



for from

the FRIENDS of

Walter Cizek S.J.

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2015 Issue II

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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.*

## The Winning Side

by John M. DeJak

It has been said that when the Chinese wanted to curse someone they would say: "May you live in interesting times." I suspect that what is meant by "interesting," is the endurance of pain or suffering or a certain amount of toil. In that case, "interesting times" have been with us since Adam and Eve. In other words, there hasn't been a time that hasn't been interesting! Yet for all that, I suppose that some times are more "interesting" than others. Take our current day. We live in a world that has not only lost its faith, but it has lost its mind!

Consider: the grotesque specter of a man becoming "a woman" and so-called "transgenderism"; so-called "same-sex marriage"; child abuse; daily assaults on the family and marriage. These are all symptomatic of a society that has lost its faith. Indeed, it is also symptomatic of a society which has lost its reason. In a matter of several generations our public mores have gone from a society that drew from the wellsprings of the Judeo-Christian tradition, to one that has—as its only calculus—the selfish desires of the individual. Thus, instead of promoting the common good and human flourishing as God designed it, we are told that we must "accept" the immorality of the age. We are told that we are "hateful" or "not charitable" if we do not accept the re-defining of what it means to be a human being (e.g., the unborn or the elderly considered "non-persons" and therefore able to be killed at the whim of another more powerful person; or a man who wants to be a woman and therefore will mutilate himself to achieve the—still false—result).

Normal people don't think this way. These issues are foisted upon the people of our country by an elite that have the resources, the riches, and the time to conduct such self-mutilation; and the ability to shove it in our faces everyday. Indeed, their plan is none other than cultural mutilation. This extends also to the mutilation of the Church. The sad observation of Blessed Pope Paul VI in the 1970s holds true: "the smoke of Satan has entered the Church." Thus, ever more, the need for Fr. Cizek as a patron saint for our times.

His life both in the Soviet Union and upon his return to the United States in the 1960s were not unlike our own: major cultural upheavals and, seemingly, a world gone mad. Confusion reigned both inside and outside the Church and many people felt adrift in a sea of hopelessness. But

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*Annual Fundraiser*  
**Raffle Tickets Enclosed**  
 Father Cizek Day - October 25, 2015



# prayer hotline



## DECEASED:

Frank Muraczewski, Joseph and Mary Derringer,  
Robert Stets

HEALTH: Tina Lewandowski, Jessica Griesener,  
Jonahan, Hank, Philip, Sister Martha, Jimmy,  
Ronald Luscavage, JoAnn, Maryann

## SPECIAL INTENTIONS:

Jerry, Tom D., Wayne Wigglesworth

For all the member of the Prayer League living  
and deceased.

*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.*



**We are now on Facebook!**  
[www.facebook.com/FatherWalterCiszek](http://www.facebook.com/FatherWalterCiszek)

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

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

June is the month for weddings. All the preparations and bookings that have gone before have reached their fulfillment in this sacrament of human love that reaches towards Divine Love. If we read from Genesis to Revelation, Scripture begins with a wedding, ends with a wedding, and all throughout the Bible the Kingdom of heaven is likened to a wedding; God’s desired relationship and covenant with His people Israel in the Old Testament, and The Church included in the New Testament—it’s always likened to a marriage covenant. We see books like Hosea, Ruth, and Song of Solomon really exemplifying this in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, we read of Jesus and Paul talking about the mystery of marriage being about Christ and us His Bride—the Church. Parables point to this as well (check out Matthew 22:1-14 – the wedding feast, and Matthew 25:1-13 the ten virgins, for further mediation on this). Revelation, the final book shows a multitudinous crowd rejoicing because it’s time for the marriage supper, and the Bride has made herself ready—grown in maturity through this process of love, devotion, and obedience (see Rev 19:6-8).

When Jesus was at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1-12) and they ran out of wine, His mother came to Him and addressed the issue. And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” (v. 4) For years, we have been taught and thought that it refers to it not having been Jesus’ time for public ministry. Others have taught this refers to Jesus’ work on the Cross that He is referring to in some kind of abstract kind of way. Both views and others like it are impossible.

Jesus stated that He only did what He saw his Father doing and whatever the Father does, the Son does (John 5:19). If it was not time for Jesus to have performed a miracle and He did it anyway, He would have been doing something outside the time and will of God. In that very moment, He would have sinned, but we know this was not so of the sinless lamb of God. No, Jesus knew no iniquity. Therefore He could not have been referring to it not being the time for His public ministry.

It was the Jewish custom for the groom’s father to have worked out with the family of the bride the details concerning the wedding arrangement, including the date of the actual ceremony. The Bridegroom would go to his father’s house and build a place for himself and his bride to live, usually attached to his father’s house. Remember, Jesus told

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# The Father Walter Cizek Prayer League, Inc.

Official Organization for the Promotion of the Cause of Canonization of Father Walter Cizek, S.J.

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fwccenter@verizon.net • www.cizek.org



*Dear Prayer League Members,*

*Enclosed you will find our annual raffle tickets for you to purchase yourself or to sell. This year with the cost of relocating the Center 100 percent participation will be greatly appreciated.*

*Please return your ticket stubs in the enclosed envelope with check or money order payable to the FWC Prayer League.*

*Thank you very much for your support and all your support in the past!  
Together we can continue promoting Father Walter Cizek's life, works and message.*

*God bless you!*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Msgr. Ronald C. Bocian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*The Father Walter Cizek Prayer League, Inc  
Rev. Msgr. Ronald Bocian  
President of the Board*

**Mark your calendar  
Father Walter Cizek Day  
October 25, 2015**

Rev. Thomas F. Sable, S.J.  
Co-Postulator



Rev. Msgr. Anthony D. Muntone, P.A., V.G., S.T.L.  
Co-Postulator

# Interview and Statement

Rev. John T. Catoir, J.C.D.

*Born and raised in New York City, Father Catoir graduated from Fordham University in 1953. After two years in the U.S. Army, he entered Immaculate Conception Seminary and was ordained a priest in 1960.*

*Father Catoir earned a Doctorate of Canon Law from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. and ran the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal for ten years.*

*He was Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Christophers, a multimedia, nonprofit corporation based in Manhattan from 1978 to 1995. In that capacity, he hosted the nationally syndicated weekly television series "Christopher Closeup," for over 17 years.*

I met Father Cizek in 1976. I was then at the Christophers in New York City. Part of my job was to find TV guests who were interesting. I really enjoyed interviewing Father Cizek and found him totally fascinating. He had a certain quality of joy and innocence, and answered questions in a very open manner. The interview was taped at Home Box Office Studios in New York City and was later aired on sixty-six commercial stations. We did "live on tape"-- which means we were live but could later edit out coughs, sneezes, etc.

To begin, we applied a little make-up to Father as the lights tend to wash any color out of a person. Throughout the interview, he came across as a holy, self-effacing man. He seemed totally relaxed on the show. Everything he did was "God's Grace." I asked questions regarding background, experience, and what was going through his mind at various times. There were smiles and laughs throughout. He was open and totally honest, "a good interview." He answered questions without any hesitation, without "editing in his own mind." He was even careful in making every effort to keep the record straight. Because of the Vatican spy charge by the Communist Government I asked him if the Church hierarchy had ever authorized him to spy. On that particular point he said, "No, I was not a Vatican spy nor sent by the Vatican in any other way but as a priest." He made excuses for the terrible things they did to him. His view was that acts of anger coming from prison bullies were "just the anger speaking." He separated the person from the deed. He had a very strong spirit of mercy.

He spoke pretty frankly in the interview but I found at the dinner and at meeting times that he did not want the conversation to be about him.

But I did make a definite mental decision to find out how he had survived his incredible ordeal. One incident he related that happened in his

grammar school days gave insight into how really stubborn, obstinate, and tough he really was. His character traits enabled him to survive. Back in those school days, since he was considered a "tough kid," a Sister in charge of altar boys said to him, "You don't deserve to be one." Right then began his spiritual transformation and he had the fierce determination to overcome her objection and be more self-controlled and God-controlled.

Later in Russia this determination came out in his primary motive to be of service to the prisoners and, incredibly, in the activities of priestly, that service could have resulted in his own death.

In a counseling situation, or in spiritual direction he had a rare patience. On the other hand he would not let you excuse yourself. He would allow no rationalizing. "No, no, no, that's not the direction you want to go."

When I would meet with Father Cizek one-on-one I liked to get his ideas on one or another issue. I had lay people calling me who would come to me as a priest, with their problems. One of the individuals I had been trying to help was really wearing me down. I was telling Father Cizek the situation, seeking guidance on how to deal with a troubled ex-nun. She was an alcoholic with a personality problem. I asked Father Cizek's opinion and he volunteered to talk to her. He was even enthusiastic about it!

I found out later that Father Cizek gave her three hours of his time. When it was time for dinner she asked if it would be okay if she stayed to talk after dinner. Father gave her a plate at the table and she stayed late into the evening. At that point Father was concerned for her safety, since she had a long trip back to New Jersey walking and taking the bus. Expressing his concern to her, he allowed her to stay in the guest room and looked forward

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to continuing their talk on the next day! (She later recovered from her addiction to alcohol.)

I compared my response to this person's encounter with Father Ciszek. I was not so agreeable, one and a half hours being my absolute limit. I was trying to guard myself from her intrusion. This was such a lesson on "going the extra mile." She probably had experienced a lot of rejection but Father Ciszek never turned her away. He patiently endured her needs in a very holy, unselfish way. Father Walter demonstrated that people have a great need of attention and can become a little too demanding. His very unusual patience and willingness to offer acceptance was unique.

I sent quite a few young people to Father Ciszek for counseling. He would accept anybody! He put God's Will first and did this with anyone he encountered. He would not read bad motives into anybody.

I knew Father Walter for about eight years. I know he had no ambition in his mind to be important. He had no need for praise and would direct all conversation from himself or change the topic.

Father's health was broken by the prison experience and aging. He had pain-- and was vulnerable to pneumonia, yet his bright blue eyes sparkled.

When I asked him to go for lunch, he might not have felt like it, but made the sacrifice because he thought it might help me. He would not think of his own convenience but tried to accommodate me. He really showed the art of "living in the present moment." This was his secret of happiness. He found and lived the manifestation of God living in the present moment. He made a commitment to abandonment to the Divine Presence within himself.

I believe Father Ciszek's contribution to the Church was the living example of God's unchanging love -- unchanging is the key word. No matter what happened he kept on loving. He is an example of how we are all called to love in every stage of life.

such are the times that call forth saints. Fr. Ciszek was one of them. The tranquility and peace that Fr. Ciszek had was born of a deep love for Christ and His Church and he knew, that even amidst the upheavals, Christ would win out. He nourished a deep faith and to refer all things to Christ and to "stick with the Church." One of the most enduring lessons that Fr. Ciszek taught was that those who do evil do so with some good in mind. In other words, oftentimes, some people don't always think about the consequences of their actions or don't reflect on whether or not what they are doing conforms to God's law. This should cause us all to have compassion and spur us to prayer.

Father wrote many letters to people during turbulent times. In these letters he helped them maintain their faith even while all around, it seemed that other people were losing theirs. When the very foundations of a culture and society were being undermined—as they continue to be today—Fr. Ciszek gave people the confidence to endure and he was an example of joy in the midst of suffering. A few words from one of his letters are appropriate here:

The Church, along with the world, is undergoing a trying period. It must [undergo such trials], if the advancement expected is to come. The readjusting in the Church is what is causing most trouble. No one person is able to give the full answer to the Church's problems, nor can what individuals write or say be accepted by all. The spirit of the age has affected the thinking in the Church. Too much rationalizing on matters of faith has clouded many fundamental truths of our revealed religion; as a result, many are confused. Why? Those at the higher level in the Church are confused themselves; or others -- theologians, philosophers, and intellectuals -- attempt a too-narrow explanation of revealed truths.

Faith, as a divine gift, stands beyond the capacity of reason and human understanding. Faith must be accepted as given us by God; that is the only role of reason in this field. The Church is undergoing a period of humiliation and purification. A renewal of the spirit of faith must take place through humble prayer; otherwise, the risk of error is inevitable. The basis of that prayer consists in this: "God is." That's the wisdom of life for all of us. Remember your faith in darkness, discouragement and doubts is God's gift to you, and your blessing. Accept it, and God will show you gradually what to do. (Letter, May 15, 1969)

These are words that should comfort all of us today! Fr. Ciszek is still speaking to us amidst our crazy world--with a smile on his face and a gleam in his eye, knowing how it all works out. That those who stick with Christ and His Church are on the winning side!

# Life, virtues of Shenandoah priest topic of book discussions

John E. Usalis

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The life of Father Walter J. Ciszek, S.J. is one full of faith, hope and love, and those virtues are shown in his writings and are being looked at in a Shenandoah book discussion.

Sister Mary Ann Spaetti, IHM, principal of Trinity Academy at the Father Walter Ciszek Education Center, is leading a discussion of Father Ciszek's second book, "He Leadeth Me," on Wednesdays during Lent at the school.

The discussion group met for the second time last week, and will meet again from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday (Chapters 8-13) and March 25 (Chapters 14-20).

The final two discussions are open to the public. Participants are asked to read the chapters for each evening, though it is not a requirement to attend.

They also are asked to bring the book along, if possible. Some books are available for purchase at the discussion, or can be purchased from the Father Walter Ciszek Prayer League or online from Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

"He Leadeth Me," written by Father Ciszek with the Rev. Daniel L. Flaherty, S.J., was published in 1973, nine years after their first book, "With God in Russia," published in 1964.

Sister Mary Ann is a board member of the Father Walter Ciszek Prayer League, which promotes and supports the cause for canonization. The idea for the book discussion came from a recent board meeting.

"At the board meeting, we were discussing that there are probably more things that could be done to educate people about Father Walter Ciszek and his spirituality more," said Sister Mary Ann. "I believe it was Elaine Cusat who suggested that a book group to discuss one of his books would be a good way, and I thought it would be a great idea.

"I like that kind of thing. I have been a member of book clubs before. I really enjoyed that experience of sitting with other adults and discussing what I read. And since I am passionate about Father Walter Ciszek and 'He Leadeth Me' is one of my favorite books, I thought it would be a really good idea to do, and I thought Lent was a perfect time."

Sister Mary Ann has read the book many times, and did so again when she was preparing for the discussion.

"I don't think there is another book except the Bible that I go back to as much as this one," she said. "It really



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contains wisdom and spirituality that would take anyone through their entire life. It touches upon everything."

The first discussion session went very well.

"The group sharing was very rich for me. I was very touched by the other people of what they gleaned from Father's book," Sister Mary Ann said.

The sessions are 90 minutes, beginning with a prayer. On Wednesday, the session opened with the "Prayer for the Cause of Canonization of Father Walter Ciszek, S.J.," followed by the discussion of the particular chapters for that evening.

"The theme that runs through the entire book is that doing God's will is the key to sanctity," Sister Mary Ann explained. "And God's will is presented in the circumstances of each day."

Father Ciszek was born Nov. 4, 1904, in Shenandoah. He was ordained in 1937 as the first American Jesuit in the Byzantine Catholic Rite. He secretly entered the Soviet Union in 1939 as a missionary priest and was arrested in 1941 as a Vatican spy.

After 23 years as a prisoner in the Soviet Union, he was released and returned to the United States. He died Dec. 8, 1984.

**His cause for canonization began in the Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic and was later transferred to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Allentown. His cause has reached the stage that it is currently being reviewed in the Vatican.**

Sister Mary Ann has a great devotion to Father Ciszek, something that is evident when she speaks of him. The transitions in her own life in being assigned to different locations, noting being transferred to California, and after a time to Shamokin, and then to Shenandoah, were something she found to make a connection with Father Ciszek.

"When I was in Shamokin, one of the sisters began to talk about Father Walter Ciszek. I began to pray to him to get me settled into another transition," she said. "That's when I started to develop a stronger devotion to him. I frequently went to his grave in Wernersville, but then to have my next assignment be Shenandoah, I thought there was more to that.

"I do love him. I feel as though he's going to be one of the people when I get to heaven who is going to be one of the first to introduce himself. Right after I'm embraced by the Lord, he'll be there saying, 'At last we get to lay eyes on each other, one of my heavenly friends.'"

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

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His disciples—probably when their understanding hadn't yet been opened to the fact He was viewing them as His collective Bride: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also." (John 14:3) The Bridegroom would not know when the day was, but sometime after building the house, the father would then tell him "go, it's time." Jesus also told us regarding His return, "concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only." (Matt 24:36, Mark 13:32)

At that appointed time, the groom and his friends would leave his home and proceed to the home of the bride, where the marriage ceremony was conducted, often at night. It was the Bridegroom's responsibility to prepare enough wine for the reception and celebration of His own wedding. When Jesus was stating that His time had not come and what did that have to do with Him, he was saying: "It is not time for me to prepare the wine of my own wedding yet." Jesus went ahead and did the miracle because it was the Father's timing for him at that moment to perform that miracle. Why? Because Jesus had to give just one more little glimpse that he is a lovesick Lover looking to prepare and present to Himself a pure and spotless Bride, one in whom He makes pure by washing her with His Word. As Father Ciszek said: "The circumstances and the people that God each day presents to us through his providence offer us the opportunity to perform action after action in proof of our dedication to the kingdom.. Whether we are married and taking care of home and family or studying in school or working in an office or a factory or on a farm, whether we are dedicated to the priestly or religious life, matters little—in whatever we do we must always seeks first the Kingdom of God." (He Leadeth Me, p. 183)

There's coming a time, a consummation of the ages, where the Wedding Feast will finally take place. There's coming a time for the joy set before Him who endured the cross, despising its shame (Heb 12:2), for Christ who died that you may be able to know Him and spend eternity with him. It's up to you to decide if you want to be a part of that, since He's done His part and is waiting.

**Suggest to your Book Club or a  
Parish Group to read  
Father Ciszek's two books.**