

An Indian businessman had to go on a business trip to Jerusalem. Initially he had no plan to take his wife on the trip as it was not a sightseeing trip. But, at the demand and some threat of his wife he ended up taking not only his wife but also his mother-in-law. While they were in Jerusalem, his mother-in-law died. He contacted the Indian Consulate to make arrangements to send the body back to India. He was told that sending the body back to India is very, very expensive. It could cost as much as \$5,000. Whereas it would only cost \$150 if he would decide to do the funeral in Jerusalem itself. This man thought for some time and answered, "I don't care how much it will cost to send the body back; that's what I want to do."

The Consulate officer was very impressed and said, "You must have loved your mother-in-law very much, considering the difference in price." "No, it's not the case!" said the Indian man. "You see, I have some Christian friends in India who have told me about a person, by name Jesus, who was buried here in Jerusalem. But, on the third day he arose from the dead. I just can't take that chance in case of my mother-in-law."

Yes, this Indian guy had rightly heard that many years ago a man named Jesus rose from the dead after three days. And today the Christians all over the world are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus who is also Christ and Savior.

Hence for the Christians, Easter is the greatest and the most important feast for three reasons:

- 1) **The Resurrection of Christ is the basis of our Christian Faith.** It is the greatest of the miracles, for it proves that Jesus is God. That is why St. Paul writes: "*If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain; and your faith is in vain*" (I Cor 15: 14). "*Jesus is Lord, He is risen!*" (Rom 10:9), was the central theme of the *kerygma* (or 'preaching'), of the apostles, because Jesus had prophesied His Resurrection as a sign of His divinity: "*Tear down this temple and in three days I will build it again*" (Jn 2:19). The founder of no other religion has an empty tomb as Jesus has. If Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead, then the Church is a fraud and faith is a sham. But if Jesus really did rise from the dead, his message is true! Without the Resurrection, Jesus would have remained forever a good person who had met a tragic end. People would remember some of his teachings, and a handful of people might try to live according to them. All the basic doctrines of Christianity are founded on the truth of the Resurrection.

This Indian man doubted that if his mother in-law is buried in Jerusalem, she might rise again on the third day as Jesus did. But what he did not know was that no matter where one is buried, one will rise again at the end of time if he or she believes in Jesus.

Resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of our own resurrection. Jesus assured Martha at the tomb of Lazarus: *“I am the Resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me will live even though he dies”*. All of us are going to rise from the dead no matter where we are buried provided, we believe in Jesus Christ.

- 2) The Resurrection of Jesus gives us hope and strength to go through the pains and sufferings of our day-to-day life. When we face death in the family and one day when we will all face our own death. So many martyrs are able to face persecution because of this hope in resurrection. In 2008, just before I came here a large-scale persecution of Christians took place not very far from my home diocese. There was fear that those fanatic Hindus may attack even our church. So, we had police protection. The attackers used to ask do you want to give up Christianity and accept Hinduism. Many bravely said NO and they were killed or burnt alive. About 100 Christians of all denominations died due to the sure hope in resurrection.

- 3) The celebration of Easter reminds us that we have the same mission as Peter and Mary Magdalene and the other disciples to proclaim the Risen Lord to the end of the earth. Thousands of new Catholics all over USA will accept the Risen Lord as their Savior.

Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee was once asked if he believed in the Resurrection. “Of course, I do,” said Huckabee. “Dead people vote in every election we have in Arkansas. Resurrection is very real to us.”