

03/31/13 Easter, 2013

-- *If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.* Many of us have heard that saying. It's usually applied to some deal to get something we want at a really low price. But we also apply it to other things in life.

-- Even if we are naturally optimistic people, we temper our optimism with realism. You don't get something for nothing. People don't just give you something significant without expecting something in return. People don't just come back from the dead.

-- The women who went to the tomb weren't expecting to see the stone rolled away. Even then, they were surprised to see those two men in radiant clothes. And their message seemed too good to be true.

-- But they recalled what Jesus had said. No doubt they remembered how their ancestors had been rescued from the Red Sea and led into the Promised Land, and had returned after years in exile.

-- That lit the spark of faith in them. But what happened when they went and told the apostles? It was too good to be true. It was nonsense, and that's a polite translation. A more accurate one might be an eight letter word that begins with a "b" and ends with a "t."

-- Yes, it would take a while for the good news to sink into the thick heads of the apostles. After all, they had experienced a great tragedy. And they were afraid for themselves and their safety.

-- As much as most of us take for granted the resurrection of Jesus, it really **is** shocking news. Those who really take it to heart change their lives. Nothing is the same anymore.

-- As most of you know, our former Pope Benedict called for a Year of Faith which began last October. We've prayed most Sundays after communion...*Lord, increase my faith...Lord, I believe; help my unbelief.*

-- Tonight (last night) four people stood (will stand) before me to commit to the Catholic faith and receive the Easter sacraments.

Hundreds more did so (are doing so) in churches in our diocese. Faith **is** alive and well, despite all the bad news.

-- At the beginning of this year, who would have predicted that we would have a new Pope under the circumstances we now have. Who would have thought he would name himself after a man who professed poverty, and that he would really live his lifestyle?

-- Who would have thought that he would spend Holy Thursday in a Rome detention center rather than the Vatican, washing the feet of male and female inmates instead of priests?

-- Is this too good to be true? Then again, is Christ's resurrection too good to be true? Sisters and brothers, there is the opportunity for new life in the Church. That's true from the highest levels to the local parish.

-- God's spirit continues to be present, despite all the bad in the world. And God's life can be with each and every one of us as we face day to day situations which seem to weigh heavily upon us. God is there to help us bear our burdens.

-- After all, he overcame death itself. That, in itself, is truly amazing. We only need to have eyes to see what God has done in our world and continues to do among us.

-- And that takes faith. Believing in the resurrection takes faith, for we do not have an account...on paper, videotape, or You Tube... of the actual event. We only have the testimony of those who believed.

-- That testimony is still offered by those who choose to be baptized and confirmed in the faith. It is seen in new leadership of the Church by a modest man from Argentina. And it's confirmed by the perseverance in faith of millions of Christians.

-- May we, in the words of our prayer for the Year of Faith, be convincing signs and heralds of the kingdom to come. It's not too good to be true...A Blessed Easter to all of you!