

The peace of the Lord be with you on this day!

About a month ago one of the young dads in the parish visited me here at the rectory. We had a pleasant visit and he presented me with a card, ironically it was a sympathy card. I thought sympathy cards were given out to the living not the dying. Don't give him a job at Day Spring Cards, Inc.

According to St John Paul II in *Evangelium Vitae*, "Living to the Lord also means recognizing that suffering, while still an evil and a trial in itself, can always become a source of good. It becomes such if it is experienced for love and with love through sharing, by God's gracious gift and one's own personal and free choice, in the suffering of Christ Crucified. In this way, the person who lives his suffering in the Lord grows more fully conformed to him."

St. John Paul II tells us to rejoice in the spiritual dimension of suffering. Our faith teaches that the dignity of human life lies in our being created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26 -27). This dignity is not something we necessarily earn, but that we are all endowed through the gift of our faith. As Catholics we are called to live our lives with deep respect for dignity, not just that we live, but in how we suffer and die.

Like Jesus, we who live in the Spirit of God, participate in sending the spirit of God's love to others. For all whose death has touched us – a death like His; a death of others. Our death becomes a source of fruitfulness. The fruitfulness of our lives shows itself only after we have died. We often become preoccupied in life and miss the opportunity to see our fruitfulness until death.

Our life bears fruit long after it come to an end. In the Gospel, "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it yields a hundred-fold." (John 12:24) I will continue to keep you in my prayers as I ask you to pray for me.

Pax.

Father Ed