s glory. If he had arrived early and Lazarus was still alive, he would only need to heal him and that wouldn’t be that great a miracle. *The Jews believed that the soul of a dead person will hang around the dead body for three days before finally going to the place of the dead.*