

- Without a doubt, springtime in our fair city is glorious. For weeks now we've been treated to the dazzling annual array of flowering flora that fills our lawns and parks.
- Everywhere we turn we see new life blooming and blossoming, giving delight to our eyes, while also enkindling hope in our hearts.
- It seems that the very earth itself is rejoicing right now as the brown decay of winter gives place to spring's green growth. Indeed, nature itself is reveling in the glory of this holy day – and so should we.
- For He Who was hanged like a common criminal on a tree now reigns as God over all things. The Lord, vanquished to hell by the sins of men, today rises triumphant over sin and even death.
- The Eternal Word, spoken by the Father, has now made His voice heard. And in rising from the dead, he says to all of us dead in sin, "Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light!"
- Just as He freed the people of Israel from their Egyptian slavery and led them dry-shod through the sea, so too does He lead us through the waters of baptism to free us from our slavery to sin.
- Washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement by the sacraments, we are restored to grace so that we might grow together in holiness. For Jesus Christ has broken the chains of death and risen triumphant from the grave!
- No, my brothers and sisters, this is no ordinary holiday. It is our *holy day* of highest magnitude. For what can be greater than the paradox of God becoming man – of taking on our flesh – in order to offer that flesh in atonement for our sins?
- What is more stunning than He, Who is Life Itself, dying the most painful of deaths in order to impart life to those dead in sin?
- These paradoxes of our Faith are not meant to confound or confuse us, but to inspire us to believe more fervently in the One Who made us, Who sustains us in being, and Who saves us from our sins.
- These paradoxes are meant to encourage us to subdue the deadly paradoxes within our own hearts: namely that we profess to be Christians but live as men of the world; that we say we hope for Heaven, but cling so tenaciously to worldly comforts.
- Yet, if we are truly sorry for our sins, our weaknesses, and inconsistencies of faith; if we confess our failures and amend our lives; our mighty king and victorious Lord overlooks our infidelities and grants us His divine mercy.
- And that is exactly what we are called to do today, on this most glorious day of the year in which God shows forth most resplendently His mighty power.
- In just a few moments, we will renew our baptismal promises, reliving that most sublime encounter with God, and recommitting to serving God in His holy Catholic Church.
- We will renounce sin so as to live in the freedom of the children of God, turning away from evil's lure so that we might be slaves to sin no longer. And we will renounce him who is the author and prince of sin.
- We will then confess our belief in God the Father almighty; in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; and in their Holy Spirit.

- But, my friends, these must not be hollow and empty words on our part, but rather the full-throated confession of people who repent of their sins and truly desire God's mercy.
- All of us have been buried with Christ in the death of baptism; we have spent 40 long days of Lent praying more, fasting more, and giving more as a means of making reparation for our sins and gaining mastery over our passions.
- And now we must seek to walk in newness of life with Him Who is the Author of Life, and to do so with integrity. The green growth of new life is not meant only for the world around us, but for our souls as well.
- So let us not pass this day in vain by seeking only to enjoy the customary temporal delights of Easter.
- But rather, let us rejoice in our Lord's resurrection by turning away from our sins, and by uniting ourselves more firmly to Him through prayer and obedience to His commandments.
- And rather than hoping only for the fatness of earthly goods, may we place our deepest hopes in the delights of Heaven, and earnestly strive to live in a way that will prepare us well to enter the celestial gates when we must go down into the tomb.
- A blessed Easter to you all.