

**"But I say to you..."**

**In a track meet, one of the most spectacular events is the pole vault. It requires great athleticism and supreme effort. For a split second the vaulter hovers over the bar before dropping to the sand pit below.**

**To perform this feat requires training and great energy.**

**Perhaps we can compare this to our efforts to live the Christian life..**

**Only in this effort we are propelled not just by our own efforts, but by the gift of God's amazing grace.**

**In the many admonitions in today's Gospel, Jesus raises the bar just as it is raised for the vaulter.**

**For in each of them, Jesus raises the bar to a higher standard, and we are challenged to vault higher.**

**For in each case, Jesus declares:**

**"But I say to you..." and he demands more than the prevailing culture.**

**and all too often our response is:**

**"Yes but...."**

**We make excuses to not go higher.**

**For instance: his admonition not to kill, but to not even kill with words. Down through the ages we have consistently answered "Yes....BUT..."**

**It has even taken us 2000 years to figure out capital punishment as being wrong.**

**Recent popes have declared that it is, but in the 19th century the Pope as leader of the Papal States sentenced citizens to death through the excuse of capital punishment being deserved.**

**Another instance of saying "Yes but...to the higher standards set by Jesus.**

**Saint Paul today declares that we are held to a greater wisdom than that of the world in which we are immersed:**

**"We speak a wisdom to those who are mature,**

**not wisdom of this age,**

**nor of the rulers of this age.**

**who are passing away."**

**So Lent approaches. For the Christian it is our season of spring training, but as we go into training, we realize that vaulting higher always relies of the energy of God's amazing grace, and so we pray:**

**Send us your amaing grace,**

**so that we might vault higher.**

**Deliver us from all our "yes buts..."**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**Amen**