

EASTER SUNDAY

April 12, 2020

A story is told of how one person experienced resurrection in daily life – well, sort of.

It seems this particular person had the habit of visiting a local bar after work and staying until closing time. He would somehow make it back home but would often lean on the horn while getting out of the car and slam the car door. Then he would fumble with his keys at the front door, stumble up the stair and collapse on his bed, fully clothed.

Finally, family and friends of the man decided to intervene and scare him into breaking his annoying habit. They went out to the local graveyard, purchased a plot, dug a full sized grave and waited for the undesirable routine to happen again.

They did not have to wait long. Within a week, he came home severely inebriated following the same routine. Only this time, family and friends sprang into action. They gently carried him the two blocks to the neighborhood cemetery, placed him in the grave and left him there with the hope that when he awakened, he would be so scared that he would resolve to stop drinking for the rest of his life.

When he awakened the next day, he was of course puzzled to say the least. He climbed to the top of the grave, looked around at all the tombstones around him and exclaimed, “My God, it’s the resurrection. And I’m the first one up!”

Hopefully, most of us have a better understanding of the resurrection than our friend in the story.

The word resurrection does not mean a restoration to one’s previous life, as happened to Lazarus, to the widow of Naim and to Jairus’ daughter. It is not resuscitation.

The word ‘resurrection’ designates a quantum leap forward into a totally new life. It is something no human being had yet experienced.

In other words, the body of Jesus that rose on Easter Sunday was radically different from the body that was buried on Good Friday. St. Paul compares a body, before and after the resurrection, to a seed and the plant that emerges from it. He says, “*When the body is buried, it is mortal; when raised, it will be immortal. When buried, it is ugly and weak; when raised, it will be beautiful and strong.*” (1 Cor. 15: 42-44)

And this brings us to our celebration of this day of days.

Easter tells us that the personal transformation of life that took place in Jesus is not something that is reserved for Jesus alone. It is something that will take place in each of us. We, too, are destined to share in the incredibly transformed life that Jesus now enjoys in heaven.

More close at hand, Easter tells us something else. As we study the Easter accounts in the Gospels, we see not only that Jesus was remarkably transformed on the first Easter Sunday, but also that his disciples were transformed.

Easter transformed them from a band of despairing people into a brigade of daring missionaries. At a command of Jesus, they set out to carry the message of Easter to the four corners of the earth. And everywhere they preached the good news, the power of Easter began to work in people's lives, just as it had in their own lives.

Beautiful things began to happen. Despair began to give way to hope; darkness began to give way to light; hatred began to give way to love; and sorrow began to give way to joy.

In short, everywhere the disciples preached, the power of Easter began to work miracles in people's lives. Those miracles haven't stopped yet. They continue to happen in our time.

This is the good news of Easter. This is the good news that we celebrate on these days.

It is the good news that we are destined to transform someday, just as Jesus was transformed on this day 2100 years ago.

It is the good news that Jesus also wishes to transform our present lives, just as he transformed the lives of his disciples after the resurrection.

It is the good news that Jesus is ready to work miracles of new life in us, if we but open our hearts to his Easter power.

It is the good news that every Good Friday in our lives can be turned into an Easter Sunday, if we open our hearts to the risen power of the risen Jesus.

It is good news that we do not have to wait until we die to share in the risen life of Jesus. We can begin right now in this Easter Sunday.

This is what Easter is all about. It is the good news that the risen Jesus is in our midst in this critical time of Covid 19 inviting us to a new life of faith, hope and love.