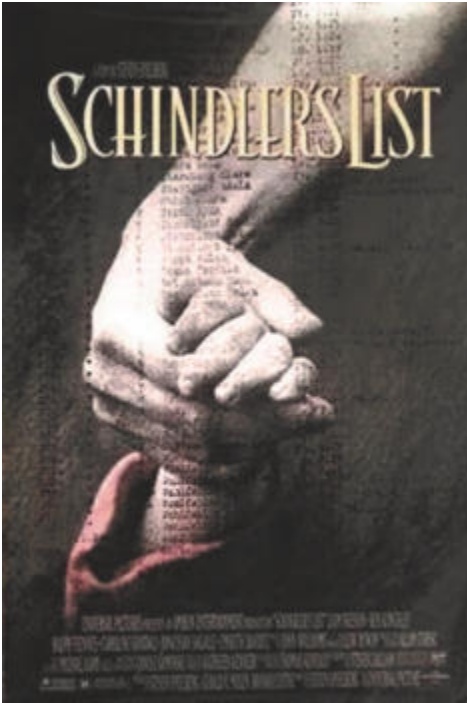


FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



A Church that had room only for saints and those leading impeccable moral lives would make about as much sense as a hospital that had room only for the healthy!

We are very complex people. All of us. There is in you and me, a great mixture of good and bad, of love and hate, of gentleness and violence.

Oskar Schindler, the German industrialist, saved over a thousand Polish Jews from the Nazi concentration camps in the Second World War. One of these Polish Jews said of him: 'He was our father, he was our mother, he was our only hope, and he never let us down'.

But Oskar Schindler was no saint. He was riddled with contradictions. He was unfaithful to his wife. He womanized. He drank. He was a liar. He was a Catholic, but only in name. Once a paid-up member of the Nazi Party, he was determined to end the war with 'two trunks full of money'. But there was another and better side to him. The side that protected his workers from the death camps at considerable risk.

Human nature is fallen. Within each one of us there is a battle between good and bad, light and darkness, strength and weakness, loyalty and betrayal.

We must acknowledge the dark side of ourselves, without conceding victory to it. Acknowledge that we are flawed, some of us badly.

We need to be hospitable to ourselves, showing ourselves the right kind of compassion and mercy.

And we need to show the same hospitality, the same leniency to others – especially to the people we share our lives with, at home and at work.

To concentrate on other people's failings and sins, can blind us to their virtues and their good points.

It is easy to voice criticisms and gripes, while omitting to offer a word of encouragement and appreciation.

We can all make mistakes, sometimes disastrous ones. We can all sin, sometimes seriously, but we can all be redeemed.

We will not be judged by a single act or by one stage in life. We will be judged by our whole life.

That is why judgment cannot come until the end, as the Gospel tells us. Some people, as soon as they discover your weakness, write you off.

But God, thankfully, is not some people.

Fr. Sean