



Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Pastor's Column

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Perseverance

The Scripture Readings for this weekend speak to us about promise and hope when the end is not in sight. This theme reminds me of Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Allow me to share a bit of his life story.

If you are interested in the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit priest and a paleontologist who died in the 1950s, I would encourage you to read his book, *Letters from a Traveller*. It is a compilation of his correspondence to a variety of people. The book is out of print, but copies can be found in used bookstores.

Fr. Pierre was raised in France and spent much of his life in China. He was a scientist and a mystic who attempted to create a theology that united science and Christianity within the framework of the Catholic Faith.

During his lifetime he wrote a number of books. All his writing was prohibited from being published by the Catholic Church because his theology was considered “unorthodox.” Pierre Teilhard de Chardin struggled with this prohibition all his life, but he remained a faithful priest and member of the Church and abided by this order.

Only after his death, were his books published! He knew that someday there would be a time and a place for his ideas. In the last 40 years his writings continue to gain much popularity and provide much in helping people to once again look at God and the universe with a sense of awe and mystery rather than a sense of dread and fear.

His works include: *The Phenomenon of Man*, *The Future of Man*, *The Divine Milieu*, and *Hymn of the Universe*.

Knowing this about his life, these words of his on perseverance written to a friend in France, take on even more meaning: *Never give up: try to attack it from another angle, the correct angle—where success is in proportion not to the extension of the individual but to the constancy in the effort to make the world around God less harsh and more human. If the pressure of events can induce you to make the mental sacrifice of every personal ambition in favor of a higher duty, I am convinced that you can reach a degree of emancipation and clearness of vision in relation to the external world, far greater than you imagine. One must contrive to preserve a real appetite for life and action whilst at the same time renouncing any desire for personal happiness. Therein lies the secret—and not illusion—of living in the Divine Milieu.*

His message, which is so counter cultural in today's world, is life giving. It is a message of promoting the Common Good over personal ambition and fulfillment. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin knows of what he speaks!