

Black Holes

When I was a kid, I loved looking up at the stars, and so when I was young I actually wanted to join NASA and be an aeronautical engineer. I wanted to travel deep into the galaxy. But God had different plans...but maybe not.

Since I had this interest in space, it really intrigued me when I found out recently that they took a picture of a black hole for the first time. This was so significant because it took a team of 200 scientists with eight different telescopes from all over the world to accomplish this feat.

Black holes are interesting because some of them are made from an enormous star that has imploded upon itself causing a supernova, an explosion, and then the leftover mass from the star compresses together so tightly to form a black hole. These black holes have a lot of mass and are very dense. For example, the black hole that was in the news has a mass 6.5 billion times bigger than the sun. The sun is 1.3 million times bigger than the earth so imagine something bigger than the sun.

A black hole has so much mass in such a small area that it's gravitational pull is so strong—so strong that even light cannot escape its gravitational pull. That is why we cannot see a black hole. If you were to fall within critical range of the black hole you would be drawn into its center, into singularity, and some scientists theorize that one of two things can happen, you begin to die slowly as the force of gravity pulls on you or you die immediately as the firewall incinerates you.

At this point we cannot know because anything or anyone who tries to go in there will not be able to come back.

When he heard his name, he began to weep profusely knowing that he would never see his family anymore.

During WWII in 1941, a prisoner had escaped from the Auschwitz concentration camp. In order to prevent other prisoners from escaping, they would sentence 10 people to die in the starvation bunker. They did this because if you escaped, you know you would be sentencing ten other people to their death. So they gathered all the prisoners from a specific unit and called the prisoners out one by one...

When they had called Francis he began to weep, "O my poor wife, my poor children. I shall never see them again!" Francis knew he would never see his family again, he knew that he was being called into the dark hole of death from which he will not be able to return...

O my poor wife, my poor children. I shall never see them again!...The human heart longs and yearns for goodness and happiness, yet as we journey through these lands we find disorder, disharmony, sin and death. We experience the goodness and joy of life, but it seems like we are all under the gravitational pull of death. This black hole drags us into its grasp until life exists no more and no mortal being has ever returned from it.

But this Easter Sunday, we have a true hope. A true anchor that grounds us when the evils of life batter upon the ships of our lives. A hope that goes beyond the grave but before we can understand the good news, we need to understand the bad news.

At the beginning of time we were given a choice in Adam. This choice was much greater than the choice to eat fruit or not but rather it was a cosmic choice that would forever effect the fate of humanity. It was a choice between either orbiting the sun or the black hole, between orbiting the light of his love through obedience and trust or plunging into the black hole of disobedience and fear.

Adam chose disobedience and fear and ever since then, every son of Adam and every daughter of Eve is born into the gravitational pull of the black hole of death, we are all born into this state where we are separated from God, outside of his orbit and trending toward death.

God has given us such a magnificent capacity to love him, but it also comes with a real capacity to reject him and he respects that because to violate our free will would be to violate our capacity for real love. Yet he loves us so much that he could not bear to see us drift away from him falling outside the orbit of his love

And this is the good news. "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son." He sent his only begotten Son, one who was sinless yet truly human. The Son who consented willingly to the Father's plan submitted himself to the gravitational pull of the black hole of death, he now enters our suffering with us, he even entered death with us dying brutally at the hands of the Romans who tortured him on the beam of the Cross. He experienced a true death. Even the true Light of the world chose to put himself in gravitational pull of the black hole of death. He went into the utter darkness of death.

Yet imagine something with me for a second. Scientists do not truly know for sure what is inside the black hole. You may encounter the 'singularity' which is the dense mass from the dead star and this singularity would compress our being into it. But others have theorized that maybe there is a wormhole inside the black hole which could lead to another dimension.

That is what Jesus does! If Jesus suffers and dies with us that is great, but it does not change the situation for us. We all just suffer and die together. But what Jesus does is that he enters into the black hole of death and he creates a wormhole into heaven. The black hole of death used to be a dead end of destruction but now Jesus has opened a wormhole to heaven, a pathway through death to heaven.

That is what we celebrate today. That Jesus has risen from the dead!

Yet we have the ability to share in Jesus' resurrection. However, Jesus does not take us away from the black hole of death. In order to rise with him we need to go into the black hole with him.

Imagine we were all in our spacesuits and we were slowly moving towards the black hole which would destroy us. Imagine if I told you that there is this rocket ship that allows you to go into the black hole and transfer you into another universe. The only thing is that in order to get into the ship you would need a three digit code. If you had a choice between this ship and life or the black hole and death which would you choose? Of course the ship! And not only that you would tell everyone you could to get into the ship and to use the three digit code because this ship has many rooms.

The ship that saves us from death is the Church and Jesus is the captain. Jesus has given us this Church to save us from the black hole of death and the three digit code to get in is this: belief, baptism and the body.

Belief: God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that everyone who BELIEVES in him shall not perish but have eternal life

Baptism: unless you are born of spirit and water you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Body: the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

When we have these three things in our heart, we will have no fear. We will not fear the black hole of death.

As Francis was weeping on the ground pondering how the next moments of his life would unfold, an unexpected voice called out from among the other prisoners: take me instead! Everyone looked back and there he was, Maximillian stepping forward. "Take me instead. I am a Catholic priest from Poland; I would like to take his place because he has a wife and children."

Everyone was shocked, but the Nazi guard eventually accepted his request and sent Fr Maximillian Kolbe and the nine other people into the starvation bunker. Many would have thought that this place would be a place of despair and hopelessness, but listen to what Bruno Borgowiec, an eyewitness recounts:

In the cell of the poor wretches there were daily loud prayers, the rosary and singing, in which prisoners from neighbouring cells also joined... Fervent prayers and songs to the Holy Mother resounded in all the corridors of the Bunker... Fr Kolbe was leading and the prisoners responded in unison.

Eventually they all passed away one by one but only Fr Maximillian was left and he was injected with poison. He was canonized in 1982 and is now known as St. Maximillian Kolbe.

It is only the person who has hope in Jesus Christ who can look at face of death and accept it, who can go into a place of utter darkness and despair and make the walls resound with joyful prayer and praise. Because St. Maximillian knew that this black hole of death is not the end and that by boarding onto the rocket ship of the Church he would be led into the gates of heaven.

Jesus Christ has conquered death. So let us not fear but have confidence that we will rise again with Jesus on the last day. Let us rejoice today as we reinvigorate our belief in him, renew our baptismal vows and receive his body and blood assured by him that we will receive everlasting life.