

**Fr. John Sassani**  
**Homily Given July 10, 2011**  
**Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Liturgical Year A**

There are over 1,000,000 words in the Holy Bible, and many are used repeatedly. The word *groan* - and all its forms - is only used twelve times. The word comes up today in St. Paul's letter to the Romans: "We groan..."

When do we groan? When our knees are aching, when we have to interact with the IRS. While sitting in the audience at a play or a movie when there's a poignant moment. While watching the news about flooding in Minot, North Dakota, or wildfires in Los Alamos, New Mexico. When bad news is delivered in the emergency room or doctor's office. When there is nowhere to go in a family stalemate.

Paul talks about the groaning of creation because of the futility life can have because of death - death seems to be the ultimate futility. But Paul isn't speaking only about death, but about every element of life that seems or is futile - and not just for people, but for everything - all creation.

The futility of death is undone by hope, by a future glory that is available to us and to everyone, to all creation, because of Christ and his Resurrection. Christ is sowing the seeds of new life in our minds and hearts, and in our communities.

These seeds of hope change the futile trajectory of sin, selfishness, and death - from looking inwardly toward the outward look of love. We look at God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to feel their divine love changing us. Then, we can look at loved ones, the neighbors, the strangers, the enemies with that same love, the only love that lifts the burden of futility.

In his great work *The Divine Milieu*, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., writes, "Because you ascended into heaven after having descended into hell, you have so filled the universe in every direction, Jesus, that henceforth it is blessedly impossible for us to escape you." Christ's descent into death has been trumped by his Resurrection and now he is filling the universe with his life and love.

But he stays with us, especially in the Church and the Word and the Eucharist, to sow the seeds of hope in us so that we can be sowers of the seeds of hope to others.

There is a Latin motet attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas called *O Sacrum Convivium* (in English, *O Sacred Feast*). It goes:

*This is indeed a sacred feast  
in which Christ himself is consumed.  
His passion is recalled  
Our minds and hearts are filled with grace  
and a pledge of future glory is given to us.*

Let us be grateful for the hope Christ sows in us in a world groaning with futility and let us promise him to be Hope to others.