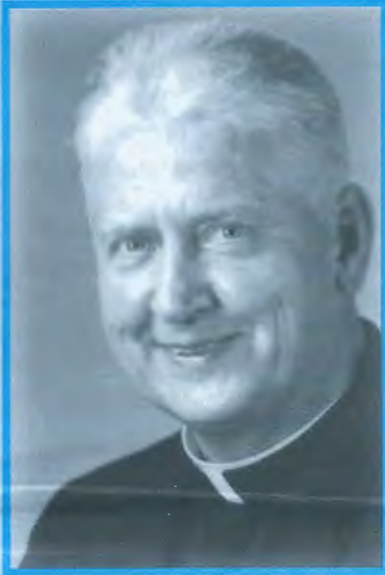




Father Walter J. Ciszek Center Temporarily Closed

The Father Walter J. Ciszek Center at 231 N. Jardin Street, Shenandoah is temporarily closed because of construction and repair. The Prayer League continues to function in Shenandoah, but the Center is not open to visitors at this time. Please direct correspondence to 108 W. Cherry Street, Shenandoah, PA 17976. We will continue to update you in future newsletters on the status of the building.



Rev. Walter J. Ciszek, 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 Ciszek, 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 Ciszek.



Allentown Diocese reorganizes parishes in Shenandoah

Bishop John O. Barres, Bishop of Allentown, has announced the reorganization of parishes in Shenandoah and Lost Creek effective July 28, 2014. Annunciation BVM, St. Casimir, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, St. George, St. Mary Magdalen (Lost Creek), St. Stanislaus and St. Stephen Parishes will close and there will be one Parish for Shenandoah and Lost Creek. This new Parish will be called Divine Mercy Parish. Two Churches in Shenandoah will remain open. Annunciation BVM will become Divine Mercy Church and be the titular Parish Church. St. Casimir Church, where Father Walter was baptized, will remain open as a Worship Center.

Annual Fundraiser
Raffle Tickets Enclosed
Father Ciszek Day - October 19, 2014



prayer hotline



We ask you to pray for the success of a film project about the life of Father Walter Ciszek, that all the financial, legal, and technical difficulties may be overcome for the production of a successful and useful film.

DECEASED: Lenie Foley, Lillian Chesko, Mary Leinti, John F. Manning

HEALTH: Sister Ann Damian, Eugene and Claire Chovanes, Rev. Vincent Welsh

SPECIAL INTENTIONS:

James Maximilian Winek, Alice McGovern

MEMORIAL DONATIONS:

Leona Kolonsky by Damian Birchess

Butch Kaplafka by Bob and Liz Schlack

Fredrick Rundiger by Bob and Liz Schlack

Joseph Wermert by Joann and Bob Frank

Mrs. Isabel Palokas by Gerre Palokas

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 Father Walter Ciszek; and for all who need our prayers.

Note:

John Dejak wrote the article With God and Father Ciszek in Rome in the last newsletter (2014 Issue I)

“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.
231 N. Jardin Street
Shenandoah, PA 17976

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By Rev. Thomas J. Sable, S.J.

Prayer Life

We don't wonder that our prayer life falls so short of God. We often don't pay the least bit of attention to what we are praying about. So often we consider our prayer as just a job we have to do, a duty to be performed. We “get it out of the way” and then relax, glad to leave it behind us. When we are at prayer, we are on duty, instead of being with God.

We find it hard to be sorry for praying so poorly. How can we hope to speak with God? God is so distant and so mysterious. When we pray, it's as if our words have disappeared down some deep, dark well, from which no echo ever comes back to reassure us that we have struck the ground of God's heart. God's silence when we pray is really a discourse filled with infinite promise, unimaginably more meaningful than any audible word that God could speak to the limited understanding of our narrow hearts, a word that itself would have to become as small and as poor as we are.

It was Father Walter's prayer life that held his spiritual journey together, even when he was most persecuted and betrayed, and Lubianka prison was in many respects a school of prayer. As with any spiritual journey concerned with growth in prayer, there is always a purification process. As described in his memoir, “He Leadeth Me,” Walter Ciszek experienced the “sinking feeling of helplessness and powerlessness” after his arrest in Russia in 1941. He felt completely cut off from everything and everyone who might conceivably help him. Considered a Vatican spy, he was transferred to Lubianka prison where men were betrayed and reportedly broken “in body and spirit.” As he had done in every crisis in the past when there was no one to turn to, Walter “turned to God in prayer.”

Our prayer need not be enthusiastic and ecstatic to succeed in placing us so much in God's power and at God's disposal that nothing is held back from God. Prayer can be real prayer, even when it is not filled with bliss and jubilation or the shining brilliance of a carefree surrender of self. Prayer can be like a slow interior bleeding, in which grief and sorrow make the heart's blood of the inner person trickle away silently into our own unfathomed depths.

We must stand ever ready and waiting, so that when God opens the door to the decisive moment of our lives -- and maybe God will do it very quietly and inconspicuously -- we shall not be so taken up with the affairs of this world that we miss the one great opportunity to enter into ourselves and into God.

Interview and statement of Father Joseph Lingan, S.J.

Fr. Joseph Lingan, S.J. was born in 1957. He entered the Society of Jesus in 1979, was ordained to the priesthood in 1990, and professed final vows in 1996. His apostolic ministries have included membership on the staff of the Jesuit Spiritual Center, Wernersville, PA; teacher, chaplain, and administrator at Gonzaga College High School, Washington, D.C.; and service as Assistant Director of Novices for the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus. Following his Tertianship Year in Australia, he served as Rector of St. Michael's Institute in Spokane, WA; Executive Assistant to the Provincial of the Maryland Province; Novice Master of the Maryland, New England, and New York Provinces of the Society of Jesus; and Interim President of Gonzaga College High School. In 2011, he was appointed Rector of the Georgetown University Jesuit Community, Washington, DC, where he continues to serve.

I remember Fr. Ciszek well and with great fondness. I met him in the summer of 1981, when he served as the Director of an 8-day Vow Retreat held at our Novitiate in Wernersville, PA. This retreat was offered as a preparation for our profession of first vows. He directed three of us who were to pronounce Vows that August. Fr. Ciszek directed one novice in the morning, one in the afternoon, and myself at 7:30 in the evening.

I remember vividly knocking on his door every evening, and then hearing his gentle voice say, "Come in!" He sat at his desk, and I sat in the wooden chair right next to the desk. The first evening we met, I acknowledged and apologized that I had not read either one of his books. He looked at me with his typical twinkle and said, "Good, now we can get started." Over the next eight days, he shared his story, his novitiate experience, the "call" he felt to "go to Russia," his impatience with having to wait, and his joy at receiving the summons.

Fr. Ciszek had a "fire-plug physique," a smile that suggested delight and mischief, and eyes that were bright and filled with joy. As a man of faith, he was tenacious. Clearly, he was eager to share his faith and his experience of and insights into "The Spiritual Exercises" of St. Ignatius Loyola. He spoke with confidence and gratitude, and as one who was clearly in love with God and with Christ.

One particular memory stands out. During our meetings, I noticed he had several shoeboxes on his desk. He shared that each box was full of letters and cards he had received in the mail, and that he was taking the time between his meetings with us novices, to write a personal response to each letter

and card. It was apparent that he was moved by the fact that people took the time to write to him, and he wanted to show them the same consideration. He shared that many included the request for prayers and/or advice, and he wanted to offer his encouragement, support and advice. Imagine, taking the time to respond to each letter and card. I suspect if he were alive today, Fr. Ciszek would be using a personal computer, and likely would be using Facebook and/or Twitter.

Many years after my 8-day retreat with Fr. Ciszek, I was asked to serve as Novice Master. As Novice Master, I often remembered Fr. Ciszek, and prayed for his intercession for each novice. I recommended and encouraged the novices to read Fr. Ciszek's "He Leadeth Me" for their own personal spiritual reading. His story was a powerful encouragement to many of the men.

Concerning Fr. Ciszek's contribution to the Church, his inspiring faith and profound fidelity are a great example for all Christians, but especially for Religious men and women. He was a humble man of prayer who loved God deeply. He desired nothing more than to serve God . . . and nothing less. As he shared his story, bit-by-bit, during the days of my retreat, he gave the clear impression that his life was not about him, but rather a reflection of the movement and action of God in his life. He liked sharing his story, because it allowed him to share about God. He was faithful because he knew to the core of his being that God was faithful, and he clearly enjoyed helping others to the same understanding. He was a living example of both the simplicity and profundity of what it means to be a person of faith.

Statement of Mary Sullivan

Interviewed by phone on October 8, 2013

Mary Sullivan, a retired nurse, currently resides in the Bronx (New York) with her husband, not far from where Father Ciszek lived on Belmont Street. She met Father Ciszek in the winter of '79 and enjoyed his friendship until his death in 1984. The following is a brief recap of the time she spent with Father Ciszek.

I first met Father Ciszek in the winter of '79. Toni Rienzi, my friend and nursing supervisor, asked if I would come and help her with Father's Christmas card mailing. I said "yes" and a great blessing entered my life. Father had many cards being addressed to people in various countries. Initially he would write a note to each person and we would address the envelopes. As the years progressed and his health declined, we would copy a note he wrote for the cards and address the envelopes. (I treasured his cards and wondered how one person could know so many people.) After we finished our work, Father would provide refreshments; we sat around the table sharing our life stories. Father was so easy to be with. He was a happy person with bright blue eyes full of laughter. Father was joyful even when he didn't feel well.

During our correspondence work, we noticed that Father's apartment was dusty. We thought his breathing would improve if we could get him dust free. Three of us, Marian, Toni and I, would periodically do a very thorough cleaning of his apartment. We dusted and polished furniture, washed and hung curtains, drapes, and linens, and scrubbed the floors. After this work, Father would feed us and we again would have conversations. On the way home (we all lived in Manhattan) we'd talk about what Father said and noted that each of us heard something different. It seemed we heard the same words but each got a different message (each according to her need). This was curious and we asked Father about it. To our surprise, he could not remember. There were times when he appeared to have amnesia about the counseling he gave us. We thought God spoke through him and that's why he couldn't remember.

On one occasion, Father went on retreat and we took the time of his absence to paint and repair his apartment (so the smells wouldn't bother him). We repaired and painted walls, cleaned and rearranged furniture, sorted dishes, as well as cut and laid carpet that someone had given him. When he came home,

he was so surprised and stated that he could feel the love with which we worked. This made us very happy.

I went to Father for confession and spiritual direction. We did the annotated spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius. Sometimes as we were discussing my assignment, the apartment door bell would ring and Father would have an unexpected visitor. When necessary, he would ask me to continue my work in the chapel so that he could attend to the needs of the visitor. I never saw him turn anyone away. (There were beautiful icons in the chapel and I think they were used at the field Mass when Pope John Paul II visited New York.)

Once after a difficult confession, I revisited Father the next day to deliver an ordered medical supply. I noticed that he looked awful (drawn, tired, and hurt). He thanked me for the delivery and said "Keep going, Mary". Somehow I knew that he had paid a price for me. I thought that the evil spirits had punished him for helping me.

Another incident I remember is when Father wasn't feeling well but had to move his car to the other side of the street (alternate side parking). To avoid his going out into the cold, I said "Father give me the keys and I'll move it for you." He told me the car had a stick shift. I said "Father, if it has wheels I can drive it." (I had once lived on a farm and drove tractors.) Well, I tried to move it and failed. I had to go back to Father and get instructions on his particular gears. Father then came to the door and coached me through the maneuvers. Finally, I got the car onto the other side of the street. Father couldn't stop laughing.

Another time I heard that Father's apartment had been robbed. He didn't have a lot of possessions and I was furious that anyone would take what little he did have. I expressed my anger in very frank terms. Father would have none of it; he wasn't upset and he would not allow me to speak against the robbers. Possessions did not matter to him.

Another time I was at the apartment and noticed that someone had given him a beautiful icon that he placed on the wall. I admired it and he went right over and took it off the wall to give it to me. I didn't take it and learned not to admire Father's things. He was happy to let go of them if he thought anyone wanted something.

One long weekend, Father accompanied us on a trip to the Adirondack Mountains. My husband and I had rented a cabin on Long Lake. It was directly on



Bishop John Barres, Bishop of Allentown, Deborah and Anthony Lodato attending Father Cizek Day 2013

Introduction of Father Walter Cizek

Last spring at a reception for newly ordained Father John Connaughton our dear friends Carl and Marie Siriani introduced their guests Jerry and JoAnne Lilore to my fiancée Deborah and me.

After our initial introduction I sat down with Jerry and spoke with him about Father Walter Cizek. I first came to know of Father Cizek through the Sirianis. Seemingly, I always wanted to know more of him. The Sirianis and Lilores had personally known Father Cizek while he was alive. But the conversation I had with Jerry was truthfully a spiritual encounter. Through my prayers I came to know Father Cizek and the Holy Spirit had guided me to this moment. I did more listening and less questioning of what he was telling me.

As Jerry told me of his own personal experience from knowing Father Cizek, I started to realize that Father Cizek's journey resulted in many spiritual insights and wisdom. I spoke to Jerry a little about my spiritual journey and he asked me "Do you have joy and peace in your life?" I replied, "I don't."

Ironically as hard as I've tried to live the Gospel in my life, I've failed to have joy and peace. Jerry quoted Father Walter, "There is something missing." This is what really compelled me to want to know more about Father Cizek.

After our marriage in September 2013, Deborah and I were invited by the Sirianis to attend Father Cizek Day in Shenandoah, PA. We met so many people beloved by Father Cizek and it was precious to hear some of the personal testimonies of people that were affected by Father's life.

We were very excited when we had an opportunity to speak with the Bishop as well as to have our picture taken with him. Also Deborah who is of Swedish descent thought the Swedish meatballs were delicious.

Eager to know more of the life of this dear servant of God, we became members of the Prayer League and bought his two books.

It was a really joyous and memorable trip. We plan to attend Father Walter Cizek Day 2014 and will continue to pray for his canonization.

Statement of Mary Sullivan con't

the water with mountain views. Father enjoyed nature and the quiet. I did the cooking. I knew of Father's food allergies and thought I had prepared well. One night I had made chicken for supper. Father looked at me quizzically and ate his meal. That night he had a severe asthma attack. His wheezing was so bad we heard it through the walls. I did what I could to make his breathing better but he was sick all night. I forgot he was allergic to chicken! He ate it rather than tell me or refuse the food I had prepared.

Recently I attended the Wethersfield Institute's yearly seminar offering. Father Koterski, S.J. was the presenter. He mentioned that he was a seminarian and pall bearer at Father's burial in Pennsylvania. (I had attended Father's wake and funeral mass at Fordham University in New York. It was beautiful! I will never forget the long procession of priests in various white vestments, both Roman and Byzantine.)

I was asked if I prayed to Father; I

haven't. I know his cause is in process. I also know he is a saint. I have always known that. He was a humble, loving servant of God. He loved the Russian people; he thought their government was in error. I have read his books and gave many copies to friends and acquaintances. I have repeated his dying words (as told to me by someone) to many people "Tell the kids to do good and leave evil to God".

Jerry Lilore's Statement

Jerry Lilore is 76 years old and retired. He lives in Fairfield, Connecticut with his wife, Joanne. He is the father of four children and has seven grandchildren. Jerry worked for Monsanto Textile Corporation as marketing director for six years, and later for Cortaulds as Vice-President for Marketing. He was active in the Cursillo Movement for many years and involved with the healing ministry with Father McDonough of Boston, Massachusetts. Jerry began support groups for the separated and divorced at several parishes and has been a Eucharistic Minister. He went to Medjugorje with a group that were all friends of Father Cizek, in 1986. He has written several articles on Father Cizek that were published in "The Word Among Us". Jerry was in the prison ministry in New Jersey for several years.

I was active in the Cursillo Movement, and we were having a picnic. A woman said she thought I might enjoy reading a book, *He Leadeth Me*. I read it later and was so taken by it that I got With God in Russia right after that.

I was working in New York at the time, in the textile business. I had my secretary locate Father Cizek. I met Father for the first time in July 1981. I called him and went over to see him, taking along a good friend, my public relations man. He had read Father's books, too, and was spellbound. When I told Father that man was Jewish, he laughingly said, "I thought you were a Methodist." Father had a great sense of humor. We spent a whole afternoon at a restaurant in the Bronx with him.

I used to go over to his apartment on Sunday morning and he would say Mass. I would do a reading, and he would give a little talk. I noticed his simplicity at Mass—no drama—he was very humble. We were in the little chapel in the apartment building for Mass, and later we'd go back to his room for a cup of coffee and talk.

After I had first met him, we set a date for a directed retreat in September. He would give me different excerpts from Scripture to read and reflect on. Later we'd discuss them and he'd answer my questions. One of the most interesting things was that he lived totally in the moment. He said, "Remember, your past is the present and the future is where you

are now."

One thing I gained was an understanding of God's will. He said that while he was struggling to find God's Will in the mistakes he had made, for example, signing papers in the prison, he came to realize God's will was in the mistake. In other words, the situation you are in is God's Will—the very circumstance itself.

Father came to our house one time for dinner. I picked him up on a Sunday. Around that time he told me that he considered me as part of his "inner circle"—that was a great honor for me. I was saying, "Father, what you went through in Siberia was terrible." Father said, "Yes, Jerry, but your divorce is your Siberia."

He really knew human nature. For example, in business matters or conflicts where I had problems finding solutions, he would understand and get right to the "core" of it for a solution. His approach to anybody's problems was about coming to a rightful moral conclusion. He wrote in my book "Trust your cares to the Lord, and He will sustain you with every blessing." (November 11, 1981)

Sometimes I'd say "I can't believe I did such and such a thing. He'd say, "Jerry, you can only do with the grace of God you have at the time."

As far as the book goes, he left a lot out, because he didn't want sensationalism to be the focus. He told me a story about a Russian Cossack, a tough-guy criminal type, who was known to have killed a number of people in the prison camp. One day Father prayed with him and the Cossack experienced a conversion, and the day after the Cossack was killed when someone put an axe to his head. Another incident he told me about was at his work, when he split open his stomach. He fixed up some bark with twine tied to hold himself together, to keep his guts in, until he could get back to camp and get some help.

In regard to his contribution to the Church, I believe that God allowed him to go through all that he experienced so that he could come back and relate to us the simplicity of God's message—it is to know and simply serve Christ.

One time at a dinner at Fordham, he commented to me that "it's not that complicated; the theologians and

continued on page 7

Jerry Lilore's Statement con't

philosophers complicate it." For example, it doesn't matter if you're Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish. You're going to be judged on how you affected other people, either for the good or for the bad.

Father Cizek went through a purification process. You cannot come before God's presence until you've been through a purification process.

He was one with God—a walking Christ. Just as close as when we receive the Eucharist, he was one with Christ on a continual basis. He was simple. He said, "Jerry, just try your lousy best, and if that isn't good enough, then try your lousy, lousy best, then leave the rest to God."

Just before he died, I said to him, "You're going to leave me soon." "Don't worry," he replied, "I'll whisper in God's ear for you. Has anyone trusted in the Lord and been disappointed? God is infallibly reliable."

I knew he was a living saint because he sustained unbelievable suffering. I believe Christ put him

through the purification process so that he could be one with God.

His definition for "humiliation" was taking the negative out of it, and going forth with it. His definition for "humility" was "the truth". He used to say, "Jerry, do you know what "resurrection" is? It's nothing else but having to go through life slowly dying."

I put together a sheet of his sayings, which I handed out at times. For example, "If you love God, You're going to suffer"; "God works miracles for those who love Him"; and "He arranges all things as an architect arranges a building." Also, "The holy Will of God is found more in suffering than in pleasure, because in pleasure one becomes attached to one's will."

Father's prayer was "Help me to accept whatever Your Father chooses for me and to respond in your spirit of love, forgiveness, kindness, total alms-giving, compassion, and mercy."

Sharing your personal spiritual interactions with Father Walter Cizek through prayer would be very helpful in promoting the cause of canonization.

The Prayer League would appreciate your communicating that to us.

Father Walter Cizek presentations at your parish or group are available. Please contact Prayer League at fwccenter@verizon.net