This coming summer, as many as 150 children of farmworkers will have the chance to experience the joy of books, plus other educational activities, thanks to the Literacy Wagon program in Central Washington. Most of the children will be temporarily living with their families in a migrant camp in Monitor, Washington, just outside Wenatchee River Park, while others will be from Catholic Charities housing sites in the Sunnyside/Granger area of the lower Yakima Valley.

Every summer, migrants arrive in Central Washington for the cherry season, which lasts from mid-June to late July. Since 2017, while the adults harvest the area cherry crops, a literacy program has been brought to children between the ages of six months and 16 years on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This year, from June 11 to July 18, Literacy Wagon, Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington’s Play & Learn, PREPARES and school district volunteers will visit the areas to spend time with children, introduce them to books, play educational games, make crafts, and provide nutritious snacks and lunches, plus other needed services.

The literacy program is the brainchild of Bishop Joseph Tyson of the Diocese of Yakima, who has served migrant camps for years with Masses and catechesis in the evenings for adults. Bishop Tyson noticed there were a good number of children at the camp who were idle while their parents were working and decided to explore an avenue to serve the children as well. He found funding for the program, which is now in its third year, through Catholic Extension which serves as a bridge between the Yakima Diocese and a donor parish in Chicago.

Catholic Extension, a papal society which is answering Pope Francis’ call to serve America’s “peripheries,” supports pastoral, youth, young adult, campus and outreach ministries, plus Catholic schools and religious education.

“Catholic Extension knew what the Bishop needed to be able to support migrants spiritually while they are here, but also understood that the children, or even the adults, need more literacy opportunities,” observed Alma Benitez, director of stewardship and development for the Diocese of Yakima.

Catholic Charities’ bilingual Play & Learn activities, ranging from building with blocks to art projects and singing songs, provide additional opportunities for migrant children at these sites. This year, the North Central Educational District #171, based in Wenatchee, will add a science exploration center. Volunteers come from Catholic parishes and schools. And Catholic Charities has PREPARES volunteers who are on site in both Monitor and another nearby camp in Malaga, where they provide diapers and meet other needs for young families. PREPARES is a statewide initiative of the Catholic Bishops of Washington State. They provide pregnancy and parenting support and activities, serving all families from pregnancy to their child’s fifth birthday. Lunches for the children come from school district programs.

“Kids are away from their homes, their books, learning materials, and their environment. Their summer slump can be deeper than the summer slumps of their classmates who don’t travel for migrant work. So, Bishop Tyson designed this program to step into that void,” said Yakima Diocese seminarian, Mike Kelly, for whom this will be the third year of assisting the summer program at Monitor. “I was impressed with how excited the children are to learn; they love answering trivia questions, writing stories, being read to – just like I did when I was a kid. That’s been rewarding.”

“The mothers are trying to do their best to keep the children entertained and to deal with some of the uncertainties, like paying rent on their homes in California but then also having to take care of the expenses associated with the trip here,” added Syndee Saucedo, PREPARES Program Manager. “It has helped to have a feeling of family, so it is less isolating for them. The Literacy Wagon has been an opportunity for kiddos to feel that this is a home away from home on these days, and families to have a little reprieve. It’s been really good.”

One of the migrant mothers, Maria Villa, has looked after her six-year-old son, Angel, and three additional children in the camp at Monitor while her husband works in the cherry orchards. She is grateful for the literacy program. Angel will be starting first grade when they return to California in late summer or early fall.

“I can see that he keeps learning and he is reading,” Villa said. “Whatever school work that he has at the camp he will keep practicing and then when he returns to school in the fall, he’s not going to have such a struggle doing school work. Thank you for these children’s activities. Without them, it would be difficult to handle all four of the children by myself. I am so grateful for these activities available to us because the children are learning and even the little ones are learning from the older children and mimicking what they are doing.”
Funeral Held for Sister M. Michel Keenan

A funeral Mass was held on May 6 in Scranton, Pennsylvania, for Sister M. Michel Keenan of the Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM). Sister Keenan, who served for numerous years at Heritage University in Toppenish, died in Pennsylvania on May 1 at Our Lady of Peace Residence in Scranton.

A native of Idaho, Sister made her final profession of vows in 1951, going on to teach at schools from Pennsylvania to Portland, Oregon. After studies at Notre Dame University, she served in faculty and administrative positions at Marymount College in Scranton and on the Pennsylvania State Board of Education.

Sister Michel was elected superior general of the IHM Congregation in Scranton and served from 1978 to 1986. She was assistant vice president of academic affairs at Heritage University from 1988 to 2000 and special assistant to the president at Heritage University from 2006 to 2010. During her service at Heritage University, she was named Person of the Year. Memorial contributions may be made to support the retired IHM Sisters, c/o the IHM Sister Retirement Fund, IHM Center, 2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509.

Bishop Joseph Tyson

Dear Friends:

Word made flesh. That is one of the key understandings of who Jesus is. In Jesus, we see the face of God. We see His Word incarnate in a human body. “Word” implies literacy. For several summers now, the seminarians of the Diocese of Yakima have been involved in a literacy project. Thanks to Catholic Extension – a philanthropic organization based in Chicago – our seminarians have been joined by key volunteers from our parish communities as well as some partnerships with our Catholic Charities here in the Diocese of Yakima in order to uplift the gift of literacy. That is our feature story in this month’s Central Washington Catholic newsletter.

Also in this issue, we feature a photo from Deacon Edgar Quiroga’s ordination. In a particularly poignant part of the liturgy, I hand the book of the Gospel to the newly ordained deacon and say: “Receive the Gospel of Christ, whose herald you have become. Believe what you read, teach what you believe, and practice what you teach.” A deacon incarnates the Word of God through his teaching and preaching.

Of course, we look to the Blessed Virgin Mary who shows us the way. She literally bears and gives birth to the “Word made flesh.” We have the witness of women religious in the Church who remind us of this mystery of the incarnation through their lives of service such as Sister M. Michel Keenan, IHM, who served at Heritage University, whom we remember in this issue.

Perhaps reading the commentary from Sister Constance of the Little Sisters of the Poor, or the many other items in this issue might spark you to question: “How do I put flesh and bones on God’s Word in my daily life?”

My hope and prayer for you this summer is that during the long warm days you might find yourself lingering over the Word of God so that the presence of the “Crucified One Risen” becomes more evident in your own prayer and your own daily life.

Other publications that you may read on a daily basis often focus on the drama of divisive public policy questions, with the media and our public officials teaming up and taking sides. Yet as Catholics here in Central Washington, we live the dream that our surrounding polarized community can barely imagine. We live the dream as Spanish and English, Americans of European heritage and Americans of Mexican heritage. We live a solution that our nation’s leaders of all political stripes cannot imagine.

We do so because of our communion in Christ where we not only receive the Body and Blood of Christ in all of His divinity and humanity, but as St. Augustine so eloquently noted in his fourth century catechetical homilies, we receive each other. We become one, assimilated into Christ, healed of all divisions. We do so because of His Word. The Word made flesh. May we sink ourselves into this deeply spiritual literacy project of faith.

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

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

Central Washington Catholic
My fondest memories of summer are the times spent with my favorite aunt at her cottage nestled in the Adirondack Mountains. As a middle school teacher, she had a gift for relating to kids in a way very different from parents, like a wise friend or a trusted confidante. My aunt patiently taught us how to knit and sew; she listened to our stories and nurtured our dreams as if each niece or nephew were the only one.

She took us on long walks in the woods, pointing out her favorite wildflowers and teaching us to recognize fresh bear tracks and other potential dangers. She also taught us how to paddle her antique canoe around the nearby lake. As we got older, my aunt would sit on the dock reading a book as we took the canoe out to explore the lily pads along the shoreline or ride the waves created by the speeding motorboats. But she always kept one eye on us in case we got into trouble.

Although she never had children of her own, my aunt took a lively interest in all her nieces and nephews until the very end of her life. She never gave us lectures, expressed disapproval or told us how things should be done, but she always kept an eye on us. She remained creative and curious long after retiring and unassumingly shared her time, her talents and herself.

As I read Pope Francis’ recent post-synodal letter, Christus Vivit, in which he encourages the young and the old to form strong bonds, I realized what a blessing my aunt was to our family, for she personified the ideal of elders as wisdom figures and memory keepers.

“WHAT DO I ASK OF THE ELDERS AMONG WHOM I COUNT MYSELF?” our Holy Father wrote. “I call us to be memory keepers…. I envision elders as a permanent choir of a great spiritual sanctuary, where prayers of supplication and songs of praise support the larger community that works and struggles in the field of life. It is a beautiful thing when “young men and maidens together, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord” (Ps 148:12-13).

When her life was coming to an end my aunt felt she had very little to leave us, but as my siblings and cousins came from all over the country to bid her farewell, it was obvious that because she had given us so much of herself, she would live on and even blossom in us.

“What can we elderly persons give to the young?” Pope Francis asked in Christus Vivit. “We can remind today’s young people, who have their own blend of heroic ambitions and insecurities, that a life without love is an arid life…. We can tell fearful young people that anxiety about the future can be overcome…. We can teach those young people, sometimes so focused on themselves, that there is more joy in giving than in receiving, and that love is not only shown in words, but also in actions.”

This is what my aunt taught us! The following words of our Holy Father brought her memory to life in a special way:

“During the Synod, one of the young auditors from the Samoan Islands spoke of the Church as a canoe, in which the elderly help to keep on course by judging the position of the stars, while the young keep rowing, imagining what waits for them ahead.” He concluded, “Let us all climb aboard the same canoe and together seek a better world, with the constantly renewed momentum of the Holy Spirit.”

So, this summer, be intentional about bringing the generations in your family or neighborhood together. Take time for long walks and slow canoe rides, and for sharing memories and dreams. You won’t be disappointed!
**NEWS**

**Priest Assignments Announced**

Bishop Joseph Tyson has announced two assignments for priests of the Diocese of Yakima, which will be effective as of July 1, 2019.

**Father Kurt Hadley**, who was ordained on May 24 at St. Paul Cathedral, has been appointed Parochial Vicar of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Yakima.

**Father Tomas Vidal**, who has served as Administrator of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Granger and Immaculate Conception Parish in Mabton, has been named Pastor of these two parishes.

*Please keep all of our priests and religious in your prayers.*

**Students for Life Groups To Meet**

Students for Life are growing strong in Central Washington! Young people between the ages of 13 and college age are invited to attend meetings planned for four Central Washington cities in June. The meetings will focus on self-respect for young people, education on the life issues and a knowledge of pro-life resources and opportunities in our communities.

The Gregory Sherman Chapter will meet at 7 p.m., Monday, June 10, at North Town Coffee, 32 North Front Street in Yakima. The Edward and Catherine Carroll Chapter plans to meet at 7 p.m., Tuesday, June 11 at Round Table Pizza, 1769 Leslie Road in Richland. The two newest Central Washington groups of Students for Life will meet at 7 p.m., Thursday, June 20, at Pizza Hut, 805 North Main Street in Ellensburg and at 7 p.m., Monday, June 24, at Godfather’s Pizza, 1014 North Wenatchee Avenue in Wenatchee. Parents are welcome at all meetings.

*For more information, call (509) 985-6248.*

**Youth Camp Coming Soon**

The time is drawing near for the second annual Central Washington Catholic Youth Camp, scheduled for June 23 – 28 at Lazy F Camp near Ellensburg.

This is a quality, week-long summer camp for young people, including daily Mass and the Rosary, Stations of the Cross and Reconciliation, with priests, sisters and seminarians assisting. It will include daily faith talks plus songs, games, swimming, inner tubing, a climbing wall, zipline and campfire every night.

The cost is $450 per camper, with scholarships available. Register at [https://www.cwcyc.org](https://www.cwcyc.org) and visit the Facebook page, “CWCYCclick” to check for more details and frequent updates. (C-L-I-C-K stands for Christ Lives in Catholic Kids.) For questions, contact Michael Drollman, director, at (509) 699-1235.

---

**Remember To Pray To Mary, Our Mother**

Many people do not know some of the most beautiful prayers which have been written through the centuries to ask Mary, the Mother of God, to pray for us. Here are two which you might pray with your loved ones:

**The Hail Holy Queen**

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

**The Memorare**

Remember, o most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly to thee, o Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to thee I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen

**All About Mary: Test Your Knowledge of the Faith**

In honor of May, the “month of Mary,” we bring back a popular feature to allow you to test your knowledge of the Faith. The following questions, based upon the Catholic Faith Challenge used by St. Joseph School in Kennewick, are all about Mary, the Mother of God.

The questions are in the form used by the Jeopardy TV program, in which the answer is given and you supply the question:

1. Notre Dame is a French title which means this.
2. This is what Mary is called when she speaks to God on our behalf.
3. This is where St. John is believed to have brought Mary to live after the crucifixion.
4. This is the day on which Blessed Mother’s birthday is observed.
5. These are the only two times the Pope has spoken “ex cathedra.”
6. These are the four most ancient and venerable prayers to Mary.
7. These are the three U.S. Holy Days of Obligation that celebrate Mary.
8. This is what Immaculate Conception refers to.
9. This is the Patron of the United States.
10. These are the four recorded events when Mary spoke.

---

Photo courtesy of Valeria Flores

**Deacon Edgar Quiroga blessed a baby following his May 17 ordination at Holy Family Church in Yakima.**