

Easter brings out the best. We put on nice, clean clothes. We prepare special meals. We even behave better at the table. On other days throughout the year, we could do better. We could show more respect for our family, for co-workers, our closest friends, even strangers. From the bedroom to the interstate, we can look back at our actions and say, "I could do better than that." We get that perspective because of a day like Easter, which really does bring out the best.

St. Paul presses the Colossians today to act their best as well. "If you were raised with Christ," he says, "seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth." The Colossians were raised with Christ in baptism. They are Christians -- they should act like it. Paul suggests the way to start a change in actions is with the mind. Put your head on straight, he basically says, and the rest will follow. Seek what is above, not what is on earth.

Christians could make a big difference in society. But first we have to get our heads on straight. We can do better. We have a higher moral standard because of our baptism.

Four television seasons ago, one out of every thirty-three characters engaging in sexual intercourse was a teenager. Last season, it was one out of eleven. Christians restrict sexual relationships to marriage. We can do better than what television promotes.

Some Americans want the right to watch the execution of Timothy McVeigh next month. Our Church finds capital punishment repulsive, even for the most heinous crimes. One violent act gives no license for another. We can do better than that.

Advocates for concealed carry in Missouri want handguns popular and private. Too many people already resolve their conflicts through anger, power, and weapons. There are more peaceful means of reconciliation. We can do better than that.

Christian Churches have one common baptism, but we do not respect one another's practices. We treat other Christians like enemies, not like family. We do not share one common communion. We can do better than that.

The gambling houses in our metro area are doing terrific business. So are loan sharks. So are utility companies. Meanwhile, churches and charities, already strapped for cash, find it's our responsibility to pay for the irresponsibility of an increasing number of citizens. We can do better than that.

This is Easter Day. It's a day for rejoicing in the risen Christ. It's a day on which the bright promise of our redemption shines. Let this day stick in our memory, a day on which, raised with Christ, we seek what is above and not what is on earth, a day that will strengthen us to do better than we have done, not just on Easter Day, but every day.