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Fifth Sunday of Lent Year A (March 22, 2026)

Let's spend Lent together with baptismal candidates.
chief priest Father Hiroshi Konishi

On the Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year A, the Gospel reading will be the story of the resurrection of Lazarus.

For those seeking baptism, this is two weeks before their baptism.

By the way, there is a phrase called "four sufferings and eight sufferings." According to Buddhist teachings, humans are burdened with four sufferings (birth, aging, sickness, and death), and four more sufferings are added to make eight sufferings.

"Suffering" likely refers to realities that are beyond our control. Even if we wish to forge our own path in life, being born, growing old, getting sick, and dying are four things we cannot control. Yet, it is because we have desires and worldly passions to try and overcome these things that we experience "suffering."

Death is a reality for humans.

But Jesus overcame death.

Jesus was always confronted with the reality of death. This was true of Lazarus, in today's Gospel reading, and also of others who were facing the death of family members. Furthermore, it seems that at some point, Jesus began to become aware of his own death on the cross. He foretold his death three times.

By the way, the verb "azukaru" is used several times in Mass. "Azukaru" is probably written as "与る" in kanji. The dictionary defines it as "to be involved in something as a participant."

In churches, it's used in phrases like "to attend Mass" or "to participate in the death of Jesus."

Since it means "to be involved," "to participate in Mass" would mean not only "to attend Mass," but also "to actively participate in Mass." What would "to participate in the death of Jesus" mean?

The Epistle to the Romans states the following (Chapter 6, Verses 4-11) :

We have been buried with Christ through baptism, in order to live a new life, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father. If we are united with Christ in his death, we will also be united with him in his resurrection. We know that our old selves were crucified with him so that our bodies, which were ruled by sin, might be destroyed and we would no longer be slaves to sin. For those who have died are set free from sin. We believe that if we have died with Christ, we also will live with him. And we know that he will never die again, because he was raised from the dead. Death no longer has dominion over him. For once he died to sin, but he lives to God. In the same way, consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus .

I apologize for the somewhat long quote, but let's keep the opening line in mind: "By baptism they were buried with Christ and became participants in his death."

Baptism is an experience of death and resurrection. Just as Jesus "died" on the cross and "resurrected" three days later, those who are baptized are doused with water, "die" to their old selves, and "resurrected" to a new life. That is the life of a "child of God."

Baptism is not merely a ceremony; it is a ritual in which we "participate" in the "death and resurrection" of Jesus.



"Mass" by José Gallegos , 1900