

Signs of spring spur renewal

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

If you have found the winter to be as dark, cold and draggy as I have, then you, too, have been relishing the signs of spring emerging all around us.

I think of longer days, some flashes of sun and added warmth. I rejoice in the sight of streets finally free of snow banks and in the thought that they will be soon be bursting with the fresh sweet green of April.

In addition to that joy of nature's gifts, I have been buoyed up by other indications that spring is finally here. The baseball season has begun. Notwithstanding all of the hard stories and struggles attaching to professional sports these days, I am still thrilled by the freshness of opening day.

Can't wait to make my first visit ever to Toronto's Sky Dome this season. And one day I hope to make it to the new Oriole Park at Camden Yards in Baltimore, Md. I have been to Baltimore a few times for meetings over the past few years and have taken delight in watching the new ballpark take shape in that city's fascinating harbor area.

But sooner and more frequently than I'll make it to Toronto or Baltimore, I'll be at Silver Stadium rooting for our own Red Wings.



A LONG THE WAY

I need to mention another sure sign of spring that brings delight to me. That is the sign of new romance so wonderfully obvious at this time of year in the neighborhood in which I live. In this area there are three high schools. Now that spring is here, new romances are beginning and young couples are taking long, hand-in-hand walks in the new sun.

These are some of the sights and sounds of spring that elate my spirits and raise my energy level. I am sure you have your own list. Whatever they are I hope that they help all of us to enter with open

spirit our celebration of Holy Week.

That, too, is a time for the celebration of new life and the renewal of life already begun. All through Lent we have been preparing for the feast. We've prayed for those to be baptized and for those to be received into the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil.

And we have prayed for ourselves that our renewal of our baptismal vows at the Easter Feast will spring from the depths of our being and help us become more like Christ in our daily activity.

That becoming is a lifelong process. It involves dying to self and then some growth. And then some more dying and some more growth. And it does not always occur in our chosen rhythm. Or at our bidding or on our time table.

We don't own it. It's a gift. But it's a gift offered with great love and with exquisite respect for our God given freedom. And so we do pray for what we need, and we work for it with confidence that God receives our humble efforts as a precious gift.

And finally we know that God will one day give us the fullness of life for which we yearn, that life is present in the dying just as spring is present in the winter.

Happy Holy Week.
Peace to all.

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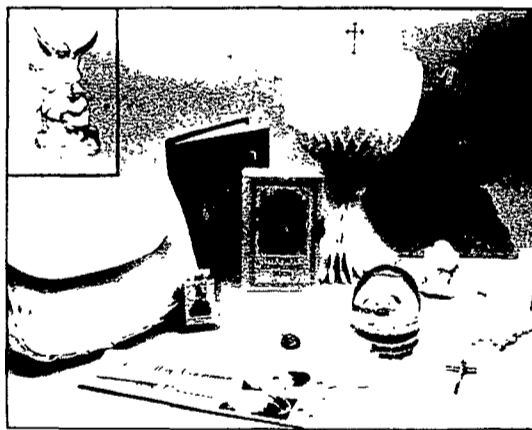
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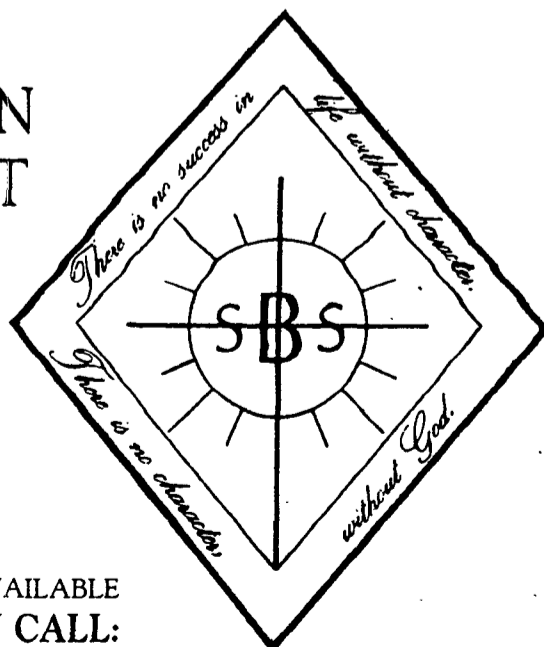
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