

Welcome to the High Plains Preacher! Stories about the Bible, high wind, fast horses, lack of moisture and other elements of life in the Texas Panhandle.

Colby

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

A five-year-old boy named Colby attends the 8 o'clock Sunday morning Mass at St. Hyacinth. He sits with his parents in the back of the church because Colby has trouble sitting still. Yet he is polite. When bringing his offering to the altar, for instance, he is the first to arrive but lets the other children drop their offerings in the basket ahead of him.

When at home, according to his mother, he is active and adventurous. His favorites things to do are climbing trees and wrestling with his older brother.

Colby is also smart and highly observant. Not long ago, at a wedding ceremony in a Protestant church, Colby was unusually quiet. He sat in the pew with a frown on his face throughout the service. His father asked what was wrong. Colby pointed to the wall of the church and said, "Dad, where are the Stations? They don't have the Stations of the Cross."

His parents were surprised that he noticed this detail. But, if you think about it, the Stations of the Cross are exactly what a young boy would notice. In the depictions of Jesus' walk to Calvary, what do we find? First off, there are soldiers. And nails. And a crown of thorns. In other words, we encounter sacrifice, courage and endurance.

These are qualities that capture the imagination of a young boy and the Book of Genesis explains why. It tells us that Adam was created in the outback. He was fashioned in the wild. So it is that a man's journey through life, and therefore his journey back to God, will entail elements of risk, courage, adventure and physical endurance.

Not so with Eve. Eve was created in the garden: a place of beauty; a place to call home; a place of love and encouragement. The very qualities at which women naturally excel.

The creation of man and woman reminds us that none of us is created as a blank slate. Rather, formed as we are from the dust of the earth, we are works of pottery. Pottery on which is found the handprint of God himself, the One who fashions each of us in love.