

4th Sunday Easter A
1 Peter 2:20-25

St. John Paul II

2017
John 10:1-10

For Holy Humor this week I'd like to share with you some actual signs that have appeared on Church sign boards

A singing group called "The Resurrection" was scheduled to sing at a church. When a big snowstorm postponed the performance, the pastor fixed the outside sign to read, "The Resurrection is postponed."

"Come in and pray today. Beat the Christmas rush!"

"People are like tea bags-you have to put them in hot water before you know how strong they are."

"God so loved the world that He did not send a committee."

"How will you spend eternity-Smoking or Non-smoking?"

"Have trouble sleeping? We have sermons-come hear one!"

"If you can't sleep, don't count sheep. Talk to the Shepherd."

Today's Gospel reading contains one of my all time favorite scripture verse, John 10:10 has Jesus saying, "I came that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

I found it interesting that the Church puts that passage on the same weekend that we hear St. Peter tell us how to deal with suffering.

But as I reflected on that this week, it began to make sense to me...

God doesn't promise us a worry free life.

God doesn't promise us a life free from suffering.

What God promises us is an abundant life.

And St. Peter tells us how we garner that abundant life.

We get that abundant life when we are patient through suffering.

We get that abundant life when we follow the example of Christ.

We get that abundant life when we refuse to return insult with insult;

We get that abundant life when we respond to suffering without threats,

We get that abundant life

when we trust the shepherd to be guardian of our souls.

You see too often in our lives we think that an abundant life means a happy life...but God doesn't say that...

An abundant life I think is a life that has meaning and purpose. I further believe that meaning and purpose come often through suffering.

There is a story told of a young boy who carried a butterfly cocoon into his house to watch it come to life.

After a couple of days the butterfly began to break through the cocoon.

The boy watched in fascination as the butterfly struggled. Realizing the butterfly was struggling, the boy reached down and opened the hole the butterfly was trying to break through. Soon the butterfly was free.

But as the boy watched the butterfly's wings remained shriveled.

Something was wrong.

What the boy hadn't realized is that the struggle to get out of the cocoon was essential for the butterfly's struggle.

It is in the struggle that the butterfly's wings gain the strength they need to fly.

I think the same is true for us.

Trials are necessary for growth.

Struggles are needed to make us strong in life.

But it is not just struggle for the sake of struggle.

It's struggling knowing that the shepherd is with us.

Knowing that the shepherd cares for us and loves us.

Knowing that the shepherd wishes for us an abundant life.

Another story bears this truth.

A mother was shopping with her young daughter at the grocery store.

Each of them was carrying a basket.

The mother started putting items in the young girl's basket...

After a while, another shopper who had watched the two of them said,

"That's an awfully big load for a little girl, isn't it!"

The girl turned to her and said,

"Don't worry, my mom knows how much I can carry."

And so it is with God.

God promises us an abundant life...

Many times that comes through hardship and struggle...

But the good news is

we have a God who knows exactly how much we can carry!