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The story is told of a fifth grade student who became engrossed in his class science experiment. The students of his class were studying the world around them and in particular, butterflies. As part of a class experiment several cocoons had been collected by the students and were being eagerly watched.

One lunch period our little fifth grade student noticed that a butterfly was about to break its chrysalis and emerge from its cocoon. The boy sat and watched in amazement as the miracle of life unfolded before him. He saw the antennae. He noted with awe how the head emerged. As more and more of the soon-to-be-butterfly appeared, he had no concern that he himself was missing his own lunch.

At one point, however, he saw the emerging butterfly begin to struggle. It looked as if this creature was not going to make it. It seemed to our young man that the chrysalis was too restrictive and that the butterfly would not emerge. It was suffering and he wanted to intervene. Our young man decided to help by chipping away at its cocoon. Within seconds the butterfly emerged, but something was terribly amiss.

The teacher soon arrived in the room and asked our young naturalist what was happening. The student explained to the teacher what had happened and how he had intervened in the process. When they both looked at the butterfly, they noticed that its wings had not materialized and that the lower portion of its body was deformed.

The student of life learned from the teacher that it was necessary that the butterfly had to struggle and suffer though the emergence from the cocoon. It is during the struggle that the butterfly's majestic wings are formed; what appeared to the boy as pain and suffering was nothing more than the way butterflies are born.

We have all heard the phrase, "No pain, no gain." This is the lesson of Easter. No one of us wants to see pain for the sake of pain, but sometimes it is in the pain and suffering that earns us our wings. It is in the pain and suffering that we are transformed. It is through the pain and suffering that we emerge from our cocoon.

The great witness of our Holy Father Pope John Paul these recent weeks is that there is a value to pain and suffering. We do not discard the elderly because they are weakened. We do euthanize the weak and disable among us. Those who suffer and struggle are vital.

As we speak of human life, we can apply the same paradigm to our individual struggles. Our pain and suffering has value; it transforms us. There is no love without sacrifice. Love emerges from the cocoon of life in moments of struggle. If we wish to intervene as our young boy did and banish suffering and pain from our lives, we too will be misshapen because we will be loveless. We develop our wings in the challenges of life; we can fly, indeed, we can soar once we have known and lived love - the Resurrection moment in our lives.

The suffering and death of Jesus that is Good Friday had to take place for there to be a Resurrection. The lesson of this Easter Sunday is that all pain, all suffering, all sorrow can be transformed to new life. This power of transformation has been given to us by our God who is Love. It is up to us to accept the challenge that lies before us. Let us rise with our Lord to newness of life and love.