

Homily based on the readings from March 30, 2024

Tonight we celebrate the most fundamental, the most amazing, the most radical mystery of our faith: death, that fearful force that has cast its shadow over all creation, is completely and utterly *vanquished*. How can this *astonishing* assertion possibly be true? If we have learned anything over the *millennia* of human history, it is that death is completely and totally *universal*. Every living being – human or otherwise – will inevitably grow old and decay. Death is so much a part of life that most of us no longer think to question its mastery over us.

There is one force in the universe, only one, that can overcome death – that *has* overcome death: Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, through the power of his self-sacrificing love. Remarkably, wondrously, miraculously – this triumph is not his alone, but ours as well: “just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” Every single one of us has the opportunity to share in Christ’s Resurrection, in his eternal life. In fact, that is our *only* true

goal as Christians – not to be happy or prosperous or successful here on earth, but to live with Christ eternally in the never-ending bliss of Heaven. This hope is not some distant, unattainable dream – it is the promise, here and now, of the Resurrected Christ.

How can all of us, how can *any* of us, share in Christ's Resurrection? If the answer to that question is not apparent, it will become obvious immediately after this homily is over – when our *catechumens* will come forward to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. This moment is not just a joyful event in their earthly lives – the culmination of many months of prayer, reflection, and study – but their actual initiation into the eternal life of Jesus Christ.

*Catechumens*, your plunging into the water – three times – will represent the death Christ died, the three days he spent in the tomb. When you rise from the font, you will be a new creature, sharing in Christ's eternal life. The same is true for all of us, for anyone who has experienced or

who will experience the saving power of Baptism. If we have *died* with Christ, we shall also *live* with him.

Some people here can remember their Baptisms, but most of us probably cannot. In either case, there is no more important day in our lives: the day when we were reborn as sons and daughters of God, the day when we became members of the Body of Christ, the day when we were freed – once and for all – from the bonds of sin and death. Our old self was crucified with Christ and we were united with him in his Resurrection. *Today* is that day for our catechumens.

Once the Baptismal liturgy is concluded, the catechumens – along with the other RCIA candidates – will partake in the gifts of Pentecost, receiving the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Confirmation. As if that is not enough, they will also receive Jesus Christ – Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity – for the first time in the Holy Eucharist. An hour from now, they will have become fundamentally different people – not through any actions of their own, but through God's power manifesting

itself through the sacraments of the Church. All of us, young or old, who have walked this road before have experienced the same change – which is renewed every year through our Easter celebration.

And so, brothers and sisters, let us join together in proclaiming Christ's Glorious Resurrection – through word and song – but above all by renewing the promises of our own Baptism and by partaking in the Holy Eucharist, the foretaste of the heavenly banquet that is to come. If we unite ourselves with the Risen Christ – fully, joyously, and unconditionally – then we too will *share* in his triumphant victory.