

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Lazarus comes back to life

INTRODUCTION

God is the giver of life, and for him, nothing is impossible. In today's Gospel we hear how a good friend of Jesus falls ill and dies. But death is not the end of life, and Jesus uses this event to show people that he is truly the Son of God.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light the candles we listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah. (*cf Isaiah 9:2-3, 6-7*)

The world was full of darkness and shadows, but now it is filled with light so everyone can see. God sent us his only Son, Jesus, to fill our world with peace and love.

SORRY

God is our loving Father and will always forgive us if we are truly sorry. Remember the story Jesus told about a loving father . . .

There was once a loving father whose son left home and lived a wicked and selfish life. This made his father very sad. One day the son came back and was truly sorry for all his mistakes. His father hugged him and forgave him for everything.

God is our loving Father and he will always forgive us if we are truly sorry.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 4: *Praise the Lord.*

GOSPEL (*cf John 11:1, 3-5, 17-29, 33-34, 39-44.*)

Lazarus and his two sisters Martha and Mary, were very good friends of Jesus. They lived in a town called Bethany, not far from Jerusalem, and Jesus often went to visit them. One day, the sisters sent an urgent message to Jesus, because Lazarus was very ill and close to death. Two days later Jesus and his disciples set off for Bethany, but when they arrived they found that Lazarus was dead, and had already been buried for four days. Martha ran to meet Jesus and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, you could have saved our brother.' Jesus said, 'Your brother will live again.' 'I know that on the last day he will come back to life,' she answered. Jesus turned to her and said, 'Anyone who believes in me will have eternal life, and he will never die. Do you believe this?' Martha answered him, 'Yes, Lord, because I know that you are the Son of God.'

When Jesus saw the great sadness of Martha and Mary and their friends, he was filled with love. 'Show me where he is buried,' he said. So they took him to the tomb, where Jesus said to them, 'Roll away the stone, and you will see God's glory.' They did as he said, and Jesus looked up to Heaven and prayed. 'Father, I thank you, for I know that you always listen to me. Let these people see and believe.' Then he called out in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, get up and come out!' To everyone's amazement Lazarus appeared, still wrapped in burial cloths, and walked from the tomb. Many people saw what happened that day, and they believed in Jesus.

DISCUSSION

How do you think Martha and Mary felt when their brother Lazarus died?

Have you known anyone that has died, and did you feel sad?

Martha believed in Jesus with all her heart. She knew that through the power of God he could do anything, even have power over death.

Where was Lazarus buried?

What did Jesus do before he told Lazarus to 'come out' of the tomb?

Do you think the people were frightened by what they saw?

If you had been standing in the crowd watching all this happen, do you think you would believe in Jesus more after you had seen Lazarus come back to life?

When did Jesus prove his power over death again?

The spirit of God raised Lazarus from the dead. He lives within each one of us, and through his power, we are raised up after death to join God in everlasting glory.

ACTIVITY

Using a pinboard fix the main Gospel characters in place to depict the scene at the tomb. Strips of tissue paper stuck onto 'Lazarus' can be used to represent the burial cloths.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord,
help us to be like Martha,
to see clearly that you are the Son of God
and the life of the world.
Make our belief,
and your life in us,
grow a little stronger each day of our lives.