

THE HIGH PLAINS PREACHER

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.

Dirt Bikes

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

A Catholic priest was assigned a seat next to an Evangelical pastor. Noticing the priest's Roman collar, the evangelical whipped out a pamphlet and said, "If you accept Jesus as your personal savior you will have peace of mind." To which the priest responded: "If I wanted peace of mind, I'd take Prozac."

His point: If your Christianity excludes hardship, suffering and sacrifice, then it's not Christianity. It's therapy.

Now, of course, no one likes to suffer. But, then, Christ never promised us a rose garden. So, beware of buying into a Grandmotherly-kind-of-religion that pats you on the head and says, "Don't worry. God will make it all work out for you. Here, have a cookie."

Yes, someday in heaven God's justice will prevail. But what about *now*?

We find an answer in the writings of St. John of the Cross. He warned about a false, God-will-make-all-better brand of Christianity when he wrote: "Some people are extremely anxious that God remove their faults, imperfections and trials, but their motive is *personal peace* rather than *God*."

The Irish monks, followers of St. Patrick, built their churches and their hermitages as close to the sea as possible. Why? In order to feel close to God's power. And His *danger*. One of those monks, St. Cuthbert, once claimed: "*Unless you are scared, you're not really praying!*"

What this mean? It means that life in Christ is not like a six-year-old riding a tricycle in a cul-de-sac with a safety helmet. Rather, life in Christ is like some teenager doing stunts on a mountain bike on the rim of a canyon!

Life in Christ is not focused on bling and fashion and worldly success. Rather, it is making your way down a darkened hall at 3 AM to the sound of a child crying; it is driving a hundred miles in snow to get to a hospital when your

mother is dying; it means prayer and fasting for the relief of all who suffer in any way.

Most of all, life in Christ is *not* praying that God lift the Cross from *your* shoulders
but for the strength to help lift the Cross from His!