



## 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

### The Rock Pile

by Fr. Jim Schmitmeyer

When I was boy growing up on a farm, my brothers and sisters and I were often sent to the fields to pick up rocks. We weren't dressed in stripped clothing but if you had heard our complaining, you might have thought the county sheriff had sent a chain-gang to your neighborhood.

With this traumatic memory in my background, you can understand my taking offense at a remark I overheard in at the Caprock Café shortly after I purchased a piece of ground four miles west of Quitaque.

The land in that area is comprised of rolling hills and, along with the hills, come rocks. I knew that the field I bought place had plenty of rocks but still, I was miffed when I heard someone in the restaurant refer to my retirement investment as The Rock Pile.

Later, I asked the farmer who grows cotton field in my field if we needed to hire a gang of kids to pick up the rocks. He shook his head and said, "Father Jim, it's the darndest thing. Your field has all those of rocks but it is among the top-producing cotton fields that we lease. The only thing we can figure is that the rocks retain heat and those heat-units help that cotton to produce to its highest potential."

Rocks? Heat units?

If my father had raised cotton instead of alfalfa, I might have become a farmer instead of a priest!