Father Lalo Barragan: Offering Direction on the Road to Priesthood

By Christine Corbett Conklin

Becoming a priest is no easy task. Think years and years of philosophy and theology, plus endless terminology and rites to learn. Now, add the fact that many of our priests come from other countries with a different language and customs. At times, it can all seem overwhelming!

In an effort to ease the adjustments and offer counsel on the road to priesthood, Father Lalo Barragan of the Diocese of Yakima is on assignment at Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon. He has been asked to serve a five-year stint, ending in 2022, with the mission of working with seminarians, helping them as they adjust to not only a new way of life, but, in many cases, also to a new country.

"I'm the ‘human formation director’ (for numerous students)," explained Father Barragan, a former parochial vicar at St. Joseph Church in Yakima who also served Holy Rosary Church in Moxee.

About half of the 125-member student body at Mount Angel is Hispanic, Father Barragan noted.

"Bishop Tyson said, in fact, that I'm the very first Hispanic diocesan priest ever to be a formator in the seminary," he observed. "The main idea is to be a mentor, to tell them it's possible for them to be ordained, to understand where they're coming from."

Cultural differences – to say nothing of language – can be a real challenge for those studying for the priesthood, Father Barragan pointed out. Something as simple as shaking hands when greeting someone is not common to the Hispanic culture, for example, he said. Instead, Hispanics tend to touch the shoulder of someone they're meeting, or to hug the person. Other differences range from such basics as kitchen hours at the seminary (more open, compared to seminaries elsewhere) to sports activities (optional here, while required elsewhere).

Father Barragan meets one-on-one with two or three seminarians each day and also attends “formation” meetings of 11 faculty members in which the progress and particular needs of each seminarian are discussed.

After coming from Mexico and spending 28 years in the United States, Father Barragan says that he "embraces" American culture, American traditions. His goal is to achieve a balance in which the seminarians lean to appreciate this country while having their own customs understood and respected.

Father Barragan admits that he does miss the frequent opportunities to preach at Mass which he had in this country while having their own customs understood and respected.

Father Barragan points to their hope to be able to begin teaching at Mount Angel next year, and he's looking forward to that.

"The main challenge is to understand the seminarians," he pointed out. And, with characteristic good humor and sincerity, he's giving that his all!

Please keep Father Barragan and all of the seminarians and faculty at Mount Angel in your prayers.
Peace be with you! What's the point of Easter? Simply put: Jesus rises from the dead. Jesus puts an end to death. He rises from death – a violent and tortuous death. In doing so, he shows us a pathway to life, too.

Why is this so important? It's easy to forget the great innovation in human thought that came with this concept of resurrection from the dead. All along the historic Appian Way in Italy, travelers can see tombs with writings that express sentiments similar to this: "O Horatio we miss you!" "O Catherina where are you now?" "O Marcus you are never to be seen again!"

"From the beginning, Christian faith in the resurrection has met with incomprehension and opposition," notes paragraph 996 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Then the Catechism goes on to cite the writings of St. Augustine: "On no point does the Christian faith encounter more opposition than on the resurrection of the body."

Indeed, even among Christian circles, there has been a certain tendency to domesticate the edginess of this central claim. Many simply see resurrection as a myth pointing to the cycle of nature and the renewal of life. Our cute Easter bunnies and the shoots of spring flowers all serve as mythic metaphors of "new life." The idea of a bodily resurrection from the dead simply does not square easily with our scientific world view.

Yet this is precisely the point of the scriptures. In the ancient world there were many theories of what would happen after death. The Old Testament proposes a number of them and in the New Testament we know that the Sadducees and the Pharisees differed on their categories about life after death – those who lived at the time of Jesus – and ours today as well.

What does this mean for us now? Our second reading from St. Paul to the Colossians reminds us that there is more to life than what we can see. Thus, the words "Seek what is above." The famous Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor in his weighty tome, "The Secular Age," describes so many of us as having a "buffered self."

What does he mean? He means that in a touch-and-drag, point-and-click world we tend to equate that which is real with that which we create. We tend to see realness only in what we control and put together. As a result, we tend to become "buffered" against anything that is transcendental and a bit beyond.

Yet within ourselves we also know that the stirrings of desire, our hope for destiny? What endures after death? Who am I to be? What is my soul. Our human experience. Where do I belong?

Our scriptures this Sunday report the unexpected. The bodily resurrection from the dead startled the woman at the empty tomb. It shocked the men who went back to their fishing only to encounter the risen Christ on the shore, cooking fish. This bodily resurrection surprised the travelers who were leaving Jerusalem and going back to Emmaus. Thus, this "bodily" resurrection of Jesus from the dead not only challenges the world view of us so-called "moderns," it was equally challenging for those who lived at the time of Jesus. This is precisely why excitement leaps off the page of the Gospel accounts. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ breaks through all previous concepts and categories about life after death – those who lived at the time of Jesus – and ours today as well.

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Yet within ourselves we also know that the stirrings of desire, our hope for love and its competing sense of loneliness suggest that it’s these hidden and unseen realities that are the most real parts of our human experience. Where do I come from? Who am I to be? What is my destiny? What endures after death? Often, we look to poetry, literature and art to bring meaning to these stirrings of the soul.

Christ’s resurrection serves as the starkest evidence that there is more to life than we can see, that God is not simply one more object within our universe with whom we can choose to contend. No. The resurrection points to the foundation of the world, the source of life and the ground that – in the words of St. Paul – lives and moves and has its being.

As I close with these words of the

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**If you have been abused or victimized by a member of the Catholic clergy, please believe in the possibility for hope and help and healing. We encourage you to come forward and speak out.**

The Yakima Diocese has a sexual abuse hotline for those who wish to report some incident concerning that issue as regards a bishop, priest, deacon or diocesan employee or volunteer. (888) 276-4490
Do Bad Things Happen to Children of Good Parents? Continued from page 4

and to behave in such a way that they are wonderful role models for their children. We expect good parents to ALWAYS protect their child from harm – even when we know from experience that that is neither practical nor possible.

Now, let’s consider another social factor. It is difficult for a faith community to believe that a beloved clergyman or other trusted member of the community could commit something as horrible as child sexual abuse. Often, it is easier for members of the community to blame the victim and the victim’s parents than to believe that a beloved Church leader would commit such an act.

The fact is … bad things sometimes happen to the children of good parents. That means that all children are at risk. As Bishop Raymond Boland says in the video, A Plan To Protect God’s Children: “[Parents] must develop a very healthy suspicion about every program to which they entrust their children…” As adults in the faith community, it is our duty to share this responsibility with parents and to work together – as a community – to help protect all children.

It is important to remember that the perpetrators of abuse are usually master manipulators. They are particularly skilled at becoming heavily involved in the lives of children and families. Most often, child molesters are people parents have learned to trust – friends, neighbors, teachers, and family members. They are people who convince us that they are generous and kind and that they genuinely care about children. Parents, and others, are lulled into believing that the person can be trusted with those dearest to them – their children.

Assigning blame for child abuse at the feet of good parents will divert us from our primary purpose – protecting God’s children. Each time we are distracted from our goal to create safe environments for children, child abusers recognize the opportunity to twist and confuse us with their manipulative mind games. As adult members of the faith community, we must educate ourselves about the warning signs of potential risks to children. It is our job to watch over all children, and to support others around us in creating safe environments for all the children in our communities, parishes, neighborhoods, and homes.

As individuals, we must avoid distractions and stay focused. And, as a community, we must support appropriate behavior and create environments where child abusers have no place to hide.

Note: Ms. Doty is a consultant to Virtus, which provides safe environment resources to many dioceses in the United States.

Register for Catholic Youth Camp

There’s still time to register for a Central Washington Catholic Youth Camp scheduled for August 19-24 at YMCA Camp Dudley, west of Yakima near White Pass.

This quality, week-long summer camp welcomes those between the ages of 10 and 18. It will include daily Mass and the Rosary; Stations of the Cross; Reconciliation; the presence of priests, sisters and seminarians; daily Faith talks, plus songs and games, swimming, canoeing, rock climbing, a zipline, and campfire every night!

To reserve a place or to learn more, visit cwcyc.org, and/or “like” our Facebook page, CWCYCclick. The cost is $300 per camper, although scholarships may be available.

Celebration of Faith Education Funding Available

Looking for college scholarships? Check out our website for available funding. Deadline is April 1st.

Does your parish desire to provide a more dynamic religious education experience for your children? Parish Religious Education Programs (PREP) grants provide support for parish religious education programs and Catechists. Deadline is May 1st.

Want to send your child to a Catholic school? Tuition assistance is available for children to attend one of our eight area schools. Contact your local school to learn more. New students may apply from April 1 through June 1.

For more information, go to www.cwcatholicfoundation.org or call (509) 972-3732

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www.usccb.org/home-missions

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**Support the Home Missions Appeal**

Parishes throughout the United States will take up the Catholic Home Missions Appeal April 28-29 to assist our country’s mission dioceses, including the Diocese of Yakima.

A program of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Home Missions is providing the Diocese of Yakima $155,000 this year, for seminarian education, the Magnificat adult education program, and the annual Church Mission Congress for religious educators.

Nearly half of our country is considered home mission territory. This appeal helps dioceses in the United States which cannot always assure access to basic pastoral services such as Mass, the sacraments, and religious education.

Through your support, the Catholic Home Missions Appeal helps these mission dioceses form vibrant faith communities and strengthens the Church at home. Please be generous.

**Grant Applications Available**

Parishes and non-profit organizations in the Diocese of Yakima are invited to apply for grants of up to $1,000 from the local portion of the Rice Bowl collection.

Each year during Lent, parishes around the country participate in Catholic Relief Services’ Rice Bowl Program. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is the official international Catholic relief and development agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Seventy-five percent of the collection is used to support humanitarian work in more than 100 countries around the world. Twenty-five percent of the proceeds from the Rice Bowl collection is returned to the Diocese to support local efforts to alleviate poverty.

Guidelines and procedures for applying for the local grants are available on the Diocese website, www.yakimadiocese.org, or by calling Leanne LaBissoniere, diocesan Rice Bowl coordinator, at (509) 367-5291.

**Do Bad Things Happen to Children of Good Parents?**

By Sharon Doty, J.D., M.H.R.

Americans have come to expect quick relief from the pain in our lives. We want the fastest acting pain reliever available. We look for the antiseptic spray that immediately stops the pain of scraped knees. We expect quick, easy answers to difficult problems. And, we want to assign blame when things go wrong – especially when what's wrong threatens our families and/or our emotional well-being, such as the abuse of a child.

In our zeal to find an easy answer to why such horrible things could happen, we sometimes point our finger at some of the very people who are suffering the most – the parents of the abused child. Compassion for the victim's family may shift to anger and blame aimed at the victim's parents. Parents who are dealing with the pain and agony of caring for their victimized child often become the victims of public opinion, public judgments, and public censure. But why do we, as a community respond in this way?

We may think that if we can blame the victim's parents, we can relax and not worry about the risk to our child or our family members … because, after all, we are good people (and, if we are parents, then we are good parents). We would never let our guard down. We would never let "someone like that" get close to our child or family member. "It must be the victim's parents' fault," we say to ourselves. "How else could something like that happen?"

We expect parents to automatically know what to do, to always take appropriate actions, to consistently respond in a helpful and effective manner to any situation,