

Your Favorite Page ... Childrens' letters to their pastors:

Dear Pastor, I know God loves everybody but He never met my sister.

Dear Pastor, Please say in your sermon that Peter Peterson has been a good boy all week. I am Peter Peterson.

Dear Pastor, My father should be a minister. Every day he gives us a sermon about something.

Dear Pastor, I'm sorry I can't leave more money in the plate, but my father didn't give me a raise in my allowance. Could you have a sermon about a raise in my allowance?

Dear Pastor, My mother is very religious. She goes to play bingo at church every week even if she has a cold.

Dear Pastor, I would like to go to heaven someday because I know my brother won't be there.

Dear Pastor, I think a lot more people would come to your church if you moved it to Disneyland.

Dear Pastor, I liked your sermon where you said that good health is more important than money but I still want a raise in my allowance.

Dear Pastor, Please pray for all the airline pilots. I am flying to California tomorrow.

Dear Pastor, I hope to go to heaven some day but later than sooner.

Dear Pastor, Please say a prayer for our Little League team. We need God's help or a new pitcher. Thank you.

Dear Pastor, My father says I should learn the Ten Commandments. But I don't think I want to because we have enough rules already in my house.

Dear Pastor, Who does God pray to? Is there a God for God?

Dear Pastor, Are there any devils on earth? I think there may be one in my class.

Dear Pastor, I liked your sermon on Sunday. Especially when it was finished.

Dear Pastor, How does God know the good people from the bad people? Do you tell Him or does He read about it in the newspapers?

This one was too good not to include:

The Deaf Mute Golfer

A man was about to tee off on the golf course when he felt a tap on his shoulder and a man handed him a card that read, "I am a deaf mute. May I play through, please?" The first man angrily gave the card back, and communicated that, "No, he may NOT play through, and that his handicap did not give him such a right." The first man whacked the ball onto the green and left to finish the hole. Just as he was about to put the ball into the hole he was hit in the head with a golf ball, laying him out cold.

When he came to a few minutes later, he looked around and saw the deaf mute sternly looking at him, one hand on his hip, the other holding up 4 fingers.

If you don't get this, a golfer is supposed to yell "Fore!" if it looks like his golf ball is going to hit someone.

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION	
NAME:	_____
ZIP CODE:	_____
EMAIL:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard <input type="checkbox"/> Discover
Amount you wish to give:	_____
Card Number:	_____
Expiration Date:	_____
3-Digit Security code:	_____
Signature:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Check the box if you wish us to keep this credit card info on file.

CROSS LINKS

CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS, UNITED STATES PROVINCE OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS
Holy Cross Association Post Office Box 771 Notre Dame, Indiana 46556-0771 Phone: 574.631.6022 association@holycrossusa.org hycost@holycrossusa.org

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Dear Hearts and Gentle Souls...

It seems as though I just wrote the Easter *Cross Links*, and here I am again, doing another one! I remember long ago when my predecessor, Fr. Bill McAuliffe, C.S.C., used his May appeal letter to ask benefactors for a Memorial Day remembrance, honoring those who fought in our nation's wars. As I write this, I mentally flash back to several years ago when I stood on the sands of Omaha Beach and wondered how in the name of God anyone could get across that beach unscathed. In a newsletter before that trip, I asked benefactors to send me the names of family and friends who had been killed in the invasion and were buried in the cemetery. I would look them up and pray for them. It was sobering to see all those crosses and Stars of David.

The old vets are passing away at a rapid rate and they are being joined by new generations of young people who are being killed in our nation's wars. So many - in the prime of their life - have been wounded physically, mentally and spiritually. God bless and keep those who serve and have served in our Armed Forces.

MAY APPEAL

Any donation given to Holy Cross will be used for the needs of our retired and ill priests and brothers.

Given what I said about vets, maybe this would be a good way to honor a member of your family, living or deceased, who served in the Armed Forces.

I promise you the prayers of the men who live at Holy Cross House and Our Lady of Fatima House. This is their specific assignment, given to them by the Provincial.

One Holy Cross priest who badly wanted to serve as a Navy chaplain died on February 26, 2015: **Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.** Fr. Ted was truly a citizen of the world. The more I listened to the tributes at his funeral and memorial, the more I realized that he was truly a man who gave life to others in every way possible, privately and publicly.

Rev. James T. Burtchaell, C.S.C. Fr. Jim died on April 10, after suffering for many years with dementia and Alzheimer's. This is so sadly ironic because he was a brilliant theologian and teacher. He was one of the two best teachers I had in theology. If we could survive his Confessional Counseling course (and "survive" is the operative word!), we could handle anything that came to us in regular confessionals ... and I mean anything! His tactic was to bring in outsiders, young and old, male and female, and give them a sin/sins to confess, most of which were outlandish. A "lucky" seminarian would be called and seated in front of the class with the penitent who would then "confess." An evaluation followed. Every one of us made a hash of things. Even if it was really a simple sin ("I was angry at my wife."), we were looking for the catch!!

Interesting little note: it will be 30 years come July that I've been in this ministry to the Association. Man, that's a long time!! Retirement will come one of these days - just not sure when. In the meantime.....

Lots of love and many prayers!!

Fr. Theob

☺ Hugs!

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES

I have several liturgical aids that help me when it comes time to put together a Prayer of the Faithful for weekend Masses. Lately, there has always been one intention that appears in all the helps: praying for the young people who are receiving Confirmation. This is very much the Confirmation season; your local bishop is busy indeed! And of course, we have the Solemnity of Pentecost coming up by the time you receive this.

The only thing I remember about my own Confirmation in 4th grade was not the actual ceremony, but the one practice we had before the ceremony. Since this was a Catholic grade school (St. Anthony's in Lancaster, Penn.), the good Holy Cross sisters made sure we were all lined up, prim and proper, and knew exactly what we were supposed to do. When it came my turn, I climbed up the altar stairs, knelt before the assistant pastor who was playing "Bishop," got "anointed" and "smacked," then got up and started to return to my place. Hands were folded just perfectly and I was walking slowly and reverently. I heard Sister saying something in a loud voice and looked around to see if she was talking to me. She wasn't, so I resumed the walk back to my seat. Next thing I knew, there was a hard smack on the back of my head ... it absolutely came out of nowhere. Sister was right there, and said: "Don't you dare look around when you are walking back." Funny ... we were all wondering about and dreading the Bishop's smack on the cheek ... I definitely didn't expect the one I got in practice!!

Truth be told, aside from a sore head, I felt no different after the Sacrament than before. Life went on ... and on ... and on. It's only as I grow in age that I can see just how powerfully the Spirit is at work. And yet that power is exercised so subtly that it can easily be overlooked or ignored. Giant steps in growth are – at least for me – non-existent. Maybe others have experienced that sudden and total shift in life focus, such as St. Paul getting knocked off his horse. For me, it's been more like baby-steps.

I guess that's to be expected, because Grace builds

on nature, as Thomas Aquinas reminds us. By nature I'm not a fast mover. I like to amble through life instead of hurrying. I'd prefer to float down a gentle creek rather than shooting the rapids, to sit in the shade and read a good book rather than talking about the book in a spirited book club. The Spirit works with me as I am, and slowly but surely transforms me into a fuller, more complete "as I am."

So how does the Holy Spirit touch my everyday life? Where do I see the Spirit at work?

For me, it's a two-step process. I believe it starts off with either Jesus or life presenting an opportunity. These can be opportunities for service, prayer, personal growth, change in ministry and so on. They can be positive or negative, happy or painful, or anywhere in between. They can be frequent, as in every day, or infrequent, as in once every several years. The Spirit prompts the life-giving response to the opportunity. The response can be a prayer, an action, not doing something, a thought, a few words, etc. The response can be spontaneous or thought-out.

The stuff that follows is personal, yes, but I tend to follow the dictum that "What is most personal is also most universal." As I count the ways, perhaps you can see similarities in your own life.

- Being grateful for all blessings.
- Stepping outside and my heart sings with the beauty of the day.
- Watching a male cardinal feeding some bird food to his consort – amazingly loving and gentle!
- Going contentedly across town to the second Mass of the day, even though I'm really tired.
- Hearing a confession or counseling someone and saying something that was so "on target" that I wonder: "Now where did that come from?"

- Not sure what to say in a homily, and the way the reader speaks or inflects a certain verse makes an idea spring to mind.
- Having a meeting where some positions are hardened, and helping folks to dialogue instead of insisting "My way is the only way."
- Sitting in front of a blank computer screen, trying to get an idea for this newsletter, and recalling a resident talking about her grandson's Confirmation. Bingo, away we go.
- On the way back to my apartment from Mass, stopping to talk with a gentleman who never said much before, and finding he has a life-or-death decision based on an upcoming MRI.
- Getting a smile from Dorothy, who rarely smiles at anyone.
- Deciding to spend some time in silence, with no TV, laptop or book.
- Being patient with a resident who is a chronic, non-stop talker.
- Giving 87-year-old Wanda a high-five because it makes her break into the biggest smile.
- Being playful and cheery as a form of ministry.
- Straightening the entryway runner so no one trips over it.
- Re-doing a woodworking project that was three-quarters finished because I just didn't feel right about the design.
- Helping couples to enjoy their companionship without worrying what other residents think (and always joking: "I get dibs on the wedding!").
- Recognizing that someone needs to finish a task, so I stop talking and cut the visit short.
- Thoroughly enjoying how residents help each

other and constantly affirming them for that.

- Taking extra time to write condolence letters to those who have lost loved ones.
- Stopping what I'm doing to give Gus the cockatiel a head rub because he's made it clear he wants one now.

Now you might look at similarities in your own life and argue that "These are things that I do of my own free will; the Spirit didn't have anything to do with it." I beg to differ. The Spirit does not affect your free will at all. The Spirit exists to give life to the world. You and I can – and do – choose not to give life to others in large or small ways. In every example above, there is a choice: to do or not to do. Everyday life gives us countless opportunities to give and receive life. It is the Spirit who prompts us to turn those opportunities into salvific moments. It is the Evil One who prompts us to ignore or misuse those opportunities.

But you might counter: "But I do these things naturally. It's who I am." Again, I beg to differ. By nature, we are selfish people. We are primed to look after #1. I'm not being cynical – it's reality. It's the effect of Original Sin. When faced with human need, the selfish person will naturally look first to his or her own situation: "I don't have time; don't have money; don't care about you; I'm too important; my needs come first; don't want to be bothered; I'm going to pray or going to Mass and don't have time to stop; my perceptions are always right." I can reel these right off because they're the excuses I use every day.

If you do good things and speak life-giving words "naturally," that means that you have truly let the Holy Spirit influence your life. You are putting on Christ. You are cooperating with the Spirit in slowly divesting yourself of the old person and putting on the new, made more completely in the image and likeness of Jesus. And the best part of all: you're happier, freer, more "in like" with yourself. Like Jesus said, "I have come that you might have life, and have it to the full."