

THE SNAILS

Adaptation of a Spanish audio-visual story by P.Ribes, s.j.

Intent of the Story

- ✓ *Te be aware of the so called “escape mechanisms”*
- ✓ *Withdrawal is one of the most common and crippling ones.*
- ✓ *Problems, dangers, threats and difficulties are to be faced not escaped.*
- ✓ *When faced with problems and difficulties the best policy is to face them, not run away from them.*
- ✓ *Problems and difficulties are there to be solved not to be shelved.*
- ✓ *We learned walking by walking, not sitting down.*
- ✓ *No one will ever leave his foot-prints in the sands of time sitting down.*
- ✓ *Hardships, problems faced chisel us into perfection.*
- ✓ *Difficulties should not be stumbling blocks, but stepping stones to success.*

The Story

Have you ever seen snails? Surely, after the rain you may see them all over the countryside. Crawling out of their hiding places, with their shells on their backs; slowly they move all over on the open fields. Oh, how they like to stroll on wet grass!

Now see what happened to one of those snails. He was young, full zest for living and desirous to see the world outside. It was the first time he left his hiding place to stroll on the sunny wet grass. Oh, how he enjoyed the bright sun, the blue skies and the freshness of the countryside.

He stuck his neck out of his shell for a little while. It was so pleasant. He was delighted. All of a sudden he saw a strange and ugly creature. What was it? It must have been a harmless thing like a butterfly. But, when that strange little creature stared at him it was too much for our snail.

Vow! How threatened and frightened our little snail was. Without caring to find out whether the visitor was a friend or an enemy, quickly he withdrew into his shell. There, he felt secure and saved from danger.

Time and again, he tried to come out of his shell to enjoy the brightness of the day and the beauty of the country side...But, again, every time he saw an stranger looking at him, in fear, quickly, he withdrew into his shell.

Very soon, our little snail remained locked inside himself; of course, feeling secure and protected; yet, alone, unwanted and unloved.

Safety and peace became” the be all and the end all” of his life. Safety kept him away from danger; true, but prevented him from enjoying a happy and meaningful life

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

One of the temptations of our time is withdrawal and lack of involvement, in civic, social and political issues, and our neighbor's problems. This is a harmful escapist attitude which we rationalize with beautiful names, like: inability, prudence, peace, discretion, common sense, etc.

In the story of the snails, this human escapist stance is clearly portrayed. The snail's shell is a symbol in itself. When there is danger or unpleasantness we withdraw into our shells.

In real life, though, it looks funny; we find men and women snails. Nay, not only men and women snails, but also, children snails – boys and girls snails. Let some problem or difficulty come their way, immediately they withdraw within themselves.

Withdrawal is one of the many "escape mechanisms" we take recourse to escape the difficulties and problems life entails. No escape mechanism will ever solve a problem, but only avoids it. **Actually speaking, "escape mechanisms" not only do not solve our problems, but create bigger ones for our future life..**

Some of the common escape mechanisms people take recourse, are: forgetfulness, day dreaming, alcohol, drug-addiction, businesses, procrastination, pouting, sickness, loneliness, etc. not to mention the greatest and final one suicide

Escape mechanisms stop us from growing, make our life barren, cut us off from reality and lead us to mental illnesses and make us social misfits.

People on the Grip of Escape Mechanisms:

They seem to enjoy peace and quiet within, but not really. Inside their shells:

- They feel lonely, uncared for and unloved.
- They feel bored without knowing how to while away their time.
- They are afraid to see and face life.

They are running away from life:

- They are not interested in their works and studies.
- They are not willing to get involved in the lives and problems of others..
- Without their being aware of it, they go deeper and deeper into themselves,` thus missing the best of life.

They are not ready to experience the pains of growing.

- The meaning of life,
- The joy of sharing ourselves with others.
- Growing to be mature and fruitful human beings.

