

## Your Favorite Page

### Come on! Really?!?

I couldn't make up stuff this good. Here are some actual label instructions on consumer goods.

#### On Tesco's Tiramisu dessert (printed on bottom)

"Do not turn upside down."  
(well, ... duh, a bit late, huh!)

#### On Sainsbury's peanuts

"Warning: contains nuts."  
(talk about a news flash!)

#### On Boot's Children Cough Medicine

"Do not drive a car or operate machinery after taking this medication."  
(We could do a lot to reduce the rate of construction accidents if we could just get those 5 year-olds with head-colds off bulldozers.)

#### On Marks & Spencer Bread Pudding

"Product will be hot after heating."  
( ... and you thought??? ... )

#### On a Sears hairdryer

"Do not use while sleeping."  
(That's the only time I have to work on my hair.)

#### On a bag of Fritos

"You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside."  
(The shoplifter special?)

#### On a bar of Dial soap

"Directions: Use like regular soap."  
(and that would be???...)

#### On some Swanson frozen dinners

"Serving suggestion: Defrost."  
(but, it's justa suggestion.)

#### On packaging for a Rowenta iron

"Do not iron clothes on body."  
(but wouldn't this save me time?)

#### On Nytol Sleep Aid

"Warning: May cause drowsiness."  
( ... I'm taking this because??? ... )

#### On most brands of Christmas lights

"For indoor or outdoor use only."  
(as opposed to what?)

#### On a Japanese food processor

"Not to be used for the other use."  
(now, somebody out there, help me on this. I'm a bit curious.)

#### On an American Airlines packet of nuts

"Instructions: Open packet, eat nuts."  
(Step 3: say what?)

#### On a child's Superman costume

"Wearing of this garment does not enable you to fly."  
(I don't blame the company. I blame the parents for this one.)

*Blessed are the cracked: for it is they who let in the light.*

### CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Visa     Mastercard     Discover

Amount you wish to give: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3-Digit Security code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

If you wish us to keep this credit card info. on file, check the box.

# CROSS LINKS

CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS, UNITED STATES PROVINCE OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS  
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Greetings, my friends!

I love this time of year in the Midwest! The season of fall engages all the senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell. The fact that ND is 4-0 as of this writing is also something to savor. But I do feel for the professional football teams and the substitute officials who have to be reeling from the wrath descending upon them. It's all so unnecessary, too. The impasse between the NFL organization and the officials' union is simply another sign of the chaos that comes when intransigence takes the place of compromise.

Speaking of intransigence and chaos, this will be my last newsletter before the November elections. It's pretty rare that we're given such a stark choice between ideologies. Notice I do not say "choice between persons." Even though many do vote for the person, in this case I feel it would be doing an injustice to the country. Both men are good people, loving husbands and fathers, faithful to their religious beliefs. But how do the policies they espouse affect the common good? Yes, your vote *does* have an effect on the country and the world ... that's why voting is a moral obligation.

I would highly recommend reading the commentary of the American Bishops on this election and the priorities

### NOVEMBER APPEAL

During November, the Church remembers those who have died and who are awaiting their reunion with us. If you would like Holy Cross to wrap our prayers around yours for your deceased loved ones, jot their names on the enclosed prayer list and return it to us. No offering is required, but if one is included, it will be used for the needs of formation, health care and retirement.

we are asked to think about. There are seven: the right to life and the dignity of the human person; the call to family, community and participation; a section on rights and responsibilities (we so often forget the latter!); the option for the poor and vulnerable; the dignity of work and the rights of workers; and finally, caring for God's creation. All of these have been hot-button issues the last few years and the political parties and candidates have very different approaches to them – approaches which call on us to see voting as making a moral choice according to our informed consciences. And speaking of informed – lordy lordy – how I hate those political commercials! How stupid do they think we are!?! Ditto for most of the stump speeches!

Anyway, the Bishops document is called "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" and the website is [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship). The document does not compare the two parties side-by-side; it simply states what the Church believes and invites us to make the necessary comparisons.

Two Holy Cross deaths to report. On August 28, **Rev. Thomas Campbell, C.S.C.**, was called home to God. Tom taught theology at Stonehill College and King's College. While teaching, he assisted in local parishes. Upon retirement from his teaching ministry, he began to work full-time in various parishes in the Diocese of Fall River (Mass.) until retirement at Holy Cross House in 2011.

On Sept. 11, the birth into eternal life happened for **Rev. David Verhalen, C.S.C.** Most of David's career was spent in high school education and chaplaincy. David had a deep desire for solitude and contemplation as well and he shared the fruits of that solitude with students and all who sought him for spiritual advice. He moved to Holy Cross House in 2010.

By way of reminder, come Nov. 1, it will be 55 days till Christmas. Have you done your shopping yet?

Be God's smile for someone today!

*Fr. Herb*

*☺ Hugs!*

# WHO ARE THE GREATEST AMONG US?

On Sept. 22, at the 4 p.m. Saturday Mass at St. Paul's, I decided to have some fun with the folks. It had been a hard week for me, given that one of my best friends in Holy Cross (David Verhalen, C.S.C.) had died. I'm happy for David; as I said in the eulogy, some words from *Amazing Grace* apply to him: "I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see." Even though I know his spirit still abides with me, and that we are in union with each other through the Eucharist, I will miss his physical presence.

But back to St. Paul's. The Gospel story from Mark was Jesus' second prediction of his Passion and death. The disciples say nothing, but hang back and start discussing who among them is the greatest. For my homily, I tried to imagine what criteria they were using to determine "greatness." Maybe the conversation went something like this:

- *I'm not bragging (the credit goes to God after all) but I did heal five people last week.*
- *Well, I brought in 40 denarii in donations. Get realistic, guys, you can't do anything without money.*
- *I was talking to some folks in Jerusalem, real movers and shakers. We are going to need them on our side.*
- *Oh, I've been working so hard lately I can barely move, but let me tell you about it.*
- *What a crowd turned out for the talk I gave! Made some converts to our cause.*
- *I have two degrees from the University of Jerusalem. If someone had listened to my suggestion, we wouldn't be in this mess.*

I made the point that the world's criterion for greatness are really superfluous. They have to do with power, money, popularity, talent and personality. At any point in time, those qualities can be taken away. And of course, they count for nothing when our time comes to be welcomed into eternal life. In contrast to this attitude is Jesus' norm for greatness: being the servant of all.

Now, instead of processing in from the back of the chapel, I usually go right to the presider's chair about 10-15 minutes before Mass is to start. I use the time for some prayer, further reflection on the Scripture, watching the folks as they come in and perhaps

praying for their particular needs. But on that Saturday, looking out at the group of elderly folk, I started chuckling to myself. I saw some folks smiling, because they knew from the look on my face that I was up to something!

What was I thinking? Well, looking at the elders, I started to wonder what their criteria for greatness would be. After all, those things that culture values so deeply as signs of greatness are not such a part of their lives any more. So I grabbed a pen and started making notes on the back of my printed homily. When it came time to speak them, here's what I said:

- *I still have my original teeth.*
- *I take only 5 pills a day.*
- *I have a 5 horsepower scooter that really gets me places.*
- *I remember everything that happened yesterday.*
- *My legs are still nice enough to wear shorts in summer.*
- *I heard every word he said.*
- *I remember what I circled on the menu the night before.*
- *I made it from my apartment to the dining room in 15 minutes flat.*

There were plenty of laughs and nods of agreement. But the point remained the same: Just as with the apostles, just as with culture, so too those ideas of greatness are really kind of silly. They're just another way of saying "How great I am."

Jesus, of course, has the last word: "*If anyone wishes to be first, he shall be the last of all and the servant of all.*" (Mark 9:35)

To be first is to be on top, to be in control, to have people doing what you want them to do. It means having the wherewithal to do whatever one wants to do at the time they want to do it. And here Jesus is saying true greatness is in being the servant of all.

Judging by our behavior, many of us have difficulty accepting this. We value our titles and authority. We value being in control of things. I value my opinions to the exclusion of other opinions. My time and my agenda are more important than anyone else's. The little demons of jealousy, envy and fear hold nasty conversations in our heads when we see these things

threatened: "How dare they ... who do they think they are ... what gives her the right to do that ... I'm going to talk to his supervisor ... and so on.

All these are normal human desires and normal human reactions to things we perceive as affecting our value and self-worth. But "normal" doesn't mean "right." We're called by Jesus to have a different mindset, a different set of values.

In society, are people expected to serve me and provide me with all the things I want? Or am I expected to serve them? What should my attitude be to the people who are part of my everyday life – those with whom I am in direct contact and others whom I do not meet but whose actions (or non-actions) affect my life? Do cashiers in the supermarket, for example, exist solely to serve me or do I make efforts to serve them through acknowledging them by name, being hospitable and friendly, thanking them for their help?

In the family, whom do we regard as first? Who is the one who serves the family? Parents? Children? Domestic help? Grandparents, aunts or uncles? Of course, if the family pet happens to be a cat, there's no doubt whatsoever: Everyone exists solely to serve Tabby!!!

In the workplace whom do we regard as first? As the least? The boss? The supervisors? Those with the titles? Those who work efficiently and quietly in the background? The cleaning staff? Who is serving whom? Who is the greatest person in any workplace? How is the greatness judged? Who contributes most? These are questions that can only be answered on the basis of how individuals behave and relate to each other in the workplace.

When I was in the Seminary, I spent a summer as an orderly in a hospital in New Bedford, Mass. As part of our training, a hospital administrator talked about the various departments. I'll never forget his adamant statement that he considered the housekeepers to be the single most important group of people in the organization because it was their work that did much to prevent the spread of contaminants. While planning was taking place for the construction of the new Saint

Joseph Regional Medical Center in Mishawaka (next door to South Bend), the consultation process focused heavily on the housekeepers. Several very clever ideas came from this group of people.

There's plenty to think about in the paragraphs above. But let me just add one more thought: More and more, I'm starting to take the view that the folks who are the greatest are the ones who most need our help. This holds true on every level: from the home to the nation, and at every age, from infant to centenarian. Sometimes they will ask for help. At other times, pride or disability keeps them from asking for help, but common sense tells us that help is needed and so we step in. Often the need for help is obvious, as with an infant or a severely handicapped person. Our greatness comes to the fore in whether or not we choose to help them, and whether or not we help them according to their real need (good!), or what we think they need (not so good!).

Why are they the greatest? Because they are helping you and I live out the Gospel. They are helping our nation be a Christian nation, as we so often claim to be. Our own personal suffering calls for a response of faith. Witnessing the suffering of others calls forth a response of charity. It will require your time and effort and maybe even some of your money. It is messy and will usually require some tears on your part and some vulnerability and some humility.

Our natural tendency is to avoid people who are suffering. As Christians, we need to do better. And let me make a painful point: We tend to help people based upon a scale of how much we think they deserve it. So a person who has cancer is OK to help, because it isn't their fault that they are sick. On the other hand, we look at someone who destroyed their marriage by having an affair and suddenly we want to have nothing to do with them. Somehow they deserve their suffering and we don't want to get involved. Jesus went to those who *needed* a physician – the sinners. Remember: The position of Judge is already taken. There are plenty of job openings for servants.

May God bless those who call us to the greatness of service.