

**Homily — Fifth Sunday of Lent (B), 2018  
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

**We have some small decorative sheaves of wheat in our kitchen.  
I took a stalk and separated the wheat grains.  
They are tiny, smooth, shiny and hard.**

**Imagine a seed being planted in moist soil.  
Before long, that tough, smooth, shiny exterior  
begins to lose its luster, look a little gray,  
kind of shrivels up and gets very wrinkly.**

**Sound familiar?**

**But then something happens inside that seed.  
What at first seemed to be like a tomb,  
suddenly becomes a kind of womb.  
A shoot erupts from both ends of the seed,  
one thrusting downward, the other upward.  
That upward thrusting shoot makes its way  
through and around all sorts of seemingly impossible obstacles.**

**Finally a green shoot breaks through the crust of the Earth,  
to the brightness of day.**

**I think Jesus is suggesting that's a pretty good way  
of thinking of our lives, not just at the end, but all life long,  
whether you're 32 or 102.**

**Faith is about trusting that all those wrinkles,  
all the bumps and bruises of life,  
are really signs that something very good  
is percolating deep down inside.**

**Jesus allows himself to be lifted up on a cross  
to assure us that  
our suffering, our day-by-day dying, is not in vain.**

**We're doing Eucharist again here this morning.  
We take some bread and pray over it  
and then pray over a cup of wine.  
That bread is made from wheat grains  
and the wine is made from grapes.  
Both of them went through a crushing process  
to eventually become something holy, sacred.**

**It took a lot of wheat grains together  
and a lot of grapes together  
to make the bread and wine that we will pray over.  
That bears some reflection as this Lent come quickly to an end.**

**Jeremiah, in God's name says:  
"I place my law (of LOVE) within them, and write it on their hearts."  
That's the inner force that empowers the dead grain to come to life.**

**The letter to the Hebrews says:  
"Son though he was, he learned obedience through suffering,  
and when he was made perfect,  
he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."**

**Obedience to what life brings**

**To obey him is to submit oneself to the crushing  
that becoming bread/wine entails.**