**THEME:** THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

**READINGS:** Acts 10:34, 37-43/ Col. 3:1-4/ John 20:1-9

Easter Sunday

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

A spectacular phenomenon which lasted only **three** minutes vividly illustrates the resurrection of Jesus Christon the **third** day. I am referring to the eclipse of the sun which occurred ten years ago, specifically on 29th March, 2006. There was complete darkness for about **three** minutes then the superiority of the light of the sun showed up again. Similarly, the superiority of the divine Light of the risen Christ (John 8:12) over the darkness of death became evident on the **third** day. At every Easter Vigil, this superiority of the Light of Christ over the darkness of death is commemorated in the Liturgy of the Light, in which there is a bonfire and the lighting of candles.

Christ had predicted that ‘the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after **three** days rise again’ (Mark 8:31). When he said that he would rise again on the **third** day, the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes got worried. So they asked Pilate to seal the tomb of Jesus and position guards there (Matt. 27:62-66). Beloved, Archbishop Fulton Sheen rightly saw an irony in this. He said that it is fitting that when the King of kings was asleep there would be guards to keep watch. Do we not have soldiers watching when our president is asleep?

Beloved, here is a paradox: the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes who claimed to be experts of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) seemed to overlook the several significant Divine interventions that had occurred in ‘**three** days’ or on the **‘third** day’. I will refer to just a few of them here:

* In Genesis, it was on the **third** day that Abraham saw the place to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22:4). But since God intervened by providing a ram in the place of the son of Abraham, we could say that Isaac was raised back to life on the **third** day (*cf*. Heb. 11:17-19).
* In Gen. 40:12-20, the Egyptian cupbearer and others (including Joseph) were in prison in Egypt, when the cupbearer had a dream. Joseph interpreted the dream to mean that the cupbearer would be released in **three** days, and it was so.
* In the story of Exodus, one of the punishments that Pharaoh and his people suffered was **darkness** for **three** days (Exodus 10:22).
* Again, God instructed Moses that the Israelites were to prepare themselves to meet him on Mt. Sinai. There God revealed himself on the **third** day (Exodus 19:1-15).
* We are also very familiar with the story of Jonah. He was in the belly of the whale for **three** days (Jonah 1:17). Jesus himself alluded to this when he spoke about his death and resurrection (Matt. 12:40).
* The final reference from Hosea is very interesting. Hosea told his wayward people: ‘Come, let us return to Yahweh…He has struck us down, but…two days later he will bring us back to life; on the **THIRD DAY**, **he will raise us up**’ (Hosea 6:1-7).

A movie I watched in my teens was entitled, ‘MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!’ Indeed, if the intention of the Pharisees and their associates was to prevent Jesus from rising from the dead, then that was a **mission impossible**; for however ‘machoed’ [physically well-built] the soldiers were, they could not withstand the power of the resurrection. How can someone with a ‘ti abrofƐ’ [18th century gun-powder] rifle stand against another dropping nuclear bomb from an aircraft? Here is the actual turn of events: the power of the resurrection effected an earthquake, blew away the stone at the entrance of the tomb, chloroformed and paralyzed the soldiers (Matt. 28:1-10). Their lives were spared only so that they could testify the resurrection to people who were even not prepared to listen to the truth (Matt. 28:11-15).

Beloved, like Isaac, Jesus **came back to life** on the **third** day; like the Egyptian cupbearer, Jesus came out of the **prison of the tomb** on the **third** day; as in Exodus event, Jesus saw light again **after three days of darkness**; and like Jonah who came out of the belly of the whale, Jesus arose **after three days in the belly of the earth**. Hence, he says: ‘It is I, the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead and now I am alive forever and ever; I hold the keys of death and the nether world’ (Rev. 1:8, 17-18).

The resurrection of the Lord is a ‘turn around’ experience for those who truly believe it. For instance, Saul, who initially vehemently persecuted the early Christians, had his life completely turned around when he encountered the **risen** Lord. Saul, who became Paul, was so affected by the resurrection of Christ that he would firmly state: ‘**All I want is to know Christ and the power of His resurrection’** (Phil. 3:10).

Indeed for all Christians, the resurrection is the foundation of our faith in Jesus Christ and hope in our own resurrection. This St. Paul underscores for all of us: ‘If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith…if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. … If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. **But [the truth and the good news is:] Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep’** (1 Cor. 15:13-20).

Beloved, may our faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ be renewed this Easter and always; and may this strengthen ever more our will to lead lives worthy of everlasting life! Amen!