

# SAINT FAUSTINA CATHOLIC CHURCH

15551 N. Boggy Marsh Road, Clermont, FL 34714

352-515-9297 // E-Mail: [office@stfaustina.org](mailto:office@stfaustina.org)

Website: [www.stfaustina.org](http://www.stfaustina.org)

Facebook: [facebook.com/St.Faustina Catholic Church](https://facebook.com/St.Faustina Catholic Church)

February 25, 2024

Second Sunday of Lent

Jesus, I Trust in You

## Mass Schedule / Horario de Misas

### *Daily Mass*

Monday to Saturday at 8:00 am

### *Weekend Masses*

Saturday @ 4:00 pm

Sunday @ 7:30 am, 9:30 am, 11:30 am

5:00 pm en Espanol

### *Wednesday Holy Hour*

3:00—4:00 pm

### *First Friday Exposition*

8:30 am –8:00 pm

### *Confessions*

Saturday 3:00 pm -3:45 pm

or by appointment

*The Church is Open for Personal Prayer*

Monday thru Thursday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Friday, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm



Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white.  
*Mark 9:2,3*

Transfiguration of Jesus by Carl Bloch, 1872

2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF  
**LENT**

## Parish Office Hours / Horario de Oficina Parroquial

9:00 am - 4:00 pm, Monday-Thursday / Lunes a Jueves — 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Friday / Viernes

### Pastoral Team

Pastor	Father Carlos J. Cabán Vázquez	Ext. 101	<a href="mailto:ccaban@stfaustina.org">ccaban@stfaustina.org</a>
Actively Retired	Father John McNalis		
Deacon	Cris Stout		<a href="mailto:cstout@stfaustina.org">cstout@stfaustina.org</a>
Operations Manager	Joe Seddio	Ext. 104	<a href="mailto:jseddio@stfaustina.org">jseddio@stfaustina.org</a>
Director of Music & Liturgy	Kelly Mucci	Ext. 102	<a href="mailto:kmucci@stfaustina.org">kmucci@stfaustina.org</a>
Director of Faith Formation	Marylu Mariniello	Ext. 103	<a href="mailto:mmariniello@stfaustina.org">mmariniello@stfaustina.org</a>
Administrative Asst./PDS Coordinator	Donna Cuttita	Ext. 100	<a href="mailto:dcuttita@stfaustina.org">dcuttita@stfaustina.org</a>
Pastoral Care Coordinator	Duane Hyland	Ext. 107	<a href="mailto:dhyland@stfaustina.org">dhyland@stfaustina.org</a>
Receptionist	Carmen Pagan	Ext. 106	<a href="mailto:cpagan@stfaustina.org">cpagan@stfaustina.org</a>

# ***A MESSAGE FROM FATHER CARLOS - UN MENSAJE DE PADRE CARLOS***

My Dear Family of St. Faustina,

The readings for this Second Sunday of Lent speak of death and life. In the first reading we see the case of Abraham, the faithful and obedient man, to whom God asked for his son and he did not deny him, he was willing to offer him as God asked him. And because of your faith, God blesses you abundantly. We know that God the Father gave his only Son, the Beloved One, for all of us, and in the story of the Transfiguration the mystery of Jesus' death is hidden.



Last Sunday the Gospel took us into the desert with Jesus. Today it drags us towards a very different scenario: a high mountain, a place that suggests light, the manifestation of God. Every year on the Second Sunday of Lent, the Church places before us the figure of Jesus Christ transfigured, there is Jesus in the midst of Moses and Elijah, in the midst of the law and the prophets. His glorious face serves as encouragement and hope to those of us who try to follow him.

Brothers and sisters, we must put Jesus at the center of our hearts and our faith, Jesus alone, not other gods around us. We have to learn to let ourselves be led by Jesus towards love. Let us not forget that those who listen to Jesus find him as a source of Love. Those who listen to Jesus are filled with the strength and life that God gives. What a good itinerary for this Lent: to place ourselves close to Jesus, to shape ourselves to his style! I remind you to keep an eye out for our Weekly Challenge. Dare to live this Lent in a different way.

Let us remember our catechumens who are already beginning the countdown of preparation to receive the sacraments of Christian Initiation on the night of the Great Easter Vigil. Let us pray for them who already participated in the Rite of Election last week and next week the Counting begins. Let us pray loudly for each of them. Animo!

St. Faustina... Pray for us.

In Christ,

Father Carlos

\* \* \* \* \*

Mi querida familia de Santa Faustina,

Las lecturas de este Segundo Domingo de Cuaresma hablan de muerte y de vida. En la primera lectura vemos el caso de Abraham, el hombre fiel y obediente, a quien Dios le pidió su hijo y él no se lo negó, estuvo dispuesto a ofrecerlo como Dios se lo pidió. Y por su fe, Dios le bendice abundantemente. Nosotros sabemos que Dios Padre entregó a su Hijo único, el Predilecto, por todos nosotros y en el relato de la Transfiguración se esconde el misterio de la muerte de Jesús.

El domingo pasado el Evangelio nos llevaba al desierto con Jesús. Hoy nos arrastra hacia un escenario muy diferente: un monte alto, lugar que sugiere luz, manifestación de Dios. La Iglesia pone ante nosotros cada año en el Segundo Domingo de Cuaresma la figura de Jesucristo transfigurado, allí está Jesús en medio de Moisés y Elías, en medio de la ley y los profetas. Su rostro glorioso nos sirve de estímulo y esperanza a los que intentamos seguirle.

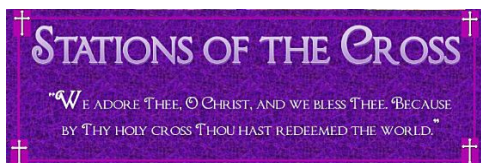
Hermanos y hermanas, hay que poner en el centro de nuestro corazón y de nuestra fe, a Jesús, solo a Jesús, no a otros dioses de nuestro entorno. Tenemos que aprender a dejarnos conducir por Jesús hacia el amor. No olvidemos que quien escucha a Jesús lo va encontrando como fuente de Amor. Quien escucha a Jesús se va llenando de la fuerza y la vida que da Dios. ¡Qué buen itinerario para esta Cuaresma!: ¡situarnos cerca de Jesús, para ir configurándonos a su estilo! Le recuerdo estar pendiente a nuestro Reto semanal. Atrévete a vivir esta Cuaresma de manera diferente.

Recordemos nuestros catecúmenos que ya comienzan la cuenta regresiva de preparación para recibir los sacramentos de Iniciación Cristiana la noche de la Gran Vigilia Pascual. Oremos por ellos que ya participaron del Rito de Elección la semana pasada y ya la semana que viene comienzan los Escrutinios. Oremos fuertemente por cada uno de ellos. ¡Ánimo!

Santa Faustina... Ruega por nosotros.

En Cristo,

Padre Carlos



The Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at:  
in Spanish at 2:00 pm    in English at 6:00 pm    in Spanish at 7:00 pm

For the complete 2024 Lent Schedule, please go to:  
<https://stfaustina.org/ministries/len-schedule-2024/>

## ***Financial Stewardship***

Weekly Collection Weekend of February 11, 2024

**Offertory / Ofertorio: \$16,762.00    Mortgage Debt Reduction / Reducción de la deuda hipotecaria: \$9,084 .00**

**Mass Attendance: 2,339**

To donate through our parish website, please go to: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z517/home>

# MASS INTENTIONS

## Saturday, February 24, 2024

4:00 pm + Juan Duran  
Requested by: Regina Duran

## Sunday, February 25, 2024

7:30 am + Donna Bridges  
Requested by: Tony Cannavale  
9:30 am Healing for: Cecilia Fanelli  
Requested by: Pat & Marylou Maiellano  
11:30 am Parishioners of St. Faustina  
5:00 pm + Ana Victoria Reynoso  
Requested by: Carmen Pagan

## Monday, February 26, 2024

8:00 am SI for: Pat White  
Requested by: Julia Costello

## Tuesday, February 27, 2024

8:00 am + Judy Billittier  
Requested by: Dan & Pat Metz

## Wednesday, February 28, 2024

8:00 am + Helga Marren  
Requested by: Carmelita Flores

## Thursday, February 29, 2024

8:00 am + Desideria Gawala Bolatete  
Requested by: Frank & Diane Maglione

## Friday, March 1, 2024

8:00 am Birthday Blessing for Angel Garcia  
Requested by: Carmen Garcia

## Saturday, March 2, 2024

8:00 am Memorial Mass Association  
4:00 pm + William G. Mattingly  
Requested by: Mattingly Family

## Sunday, March 3, 2024

7:30 am SI for Mickey & Molly Riley  
Requested by: Nonie Mae  
9:30 am + Thomas Van Nosedall  
Requested by: Donna Van Nosedall  
11:30 pm + Livio Barattieri  
Requested by: Angela Francisco  
5:00 pm Parishioners of St. Faustina

# PRAYER REQUESTS

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

In order to properly update our parish "Prayer Request" section of the bulletin, we are asking you to **resubmit names** that you would like on our list by emailing: [office@stfaustina.org](mailto:office@stfaustina.org).



Kristey Nelson, David Egan, Robert Kolenc, Jan Nilsen, Brenda Brubaker, Roger Darnell, Sandy Darnell, Tina Cyr, Patrick J Cyr, Barb Nelson, Ed David, Jack Marchewka, David Venditti, Elizabeth Cocco, Cecilia Fanelli, Arabella Zeglovskis, Felisa Parker-Gibson, Helen Capozzi, John Magnotti, Kay Bucci, Becky Oosterveen, Jose De Pool, Magdalena Lezcano, Joseph Loughrey, Robert Kasper, Paul Overeem, Julie Sabon vanDyke, Michael Daniel Boglino, Christine Gallagher, Timothy Leonard, Deborah Hollis, Christina Gallagher, Mike McGee, Frank Sebastian, Larry Wilson, Joseph Foster, Carmine Gallo, Michael Kelly, Elsa Gomez, Nancy Harrigan, Judith Crogman, Jean Conn, Carlos Corrales, Theresa Wentling, Paulette Sparlik, Lilian Hawkinson, Mark Thomas, David Bache, Zachary Birkholz, Jim Exnicios, Angela & Exevior Bojda, David Bartkus, Mary Ann Cunningham, Jeannie Burns, Linda Patrick, Michael Patrick, Anita Boyd, Julie Haley, Larry Brunke, Sr., Ron Henefer, Hadley Epps, Tina Audino, Daniel Cuttita, Patricia Dick, Lenise Shope, Marge Tagler, Mary Garl, Sue & Gene Plante, Donald & Trish Villeneuve

Stream our St. Faustina Masses Live by going to our secure parish web page at: <https://stfaustina.org/livestream-of-mass/>



*If you are a visitor to St. Faustina Catholic Church, we want you to know how welcome you are --- whether you have come from across the world, from another part of the country, or from another parish here in the state or city...WELCOME!*

**OUR MISSION** — St. Faustina is a parish family inspired by the Holy Spirit and called to reflect God's Divine Mercy through a responsible stewardship of time, talent and treasure in the context of ministry.

**NUESTRA MISION** — Santa Faustina es una familia parroquial inspirada por el Espíritu Santo y llamada a reflejar la Divina Misericordia de Dios a través de una administración responsable del tiempo, el talento y el tesoro en el contexto de ministerio.



# THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Daily Mass Monday thru Saturday at 8:00 am followed by the Holy Rosary

Saturday, February 24	Grief Support, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm in classroom
Sunday, February 25	No Events Scheduled
Monday, February 26	No Events Scheduled
Tuesday, February 27	Bible Study, 8:30 am to 10:00 am in classroom Adult Choir Practice 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm in church Cantor Practice, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in church
Wednesday, February 28	Holy Hour, 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm in church Young Adults Ministry, 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm in classroom
Thursday, February 29	Divine Will Study, 9:00 am to 10:15 am in classroom Taller De Oracion Y Vida, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm in classroom
Friday, March 1	First Friday Adoration, 8:30 am to 8:00 pm in church Stations of the Cross, in Spanish, 2:00 pm, in English, 6:00 pm, in Spanish 7:00 pm in church Elsanto Rosario, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm in classroom Tallar Oracion following the Rosario
Saturday, March 2	First Saturday Rosary, 8:30 am in church Grief Support, 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm in classroom
Sunday, March 3	No Events Scheduled

The following Feast Days will be celebrated at this week's Masses: **Wednesday, February 27**, St. Gregory of Narek, Abbot and Doctor of the Church, **Thursday, March 7**, Saints Perpetua and Felicity, Martyrs, **Friday, March 8**, St. John of God, **Saturday, February 9**, St. Francis of Rome



**FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION** — During this year of Eucharistic Revival, St. Faustina will be honoring our Lord, Jesus Christ, every First Friday through 12 Hours of Eucharistic adoration starting after the 8:00 am Mass. In order to have a constant vigil of



prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, we must make sure that each hour during the day is covered. Therefore, it is necessary for each person to commit to one specific hour each month. In this way, the hours can be organized so that someone is with Jesus all the time. If you would like to share some time with the greatest gift of all, our Lord Jesus Christ. Please sign up in the adoration folder, located on the table in the Narthax. Within the quiet of our hearts, we find God. Within the whisper of our souls, He speaks. And it all begins by being present with God during Eucharistic Adoration.



In keeping with the Spirit of Lent, our monthly Hospitality and Bake Sale weekends will not take place during the month of March. We invite you to celebrate the season by offering donations to our Food For All and South Lake Family and Pregnancy Center wagons located at the entrance of the church.

We "thank" everyone who has donated to these two important outreach programs that support our local community.

The St. Faustina Memorial Mass Association is an opportunity to honor loved ones. Every Saturday morning at the 8:00 am Mass, intentions will be for those listed in the Memorial Mass Association. The suggested donation to have your loved one remembered at Mass every Saturday morning, until the end of the year, is \$25.00. To see the current members, please go to: <https://stfaustina.org/ministries/memorial-mass-association-members/>



For more information, please contact the office during regular business hours, call us at 352-515-9297, or email us at: [office@stfaustina.org](mailto:office@stfaustina.org).



Twelve Catechumen went to the Basilica of Mary on February 18 to participate in the Rite of Election, which enters their names and welcomes them as new members of the Church. They will be baptized, confirmed and receive their First Communion at the Easter Vigil Mass on March 30.

The students are Sofia Bernal, Christopher Brown, Sebastian Emeric, Santiago Emeric Kamila Gonzalez, Shelby Lewandowski, Ayden Lima, Carlos Osario, Thiago Osaria, Vanessa Osario, Victoria Rodriguez and Marcos Vierra.

Catechist Israel Santiago accompanied them and represented our Parish. Israel also brought the Book of Elect with the names of the Catechumen for this year and presented it to Bishop Noonan.

They will participate in the Scrutinies, which will be held on March 3, 10, and 17, at the 9:30 AM Masses. Then they will attend the Holy Thursday Mass and will be involved in different functions.

# PARISH MINISTRIES & UPCOMING EVENTS



Every week during Lent, Father Carlos challenges us to a “Weekly Lenten Challenge, 2024.” A new challenge will be announced at the beginning of the Mass. The challenges will also appear right here in our bulletin as well as on our parish website (<https://stfaustina.org/> ... on the home page on the left side under the “Announcements” section, and on our parish Facebook page.

Cada semana durante la Cuaresma, el Padre Carlos nos desafía a un "Desafío Semanal de Cuaresma, 2024." Un nuevo reto será anunciado al comienzo de la misa. Los desafíos también aparecerán aquí mismo en nuestro boletín, así como en el sitio web de nuestra parroquia (<https://stfaustina.org/> ... en la página de inicio en el lado izquierdo debajo de la sección "Anuncios", y en la página) de Facebook de nuestra parroquia.

## Weekly Challenge for this Lenten // Reto Semanal para esta Cuaresma Pillars // Pilares: Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving // Oración, Ayuno & Limosna

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Lent: Lenten Pillar: Fasting**  
Fast from all electronic screens

This week’s challenge is to fast from all electronic screens, with the exception of those needed for work or essential daily living (like making a phone call or watching the news). In the Gospel this Sunday, Jesus takes his disciples away to the mountaintop, free of the distractions of the world. Here, He is transfigured and foretells His Resurrection. May we be “resurrected” this week from the things of the world into the things above!

*“adapted from <https://www.stjohnsindy.org/lenten-challenges.html>”*

**2<sup>o</sup> Domingo de Cuaresma: Pilar de Cuaresma: Ayuno**  
Ayuno de todas las pantallas electrónicas

El reto de esta semana es ayunar de todas las pantallas electrónicas, con la excepción de las necesarias para el trabajo o la vida diaria esencial (como una llamada telefónica o las noticias). En el Evangelio de este domingo, Jesús lleva a sus discípulos a la cima de la montaña, libres de las distracciones del mundo. Aquí, Él se transfigura y predice Su Resurrección. ¡Que seamos "resucitados" esta semana de las cosas del mundo a las cosas de arriba!

*"Adaptado de <https://www.stjohnsindy.org/lenten-challenges.html>"*

Click on the following link for another great resource for us this Lent: <https://national-eucharistic-revival.s3.amazonaws.com/2024+Eucharistic+Prayer+Companion+for+Lent+and+Triduum+%5BENGLISH%5D.pdf>

Haga clic en el enlace a continuación para obtener otro gran recurso para nosotros esta Cuaresma:

<https://national-eucharistic-revival.s3.amazonaws.com/2024+Eucharistic+Prayer+Companion+for+Lent+and+Triduum+%5BSPANISH%5D.pdf>

**This year as we celebrate our Lenten journey together**, our Parish is offering a unique way to provide a tangible reminder of Jesus's crucifixion for our sins. After Masses during the first three weekends of Lent, a volunteer will be offering you a "Remembrance Nail" to carry with you during the season of Lent. Then at our Good Friday service, your nail will be hammered to a Cross outside the Church. This is a symbolism of our sins being forgiven on the Cross. The recommended donation for the nail is \$1.00. All proceeds benefit the Debt Reduction fund.



## Join Father Carlos and Father Miguel for a once in a lifetime spiritual experience to Italy from August 19 — 30, 2024.

Your pilgrimage will take you to the beautiful cities of Venice, Florence, Cassia, Assisi, Santa Rita, and Rome and through the towns and villages of Mestre, Lanciano, San Giovanni, Monte Santangelo, Mount Casino and Montecassino.



For more information, including the trip brochures in both English and Spanish, please go to:

<https://stfaustina.org/ministries/trip-to-italy-with-father-carlos/>

Únase al Padre Carlos y al Padre Miguel para una experiencia espiritual única en la vida en Italia del 19 al 30 de agosto de 2024.

Su peregrinación lo llevará a las hermosas ciudades de Venecia, Florencia, Cassia, Asís, Santa Rita y Roma y a través de las ciudades y pueblos de Mestre, Lanciano, San Giovanni, Monte Santangelo, Monte Casino y Montecassino.

Para obtener más información, incluidos los folletos del viaje en inglés y español, visite:

<https://stfaustina.org/ministries/trip-to-italy-with-father-carlos/>

# OUR CATHOLIC APPEAL / NUESTRO LLAMAMIENTO CATÓLICO

**Thank you for your OCA Contributions on behalf of St. Faustina!  
Your Generous Contributions Support Missions Locally and Around the World!**

Each year parishes of the Diocese of Orlando are assessed with a contribution commitment toward the Diocese of Orlando's **Our Capital Appeal (OCA)**. Among many things, the Diocese OCA supports:

Diocesan ministries and families in the Mission of San Juan de la Maguana	Adults with disabilities at Bishop Grady Villas Veterans and homeless at Pathways to Care
Every ministry and school in the Diocese of Orlando	People and families locally and globally in need of food, shelter, and education
State and National outreaches	Missions work locally and around the world
Leadership & Parish Life	Human Dignity and Solidarity
Laity, Family, & Life	Ecclesiastical Property

The assessment for St. Faustina Catholic Church in 2024 is \$106,240. We believe that this assessment is reasonable and fair for our church and is attainable. Certainly, our Lord provides!

Throughout the year Father Carlos and I (Joe) receive an OCA statement from our Diocese listing St. Faustina contributors and their contribution amounts. It is always so humbling to see the generous donations from our parish to our offertory, Mortgage Debt-Reduction Fund, and of course the annual OCA!

If you have not yet contributed to the Diocese of Orlando's OCA on behalf of St. Faustina, would you prayerfully consider doing so? Envelopes (returned directly to the Diocese) were mailed to parishioners' homes beginning last month, but the address and more envelopes are available in our church office if needed. If contributing online or using your own envelope, please make sure that St. Faustina is listed so that we receive the proper credit. You can also donate, as well as learn much more about the OCA, by going to the following link on the Diocese of Orlando website: [Our Catholic Appeal - Catholic Foundation Central \(cfocf.org\)](http://Our Catholic Appeal - Catholic Foundation Central (cfocf.org))

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact our office at [office@stfaustina.org](mailto:office@stfaustina.org) or (352) 515-9297. Prayers for rich blessings upon you,

*-Father Carlos and Joe*

**¡Gracias por sus contribuciones a OCA en nombre de Santa Faustina!  
¡Sus generosas contribuciones apoyan misiones a nivel local y en todo el mundo!**

Cada año, las parroquias de la Diócesis de Orlando son evaluadas con un compromiso de contribución a la Campaña Nuestra Capital (OCA) de la Diócesis de Orlando. Entre muchas cosas, la OCA de la Diócesis apoya:

Ministerios diocesanos y familias en la Misión de San Juan de la Maguana	Adultos con discapacidades en Bishop Grady Villas Veteranos y personas sin hogar en Pathways to Care
Todos los ministerios y escuelas de la Diócesis de Orlando	Personas y familias a nivel local y mundial que necesitan alimentos, refugio y educación
Alcances estatales y nacionales	Las misiones trabajan a nivel local y en todo el mundo
Liderazgo y Vida Parroquial	Dignidad humana y solidaridad
Laicos, familia y vida	Bienes eclesiásticos

La tasación para la Iglesia Católica de Santa Faustina en 2024 es de \$106,240. Creemos que esta evaluación es razonable y justa para nuestra iglesia y es alcanzable. ¡Ciertamente, nuestro Señor provee!

A lo largo del año, el Padre Carlos y yo (Joe) recibimos una declaración de OCA de nuestra Diócesis que enumera a los contribuyentes de Santa Faustina y los montos de sus contribuciones. Siempre es una lección de humildad ver las generosas donaciones de nuestra parroquia a nuestro ofertorio, al Fondo de Reducción de la Deuda Hipotecaria y, por supuesto, a la OCA anual.

Si aún no ha contribuido a la OCA de la Diócesis de Orlando en nombre de Santa Faustina, ¿consideraría hacerlo en oración? Los sobres (devueltos directamente a la Diócesis) se enviaron por correo a los hogares de los feligreses a partir del mes pasado, pero la dirección y más sobres están disponibles en nuestra oficina de la iglesia si es necesario. Si contribuye en línea o usando su propio sobre, asegúrese de que Santa Faustina esté en la lista para que recibamos el crédito adecuado. También puede donar, así como aprender mucho más sobre la OCA, visitando el siguiente enlace en el sitio web de la Diócesis de Orlando: [Nuestra Campaña Católica - Catholic Foundation Central \(cfocf.org\)](http://Nuestra Campaña Católica - Catholic Foundation Central (cfocf.org))

Para obtener más información, no dude en comunicarse con nuestra oficina al [Office@StFaustina.org](mailto:Office@StFaustina.org) o al (352) 515-9297. Oraciones por ricas bendiciones sobre ti,

*-Padre Carlos y Joe*

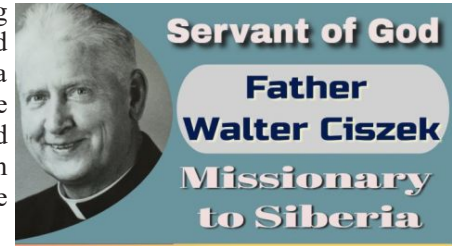


# **FATHER WALTER JOSEPH CISZEK, SERVANT OF GOD**

**By Marylu Mariniello**

Walter Joseph Ciszek, S.J. was a Polish-American Jesuit priest of the Russian Greek Catholic Church who performed clandestine missionary work in the Soviet Union between 1939 and 1963.

He was born on November 4, 1904 to Polish immigrants Mary Mika and Martin Ciszek in the mining town of Shenandoah, PA. His father came to the US in the 1890s from Galicia in Austria-Hungary. As a young man, Walter was a discipline problem, becoming a street gang member who challenged his family, teachers and the police. Then he shocked everyone by deciding to become a priest. In 1928, he entered the Jesuit seminary in Poughkeepsie NY. The next year, he volunteered to serve as a missionary to Russia, where the Bolshevik Revolution had taken place twelve years before. Christians were being openly persecuted there, with few having access to a priest. Pope Pius XI made an appeal to priests from around the world to go to Russia as missionaries and Father Walter answered this call.



In 1934, Father was sent to Rome to study theology, Russian, the history of Russia and liturgy at the Pontifical Russian College, also known as the 'Russicum', a Jesuit-run seminary. This school was established to train priests for missionary work. His fellow seminarians included Alexander Kurtna, a convert from the Estonian Orthodoxy. Father referred to Alexander by the codename "Misha" in his memoirs. Following his expulsion from the Russicum in 1940, Kurtna worked as a translator for the Vatican's Congregation for the Eastern Churches between 1940 and 1944, with only one interruption. During those years, Kurtna also covertly spied for the Soviet NKVD, the secret police, also known as "The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs." This was devastating for Father and many other priests and faithful. Kurtna was always loyal to the USSR, but he started spying for Nazi Germany in 1943 because he was threatened with being sent to a concentration camp. Kurtna had his revenge by stealing codebooks and passing them to the Soviets. Ironically, Kurtna and Father Walter met one another again in 1948 as fellow political prisoners in Norillag.

In 1937, Father Walter was ordained a priest in Rome in the Byzantine Rite taking the name of Vladimir. The next year he was sent to the Jesuit mission in Albertyn in eastern Poland. World War II began in 1939, which allowed the Soviets to occupy that area and forced Father to close his mission. He then went to Lviv and realized that it would be simple for him to enter the Soviet Union with the other exiles heading there. He secured permission and was able to cross the border in 1940 under the assumed identity of *Wladymyr Lypynski*. He and two of his fellow Jesuits traveled 1,500 miles by train to Chasovoy in the Ural Mountains.

There he worked as an unskilled logger while discreetly performing his ministry for the next year. In 1941 Father was arrested for spying for Nazi Germany and the Vatican. He was astonished to learn that the NKVD already knew his real name, that he was an American citizen and a Catholic priest. Then he was sent to the Lubyanka prison in Moscow, the national headquarters of the NKVD. He spent five years there, with most of them in solitary confinement. Father was routinely tortured and signed a "confession" in 1942 and was sentenced to fifteen years of hard labor in the Gulag. He remained in Lubyanka for four more years. In 1946, he was sent Norilsk, near the Arctic Circle. There he was forced to load coal onto freighter vessels. Later he was transferred to working in coal mines located in the Permafrost. A year later, he was sent to work on the construction of nickel, copper, cobalt, platinum and palladium ore refineries. He worked in mines from 1953 to 1955.

Throughout his imprisonment, Father continued to pray, offered Roman Masses and the Divine Liturgy, heard confessions, conducted retreats and performed secret and illegal parish ministry. He was presumed dead by both his family and the Jesuits. On April 22, 1955, his hard labor sentence ended. He was released with the restriction that he had to live in the city of Norilsk. Then he was finally able to write to his sisters in the US. Father set up a Catholic parish in Norilsk, but was then ordered by the KGB to move to Krasnoyarsk in 1958, where he secretly established several nearby mission parishes. When the KGB learned of this, Father was forcibly transferred to Abakan, ninety nine miles to the south, where he worked as an auto mechanic for four more years. In 1963, he finally received a letter from his sisters in the US. A few months later, the Soviet Union grudgingly decided to return Father and an American student named Marvin W. Makinen to the US in exchange for two Soviet agents. Father didn't know that Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy demanded his repatriation since the arrival of his first letter to his sisters in 1955. He was flown to Moscow and brought to the US State Department. There Father was told that he was still an American citizen and was able to go home. After twenty three years of living under Communist rule, Father came home on October 12, 1963, along with Marvin Makinen. The Soviets received the two GRU agents.

Father began working and lecturing at the John XXIII Center at Fordham University in 1965 and wrote two books, including the memoir *With God in Russia* and served as a spiritual director, but his health went on the decline. Father Ciszek died on the feast day of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 1984 and was buried at the Jesuit Cemetery in Wernersville PA. In 1985, a Carmelite nun, the Mother Superior of a Ruthenian Rite Carmelite Nunnery which Father Ciszek helped found, began to petition for his formal canonization, which is currently being handled by the Diocese in Allentown, PA. Father Walter Ciszek's current title is *Servant of God*.

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