



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

El Guapo

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

My dog's name is Guapo. Actually, his real name is *El Guapo*, but I don't introduce him to strangers by his full name because they think I'm saying El Chapo and then they want to know if he does drugs. So I introduce him as Guapo which some people hear as Waffle and ask if he likes his waffles with maple syrup and butter.

Nevertheless, Guapo likes his name. He likes it a lot. After all, it's Spanish for handsome which might explain why he is always so happy to come when I call him. Who wouldn't like being called Handsome?

And handsome he is! I first saw him in a parking lot without a collar and homeless. I thought to myself, "What a nice-looking mutt." He's got brown patches around his eyes like an Australian shepherd. He has a white blaze and a white muzzle and a white yoke across his shoulders that extends down his front legs. The rest of his coat is three shades of brown streaked with black.

Guapo is happiest when chasing jack rabbits. He also likes to bark at my cows and is disappointed that they don't chase after him when he tries to play tag with them. After a while, he gives up and takes a dip in their water tank. He's got the best smile in the world and never strays far from my side.

Growing up on a dairy farm, I can't imagine life without a dog. They were useful, loyal and hard-working. Which may be the reason I often ask God to make me more like my dog: happy, forgiving and living-in-the-moment.

Have you ever noticed how much dogs enjoy life? Whatever a dog happens to be doing at any given moment just happens to be "the absolute best thing in the world" to be doing at that particular moment.

God bless our dogs. They are not only our best friends, they remind us that living in joy is one of the best ways to live in God.