

## Easter 2021

- How dead do you have to be...before there is no hope?
  - As we celebrate Easter...and focus on the power of the Resurrection...
    - that's the question that came up in my prayer.
- Before modern medicine...
  - people were thought to be dead all the time...
    - when really...they were not.
  - And sometimes...they would even wake up...
    - right in the middle of their own funerals!
- With modern medicine...
  - it is quite common...
    - for people to be brought back from the dead...
    - depending of course...on how long.
  - But eventually...
    - there's no coming back! Right?
  - So...
    - how dead do you have to be...
    - before there is no hope?
- In a parish full of medical professionals...
  - I'm sure that many of you would know the answer...
    - or at least something close.
  - Me...
    - without any medical expertise whatsoever...
      - I did what any normal human being does...
      - when faced with a medical question...
      - I got on Google!
  - And the record...
    - for the longest time to be dead...and still be brought back to life...
      - well...suffice to say...
      - that it's only a number of hours...
    - that is...if you believe Google!
      - Which I think we can in this case...
      - medically speaking.
- But of course when it comes to our faith...the answer is a radically different.
  - Today...we celebrate the fact...that after three days...
    - from Good Friday...through Easter Sunday...
      - Jesus rose from the tomb.
    - Now...aside from the fact that the tomb was sealed...
      - and He simply could not walk out on His own...
      - even if He were...mistakenly dead...
    - I wonder...if a part of the reason...
      - that Divine Providence choose that length of time...3 days...
      - was with modern medicine in view...



- Recently...
    - we've been having first confessions...
      - and while we might not think of them...in these terms...
      - they do go through...their own passion, death and resurrection.
    - As I'm waiting for them to approach...
      - I can often hear the hesitancy in their voice...
        - some of you parents...really have to encourage them...
        - *"Oh, Fr. Jeff is nice...it won't be so bad!"*
      - And then I'll hear a few tentative steps...as they walk in my direction...
        - some will even turn around...and run back to their parents.
      - But after a bit more coaxing...
        - they all eventually die to that fear...and come to confess their sin.
      - But of course the best part...is after absolution...
        - that's when they run back to their parents once again...
        - but this time...they are so filled with joy...
        - that they must share that excitement with their folks.
      - It's not unlike...what the women experienced...
        - when they ran from the empty tomb...on Easter Sunday morning...
        - they simply had to share that joy...with the Apostles!
      - For some reason...we forget what that feels like...as we get older...
        - to have that burden...suddenly lifted off of us...
        - but that's a small taste of the resurrection!
  - I got to feel something similar...when I was baptized as an adult...
    - all my sins...washed away...in an instant...
      - the burden of it all...suddenly gone.
    - In fact...the full feeling of that freedom...
      - didn't even begin to hit me...
        - until I was driving home.
      - That's when I was suddenly overwhelmed...
        - with the feeling of God's love for me...
        - and I simply could not stop crying...tears of joy.
      - In the days and months that followed...
        - I had to share that joy with others...
        - I had to share my newfound faith...
          - with everyone I met!
      - That too...is a small taste...of the resurrection!
  - We have several who will be baptized this evening...both adults and children...
    - I pray that you get a small taste like that...
      - and that you share that joy with others.
    - You're going to have a powerful impact on this world...
      - as you share your faith!
- But it's not just in the sacraments...that we encounter this grace.

- I know a person who was suicidal...
  - who had even made...the mental commitment to do it...
    - they were certainly lost in despair...
    - and had no apparent reason for hope...
  - but then suddenly...in an instant...
    - they had an overwhelming feeling...of God's love for them.
  - They couldn't even point to anything that they did...
    - but in that moment...everything changed for them...
    - and their life...would never be the same.
- Or it's like the sudden healing...
  - of a couple's marital relationship...
    - who after years of struggling...had long ago given up.
  - But then suddenly...something changed.
    - They couldn't even point...to what was said or done...
    - but they did know the day and the hour...after which...
    - everything just suddenly got better.
  - These too...are small tastes...of the resurrection!
- Perhaps you've had...a similar experience...
  - when out of no where...
    - things just suddenly get better...
    - and you better know...the love of the Lord...as a result.
  - I guarantee that in each of these cases...
    - there was someone else interceding...
      - someone praying and doing penance...
      - offering their suffering for you...
    - like our Blessed Mother...like Saint John...
      - standing faithfully at the foot of the Cross.
  - Because the joys of the Resurrection...
    - can only come by first embracing the Cross...
    - either ourselves doing it...or someone doing it...on our behalf.
- My brothers and sisters...
  - because of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ...
    - that's the only real cause...of hope in this world (the Cross).
- So where are you dead and lifeless? Where have you lost all hope?
  - What is it...in your life...or the life of someone you love...
    - that needs the power of the Resurrection?
  - Whatever it is...bring it to the Cross...
    - through the confession of your sins...
    - through prayer and penance...
    - because no matter how dead it may be...
    - in Jesus Christ...nothing is beyond all hope.