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God turns disaster into a means for salvation

Jacob's favourite son was Joseph. His brothers sold him as a slave, and he was taken off to Egypt, where he landed in a prison. Except for God's intervention, Joseph would have lived the rest of his miserable life in that dungeon.

03/30/2024

Joseph in the Old Testament helps us understand Christ's death and

resurrection. It also helps us see the hand of God, working in mysterious ways, whenever things go horribly wrong.

Joseph's power to interpret dreams was a two-edged sword. It's the reason why he ended up imprisoned in a strange land. It's also the reason why he was freed from prison. When he explained the dream about the seven fat cows and seven skinny cows, the Pharaoh put him in charge of the kingdom.

It was all part of God's plan to save Israel from perishing. Jacob and his entire family were welcomed into Egypt and given food during the famine. God turned what looked like disaster into a means of salvation. As with Joseph being enslaved in Egypt, so with Jesus being nailed to the cross.

Jesus told the twelve apostles several times that he would be crucified and

then rise from the dead on the third day. Why weren't they waiting outside the tomb on Sunday? Probably for the same reason that you and I tend to give up when things go wrong. We know about the promise that Jesus made to the apostles. We know it also applies to us: "In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." Despite the promise, we allow ourselves to be overcome by sadness when trouble knocks hard on our door.

That is why we need Easter every year. This is why we need to celebrate Christ's resurrection every Sunday. We need to recall the hope our Lord wants us all to share: "A woman in childbirth suffers, because her time has come; but when she has given birth to the child she forgets the suffering in her joy that a man has been born into the world. So it is with you: you are sad now, but I shall

see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you.”

Satan knows how to use sadness to his advantage. When you feel sad, pray. No matter how bad things get, shake off the sadness. All that troubles you now will pass away. You may have to smile with tears in your eyes. But try to smile, and remember that Christ has conquered death. He will come in glory to lead his faithful disciples into his kingdom.

This article by Fr. Joe Babendreier first appeared in the Sunday Nation in April 2012.