

- At the top of our mural, you'll see two angels holding books with Psalm 65 inscribed upon them. That psalm reads:

*To you our praise is due in Zion, O God. To you we pay our vows, you who hear our prayer. To you all flesh will come with its burden of sin. Too heavy for us, our offenses, but you wipe them away. Blessed is he whom you choose and call to dwell in your courts. We are filled with the blessings of your house, of your holy temple.*

- I had this beautiful psalm painted into our mural to remind us of the gratitude we owe to God for the great work of redemption He has wrought through the suffering, death, and resurrection of His Son.
- This psalm humbles us because it reminds us of how our sins are a burden that we cannot take care of ourselves, but that we need a remedy that only God can supply.
- And God's remedy was His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, whose agonizing death on the Cross we honored yesterday. And we honored it because it wiped away our sins.
- This psalm, too, speaks of the wonder it is to be admitted into His holy temple: the Church – and not just the physical buildings of the Church, as beautiful as they may be, but the spiritual reality that is the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.
- Tonight, 13 of you will be fully initiated into this one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church. 9 of you will pass through the cleansing waters of baptism, and along with 4 others will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in order to be good soldiers for Christ.
- Yet getting to this point in your life was no easy task – and perhaps it was even more difficult than you realize. For to get to this point in your life, you must overcome the snares of the evil one, who works to keep each of us away from God's sanctifying grace.
- This is especially true for those of you who are to be baptized tonight. For the un-baptized soul is especially subject to the power of darkness, and must needs be wrestled out of that captivity the evil one tries to hold us in.
- That was the whole point of the scrutinies that you underwent on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays of Lent. Those weren't just nice rituals to show you off to the rest of the congregation.
- No, those prayers were for your spiritual benefit, to break any remaining bonds of darkness the evil one might hold over you.
- If that sounds dramatic, it's because it *is* dramatic. Salvation *is* dramatic. Christ dying on the cross and rising again *is* dramatic!
- You are here tonight not to become a member of a club or organization. No, you are here to become a member of Christ's Body, a son or daughter of His one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church.
- And this is so important, for it is only within the mystical Body of Christ that any of us can hope to be saved. Through the power of the Sacraments, Christ our King and Good Shepherd, reaches out His hand to us and says, "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead."
- Through the Sacraments we share in His death and resurrection, and thus, becoming Catholic and a member of Christ's Church is the greatest blessing any of us can hope to receive in this life.

- For our part, especially for those of you who are entering the Church tonight, we must resolve to live in a manner that makes us worthy of so great a promise!
  - Yet knowing full well the weaknesses of human flesh, of our propensity to allow sin to dominate us, Jesus gives us the sacraments to strengthen us. The Sacraments are not reserved for the sinless, but are remedies for the sick.
  - While Baptism frees us from our sins, Confirmation strengthens within us the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, counsel, understanding, piety, courage, and fear of the Lord, so that we might live our Catholic faith with integrity.
  - Our confirmation gives us the ability to proclaim our faith boldly as good soldiers for Christ, even to the point of suffering death for the Faith!
  - What's more, in receiving the Eucharist, we are nourished with our Lord's own Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, so that we might draw closer in union with Him and receive the antidote to our daily venial sins.
  - And for those times that we fail to love our Lord as we should, He gives us the Sacrament of Reconciliation by which we can repent of our sins and receive His mercy and forgiveness!
  - As such, the sacraments give us all the grace we need to become worthy of the promises of Christ! So practice them well. Receive the Sacraments with faith, hope, and a generous love for our Lord – mindful of your sins, and ever sorry for them.
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- Knowing that we owe a sacrifice to praise to God, who hears our prayers; knowing that our burden of sin is too heavy for our weak human flesh to carry, and trusting in our Lord to wipe those sins away, may we be filled with joy this holy night, knowing that we are receiving the blessings of His Church.
  - Truly, blessed is he whom God calls to dwell in His courts. Knowing this, may we all live in a manner that makes us worthy of those blessings.
  - A blessed Easter to you all.