

**OUR LADY OF PROMPT SUCCOR CATHOLIC CHURCH
CHACKBAY, LOUISIANA**

October 25, 2009

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time



Pastor's Corner...

October is Respect Life Month

Continuation on "Why You Matter..."

A Reflection on Human Dignity

By Rev. John Bartunek, LC, STL, is a legionary of Christ priest and author of *The Better Part* and *Inside the Passion*

The subtle lies of today's culture of death are a plague of spiritual leprosy, reducing the value of human persons to some arbitrary standard that changes like fashions. They wound us and wear us down. They make us think that we truly are, underneath it all, lepers. And so we live in bustling cities surrounded by millions of people, while in our little apartment we cry lonely tears. But Jesus is nearby, waiting for us to approach him and ask for a cure. He touches us still, if we let him, especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. To the world around us, what matters is what we possess, but to the Lord, *we matter* because we are his beloved children, created in his image, for whom he died, and with whom he wants to live forever in heaven.

Lately, some scientists have been spending a lot of time and money trying to show the contrary, that animals and people and even machines are pretty much all the same – just different combinations of the same material elements. It's interesting to note that none of the animals or machines that they have been experimenting with have given any evidence of doing similar experiments on the scientists. That's because human beings are different; their God-given dignity makes them so.

Discovering how much we matter frees us from the slow death of spiritual leprosy. It also shows us how to live. As St Paul put it, "You should befriend each other, then, as Christ has befriended you" (Romans 15:7). This is the game plan of all the saints.



Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta executed this plan beautifully. Once she was staying with a community of sisters working among the Aborigines in Australia. She visited an elderly man who lived in total isolation, ignored by everyone. His home was a filthy wreck. She told him, "Please let me clean your house, wash your clothes and make your bed." He answered, "I'm OK like this. Let it be." She said, "You will be still

better if you allow me to do it." He finally agreed. While she was cleaning, she discovered a beautiful lamp, covered with dust; it looked like it hadn't been used in years. "Don't you light that lamp?" she said, "Don't you ever use it?" He answered, "No. No one comes to see me. I have no need to light it. Who would I do it for?" Mother Teresa asked, "Would you light it every night if the sisters came?" He replied, "Of course." From that day on, the sisters committed themselves to visiting him every evening. Mother Teresa left Australia. Two years passed. She had completely forgotten about that encounter. Then she received a message from him: "Tell my friend that the light she lit in my life still continues to shine." (This anecdote is recorded in more detail in *Voices of the Saints* by Bert Ghezzi.)

You matter. That's why Christ came into your life, cleaned your soul, and lit the lamp of faith in your heart. If ever the lamp goes out, he is always there to light it again. And while it shines, it should inspire us to roll back the dark lies of the culture of death and spread the light of Christ's love to everyone we can, because they matter too.

Even Napoleon's prisoner discovered this. One day a green shoot came up through the cracks in the stones on the dungeon's floor. It began to reach up toward the light in the tiny window at the top of the cell. The prisoner used some of the water brought to him each day to pour on the tiny sprout. It grew slowly until at last it became a plant with a deep blue flower. As the petals opened in full blossom, the solitary captive crossed out the words previously written on the wall. "God cares," he scratched instead

- ⊕ **Annual Memorial Mass....** Will be on Monday, November 2, 2009, at 7pm. Please come and pray with us as we remember all those who have gone before us. Eternal Rest grant unto them, O Lord...
- ⊕ **Blessing of Tombs... November 1, 2009...** In place of the 5pm Mass, we will have a Holy Mass at 3pm(Sunday) and we'll pray the Holy Rosary after the Mass by the Tomb of the Unborn while we bless the tombs.
- ⊕ **All Saints' Day...** Today we keep the festival of your holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, our mother. Around your throne the saints, our brothers and sisters, sing your praise forever. Their glory fills us with joy, and their communion with us in your church gives us inspiration and strength as we hasten on our pilgrimage of faith, eager to meet them. So we pray during the Mass of All Saints. We

celebrate those who have made the long journey to the holy city, to Jerusalem, to the feast of heaven. The scriptures and prayers for the day tell us that we are part of that vast throng now standing before God's throne in ceaseless praise. From the second reading: "I saw before me a huge crowd which no one could count from every nation, race, people and tongue...dressed in long white robes." At our baptism, when we received our white robes, we became part of this great assembly. Indeed, every time we go to Mass, before we sing Holy, Holy, we recall that we sing God's praise with "angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven." Who is this company and why is it so wonderful to be part of it? This is another way of asking, "What does the communion of saints mean?" It is not complicated. All the baptized, living and dead, across the generations, walk together, suffer together, sing together—not only those who have died, and not only those who lead heroic lives. Vincent Harding, writing in Sojourners magazine, put it this way: "What a wild company we belong to! These are wild people, persecuted people, going-out, not-knowing-where-they're-going people." For a picture of what the lives of saints look like, read the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1–12.) Copyright © 1997 Archdiocese of Chicago. Liturgy Training Publications, 1800 North Hermitage Avenue, Chicago IL 60622-1101; 1-800-933-1800. Text by G. Thomas Ryan. Art by Chuck Ludeke.

⊕ **All Saints ... Ordinary or extraordinary? ...**The Feast of All Saints is an annual event calling to mind the otherwise easily forgotten truth that, for the most part, holiness is achieved in obscurity through the performance in an extraordinary way of ordinary duties. We can easily be transfixed by the heroic and large-scale achievements of canonized saints. Without minimizing these achievements, we must be brought back to the reality that we serve the Lord through fidelity to daily duties ...that there are countless saints whose names and exploits we will know only in heaven ...that we hopefully will someday be among them, and that their example and intercession can help us follow Jesus more faithfully.

All for the Greater Glory of God!

Fr. Robert ☺