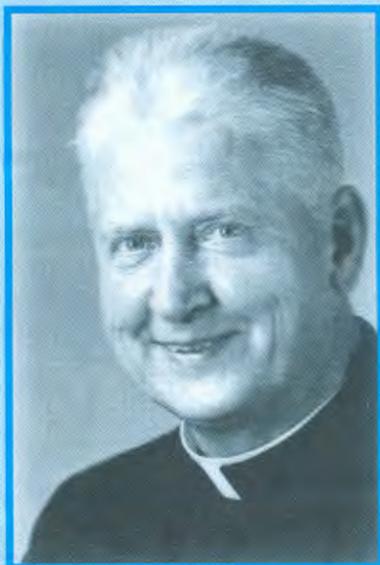




for from the FRIENDS of

Walter Cizek S.J.



Rev. Walter J. Cizek, S.J.

PRAYER FOR A FAVOR THROUGH THE INTERCESSION OF FATHER WALTER CISZEK, S.J.

Almighty God, we love, adore and praise You as our Creator and Loving Father. Look with compassion and mercy upon us. Hear our prayer in this time of special need and through the intercession of Father Walter Cizek, grant the following favor if it is Your Holy Will.

(Mention the Request)

Most loving God, accept our gratitude for hearing this prayer. May the knowledge of the virtues and holiness of Father Walter be recognized and known to provide a lasting example to draw sinners to reconciliation and to lead souls to sanctity.

For You are our God and we are Your people and we glorify You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Please inform the Prayer League of any special favors from Father Walter Cizek.

Father Walter J. Cizek – Superhero to Many

BY SISTER DORIS

Appropriate challenges in life, in the right proportion, make us thrive in development of talents and capabilities—without them we could not live a full life. Where there is too little challenge in a person’s life, one often becomes bored and, usually, lacks a zest for living. When faced with sufficient challenge, a person blossoms with vigor and energy. However, confronted with too much and too difficult challenge, a person gets stressed out, both physically and mentally; if such conditions are prolonged, one can be rendered broken down and helpless, even giving up on life itself.



Seminarians studying at Mount St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD toured the Prayer League and St. Casimir’s Church. Standing by baptismal font which Father Cizek was baptized are from left to right: Joe Baker, Greg Haman, Paul Rayburn, and Alex Millar.

Father Walter Cizek, in spite of enduring years of continuous overpowering challenges in Russia, was able to survive, return to the United States and live an active life of preaching and spiritual direction for many years until his death in 1984.

In this article I want to highlight Fr. Cizek’s life, and point out some of the many challenges he faced—without caving in under the pressure. I do believe, and I know Fr. Walter acknowledged that it was only by the grace of God that he survived it all without permanent scars. In fact, Fr. Walter said in With God in Russia (p.1), “I don’t just mean God took care of me. I mean that He called me to, prepared me for, then protected me during those years in Siberia. I am convinced of that...”

Walter’s early life was well grounded spiritually in the home by the direction and example of a prayerful mother with great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and reinforced through Catholic school education. His oldest sister, Sister Conrad, was already a Bernardine Sister, and one of his younger sisters would follow her into religious life.

Not actually inclined to hard study, Fr. Cizek confessed in With God in Russia (p.2) “I had no use for school, except insofar as it had a playground where I could fight or wrestle or play sports—any sport.” But his father valued education and

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Father Walter Cizek Day 2011 October 16, 2011



**REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DECEMBER 15, 2010 MEETING**

The meeting began with the prayer for the cause of canonization of Father Ciszek.

Minutes of the September meeting were reviewed and approved upon the motion of Kathie Palubinsky, seconded by Michele Day, and approved by all members present. The report from the Board was also unanimously approved.

Dates were set for meetings to be held in 2011, at 6PM on the Wednesday evenings of March 2, June 22, September 7, and December 14.

Monsignor Bocian inquired whether there had been response to contacts made with the Polish-American Priests Association, to which Sr. Doris replied in the negative—all contacts proved unsuccessful.

Elaine Cusat presented the treasurer's report for Fr. Ciszek Day and as of December 1, 2010. Sr. Doris noted that raffle income this year was below that of previous years. The new format may have been the reason.

Monsignor Bocian reported that of the five persons contacted as nominees for membership on the Board three persons responded that they could not be available at this time. Msgr. Bocian has already submitted the other two names to the Bishop for approval.

A communication from Fr. James Desjardins in Siberia was presented for consideration by the Board. Members unanimously approved a follow-up by the Prayer League. Sr. Doris was instructed to reply with a request for a detailed plan for each of the projects.

A second request, made by a Prayer League member, was to make cards and brochures available at the basilica near Disney World, to spread knowledge of Fr. Ciszek and his cause. The motion was made to do a follow-up on that request as well.

Elaine Cusat spoke of establishing a speakers bureau—to have persons available to speak to church groups and others about Fr. Ciszek's life and examples.

Michele Day made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Kathie Palubinsky seconded that motion.

Msgr. Bocian closed the meeting with a prayer.

“For/From the Friends of Walter Ciszek, S.J.”

A Publication of the Father Walter Ciszek Prayer League
Official Organization for the Promotion of the Cause of
Canonization of Father Walter Ciszek, S.J.
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By Rev. Thomas J. Sable, S.J.

Many years ago when I was driving through Wyoming, I encountered the Wind River Mountains. They were located near the Continental Divide at the spine of the Rocky Mountains. After hours of struggling to keep my vehicle on the road because of the powerful wind, I pulled over and went into a coffee shop to rest a bit from my ordeal. I asked the waitress behind the counter whether it was always this windy. She said: “What wind?”

There was a sound of a rushing mighty wind at Pentecost. The wind is a symbol of God and, therefore, a proper symbol of the Holy Spirit. Often in the Old Testament, God revealed Himself under the guise of breath or wind. Wind is, of all material things, one of the most spiritual in appearance. It is invisible, ethereal, mysterious and, therefore, nearest to the idea of spirit. In Ezekiel's famous vision, when he saw the valley full of dry bones, we all know that the Spirit of God was intended by that revivifying wind which came when the Prophet prophesied and blew upon the withered relics till they were brought to life. Ordinary winds blow from this or that section of the skies, but this wind descended from Heaven itself it was distinctly like a down-draft from above. It brought together the pilgrims to Jerusalem from the four corners of the earth. The true Spirit, the Spirit of God, neither comes from this place nor that neither can His power be controlled or directed by human authority His working is always from above, from God Himself.

The Church was born at a particular time and place, but grew quickly in its mission to the whole world. Like all things in the world, the Church is subject to the storms that afflict our human condition. In his experiences at Albertyn and in Siberia, Father Walter Ciszek saw the human side of the Church, torn, afflicted, and suffering. “Again and again, as I watched all this happen, I had to force myself not to think of the question that kept returning unbidden to mind: Why has God allowed this evil to happen? Why persecutions? If God must allow natural disasters, or even wars because of human failings, why can't he at least allow his flock to be shepherded and comforted during such calamities? Surely he could defend and protect his flock instead of having it singled out for special attack such as this?” (He Leadeth Me, p. 19) Indeed at the height of the Stalinist persecution of the Church, it might have seemed that the Church was a valley full of dry bones. The Spirit of God was despised among the Soviets so much so that they do not even believe in His existence, but the Soviet Empire was blown over by the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit came softly, breathing like a gentle zephyr which fans the flowers, but does not dislodge the insect of most transparent wings, and believers' hearts were comforted. The Spirit came with yet greater strength and the faithful prostrated themselves in the dust as they hear the thunder of His power bringing down, with a crash, false confidences and refuges of lies. How the strong empires of the powerful, which seemed to stand like rocks, were utterly cast down. How the hopes of the powerful, which appeared to be rooted like oaks, were torn up by the roots before the breath of the Spirit. What can stand against Him? We will see in these our days something of that mighty rushing wind which breaks the cedars of Lebanon and sweeps before it all things that would resist its power.

Father Walter J. Cizek— Superhero to Many continued from page 1 . . .

wanted the best for Walter, trying everything from talking to thrashing, to set him straight.

Walter had a stubborn nature, willing to try anything until he mastered it. Because he was short in physical stature, he tried to build physical prowess in every way he could, excelling in sports, especially as a pitcher in baseball, and in wrestling. According to Sister Evangeline, his sister, he may have been a “tough”, but he always showed a heart for the defenseless who were being hurt, and “the town bullies knew very well that sooner or later Walter would show up to right a wrong.”

After eighth grade, once he had made up his mind that he wanted to become a priest, and winning his mother’s approval, Walter stubbornly insisted before his unbelieving father that he really was serious about entering a seminary, and took off for Orchard Lake. There he took on challenges just for the sake of accomplishment—like running in the very early morning hours miles around the lake on the seminary grounds, or jumping for a swim in nearly freezing water, or eating only bread and water for the forty days of Lent, or going a whole year without eating meat. He wouldn’t dare be openly pious, but late at night, Walter would sneak down to the chapel to pray.

Doing the “hardest thing” always fascinated and attracted Walter. Therefore, after reading the life of St. Stanislaus Kostka, whom he admired as being a tough, young Pole, and later that year making a retreat conducted by a Jesuit, Walter felt that perhaps he ought to be a Jesuit. He tried to argue himself out of that feeling with various logical reasons, but prayed over it at the same time, finally deciding to take on the big challenge, because it was hard. It was not an easy challenge to convince his father, nor was it easy to convince the Provincial that he had to become a member of the Jesuit Society.

Not long after Walter joined the Jesuits, a call came from the Holy Father for seminarians to enter a new Russian center for preparing missionaries to work in Russia. Just hearing the announcement, Walter revealed that it struck him like a “direct call from God”.

Though he had to be patient in waiting to be accepted, Walter had to first finish his studies in philosophy. Several times he reminded the Father General that he had volunteered for the Russian mission. In the meantime, Walter continued to go without things as well as to undertake annoying jobs, just to be conditioned for harder things. He also had learned to ask advice and guidance, and to do as he was told. It was with the aim of strengthening his will that Walter wrote “On the Training of the Will” for his philosophy thesis.

Having been chosen to study at the Russicum, Walter put in many a hectic day learning theology, as well as the Russian language, history, and literature. In his usual habit of taking the hard path, he also learned to a level of mastery the German and French languages. Again, although he felt challenged by the difficulty of the Oriental liturgy, Walter hung on and finally came to love it.

When the time after his ordination did not seem feasible to try to send men into Russia, Father Walter was sent from Rome to a flourishing parish in Albertin, Poland as further preparation for the Russian mission. Within a year’s time Russian troops took over the seminary, and before long, Walter and his confreres were left sharing just one room of a guest cottage on the compound. Finally with the official closing of the parish, Father Cizek and another priest got permission to try to enter Russia.

Nothing about the long tedious journey or the days of working at the lumber camp in Chusovoy made life easy—weather, travel circumstances, living accommodations, work load and conditions, low pay—all contributed to heavy burdens in every aspect of living, making it almost impossible to work as a priest. To make matters worse, the threat of impending attack by the Germans required workers at the lumber camp to drill after work hours three or four nights a week, even up to one o’clock in the morning.

Little more than a year of such existence passed when one night the NKVD came to arrest Father Cizek and his roommates as German spies. He was thrown into a cell about ten feet square, crowded with at least two dozen others. Just one night later he was transferred to a district prison cell in Perm, about thirty by thirty feet, soon crammed with more than a hundred other prisoners. It was at Perm that Walter endured serious lengthy interrogations, heavy blows to the face, rubber clubbing on the back of the head, dark closet-like rooms, and other forms of torture.

Father Walter then “graduated” to the likes of hell with solitary confinement at Lubianka prison. Thus began a regimen with little variation—breakfast consisting of bread, sugar, and boiling water; a day of endless walking up and down, with no sleep or lying down allowed; a thin soup of fish and bones for lunch; a daily walk in the courtyard; two or three tablespoons of kasha for the evening meal; and more walking up and down before lying down at ten o’clock to sleep, with bright lights on all night. There were endless interrogations—even at odd hours of the night, drugged sessions, and electric shock techniques.

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During all the days of imprisonment, Father Walter devoted time to prayer—three rosaries a day as substitute for the breviary, mental prayer, prayer for deliverance and protection, and prayers for his interrogators and torturers.

Following years of imprisonment Father Cizek was sentenced to more years in the labor camps. During those years he met with heavier burdens because he was a priest—he was often assigned to the lowest and hardest work. He dug foundations by hand; he carved long sewer trenches in frozen ground with only a pick and a shovel; he loaded and unloaded heavy construction materials, having sometimes to stand in freezing water; and he crawled through new mine tunnels. Father Walter came to the realization that work is not a curse, but a sharing in God's own work of creation, and he gave his best efforts to it all.

Father Cizek also had to bear many heavy burdens and challenges imposed by circumstances in labor camp environment, such as: oppression by bands of thieves; infestation of lice; outbreaks of scurvy and of boils; scant and ill-fitting clothing; extreme deprivation of food and healthcare; severe punishment for minor infractions—like reaching for a piece of food; and lack of heat.

"Freedom" after completion of sentenced time in the labor camps allowed Father Cizek to take on a paid job, but he had to register with the local police, live where he was told to live, and move about in the region only with permission. Walter held a job at first as a lab assistant, but because he was caught and charged with carrying on missionary work, he was ordered to leave that area. When provided with two alternative places to go, he chose to go to Abakan, where he found a job as a car mechanic. Here he excelled in his capability to improvise and even make dies by hand—for which he earned awards from the government, and was given students to learn from him.

Father Cizek admitted that his strength came from his great love for God through the Blessed Mother's intercession. He said that when God did not answer his petition he always went to the next door, which was never locked, and asked Mary to help—she never failed him. It was her plan he followed in working out his salvation and those of the people entrusted to his priestly care. This plan included basic humility, constant prayer, complete self-denial, abandonment to Divine Providence, and full abidance by the will of God.

This was his secret: through all his trials he was challenged by God to believe and trust. Just as his stubbornness in early life helped him hold on to his determination, so through the rest of his life he held on to God with the same tenacity, and by the grace of God he came through, and for that reason ever becoming a better person.

My Impressions of Father Walter Cizek

Written by Joseph Baker, a seminarian from the Catholic Diocese of Peoria studying at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD

This past April 16, I had the privilege of embarking on a pilgrimage with three of my fellow seminarians at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, MD. This pilgrimage was a trip which I had long awaited, and I was not left disappointed. Along with stops at a couple sites relevant to Fr. Cizek's life in Wernersville and Sugarloaf, PA, we also visited Shenandoah, PA where we were warmly greeted by Sr. Doris and Sr. Jean Marie at the Cizek Center, the home of the Walter Cizek Prayer League. The highlight for me in Shenandoah was the opportunity to venerate the very baptismal font in St. Casmir's Church where Fr. Cizek was baptized almost 100 years ago in 1904.

I first met Fr. Cizek in August of 2007 after reading his book, *He Leadeth Me*. I remember being so mesmerized by his remarkable story. It seemed like such an unimaginable tale, one which I could read and understand but which was also completely foreign and intangible to me, a young college student from a small town in Illinois. Nonetheless, Fr. Cizek's story stuck with me over the next few years, and when I came to seminary in Maryland, I knew I had to go and see his hometown, only a few hours from the seminary. On our April 16th pilgrimage, I was most struck by Walter Cizek's humble birthplace of Shenandoah and the extreme simplicity of his life. While it can rightly be said that he lived a life full of adventure, danger, and excitement, the likes of which few in our society can match, I am not so sure that Fr. Cizek, himself, would focus on this.

He was born into a typical American family a few years after the turn of the 20th century. His parents were blue-collar immigrants from Poland who settled in a fairly remote Pennsylvania coal mining town. As a youngster, despite getting into a bit of trouble, he lived mostly a normal life, and in a day when it was not uncommon for a young man to pursue a call to the priesthood, even his decision to enter the seminary was not beyond ordinary. All in all, he was a pretty normal young Catholic man attempting to pursue the will of God. Yet, his decision to study at the Russicum in Rome in preparation for a future ministry behind the iron curtain may be, to many, the point at which his ordinary life began to take a turn toward the extraordinary.

However, after visiting the humble sites of Fr. Cizek's childhood and early life as a religious, I sense that he would not have recognized in himself any sort of extraordinary abilities. I believe his key to survival was a radical willingness to answer with a "yes" to the call of God. The beginning of the Book of Jeremiah says that "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jer. 1:5) We live in a massive world, and in a time when our global population is rapidly approaching 7 billion people, it is almost natural for us to get lost in the shuffle. Further, in regard to our relationship with God, the thought can easily occur that there are so many other people in the world, God cannot possibly care about me, let alone have a plan for me which is different than the plan He has for every other person on the Earth.

Nonetheless, as Christians, we know that Jeremiah's words are true; God has appointed us as prophets! He is truly relying on us to bring the Good News to others and to contribute our part in bringing about the Kingdom of God on Earth. Even before our birth He had in mind the precise nature of the call with which he would endow us. While Fr. Cizek's story is, indeed, a remarkable tale matched by very few, his call, the call to holiness, is far from unique. In fact, it is experienced by all! While Fr. Cizek's story is rightly labeled as remarkable, what I discovered on my trip to Shenandoah is that he, himself, was remarkable not because of his ordeal in the Soviet Union, but rather because he responded in the affirmative to the call to holiness. God asked him to go across the world and serve as a prophet to a nation who had removed the Divine from its borders, and he willingly responded in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Here am I! Send me." (Is. 6:8) Whether God is calling us to serve as a missionary in a Godless nation, or whether he is calling us to a more 'normal' life, all of our lives are extraordinary when we follow the example of Fr. Cizek by willingly responding to the Lord, "Here am I! Send me." Father Walter Cizek, S.J., Pray for us!

Father Walter Ciszek's Spirituality as seen by his sister – *Sister Mary Evangeline* (Fourth Installment)



Lifting the Burdens of Sin

It may be well to note how humility removed the obstacles that were barring his pursuit of holiness, and instead became responsible for the arrival of God's help in his care of souls.

I can say from my confession experience with my brother that it was his humility that prompted sinners to pour out their sins in full sincerity before this gentle and meek priest. His patience, his very facial expression of compassion, his every word to the penitent invited openness, relaxation, and complete presentation of one's transgressions. Father Walter also told me that those who came for counsel would, after hearing Father in his introductory conversation of joyfulness and calm, spontaneously make a confession of their sins which brought to light the source of their disturbance. Father Walter would then offer guidance that he was ever certain came from his Master and never from himself. This very conviction was so evident to those who sought answers for their problems that it left no room for questioning the advice that was given. They felt that God's very own fullness reached them through the spoken word or written advice of this holy priest.

Here is another confession instance of import. At the time Father Walter was preparing his notes for his second book *He Leadeth Me*, he felt a sudden urge to leave Mt. Pocono, PA and ride to Shenandoah to visit his brother John. At that time, John was afflicted with a heart condition, but was not bedridden. When Father Walter met him, he alerted John that God would call him that day. Without hesitation, John at once decided to make a confession of his entire life before his own brother; however, he asked for some time to prepare for it. Incidentally, in the previous sixteen years John had made a practice of weekly confession. On that eventful day, John knelt before his brother and made his life confession. Being able to alert his brother about impending death showed that his humility also brought him God's grace of discernment. Two hours later when Father Walter got back to Mt. Pocono, he received a call that John had expired shortly after Father's departure from Shenandoah. John was well prepared to meet his Maker for, like countless others, he knew that his brother's words and actions came from God.

In the favorable responses of the penitents, Father Walter always saw the hand of God and never felt that he was the one responsible for a gratifying turnout in the matter. Instead, he wholeheartedly accepted his own insufficiencies and begged the Lord's enlightenment in his endeavors with souls by living a life of genuine humility.

It was his personal pursuit of true humility that inspired

him to convince penitents that if they accept the humiliation of having committed sin, and if they discard their hurt pride Our Lord would help them in their efforts of amendment since He is their Savior. He reminded his penitents that, after all, Jesus said, "I am not come to call the just but sinners." In addition, Father Walter convinced those whose confessions he heard that Jesus can restore everything in Himself providing that they resort to that humility which brings on God's help.

In the case of Father Walter, once he got rid of his own complex illusions of self-sufficiency he began to enjoy a spirit of freedom. His living a more truthful life made him ever mindful that God alone and not self is to be the main focus of our life. Even in a matter of a few minutes with him this practice of his came to the fore. His rapport with those guilty of sin became less controlling and more understanding. He fully realized that no person is "without a fault. No person bereft of a burden, no person sufficient to himself, and no person wise enough, of himself."

His substitution of self-certainty for a sincere humility brought him a faith that was strong, a complete trust in God when all seemed ready to totter, and a firm peace in the many trying circumstances that cropped up not only in the concentration camps but also in his apostolate in America. His very simplicity that showed no singularity in all his endeavors drew countless souls to him in both countries. He looked for no human respect yet he received more true regard than did some famed personages. It was because he now was ever himself a priest of non-hypocritical courtesy and love of all, especially the insignificant. He was just so real that he manifested no self-consciousness, simply because he lost interest in himself. He lived in God's presence born of a strong faith, a gift granted to him by the Lord as a by-product of his humility.

A Good Summer Read



Summer is the time for relaxation and picking up a good book to read!

How about stocking up with a few volumes of *With God in Russia*? You can hand it out to friends who need a good summer read while they go on vacation, are home from college, or want to escape into a good book. It is not as "deep" as *He Leadeth Me*, and the adventure is appealing to young and old alike!

Note Written by Father Cizek in 1967

Dear Prayer Center,

On Jan 11, 1967 I sent a Thank You letter to Fr. Walter Cizek S.J. for his magnificent book *With God In Russia* telling him how much the book was helpful to me (at the time I was in senior High School-gr 13, in St. Pius X Preparatory Seminary, Ottawa Ontario Canada). Shortly after, I received this beautiful card from him which I have attached--he discusses in the card his thoughts on Prayer and how God works through prayer, It is a simple yet profound theology of the presence of God in our lives of Faith. I share this with you and pray that in a small way it helps his cause. May Fr. Cizek pray for all of us!

Sincerely yours, Barry Blackburn, Toronto

Dear Barry Blackburn, PC
(Pax Christi, Peace of Christ)

I felt very happy after reading your letter written to me Jan. 14th. Thanks a lot for sharing your reactions after reading "With God in Russia." Your letter is a proof how God can use any means to encourage people spiritually. Every work done for Him sincerely, has in itself this possibility. Because it is a good, and good can only be used to produce its kind. Time, place, circumstances are not obstacles for its influence. The spiritual world is even more correlated in itself than the material world. Hence, a good done in one part of the world, can have an effect on someone living in a far-off distant place. That is the power of God's intervention operating. The important thing is that we do good for God that He may use it for our higher goal, which is He Himself.

With sincere gratitude and every best wish, all blessings, In the Lord.

W. Cizek, SJ

You're remembered in my prayers.

Dear Barry Blackburn, PC
I felt happy after reading your letter written to me Jan. 14th. Thanks a lot for sharing your reactions after reading "With God in Russia". Your letter is a proof how God can use any means to encourage people spiritually. Every work done for Him sincerely has in itself this possibility. Because it is a good, and good only can be used to produce its kind. Time, place circumstances are not obstacles for its influence. The spiritual world is even more correlated in itself than the material world. Hence, a good done in one part of the world, can have an effect on someone living in a far-off distant place. That is the power of God's intervention operating. The important thing is that we do good for God that He may use it for our higher goal, which is He Himself. With sincere gratitude and every best wish. All blessings. You're remembered in my prayers.
Fr. Cizek S.J.

Lessons Learned!

from *He Leadeth Me*

Chapter 6, The Interrogations

by Kathy Prieto

Complete Abandonment

In Chapter 6, The Interrogations, one feels great sympathy toward Fr. Walter for all that he went through during the Lubianka interrogations. While turning the pages, one begins to think Fr. Walter was too hard on himself, that he should not blame himself for failing, signing his name on the papers. Feeling sympathy is a natural human response. However, just feeling sympathy does not take in the deeper meaning of the chapter-- that we must completely rely on God and not on ourselves. Although it would appear to most readers that Fr. Walter had already completely relied on God for everything, he points out specifically where he failed at this.

"I" was the root of his shame and problem.

He spent much time in prayer thanking God for his care and providence. But in hind sight, complete abandonment was not there. He had been thanking God for his talents and gifts such as steady nerves, good physique, and a strong will. These gifts he used "to do his will at all times and to the best of my ability. In short, I felt guilty and ashamed because in the last analysis I had relied almost completely on my self in this most critical test -- and I failed" (pg. 68).

- It takes a delicate conscience to discern if one is completely abandoning oneself to God's providence.
- It takes a life time of practice, hour by hour, day by day to

grow in this abandonment. Do you do a daily examination of conscience to see where you could have practiced abandonment more?

- Do you pray for the grace of a deeper understanding of yourself and to become more aware of when "I" get in the way?

In the middle of the chapter, Fr. Walter describes what one would call "a kidding of ourselves". Kidding ourselves in believing that what we want is actually what God wants for us. This is akin to thinking we (that "I" again) are all-knowing like God!

Over Coming Self

This tendency to set acceptable conditions upon God, to seek unconsciously to make his will for us coincide with our desires, is a very human trait. And the more important the situation is, the more totally we are committed to it or the more completely our future depends upon it, then the easier it becomes for us to blind ourselves into thinking that what we want is surely what God must also want. We can see but one solution only, and naturally we assume that God will help us reach it. In any case, I am sure that this tendency was strong in me. I had been strong-willed as a boy. When I entered religion, I saw this character trait as a talent given me by God rather than as a flaw. I took pride in developing it further, through ascetical practices such as fasting, severe penances, exercises of will, and personal discipline. Had I failed to see that these were not always done solely in response to God's grace or out of some apostolic motive, but also out of pride? Yes, I prided myself on doing these things better or more often than others, vying as it were with the legends of the saints to prove that I (that tell tale word, again) could prove their equal and somehow be better than my contemporaries (pg. 69).

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prayer hotline

DECEASED – Pearl Keyes, Jim Peck, Henry Selvocki, Mary Jo Burkot, Evelyn Babinchock, Mary Dando, Shem Evans, Helen Sprecher, Frank Macus,

HEALTH – Dawn Bozek, Karen Mandi, Irene Piaskowski, Helen Brennan, Estelle Bitel, Leah Guzinsky, Florence Steele, Georgette Moyer, Baby Tyler John Canzone, Leona and Clarence Edmundson, Charlotte Kreitzner & sons--Tom and Dan, Louise Palubinsky, Msgr. Joseph Rauscher, Dana Disraeli, Dorothy Yanashesky, Lillian Sokolosky, Mary Buczynski, Betty Hahler, Stella Bobrowski, Ernie Gambino, Timothy Smock, Gregory Booth, Jill & David Broderick, Kevin Kulik, Rick Halford, Gina Cooper, Anna Yockochonis, Michael, Mary Scholefield, Walter & Irene Baran, Cathleen Stefanski, June LeMeuse, Robert Quinty Family

IN THANKSGIVING – Ted Zmuda

SPECIAL INTENTIONS – Marcus Antonio Bermejo, Eric Olsen Family, Joseph Worton Family, Margie Kulik & grandchildren, Hummer Family, Bishop William Walterscheid, Gloria Kreider

For all whose names were previously on our list, but who are still in need of our prayers; for all those who have requested prayers of the League; for all prayer league members, for all those who are praying through the intercession of Fr. Walter Ciszek; and for all who need our prayers.

MEMORIALS: In memory of Rita McTamney by Thomas McCreesh

Notes from Sister Doris

We are delighted to be able to share with you reflections on Father Ciszek written by Joseph Baker, following his visit here on the Saturday before Palm Sunday. Luckily, we received an e-mail from Barry Blackburn with a short message from Father Ciszek written to him back in 1967, that he gave permission for us to print. Together with the next installment of Sister Evangeline's recollections, we think this all contributes to your enjoyment of a better offering in this issue of the newsletter.

Many members are not paid up for 2011—we do realize that many of our members are well established senior citizens, and may not be paying attention to mailing labels--therefore, we are again making a clarification: If the label on your newsletter reads January 2011, or any date earlier than that, this will be your last issue if we do not hear from you. A label reading Jan 2012 or later means that you are paid up through 2011. There will be no further reminders to guarantee that your name stays on the list for receiving the newsletter.

May your warm days of summer be much better than what many of us have experienced earlier this year. Spiritually, may you feel the benefits of Father Ciszek's intercession—all prayer league members are remembered aloud in prayer at each holy hour.

Lessons Learned! continued from page 6

- During prayer, you may often ask for help in doing God's will. Do you pray for the grace to accept God's will?
- Do you tend to lean toward scrupulosity in deciding what is God's will for you....ignoring the obvious?
- Do you accept that every moment and incident in your life was permitted by God, and thus, God's will?
- Do you believe that even bad things are permitted by our all powerful God?
- How do you respond to these bad things?
- Jesus said, "Father, not my will but yours." He set the example for us. His human nature certainly was not enjoying the nails being hammered into his hands or the scourges on his back. But he did it out of love for us. Have you helped another even though it hurt you or inconvenienced you?

In order to have complete abandonment to God's will, one must completely overcome self. This is a work in progress, with pride as a stumbling block in achieving this complete union with God and his will. It is through the development of the virtue of humility that one makes progress toward uprooting pride. Fr. Walter echos this in the end of the chapter when he says, "Learning the full truth of our dependence upon God and our relation to his will is what the virtue of humility is all about" (pg. 70).

As a resolution for this week, read Chapter 6, and pray for the grace "to put grace ahead of nature"... and "to trust primarily in God rather than in my own powers" (pg. 70). Hopefully the lights gained during prayerful reading of this chapter will help in the journey of complete abandonment through overcoming self.