

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.

'My Sacrifice and Yours'

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

A young man who steps into a jewelry store to buy an engagement ring. He asks to see the most expensive ring in the display case. He feels the weight of it in his palm and his hand starts to tremble, not because the ring is heavy, but because of the vow he will soon make to offer his life to the one he loves.

At every Mass, I pray to experience a similar tremor in my hands at that point when I receive the gifts of bread and wine. I pray for the grace to cradle these symbols of your life in my hands the way a man holds a diamond engagement ring. Why? Because the bread and wine offered on our altars represent all the joys and sorrows, all the hunger and longing of all the world.

My sacrifice and yours.

When I place the bread on the altar, I call to mind wheat fields and farmers in combines and grain elevators that stand like sentinels along the highways of West Texas. I pray for rain and good wages for those who grow our food, transport it, process it and stack it high on grocery shelves.

Then, next to the bread, I place a chalice of wine on the altar. This wine represents the labor of your hands and the love in your hearts, things like the scraped-up knee on a little girl who fell off a bike that week, the bandage in the hand of a paramedic at the scene of an accident, and every family in the Middle East driven from their homes by the sound of exploding bombs.

This is what you and I offer at every Mass: the life of all the world in union with Christ on the Cross! The sacrifices you make for your children. The sacrifices you make for your marriage. The sacrifices you make to live simply so that others might simply live.

My sacrifice and yours.

All of our sacrifices, big and small. Our daily labor and our deepest love.

Pray that my sacrifice and yours be acceptable to God, the Father Almighty.

Pray that we offer our lives to God with hands that tremble like those of a man with a diamond ring in his palm.