

## Deacon Jim's Corner

### A Letter from Our Pastoral Coordinator

February 03, 2019



***May Christ's peace, joy and hope be with you all!***

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I used to read quite a bit of theology in my younger days (far too many years ago). But in the last 15-20 years, my interest and my focus has been on Catholic Contemplative Spirituality. When I get to read, I spend time with some of the greats of our Tradition: St. Teresa of Avila, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, Thomas Merton, St. Edith Stein, Bl. Charles de Foucauld to name just a few. I also enjoy writings from other Christians who are not Catholic, like Anglican Bishop N.T. Wright, and Sarah Young especially two of her works: **Jesus Calling**, which I've noted before, and **Jesus Always**. I like her because she has been through some profound struggles as a disciple. Her reflections offer me great comfort. Despite her battles, she trusts in God's providence. I consider all these disciples - my friends.

Here's one excerpt from **Jesus Always** that I keep going back to and similar to her other works, she writes in the first person in an oracle fashion (speaking for God). "I am your strength! When you begin a day feeling weak and weary, it's all right. Your weakness can be a reminder of your need for Me. Remember that I am with you continually – ready to help you as you go along your way. Take my hand in joyful trust, letting Me guide you and strengthen you. I delight in helping you, My child" (p. 25. **Jesus Always**. Sarah Young).

Lately, I've returned to another friend I haven't read in a while whom is speaking clearly to me. My "friend" is the American Jesuit, Fr. Walter Cizek S.J. (1904-1984). He was imprisoned in Russian labor camps in WW II and then in Siberian labor camps for a total of 23 years. His experience in this terrible ordeal is chronicled in the book, **With God in Russia**. If you don't know his story, I urge you to read it. But a book I'm returning to that he wrote (assisted by another Jesuit) is affecting me much more deeply. It's entitled **He Ledeath**

**Me**. In it he wrestles with his experiences in imprisonment and interrogation, his temptations and trials, and his struggles with faith. In his darkest moments, he recommitted to his faith in Jesus. On almost every page, his honest and blunt reflections challenge me to be a better disciple. I know that I have a long ways to go. In my desire for Jesus, Fr. Cizek has been incredibly helpful to me. The Vatican has given its formal approval for the canonization process for Walter Cizek S.J. to begin. His trust in God's abiding and ever-present Providence is an incredible witness to the Church.

If you don't have the habit of doing spiritual reading, I urge you to consider taking it up. Perhaps you could consider one of the saints or books I recommended? You may have a prayer book that has consoled you in the past to which you could return. You could even head over to Vercillo's Catholic Book store off 38<sup>th</sup> Street in Tacoma and browse through their holdings. Our Catholic Tradition is rich with diverse writings and people who can help us in our desire to draw closer to Jesus!

Perhaps you have a book that you would recommend to me. If you have a favorite, why not send me an email with the author and the title. Eventually I can list and share those books that have helped you in your faith in Christ Jesus!

**In God's great love and mercy,**

**Deacon Jim**



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