



From Christianity's early days, the butterfly was viewed as a symbol of transformation, pointing to the resurrection of our Lord and Savior. The three stages in its life: caterpillar to cocoon to beautiful butterfly point

to Jesus' life on earth, His passion and burial in the tomb, and His resurrection into the glory of life above and beyond this realm. We, Christians, believe that we follow the same pattern in existence, for as Saint Paul writes (1 Corinthians 15:51): "*We shall all be changed.*"

When the camera fades in to begin the new movie, ***The Ravine***, it focuses on a chrysalis cocoon hanging from a tree by a ravine where a gruesome reality lingers in the aftermath of a double homicide and suicide. A horrendous crime such as this should leave us in the depths of despair fueled by deep sadness, unthinkable tragedy, unrelenting grief, and furious anger. But the author of the book, Robert Pascuzzi, and the producers of the movie, Robert and his wife, Kelly, want us to see beyond the horrors of the cross and the sorrows of this valley of tears to glimpse hope from a world that does not permit suffering and death to have the final word.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us to enlighten us to God's gracious mercy and the Holy Spirit's redemptive love. That is one of the pervading messages of ***The Ravine***. It invites us to revisit the most difficult situations of our own earthly existence, the frightening memories, raw feelings, and sobering impact of the moment in time that changed our lives forever. It also calls us to take it all to God, whose love is greater than our fears, whose

mercy is deeper than our guilt and shame, whose outstretched arms reach much farther than our attempts to hide from our own pain.

This same message of Holy Week beckons us to face the paschal mystery and the mysteries of our own life in Christ. As we contemplate His passion, we somehow find strength to pick up our own cross and walk with Him, realizing that beyond the earthly pain lies divine gain, beyond the ugly gore is a magnificent glory, beyond the excruciating cross is an exultant crown, and beyond the crucifixion is the promise of a sacred resurrection.

Many of you got to meet and talk with Kelly and Robert here on the weekend of March 20-21; some of you have read their thrilling book. I join them to invite you to the premier of their movie that will debut on Easter weekend at various places in the Kansas City area. One of those places is here in the northland, at the B&B Liberty Cinema Theatre: 1903 Victory Drive (816-781-1700). The showtimes are on Good Friday, April 2, at 1PM, 4PM, and 7PM, on Holy Saturday, April 3, at those same times, plus a late night airing at 10PM, and again on Easter Sunday, at the same three times. As faith and culture intersect, watching this film might be a great way for you to reflect upon the holiest days of the year, as you tie them to overcoming the most devastating challenges that you have faced on your spiritual journey.

Just as Jesus went into the desert to face the demon, so are we called to face and defeat demons that haunt and deceive us. I will host discussion groups for those wishing to process the paschal mystery in our own lives vis-à-vis ***The Ravine***. Grateful that the Pascuzzi Family has willingly shared this passion with us, we can more lovingly understand our unique role in the paschal mystery and in God's reign.