

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:12-14
Response: *“With the Lord there is mercy and redemption”* (Ps. 129:7).
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 129:1-8
Second Reading: Romans 8:8-11
Gospel: John 11:1-45

Ever been down in the dumps? Ever seen people spiritually dead or lost and forsaken? Have you seen physical death or see someone die? Ever felt the loss of a loved one?

“Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord” (Ps. 129:1); and God hears our prayer. He sends us his beloved Son, now the Risen Lord breathes his loving Spirit and new life into us. The Risen Lord is present with all his grace and power. He has conquered death. He is alive.

Here is the fulfilment of the prophecy: *“I open your graves and raise you up”* (Ezek. 37:11). God shows Ezekiel how a dead nation will come to life. This is the plan of God for everyone. Still we come to the open grave and look at death staring us in the face. What is our destiny?

It seems we cannot escape. But we are not built for time we are built for eternity. We are not born to die. We are born to live, not just for a time but forever. *“I shall put my Spirit in you and you shall live”* (Ezek. 37:12). That is our destiny, to live like God. We are his image.

We are not like other creatures but made to be like the Creator himself, with his life, eternal life. *“The spirit of God has made his home in you”* (Rom. 8:11).

We are born, not simply to live in the flesh but to be in the Spirit, and live for ever after death. The Risen Lord is a witness, conquering death, proclaiming *“I am the resurrection”* (Jn. 11). In his resurrection we rise to new life. He died like us that we might become fully alive in him.

“Lazarus is dead” (Jn. 11:14). Jesus confidently raises him up. He *“will rise again”* (Jn. 11:24). Nothing in creation defies his power, not even death, as his voice thunders to the one who had been dead for four days: *“Lazarus, come forth”* (Jn. 11:43); and the dead rise.

The whole episode in today’s gospel is a living parable. We die physically and spiritually because of sin. Jesus, our Saviour summons us out of death, sin and darkness (tomb), into life.

This is the **Gospel**, written after Jesus’ death and resurrection, declaring he is the Risen Lord of life and death. He is present, yesterday, today and tomorrow, for you and for me.

We celebrate this **Liturgically** as we journey through the season of Lent, dying to self, preparing for the glorious new life of Easter.

Our **Creed** teaches Jesus was crucified, died and buried. On the third day he rose again.

Our Lenten **Action** is fasting, prayer, penance and almsgiving, a means of dying to self so that Christ may be more alive in us.

In an evangelization sense, dying to self could mean making sacrifices to win others for Christ. The missionary will take opportunities to serve neighbour in order to show the way to the Lord.

FOR THE CHILDREN



Who died in the GOSPEL. Who came to raise him up?

What does it mean to die? What does the resurrection mean?
(TEACHING)

Where can we meet the risen Lord today?

We meet him in the **EUCCHARIST**.

One also meets the Risen Lord in his people, in you and me. This is **WITNESS**, showing Christ to the world and seeing Christ in others.

FOR TEENAGERS (*Insight into LIFE TEEN approach*).

The teens are reminded that death wasn't God's plan but the result of a choice by our first parents. Here, for humanity, the desire for power was more important than intimate union with God, pushing life away and choosing death. Humanity abused its power to choose.

Now we look at death in the face. We see it in the Bible, such as the death of Lazarus and we see it all around us.

Jesus conquers death and saves us. (His name means: 'Saviour'). Today we see him calling Lazarus from the tomb. He frees us too from sin and death. If we want to be saved, we have to make choices that lead to life.

"We have to abandon the empty promises of materialism and renounce the brief thrills of sin. We have to listen to the summons to come out of the tombs we constructed and come into the light of the Lord. The raising of Lazarus prepares us for the Easter celebration."(i)

Here focus is given to key words and key themes, such as 'Resurrection' and 'Repentance' and 'placing all our trust in God.'

(i) **LIFE TEEN. LITURGY PLANNING GUIDE.** *Life Teen, Inc. USA. 2011. pp.33,34.*

P.S. Life Teen is a highly recommended Catholic apostolate for Teenagers.

RCIA

Note key words and sentences in today's Gospel. "**The one you love is ill**" (Jn.11:3), "**The sickness will not end in death**" (v.4), "**Jesus loved**" (5), "**Jesus wept**" (35), "**If you believe**" (40), "**You will see the glory of God**" (40) and "**unbind him**" (44).

What do these words mean to you in your journey of life, your journey of faith, especially in the RCIA?

LIFE EXPERIENCE

We all, sooner or later, have to face the reality of death, '*mors omnibus communis.*'(i) Having terminal cancer, my brother-in-law knew he hadn't long to live. We spoke about many things and finally reached the eschatological topic. He handled it better than I thought. We concluded with a promise to each other. I pray for him to meet the Lord in heaven; and when he does, he will put a word in for me. I kept my promise and I know he will keep his. How great is the mystery of the Church in heaven and Church on earth, one body of Christ.

(i) **FIELDING Henry.** *History of TOM JONES. A Foundling.* Wordsworth Classics, Great Britain. 1999. p.442.

LITTLE ANGELINA

Angelina's grandmother had just died. The little child was looking quite lost and confused. I wondered what was going on through her mind. She watched her family crying and they explained to her that their grandmother had gone to heaven. So why were they crying? It must have left her wondering whether heaven was a good place to go after all.

N.B: In the early Church, death was a moment of glory. St. Stephen, during his martyrdom, says: "**I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God**" (Acts 7:56).

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION: *Dialectic on Death*

A *dialectic* is a critical examination involving certain processes of thought. An approach is to face the truths of life and their contradictions and merge them into a higher truth. Hegel saw this in terms of *thesis*, *antithesis* and *synthesis*. Carew Hunt makes an interesting application of this dialectic to life, seeing **death**, not as the final word nor even the *antithesis* of life. It is the *antithesis* of **birth**.⁽ⁱ⁾ The *synthesis* is the truth of both: birth and death; and this is **life**. It is the experience of both. **True life** is dying to self and being born to eternal life. This is the kerygma, Good News, the apostolic proclamation of faith: Jesus Christ was born, died and rose again. He is the Risen Lord, the *synthesis*, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, beginning and end, living in our midst and hears the cry of his people: *Maranatha!* (Come Lord Jesus!). He gives us salvation (true life), and so we are born (*thesis*), not to die (*antithesis*) but to live forever (*synthesis*). The dictum of St. Irenaeus rings true: Δοξα Θεου ανθρωπος μεστος (*Doxa theou anthropos mestos*)⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ – "**The glory of God is a human fully alive.**"

(i) CAREW HUNT Robert Nigel. *THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNISM*. Penguin, Harmondsworth. 1963

(ii) IRENEE DE LYON: *CONTRE LES HERESIES*. IV. XX:180. Tome II. Les Editions du Cerf, Paris. 1965. p.649

N.B.: Translation given is "La gloire de Dieu c'est l'homme vivant." Some texts, use the Greek 'ανθρωπος μεστος' (*anthropos mestos*), 'complete human', instead of 'ζων ανθρωπος' (*zoon anthropos*), living man, to describe the human person 'fully alive.'

Watchword: "**I am the resurrection and the life**" (Jn.11:25). "Who believes in me never dies" (26)
"I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God" (27)

Hebrew: אֲנֹכִי הַתְּקוּמָה וְהַחַיִּים

Anokhi hatequmah vехаhayim.

Greek: Εγώ ειμι η αναστασις και η ζωη.

Ego eimi he anastasis kai he zoe.

Latin: Ego sum resurrectio et vita.

Portuguese: Eu sou a resurreçao e a vida.

Spanish: Yo soy la resurreccion y la vida.

French: Je suis la resurrection et la vie.

German: Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben.

Afrikaans: Ek is die opstanding en die lewe.

Zulu: Mina ngingukuvuka nokuphila.

Xhosa: Ndim uvuko; ndimubomi.

Sotho: Ke nna tsoho le bophelo.

Irish: Mise an tAiseiri agus Bheatha

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CATECHETICS

Lesson 16:

Survey of the History of Catechetics in the 20th Century

Below is a *Biblical-Liturgical* type of lesson. It is a simplified form for children to be supplemented by a '*Teacher's Guide*' in preparation of the lesson. The guide is more informative, explaining the content and approach used in this catechesis.

It is based on Lesson 47 in Book III of the "People of God" Series, "You are My People", page 98, 1970. Note how this catechesis begins with the **Bible** and ends with the **liturgy**.

47. The Sacrifice of Jesus

Jesus told his apostles that they must all go to Jerusalem. He also told them that there he must suffer and die. It was the Jewish feast of the Passover.

That evening Jesus gathered his apostles together and said, "I have longed to eat this passover with you before I suffer." At the supper table Jesus took bread and said, "Take this all of you and eat it; this is my body which is given for you." Then he took the cup of wine and said, "Take this all of you and drink from it; this is my blood which is shed for you."

The next day Jesus died on the cross. He offered his life as a sacrifice to his heavenly Father for us.

(From the Bible)

The Sacrifice of the Mass

At Mass Jesus continues to offer himself to the Father. The Mass is the sacrifice of Jesus. The cross in the church reminds us that the Mass is the sacrifice of Jesus.

At Mass we also do what Jesus did at the Last Supper. The priest gives us the body and blood of the risen Lord. The Mass is a holy meal.

For my life

I will go to Mass every Sunday.

Something to do

Draw a picture which shows that the Mass is a sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. In the same picture show that the Mass is a holy meal like the Last Supper.

Learn

Why is the Mass a sacrifice?

The Mass is a sacrifice because Jesus continues to offer himself to his Father for us.

Why is the Mass a holy meal?

The Mass is a holy meal because we receive the body and blood of the risen Lord.

Sing

Bring to the Lord your offerings:

Adore him in his holy place.

(Liturgy)

P.S. It is important to note that this lesson in its simplified form is more completely given in the 'Teacher's Guide.'

