

Your Favorite Page

Here are some eye-rollers for you!

- When chemists die, they barium.
- *Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.*
- I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid. He says he can stop any time.
- *How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.*
- I stayed up all night to see where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.
- *This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.*
- I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.
- *I did a theatrical performance about puns. It was a play on words.*
- They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a Type-O.
- *Why were the Indians here first? They had reservations.*
- We are going on a class trip to the Coca-Cola factory. I hope there's no pop quiz.
- *I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.*
- Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?
- *Broken pencils are pointless.*
- I tried to catch some fog, but I mist.
- *What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A thesaurus.*
- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.
- *I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.*
- I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.
- *All the toilets in New York's police stations have been stolen. The police have nothing to go on.*
- I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.
- *Haunted French pancakes give me the crepes.*
- Velcro is a rip off!
- *A cartoonist was found dead in his home. Details are sketchy.*
- Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!
- *The earthquake in Washington obviously was the government's fault.*

STRANGE HEADLINES

- Miracle Cure Kills Fifth Patient

- *Rangers (Texas ball team) Get Whiff of Colon*
- Total Lunar Eclipse Will Be Broadcast Live On Northwoods Public Radio
- *Starvation Can Lead to Health Hazards*
- Rally Against Apathy Draws Small Crowd
- *Police Arrest Everyone On September 22nd*
- Parents Keep Kids Home to Protest School Closures
- *New Sick Policy Requires 2-Day Notice*
- Man With 8 DUI's Blames Drinking Problem
- *Hospitals Resort to Hiring Doctors*
- Homicide Victims Rarely Talk to Police
- *Barbershop Singers Bring Joy to School for Deaf*
- Meat Head Resigns
- *Statistics Show That Teen Pregnancy Drops Off Significantly After Age 25*
- Federal Agents Raid Gun Shop, Find Weapons
- *Caskets Found as Workers Demolish Mausoleum*
- Army Vehicle Disappears After Being Painted with Camouflage
- *County to Pay \$250,000 to Advertise Lack of Funds*
- Man Accused of Killing Lawyer Receives New Attorney
- *Meeting on Open Meetings Is Closed*
- City Unsure Why the Sewer Smells
- *Bridges Help People Cross Rivers*
- Worker Suffers Leg Pain After Crane Drops 800 Pound Ball on His Head

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CROSS LINKS

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

I'm writing this at home with the folks, near the North Carolina shore. It's a good day to write, since a nor'easter is passing by and there's plenty of rain, a real blessing for this rain-starved part of the country. Anyway, at 87, they're still living in their own home, and doing as well as can be expected. Each time I come back, though, there's some sadness because of evident aging, and also because still more friends and neighbors have either moved away or died. It's not the same neighborhood I knew back when they first came here in the late 80's. But then again, what in our world ever does remain the same, except for God's continued presence with us.

Spring is always a time of transitions. There are First Communions and Confirmations, graduations, weddings, and so on. Back on the Saturday after Easter, **Rev. Matt Kuczora, C.S.C.**, was ordained to the priesthood. After a home celebration, Matt returns to parish work at the Holy Cross parish in Guadalupe, Mexico. For the full story, pictures, and video, go to www.holycrossusa.org. That's a good site to visit often so you can keep abreast of Holy Cross activities and news.

MAY APPEAL

Traditionally this appeal is for the needs of the elderly and retired priests and brothers of the Province. That tradition remains, as well as my promise of their prayer for you and yours. Those men have only one assignment: prayer for our benefactors.

But it also strikes me that with Memorial Day at the end of the month, this might be a good way to honor or memorialize the members of your family who have served our country in the military, or to ask for prayers for yourself if you have served. What a debt of gratitude we owe to those men and women!!! Among them are many of the elderly CSC's mentioned here.

The seminarians are off on their summer activities in various ministries. Some are preparing for entry into the Novitiate in the late summer. Three men have been approved for Final Vows, and will be spending time preparing for that Fall ceremony. As of this writing, the Provincial Council has not yet considered the petitions for Entry into the Novitiate and for First Vows. This will happen in upcoming Council meetings.

Three men have passed from this life to the next. On Sunday, April 15th, at the age of 91, **Rev. Cajetan Holland, C.S.C.**, was welcomed home. Cajetan started his life in Holy Cross as a Brother, and 34 years later entered the Seminary and was ordained in 1979. As a Brother, he was a high school teacher, and as a priest he was a hospital chaplain and gave parish assistance in Connecticut and Vermont.

Three days later (April 18th) **Rev. Joseph L. Walter, C.S.C.**, died at the age of 82. Joe was a long-time fixture in Chemistry and Pre-Professional Studies at Notre Dame until retirement in 2005. He was also very active in the professional development of pre-health advisors, and was nationally known and appreciated for his work with these men and woman.

As I was typing the above, an e-mail notification came from the Assistant Provincial telling us of the death of **Rev. Chester Pruzynski, C.S.C.**, the morning of April 22nd. Fr. Pru, as he was widely known at the University of Portland, was ordained in 1962 and shortly after assigned to the University of Portland. He was a teacher, friend, athletic booster, and an inspiration to students, staff and faculty.

Now it's about time for me to transition into ending this thing!! I hope and pray that you have a safe and healthy summer, with some time for personal rejuvenation and reflection. Enjoy the reflection inside, and the laffs on the last page. And....thank you for being you, and being part of the Holy Cross Family!

With love...and a few hugs!!

Fr. Herb

☺ Hugs!

A RECIPE FOR FEELING POWERLESS

Several years ago, in a previous edition of *Cross Links*, I wrote of a conversion experience I had one Fall day. Long-time readers may remember it, but there are many readers for whom this will be new.

It was one of those glorious autumn days when it was almost sinful to be inside. So I left work early, went home, and decided to do some outdoor housekeeping. I grabbed a couple of flowerpots, emptied them onto the compost pile, and started walking to the garage to store the pots for the winter. Suddenly, I was almost brought to a standstill by a powerful conviction that my carrying those flowerpots was absolutely essential to the world's salvation. I didn't know how or why....all I knew for sure was that in God's Providence, this everyday action was good for the world.

From that experience came a deeply-felt certainty that every action and word, no matter how small, has significance for my own personal relationship with the Lord, my relationship with others, and somehow brings the Kingdom of God that much closer to fulfillment.

Ideally, the word or action is motivated by love. But even if it's performed out of duty, that's OK. Remember the parable of the two sons asked to go work in the vineyard (Mt 21:28ff)? The first son said "Sure, I'll go," but never did. The second son said "No way!" but ended up going. Jesus commended the second son as doing the will of the Father. So even if our motives are mixed, God can still bring about good for others.

To bring this home a bit, remember your reluctance when you've had to go to an event or were asked to do something you didn't really want to do. Were there times when something totally unexpected and good happened? Here's what Steve (not his real name) told me once: "I usually go to the parish's bingo night to help out, but the other night I was just too tired from a lousy day at work. Nothing I did went right. But I went," he said, and continued: "A man who knew I was in A.A. came up to me and asked me to walk him through Step 5 (*"To admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs"*). It's a critical step for someone in recovery, and I was thrilled to be asked to help. And it happened because I went, even though I didn't feel like it." There's a double blessing here: Steve was affirmed as a good man, and a brother was helped along the journey to recovery. I'm sure you can think of several such incidents in your own life, where reluctance was transformed into amazed gratitude, a "Wow!!" experience.

This perspective of doing small things well is rooted deep in Christian spirituality...it's not just my opinion. In the Gospels, we have the widow's mite, the cup of water given to a little one, five loaves and two fish being multiplied to feed thousands. We have the Beatitudes and the

Judgment scene in Matthew 25 - in both cases, seemingly insignificant actions bring tremendous blessing. We also have Jesus saying several times: "If you are faithful in little things, you will be entrusted with greater."

Theresa of Lisieux had her "Little Way." Brother Lawrence (a 17th century Carmelite monk) said that picking up a piece of straw from his kitchen floor brought him very close to the Lord. In his *Introduction to the Devout Life*, St. Francis de Sales tells a Christian laywoman that fidelity to her everyday duties is truly a way of holiness and sanctity.

Gandhi encouraged his followers to "Be the change you want to see in the world." Ergo, if you're tired of all the divisiveness in our society and Church, be more willing to listen and less quick to judge and label. You're aware of hunger in the world - donate to your local food pantry. You feel like an anonymous cog in a world that doesn't care - thank your grocery store cashier by name. By changing yourself, you have by that very fact already altered the world. It's called "the butterfly effect" or chaos theory.

In our own era, Dorothy Day wrote: "*Our vocation is to do little things well for the love of God. This means monotonous things, eternally repeated. But if we have the 'vision of the whole,' we will connect doing these little things, these monotonous things, with spiritual truths. The vision of the whole is that every task, routine or not, is of redeeming, supernatural value because we are united with Christ.*"

And here is Mother Teresa's take: "*In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love.*"

All this seems to go completely against human nature. We don't want to do small things. We've been conditioned into thinking bigger is better, that doing a small thing is like throwing a thimble of water into the ocean of the world's problems. It's almost as though the small things aren't worth it, that they don't make a "big enough" difference. For example, countless benefactors over the years have apologized for their "small" gifts, and have wished they could do more. I thank them for that wish, for I believe God can do good things with that! (Now don't go wishin' *too* much...the monetary gifts of any size are needed and helpful to us!!!)

We all want to change the world, but how many of us believe we can? The desire for big change is overwhelmed by the size of the effort and resources that would be required. Sadly, most of the time, we are either paralyzed or demoralized into doing nothing.

And why is that? Because we forget the power of God. If we place our efforts in God's hands, that so-called "little" gesture, action, or word becomes salvific in ways we won't comprehend this side of heaven. As Jesus said to Thomas

on the Sunday after Easter: "Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believe."

Y'see, folks, we live in a very very troubled world. Everywhere we look there is conflict, not just wars of bullets and missiles, but also verbal wars. The economic scene is frightening, especially when we look at our personal economic resources. The dysfunctional struggles for power in Church and government (and *between* Church and government) bring cynicism and distrust. The feeling of powerlessness experienced by the ordinary Joe and Jane has never been higher (at least in my 63-year old life!).

We know we can't do big things. We feel the small stuff doesn't mean diddly. So now what? Here are two suggestions.

I believe the single most important way to start making a difference is to begin each day with gratitude. We all go through times when nothing seems to go right. We whine and complain to anyone who will listen. We rant about some real (or perceived) problem, situation, incident...you know the drill. As for those who are chronic complainers...well, one can only feel pity and compassion for them, since they cannot see blessings in their life.

But if we take a step back and count all the things that are right in our lives, it will make a difference, and it will be cumulative. If we start the day from a position of gratitude, it sets the tone for the day. It doesn't have to be complex: "I'm thankful for the new day." "I am thankful to have a job." "I'm grateful to have a bed to wake from." "I'm thankful for not dreaming of zombies again last night." "I'm thankful for hot water in the shower." "Thank you, Lord, that I didn't see my name in the obits this morning."

If you think hard enough, you will always find something to be thankful for, no matter how rough things seem. And you can build on that gratitude. Positive thinking is so important to our health and to our spirituality. Where gratitude begins, a positive outlook will follow. Cultivate it, and I can absolutely guarantee you will indeed see and know that your "small" gestures of love and concern are making a difference.

Second - and this is how I personally handle things - take stock of your situation and resources. Use the gifts God has given to you. I do not have the energy or the desire to fight the big battles that are going on in our country and Church. I leave that for those who feel the need to do battle, and who have the monetary means and power to do so. Nor do I have any desire to complain and gripe, debate or argue the pros and cons of this or that or the other thing...I leave it for those who thrive on such things. I can't get excited or motivated enough to deal with all that.

My energies are instead concentrated on doing and being the best I can for Association benefactors and the folks at St. Paul's retirement community, with emphasis on the latter because I'm with them on a face-to-face basis each day. I came very quickly to see that little things like a smile, a cheery word, a little flirt with the guys and gals, a touch on the shoulder, a hand with a wheelchair or walker, pouring a cup of coffee or water for those not strong enough to lift the pitchers, a little silliness and goofiness, and listening - always listening - these are the things that are making a difference to the world that is St. Paul's, and they ripple out from there.

For benefactors, sharing my thoughts and reflections through this newsletter, through gift acknowledgements, through snail mail and e-mails, is how I make a difference in their worlds (at least I hope I do)...and so many of those things are shared with others. Countless folks share the Page 4 humor with others, and it delights me to be able to help others laugh.

If I can contribute to benefactors' spiritual growth through writing, and to the St. Paul's community by presence, then that suffices. God's work is being done. I don't have to do everything, nor do you. But doing something, and doing it with love - even if the love comes later - does pay off.

As long as there is somebody who needs something and you and I are doing something about it, we are making a difference. Your life and mine thereby gains meaning and purpose. You don't need to change the world and you don't need to feed your ego like crusaders and celebrities. In the large scale of the world and the Church, you and I are pretty much unimportant, powerless, and insignificant....peons, in other words.

But, but, but.....give me "peons" any day!! We are each other's strength and salvation, since we know our littleness and know we must rely on God for help. We can make enormous difference by engaging in small little acts of kindness towards our fellow human beings. To paraphrase a Chinese proverb, to make a thousand people happy, start with a smile. And don't forget the small acts of kindness to yourself!! They're important too. If you care for yourself in a good healthy way, you'll care for others in similar ways.

And always remember: in the hands of our Risen Lord, with the help of the Holy Spirit, nothing is impossible!!!!

"Watch your thoughts, for they become words.
Watch your words, for they become actions.
Watch your actions, for they become habits.
Watch your habits, for they become character.
Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny."