With 2020 just around the corner, are you thinking about making New Year’s resolutions? Maybe you plan to lose weight, stop smoking or try to earn more money. That’s all well and good. However, maybe you should also consider some healthy habits for your soul, suggests Father Richard Sedlacek, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Selah. It can be a good investment in eternity. Even with a very hectic schedule, it’s possible to “enhance your spiritual life,” Father suggests.

Something you can do anywhere, at any time of day, is simply to pray. “We need a prayer life to sustain us through all of the confusion in the world and in the Church,” he said. Although Father Sedlacek is “a rosary person,” there are many forms of prayer, from a silent word of praise to God to an intercession for a particular need.

“Mary is always encouraging us to pray for other people,” Father said, noting the messages from numerous apparitions of the Blessed Mother through the years. Also consider Eucharistic Adoration in the New Year.

“Spend some time before the Blessed Sacrament,” Father recommends. “Most parishes have it (Adoration) for at least a few hours each week. Pray in the silence of the Blessed Sacrament.”

In addition, there are many wonderful books and articles to read, to deepen your understanding of our Catholic Faith and of current world issues. Read about the lives of the saints, who can offer us so much inspiration, or perhaps Bishop Robert Barron’s “Letter to a Suffering Church,” about the sexual abuse crisis, Father said.

There are Magnificat classes to attend (see related article) and a replica of the Shroud of Turin is scheduled to return to Eastern Washington in early February, Father said, visiting numerous cities (check your parish bulletin for details). “The Shroud (believed to be the burial cloth of Jesus) is a powerful piece of evidence for God’s existence,” he said.

Even when you’re on the road, it’s possible to tune your car radio to religious programming such as “Father Spitzer’s Universe” on EWTN.

Read your weekly bulletin to see how you might help with parish programs ranging from the St. Vincent DePaul Society to activities for youth, help for the homeless, assistance for expectant mothers or setting up for parish activities.

And, speaking of parishes, “if you’re not going to Mass, you should go,” Father Sedlacek urges.

Be sure to go to Sunday Mass and then consider attending a weekday Mass, in addition.

Take advantage of the spiritual lift of confession, the sacrament of Reconciliation, especially if you haven’t been for a while.

If time and resources allow, you might consider going on a pilgrimage, even to a Marian shrine in the United States, he added.

“Just reflect on how you’re growing in your relationship with Jesus Christ and how you might enhance that relationship,” Father Sedlacek suggested. “We’re all creatures of habit. We need to get in the habit of doing good things.”

Here’s wishing a happy and holy New Year to you all!
Dear Friends:

Welcome to the December issue of the Central Washington Catholic. For so many, the approaching New Year can be a time of new beginnings. That’s why I’m grateful for the wisdom and insight of one of our more seasoned pastors, Father Richard Sedlacek, on how we might not only make New Year’s resolutions but, by the grace of God, actually keep them.

New beginnings are precisely what mark the month of January in our efforts at protecting and nurturing the gift of life. One of my most firm resolutions is our continued building up of our programs and support for “safe environment” education in order to prevent child sexual abuse and to expand our own knowledge and awareness as we reach out in our programs of education and catechesis in our parishes across Central Washington.

Our efforts for the most young and vulnerable also are reflected with our annual Mass for Life. The Mass takes place at Holy Family Parish in Yakima at 11 a.m. Sunday, January 19. This is the parish’s regularly scheduled bilingual Mass. Staff and volunteers from PREPARES will be present. As many of you know, PREPARES is the initiative of us bishops here in Washington State to walk the journey of life from the moment of conception to the fifth birthday of the child. We provide wraparound love and support to moms and dads as well as their children and their families so that they can “choose life.”

Statewide, 158 parishes have some form of the PREPARES ministry. We reached out to 12,231 families in 2018. We are still compiling the numbers for 2019. Thanks to so many of our parish volunteers, we distributed 5,270 essential items, ranging from diapers and wipes, clothing and car seats, “Pack and Plays” as well as strollers. We’ve held 706 events on PREPARES across the state, with 148 families attending the more intense parenting support groups as well as the “Play and Learn” coaching for parents with their children. We have a core of 74 highly trained volunteers who serve as family companions to specific new moms and sometimes new dads, mentoring, supporting and encouraging the gift of life for the unborn as well as their newborn.

I am writing this in December, following countless celebrations in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with so many of you devout parishioners spending entire days and nights in prayer and vigil. Perhaps one of the attractions of this particular apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the fact that this is the only apparition where she comes pregnant and about to give birth. As patroness of the Americas, she shows us the way to Jesus, the unborn Child. This unique apparition elevates for us an interior disposition for accepting the gift of the unborn. She strengthens within us our New Year’s resolution to protect and nurture the new beginnings – the very gift of life.

My thanks to all of you for your own resolution to support life, not only in protecting the life of the unborn, but in addressing the many vulnerabilities that surround that unborn life: the challenge of poverty, the fragility of undocumented families, the need for stable housing and employment. As a Church we want to embody the teachings of Jesus through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy for all those in need, including the most vulnerable: the unborn.

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Ten New Deacons Ordained for The Diocese of Yakima

Vatican Council, differs from the “transitional diaconate,” which seminarians generally receive about a year before priesthood, and which includes a promise of celibacy.

The 10, most of whom are primarily English-speaking, are the first to be ordained from a group of more than 40 men who began the inquiry process more than four years ago. A larger group of primarily Spanish-speaking deacons will be ordained February 28 at St. Joseph Parish in Kennewick.

More ordinations will follow in the next year or so as those still in the program complete their formation in theology, scripture, liturgy, spirituality, and pastoral ministry.

Congratulations to our new deacons who will serve in the following parishes: John Blackburn, Holy Apostles, East Wenatchee; Mike Gaulke, Holy Spirit, Kennewick; James Johnson, St. Andrew Parish, Ellensburg, serving at St. John the Baptist in Cle Elum and Immaculate Conception in Roslyn; Mark Krcma, Our Lady of Fatima, Moses Lake; Tom Miller, St. Joseph, Yakima; Robert Turner, St. Joseph, Wenatchee; Tim Wauzynski, St. Paul Cathedral, Yakima; Terry Wentz, Sacred Heart, Prosser; Jorge Calderilla, St. Joseph, Wenatchee, serving at Our Lady of the Assumption in Cashmere and Leavenworth; and Juan Reyes, St. Rose of Lima, Ephrata.

Let’s keep these men and their families in prayer as they join Bishop Tyson and the priests of our diocese in ministering to all of us.

Central Washington Catholic

DECEMBER 2019 • Volume 60 • Issue 12

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The Central Washington Catholic (ISSN 0195-1831) is published monthly by the Diocese of Yakima, 5301-A Tieton Drive, Yakima, WA 98908-3493.
Submission schedule: Deadline for the submission of material is at noon on the first day of the month of publication.
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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
The Knights of Columbus of Holy Spirit Council #10653 have donated about 200 coats and cash to support the work of Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington.

“This donation aligns with our support of the corporal works of mercy; to ‘clothe the naked,’” said Robin Rego, Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus, Council #10653.

The Knights of Columbus council also donated $3,000 to Catholic Charities, specifically allocating $2,000 to PREPARES. The support of the Knights of Columbus falls within their four principles: Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. PREPARES offers free services to families raising a child under five years of age.

“The PREPARES program at Catholic Charities is all about looking after the Lord’s needy little ones, which rings true with us,” Rego said.

“As an organization dedicated to living out its mission to ‘bring hope to life - for those most in need,’ we will fill the gap. We can’t accomplish this alone,” said Syndee Saucedas Cavazos, PREPARES program manager. “We are a stronger community when we come together...”

PREPARES services include parent-toddler learning groups in English and Spanish, family companions, resource navigation, and filling other essential needs of participating families. To donate or to learn about volunteer opportunities, call (509) 946-4645. For more information, visit http://www.preparesforlife.org/ or Facebook (@ccppss) https://www.facebook.com/ccpapss/.

**Mass for Life Is Planned**

The dignity of human life from conception through natural death will be celebrated at the annual Mass for Life, scheduled for 11 a.m. on Sunday, January 19, at Holy Family Catholic Church in Yakima. The Mass marks the 47th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion, which was decided on January 22, 1973. Mass will be celebrated by Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson, Bishop of Yakima.

A light lunch and brief program in the Father Murtagh Gathering Hall will follow the Mass. All are welcome to attend.
January 22 will mark the 47th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion throughout the nation. (Earlier legislation legalized abortion in Washington State.)

More than 60,000,000 little ones have already died in the United States since 1973 and countless mothers and fathers have been devastated by their loss. Now, we must amp up our prayers and voices, to end abortion once and for all, in our state and across the nation.

Join in the Mass for Life, at 11 a.m., Sunday, January 19 at Holy Family Church in Yakima (see related story); the Yakima Walk for Life (scheduled for 1 p.m., January 25, beginning at Grace of Christ Church on Yakima Avenue); or other events planned in your community.

Educate your children, grandchildren and everyone else you can about the realities of the miracle of life: the amazing development of the human being in the womb. Also know that many pro-life centers across our region and the Catholic Church PREPARES program offer valuable assistance for those with unplanned – or otherwise challenging – pregnancies. No one need be alone.

Here are some basic facts which you can share with others:

- At conception, the complete genetic code is present for a new human being, including hair color, eye color and whether or not the child will have dimples.
- At about three weeks into pregnancy, a rudimentary heart begins beating, clear evidence that this is a human being.
- By six weeks, the developing baby can feel tremendous pain, for example if he or she is subjected to an abortion procedure.
- By three months, this tiny human being has limbs that are long enough to bend, a face that is taking shape and most of the developing internal organs in place.

This child just needs time and nourishment to be born. Life is precious, from conception through natural death. Spread the word!

Guadalupe Celebrations Span Nations

Parishes and individuals throughout the Diocese of Yakima – and beyond – celebrated the special feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12. This feast marks the 1531 appearance of Blessed Mother to Juan Diego on Tepeyac hill, near Mexico City. Many parishes, including St. Paul Cathedral in Yakima, featured native dancing and drumming to honor Our Lady. Yakima Diocese seminarians Eduardo Chavez, Ethan Pfeiffer and Danny Sanchez served Mass at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.