

Twelfth Sunday Ordinary Time (B) - Pura Vida

My daughter graduated High School and as a gift she asked for a trip to Costa Rica. We just came back from that trip and while in Costa Rica, I learned that their most popular phrase is “Pura Vida” which translated is “pure life”. Costa Ricans will greet you with “Pura Vida” they will wish you a “Pura Vida” and they hope to have a “Pura Vida” themselves.

The phrase has different applications for them based on the situation, but they all have the same theme... to say “Pura Vida” (pure life) or to wish someone pure life is to wish a life of peace, a life of joy and a life of freedom. The goal of Costa Ricans is to live and for others to live a pure life.

As you can imagine not everything in life is a life of pure life, there are many things that threaten a life of peace, joy and freedom, these threats we can call storms. Storms come and go; it is not a question of **if** we will encounter them but is a question of **when** we will encounter them. Storms can come in different forms, they can be financial hardships, health concerns, family problems, marital problems, addictions, natural disasters, even veering off from your faith. Some can be predicted in a way, for example if I go out drinking, drive home, get into an accident or get a DUI, you can say that somehow that storm (or the consequences) was predictable or expected, but most storms are unexpected.

That was the case for Norman, one of our tour guides in Costa Rica.

Norman had worked 15 years to build up his travel/tourism company... He was self-employed, business was good, family was doing well, he was in good health... he was living as he stated “Pura Vida” ... **that is until 2020...** In 2020 he was hit with an unpredictable storm, the storm called COVID, it shook his entire life... Tourism came to a complete halt in Costa Rica, he lost his business, he encountered marital problems, which ended in a divorce, the stress, anxiety and concerns created health issues for Norman... the peace, joy and freedom that he had described as Pura Vida... struggled through the storm... and he told me that his goal as he was starting to get back up (working for someone else) was to reach Pura Vida again.

So, I ask myself how do you live “Pura Vida” in the middle of a storm? Or can you?

I personally believe that “pure life” can be defined as more than a life of peace, joy and freedom... A pure life can be defined as the psalmist did... to live a pure life allows you to **give thanks to the Lord** for his Love is everlasting... In the middle of your storm.

Are you able to give thanks to the Lord during your storm?

The story of Job presents us with a character that had it all, yet he lost it all, his health, fortune, friends and family, he truly encountered a storm, it was very similar to what Norman thought that he had encountered... Yet the Lord addressed Job **out of the storm...** In other words, the Lord was **with him through the storm.**

The gospel shows us the story of Jesus, the disciples and the storm at the sea. The disciples were frightened, they lost their peace, they didn't know what to do... **Yet Jesus was with them...**

We are all going to encounter storms and at times we will lose our peace, our joy, we will get frightened, angry and not know where to turn... When you get that phone call with a not so pleasant diagnosis for you or a loved one... when everything seems to be more expensive and you are not able to cover your expenses... when you find out about a situation that affects you greatly and there seems to be nothing you can do to help... when you or a loved one seems to be losing their faith, their hope, their zeal... when you lose a loved one... we might turn to the Lord like Job and ask... Lord where are you? Or Lord why?

If you want to get back to a state of pure life, that moment of peace in the midst of the storm... Just realize that he is with you... That our Lord is with you in the middle of the storm... you might not feel him, you might not realize it, you might not have asked him to but know that **at the moment of the storm you can give thanks to the Lord because he is with you...** you might not be able to give thanks to the Lord in the middle of your storm yet, but at least realize that his love is everlasting...the psalmist said... **give thanks to the Lord for his love is everlasting...** I believe that this is truly the way for us to reach Pura Vida...