

## PASTOR'S COLUMN

### *“The Pain Passes...The Beauty Remains”*

As we make our journey of life, we encounter many obstacles, difficulties, sufferings, and pain. If we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and embrace our crosses as Jesus did His, these crosses can become the pathways to new life, new hope, and new beginnings.

The Prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of Jesus in these words taken from this Sunday's First Reading:

“The Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity. If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him.

Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear.”

(Isaiah 53:10-11)

From the life and example of Jesus, we come to know and believe that suffering, embraced in faith, is redemptive!

May this story strengthen us as we face the aches, pains, sufferings, frustrations, and challenges of daily living:

Once upon a time, a couple was in a gift shop looking for a birthday present. The woman spotted a beautiful teacup. “Look at this lovely cup,” she said to her husband.

He picked it up and said, “You're right! This is one of the loveliest teacups I have ever seen.”

The teacup spoke to the couple, “Thank you for the compliment, but I wasn't always beautiful.”

The woman asked of the cup, “What do you mean when you say you weren't always beautiful?”

“Well,” said the teacup, “once I was just an ugly, soggy lump of clay. But one day a potter with dirty, wet hands threw me on a wheel. I was turned around and around until I got so dizzy I couldn't see straight. ‘Stop! Stop!’ I cried. But the potter with the wet hands said, ‘Not yet!’ Then I was poked and punched until I hurt all over. ‘Stop! Stop!’ I cried. But the potter's voice said, ‘Not yet.’ Finally the punching stopped.

“But then something much worse happened. I was put into a furnace. I got hotter and hotter until I couldn't stand it. ‘Stop! Stop!’ I cried. But a voice said, ‘Not yet.’ Finally, when I thought I was going to burn up, I was taken out of the furnace. Then someone began to paint me. The fumes got so bad that I felt sick. ‘Stop, stop!’ I cried. But all I heard was, ‘Not yet!’ Finally it stopped. But then I went back into that awful furnace. This time it was hotter than before. ‘Stop! Stop!’ I cried. But all I heard was ‘Not yet.’

“Finally I came out of the furnace to cool. When I was completely cool I was placed on this shelf, next to a mirror. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I was amazed. I could not believe what I saw. I was no longer ugly, soggy, and dirty. I was beautiful, firm, and clean. I cried for joy. It was then that I realized that all the pain was worthwhile. Without it I would still be an ugly, soggy, lump of wet clay. It was then that all the pain took on meaning for me – it had passed – but the beauty it brought has remained.

In the midst of our sufferings, let us continue to trust in the Lord. The crosses we bear, embraced in faith, bring new life, new hope, and new beginnings.

The pain will pass. The beauty will remain.

F. Mike