

Reiser's Ramblings by Fr. Bernard Reiser

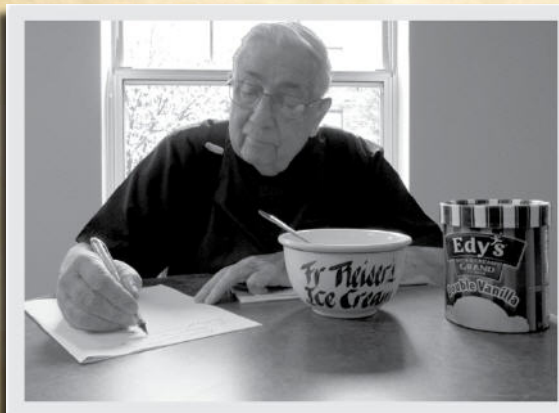
"Reiser's Ramblings" is a collection of the best columns written over the past three decades by Fr. Bernard Reiser, former pastor of Epiphany Parish in Coon Rapids, Minn. In the book, find Fr. Reiser's take on everyday topics such as family, kindness, gratitude, prayer, helping others, and staying focused on what's important in life. Fr. Reiser's essays are rich in symbolism, wise in understanding of human nature, and fruitful in explicating the word of God.

Fr. Reiser brings together a wonderful collection of "ramblings" that all of us can take home and take to heart. Father is a master in the art of spiritual storytelling; he engages, entertains, and challenges with undeniable hope. He has a gift and he shares it generously in this lovely book. Included are stories with the deep conviction that our human journey and our spiritual journey are intrinsically linked. He shares observations that are sometimes so wondrously obvious and visible, and he does it in a way that feels like you're hearing from a close friend.

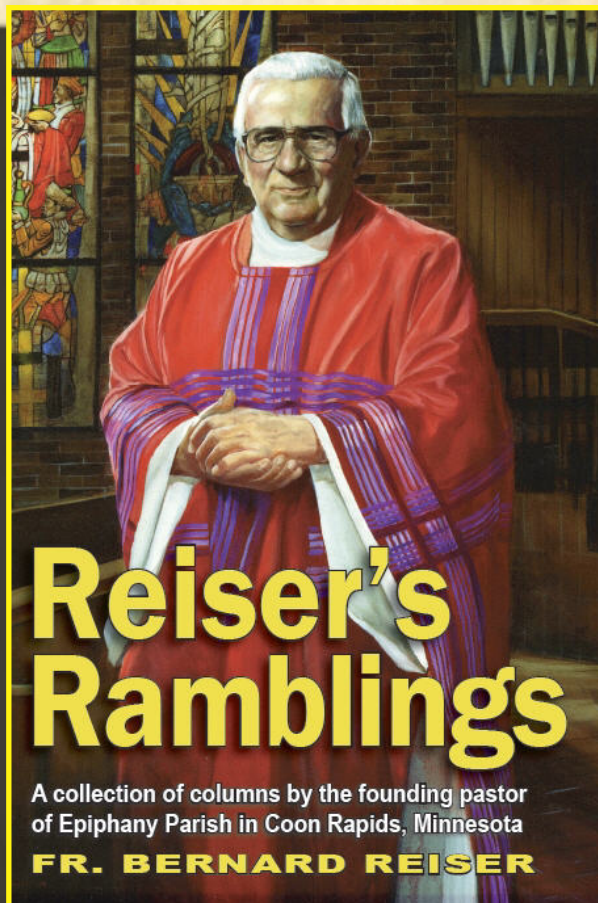
It becomes clear as you page through Reiser's Ramblings that Fr. Reiser clearly loves his vocation as a priest and delights in sharing his years of study and the fruits of his prayer with the reader. Fr. Reiser opens up the Scripture in familiar language, stories, and metaphors that are accessible to the ordinary person in the pew. How uplifting and inspiring to hear the Gospel woven with from Father's personal life experiences! Father's Gospel insights are the very best. Further, his approach is brilliant; he teaches through storytelling, which allows the reader to make sense of a complicated world.

It doesn't matter if you are familiar with Fr. Reiser and his work — or have only recently been introduced to Fr. Reiser through "Reiser's Ramblings" — you won't be disappointed with this lovely and wise book. "Reiser's Ramblings" places Scripture in a context that moves your heart and stirs your soul.

Quote: "It typically was late each Sunday before I'd have an opportunity to set down on paper my thoughts for the columns that would become the weekly Reiser's Ramblings. Often, it was midnight and the only sound in the rectory was the hum coming from the refrigerator. I would sit at the kitchen table - always with a bowl of ice cream because that is my favorite treat - and look at the blank page. Before I'd start I'd offer this quick prayer: "God, what will we write about this week?"



All profits from the sale of Reiser's Ramblings go to Haitian relief efforts sponsored by Reiser Relief Inc. Donations and book sales can be processed online at ReiserRelief.org



Haiti Relief

Years before an earthquake devastated Haiti in January of 2010, Reiser Relief was bringing hope and light to the people of Haiti. The earthquake made an unbelievable situation worse, however; the images coming out of Haiti in the days after the earthquake became a reminder to all of us that the people of Haiti must not be forgotten.

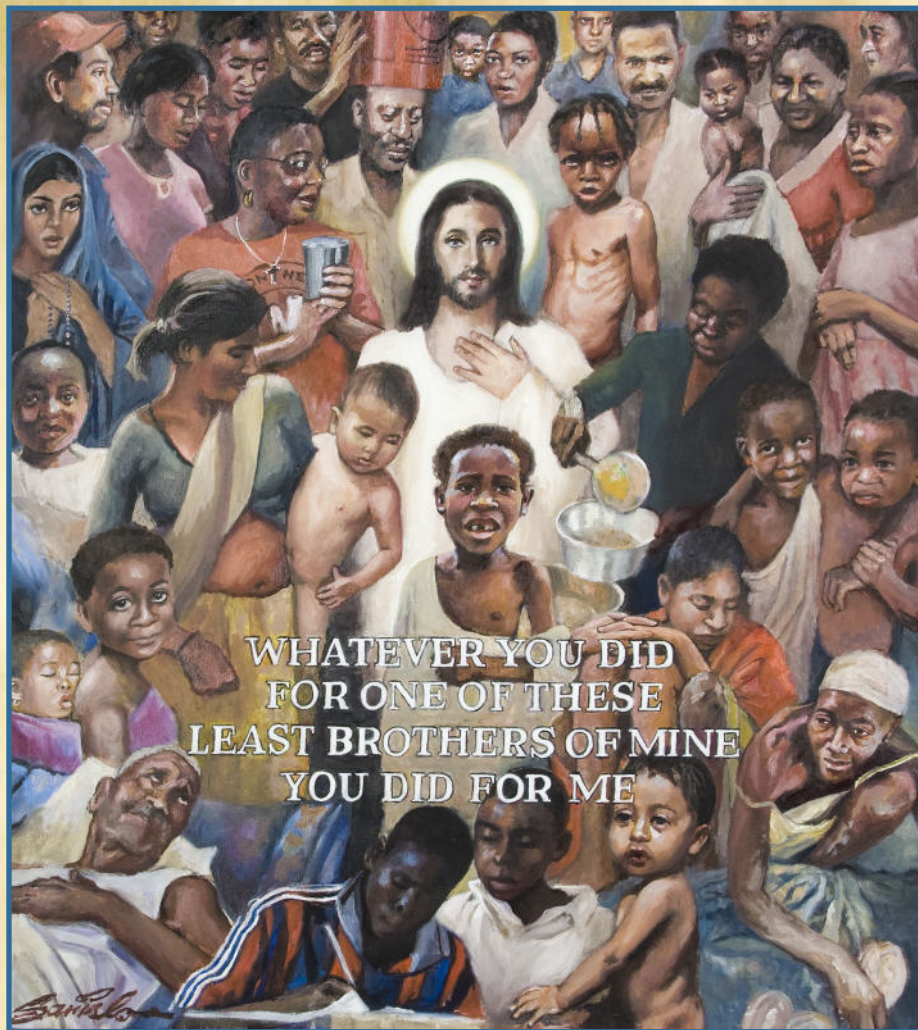
Reiser Relief provides essential services to aid Haitians in their day-to-day efforts for survival. These services include providing fresh water, stocking food centers, and funding education and eldercare facilities. Many of our outreach projects are in or near Cité Soleil, a slum near the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince. Reiser Relief funds a water truck that operates six days a week, delivering fresh water, free of charge, to poor neighborhoods, of Cite Soleil. The Reiser Relief

truck delivers a life- saving resource to numerous impoverished Haitians, who haul five-gallon buckets full of fresh water back to cardboard shanties or tin shacks that serve as family homes.

Reiser Relief also supports the transportation of food, which is provided through Feed My Starving Children. Shipping containers carry highly nutritious food packets, with each packet providing the nutrition for one person to survive for one day. We are reminded that giving drink to the thirsty and food to the hungry is one of the seven Corporal Works of Mercy. Christ Jesus said: "Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers or sisters of mine, you did for Me." (Matthew 25:40)

With the help of supporters like you, Reiser Relief can continue to save the lives of the extremely impoverished people of Haiti. We live among abundance. The Haitians live in extreme poverty, waiting for your generous response to this plea for help. If you have made a difference in the lives of the Haitian people in the past — we thank you and pray for God's abundant blessings upon you. If you are considering a first-time donation to Reiser Relief, please be assured your financial support will make a lasting impact on some of the world's neediest citizens. Together, we can continue to make a difference in touching the lives of thousands of people! Help us continue to provide assistance to Haiti focused on providing the basic necessities of life: food, water, education, and building facilities. Our work is inspired by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Please join us in our efforts and may God bless you most abundantly for your support!

Sincerely in Christ,
Father Bernard Reiser
President - Reiser Relief



Haiti Painting by Artist Mark Sanislo

God's Grace At Work Within Us

My family's farm was on the edge of a small lake. The water was surrounded by woods except for our shoreline. In a north bay, closest to the farm, was an island with a cluster of trees whose roots were no doubt nourished by the water that surrounded them. This island was a favorite place of mine when I was a boy; I would go and sit in the shadow of the trees looking at water all around.

One spring the rains came in abundance and continued into the summer. Soon, the ground around the trees was covered with water until at last the trees stood immersed in the lake. Slowly but surely, the trees died, overpowered by the same water that once nourished their roots. The island eventually disappeared and the trees, lifeless, fell and soon floated away. When I think of the lake, the lovely island and the beautiful trees, I am reminded of the spiritual life of so many.

People are like the trees growing beautifully on the island and the water surrounding the island are the things of the world, namely the materialistic and secular influences of our modern society. As the number of material things and worldly interests increase, like the water, they slowly sap the individual of their spiritual life and growth.

Matters of God become less and less important as our interest in secular matters increase. When we focus on the pocketbook and material resources, which we rely upon to pay for worldly desires and various entertainments, our dependence on God is lessened.

Soon, prayer loses its value; reliance on a fat checkbook takes the place of a Providential God. The life of the spirit becomes less and less important and slowly it is drained from the person's soul. What can be seen, touched, felt and enjoyed overpowers the unseen and the realities of a future life. The glory and joy of the Kingdom, which God has promised to the faithful, are no longer taken seriously. How quickly the things of the world can wash away the storehouse of the spiritual that has been built over previous years.

We all live on the island of the spirit and we are surrounded by the worldly attractions that oftentimes seem so appealing, so delightful and so much to be sought after. But, like the water surrounding the island, they slowly gain greater hold, greater power, over the spiritual trees in our life.

I urge everyone to take inventory on how worldly things are encroaching on their spiritual life. Are we losing our grip on the great principles and teachings of Christ that we gained in our younger years? Are matters of God slowly getting watered down, rendered less and less important?

It is good to regularly take inventory of where we are in our relationship to God and the spiritual state of our soul. Is our island of the spirit growing stronger and expanding, or is the "water" of the world encroaching upon our spiritual fortifications? Youth, middle-aged or senior, it is never too early to take inventory of your spiritual life and to evaluate where you are in your journey to Heaven.

Don't wait until your spiritual island has been washed away by the waters of a worldly existence. Jesus once said: What profit does a man show who gains the whole world and destroys himself in the process. (Mark 8:36) These Ramblings offer considerations as you fortify yourself against the worldly influences that could otherwise engulf you.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Fr. Bernard Reiser is a long-time resident of Coon Rapids, Minn. He was ordained a Catholic priest in 1949 after attending the St. Paul Seminary. Fr. Reiser was first assigned to Saint Mary of the Lake, White Bear Lake, as Associate Pastor. He served that community for fifteen years. In 1964, Fr. Reiser was selected to start a parish in Coon Rapids. Fr. Reiser bought seventy acres of farmland on which to build this parish and the Church of the Epiphany was formed. Epiphany parish grew from 150 families in 1964 to 5,000 families today. Along the way, Fr. Reiser added to the Epiphany campus an elementary school, a Perpetual Adoration chapel, a senior housing complex, an assisted living facility, a cemetery, and several outdoor shrines. He also led the parish to

construct a spacious sanctuary. Epiphany is now one of the largest Catholic communities in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis and in Minnesota.

In 1996, Fr. Reiser traveled to Haiti. He reflects on the trip: "I had seen slums in China, Egypt and Mexico City, but none of them compare to the tragic realities of the slum outside Port-au-Prince." In time, Fr. Reiser established Reiser Relief Inc., a non-profit organization that funds relief and development projects in Haiti. Reiser Relief Inc. is committed to providing essential services to aid in the day-to-day survival of the impoverished people of Haiti, which is the poorest country in the western hemisphere. Relief services include: delivering fresh water, funding food centers, funding education, and providing care for the elderly. Many outreach projects are set up in or near Cité Soleil, a suburb of the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince.

Fr. Reiser is the personification of the good shepherd; his contributions provide inspiration to everyone who crosses his path. Meet Fr. Reiser and discover a kind and compassionate man focused on the principle of serving others. His spirited leadership and trust in God is making a difference in peoples' lives and it inspires others to join him in his work.

In January 2011, Fr. Reiser was selected by the local NBC-affiliate station, KARE- 11, as one of its "Eleven Who Care" honorees. KARE- 11 launched its "Eleven Who Care" program in 1984 to recognize volunteers who serve the Twin Cities area with an outstanding spirit of community. Each year, hundreds of names are submitted for consideration and the "Eleven Who Care" Board of Governors selects eleven people who best exemplify the belief that one person can make a significant difference in the lives of others.



Fr. Reiser remains actively involved in helping the world's poorest citizens as chairman of Reiser Relief and has no intention of retiring. "As long as I can work, I will," he promises.

Reiser Relief Inc.

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