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JANUARY 2020 *Letter*

Guide The Young, Offer Assistance, Begs Woman Who Had Abortion

By Christine Corbett Conklin

A Central Washington woman who had an abortion 18 years ago would like you to know that the anguish is still with her. She'd also like you to encourage young people to embrace chastity, and to help those who don't know where to turn for unplanned pregnancies.

Marie's* voice still cracks when she recalls that day in 2002 when she went into a Midwest Planned Parenthood for an abortion at six weeks into her pregnancy.

"Nobody said that this was going to be this horribly devastating event that would affect the rest of my life," she said. In addition to a "myriad of physical problems" she was to experience afterward, "the emotional and spiritual warfare and pain were unbelievable."

At the time, Marie, now a Catholic of the Diocese of Yakima, was married with two children. As much as she loved her kids, she suffered from very severe postpartum depression. When she found she was pregnant with another child, the past postpartum depression was all that anyone could think of. Family members, acquaintances who'd had abortions, even a clergyman, all pointed out the risks to her and her family of going through with another pregnancy.

"I knew it wasn't right," she recalled. "It isn't a choice. It's a feeling of being completely trapped ... The fear is so immense, you can't imagine."

Marie was looking for a sign, a word of encouragement from SOMEONE, ANYONE that the pregnancy might turn out alright, that the depression might not be as bad, that she could try medication, that they would stand by her. As she walked into Planned Parenthood, even "prayer warriors" on the sidewalk failed to ask if they could be of help, she recalled. Once admitted to the facility, she made a last effort to pray to her beloved grandmother who had died when she was a child, asking for a sign that she shouldn't have the abortion. No sign appeared.

Following the abortion, even her husband experienced extreme emotional distress, and ultimately, the couple divorced.

"They want you to believe that once it's (abortion's) over, you just go on with your



life," she said. "That's not the case ... I felt like my life was destroyed."

The key message that Marie would like to share, in this anniversary month of the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion across the United States, is that we all need to reach out and support vulnerable youth and those with unplanned pregnancies.

Growing up on a military base in western Europe, Marie recalls how "nobody ever taught me the value of chastity, of virginity." As a young person, "you don't want to be weird; you want to be accepted," she observed.

And that is where her path began to lead toward abortion, she contends.

"It (abortion) doesn't start out of nowhere," she said. "It starts with promiscuity and artificial contraception outside of marriage." In our "throwaway society," the desensitization process begins early. We must talk to young people, emphasizing their worth and the value of sexual purity, she stresses.

It's important for families to continue to reach out to young people to offer loving support, even when they move out on their own, she adds, and young people should also know that they are still welcome at home.

For those with unplanned pregnancies, we need to do all we can, Marie believes. Don't just hand off some baby clothes and believe that your work is done, she said. Help a young woman who is expecting to see through the lies of the current culture, to "trust God" and to understand that, although she may be in a difficult situation, "from the moment she conceives, she is a

mother," and you are there for her.

"There is help out there," Marie stressed. She herself began to find comfort through **Project Rachel (Rachel's Vineyard)**, a ministry which helps women work through their grief and guilt to seek forgiveness and healing and is offered in Eastern Washington. Other local alternatives include **Students for Life**, an organization which teaches self-respect and the value of life to those age 13 and above, with chapters in Yakima, Ellensburg, Tri-Cities, Wenatchee, and coming soon to the Lower Yakima Valley. The **PREPARES**

program offers assistance to families throughout Central Washington who have children from conception through age five. Additional resources include **Birthright** in Yakima; **Hope Medical** in the Tri-Cities; and **Real Options Pregnancy Clinic** in Wenatchee.

Don't "spend the rest of your life trying to put back the pieces" from a shattered existence, as she has done, Marie urges. Act now to help prevent that situation for yourself or others.

**Her real name has been changed, for confidentiality.*



In this painting by Caravaggio, Jesus points to Matthew while Matthew looks downward at his money. In his column on page 2, Bishop Tyson talks of this painting and of how God's mercy "points to us."

A Message from Bishop Tyson...

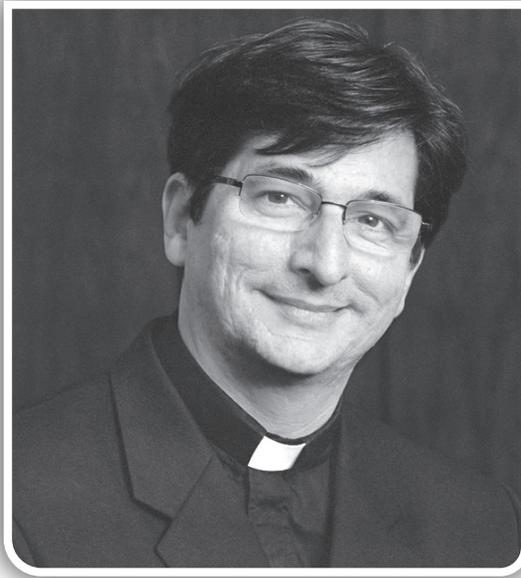
Dear Friends:

If there can possibly be a single word that best captures the ministry of our Holy Father Pope Francis, it is this: mercy. Our two featured articles in this month's *Central Washington Catholic* express the fundamental stance of mercy so necessary to bring people back to the Church.

Because of God's mercy, our feature story of a woman having had an abortion suggests how through God's mercy even the gravest sins can be forgiven. The trauma of abortion for both women and men often requires a long process of accompaniment so that the healing power of Christ's forgiveness can bring forth a restored communion with the Church as well as supportive friendships on the journey of faith.

Somewhat similarly, the fine ministry of Father Michael Ibach and his team with regards to annulments calls forth the mercy of God in failed marriages. Mercy is a necessary ingredient in order to carefully discern what necessary elements were absent when the couple first attempted to enter into the sacrament on their wedding day.

The bottom line is that when God's love meets human sin, the fruit is



Bishop Joseph Tyson

always mercy. God is infinite love. Pure love. Unadulterated love. But we live in a fallen world. "We are all on the same boat," once noted the great G.K. Chesterton, "and we are all seasick." That's a great definition of original sin. It's why on this side of the grave, we may be more likely in our daily lives to experience God's love as mercy.

One of Pope Francis' most favorite paintings is by the famous painter Caravaggio, titled "The Call of Saint Matthew." It hangs in the San Luigi de Francesi Church in Rome. Our pilgrims

from Yakima had the chance to see this famous painting directly about three years ago. Jesus dramatically points to Matthew, the tax collector, while Matthew's eyes are gazing downward at his money.

The mercy of God points to us too. Hopefully you see the work of God's mercy in our entire lineup of stories and features this month. Whether it is abortion, our ministry for failed marriages through annulments, the desire to save marriages through Retrouvaille, our ongoing protection of youth against sexual abuse through our safe environment ministry, our Magnificat program or the Students for Life ecumenical ministry – God's mercy is under the surface, deeply at work in the minds and hearts of so many across Central Washington here in the Diocese of Yakima.

My thanks for so many of you who do so much to uplift the gift of life. Thanks for the many ways you desire to be instruments of God's mercy.

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Magnificat Classes Offered

Is one of your New Year's resolutions to improve your spiritual life? The Magnificat program offers an easy solution. This program of faith formation, leadership and lay ministry now incorporates a vital new component of teaching about how science supports and reinforces our Catholic beliefs.

The next session of English classes

will begin on Saturday, February 15 in Kennewick at Holy Spirit Church, 7409 West Clearwater. There, Father Peter Steele and Father Daniel Steele will discuss "Dante's World Today: Hell, Purgatory and Heaven" followed by a presentation on "Anchoring Science in Our Faith: Scientific Evidence of a Soul."

The same program by the Fathers

Steele will be repeated February 22 in Wenatchee at St. Joseph School, 600 St. Joseph Place, and February 29 in Yakima at the St. Paul Cathedral Building, 1214 West Chestnut.

All classes are presented between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Additional information is available on the Diocese of Yakima website at yakimadiocese.org.

Rachel's Vineyard Offers Help

Rachel's Vineyard is for anyone who has experienced emotional/spiritual pain after an abortion. Women and men of all faiths are invited to begin the healing process!

The next retreat is scheduled for March 2020, but help is available now. Contact Lisa at (509) 421-7847 or email: rvcentralwa@gmail.com. More information is available at www.rachelsvineyard.org.

Rachel's Vineyard is a confidential/safe place to connect with others and process your experience. Space is limited. Need-based scholarships are available. The sponsor is

the Cornerstone Ministry of the Diocese of Yakima.

"If the emotional and spiritual wounds of a past abortion have been sapping faith, love and joy from your life, I can promise, that if you enter this process for healing, your life will begin to change. A journey into Rachel's Vineyard is a gift only you can open your heart to receive. ... A new chapter of your life awaits you. ... Take courage, God is calling you towards peace, love, hope, and freedom." (Dr. Theresa Burke, Founder of Rachel's Vineyard Ministries)

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

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Rethinking “Stranger Danger”

Courtesy of National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

“Stranger danger.” It’s short. It’s simple. It even rhymes! But is it really the most effective abduction prevention lesson for our children?

Children do not understand the concept of a stranger. Many believe that strangers are mean, ugly people – so the nice man asking for help to find his lost puppy? Not a stranger.

Children also learn that some strangers – like store clerks, police officers, or parents with children – are helpful. It may be hard for them to understand the difference between strangers who could hurt them and strangers who may help them.

Most importantly, “stranger danger” ignores the fact that most children are abducted by someone they know.

Avoiding strangers will not help if the abductor is a family member, neighbor, or family acquaintance. When you talk to your children about abduction prevention, don’t focus on warning them about certain types of people. Instead, teach them to identify



and respond to threatening situations.

A NEW MESSAGE

Say goodbye to “stranger danger.” Try using the following language when talking to your child about abduction prevention:

- **Don’t say:** Never talk to strangers.
- **Say:** You should not approach just anyone. If you need help, look for

a uniformed police officer, a store clerk with a nametag, or a parent with children.

- **Don’t say:** Stay away from people you don’t know.
- **Say:** It’s important for you to get my permission before going anywhere with anyone.
- **Don’t say:** You can tell someone is bad just by looking at them.
- **Say:** Pay attention to what people do. Tell me right away if anyone asks you to keep a secret, makes you feel uncomfortable, or tries to get you to go with them.

In addition to these conversations, use role-playing scenarios to help your children practice their abduction prevention skills. The more children practice, the better prepared they will be to respond to an emergency. Download the tips through the following link: <http://bit.ly/2rISXUv> or contact Msgr. Robert Siler, (509) 965-7117 or robert.siler@yakimadiocese.org for a copy.

Annulment of Marriage: What It Is – And What It ISN’T Continued from page 4

sacrament in the first place, Father suggested.

In the case of alcoholism, infidelity or other types of abuse, for example, it may be that the warning signs were already present at the time of marriage, and that will be considered.

For couples seeking a declaration of nullity, Pope Francis has also suggested a “briefer form” for the process, which is just coming into use in the Diocese of Yakima. Here, the man and woman must both come forward as “co-petitioners” to ask for an annulment. When

information is obtained, the Office of Canonical Concerns may ask the Bishop if a declaration of nullity may be granted, thus streamlining the process.

Father Ibach observed that his office is actually receiving fewer requests for annulments, compared to past years. This may be due to fewer marriages taking place, indifference for the laws of the Church, or even misconceptions and fears about what annulment is, he observed.

Yet, the Church wants to show compassion. (We consider) “if there

was a failed marriage, how could we help those people move forward with their lives, their hopes and dreams,” Father Ibach said. When there is still hope for a marriage, the Church also offers programs such as Retrouvaille (see article page 4) to help improve communication and problem-solving.

For more information on annulment, you may contact your parish priest or the Office of Canonical Concerns at (509) 965-7123 or (800) 505-6610. The office is located at 5301-D Tieton Drive in Yakima.

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NEWS

From Around the Diocese

Retrouvaille Weekends Planned

Registration soon will be closing for upcoming Retrouvaille weekends, designed to help ease tension within marriage. Program leaders know that when couples try on their own to talk about a problem, it may only make the situation worse. Some couples have arguments. Others experience coldness and simply shut down. Most don't know how to change the situation.

Inland Northwest Retrouvaille will offer two weekends in early 2020, to help couples bring new joy to marriage. The English weekend will be held February 14-16 at the Immaculate Heart Retreat Center in Spokane. The Spanish Weekend will be held March 13-15 at the Best Western Plus in Richland.

Retrouvaille (pronounced *retro-vi* with a long *i*) has helped thousands of couples experiencing marital difficulty at all levels of distress. The program is designed to provide the tools to help get marriages back on track.

For more information, visit www.helpourmarriage.com or ayudanuestromatrimonio.org or, for confidential information, call (800) 470-2230 English or (800) 966-7981 Spanish.

Students for Life Plan Meetings

Would you like to do something to make a difference in your community? All young people between the ages of 13 and college age, and their parents, are welcome to attend upcoming Students for Life meetings across Central Washington.

Students for Life promotes self-respect in young people, teaches about the life issues and encourages youth to become ambassadors for life, sharing a message of hope and encouragement with their peers and their community.

The Gregory Sherman Chapter will meet at 7 p.m., Monday, February 10 at North Town Coffee in **Yakima**. The Edward and Catherine Carroll Chapter will gather at 7 p.m., Tuesday, February 11 at Round Table Pizza on Leslie Ave. in **Richland**. **Ellensburg** students will meet at 7 p.m., Thursday, February 20, at St. Andrew's Church for a movie night. **Wenatchee** students are invited to join in a youth group meeting at 2 p.m., Sunday, February 16 at Holy Apostles Church in East Wenatchee. A new Students for Life group in the **Lower Yakima Valley** will have its first meeting at 7 p.m., Tuesday, February 25 at Casa Tequila Family Mexican Restaurant in **Grandview**.

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

Spiritual Journey Set for Spring

Tired of the Winter weather? Maybe you'd like to join "A Spiritual Journey to Mexico," planned for this Spring, to include the first Mass of newly ordained Father Edgar Quiroga.

The eight-day journey, from May 27 to June 3, will be under the spiritual direction of Bishop Joseph Tyson and Fathers Felipe Pulido and Cesar Vega.

Highlights of the trip will include the Martyrs' Sanctuary, near Guadalajara; the Basilica of Our Lady of Zapopan; Tecalitlan, Jalisco for Father Quiroga's Mass; Tulpetlac, where Juan Diego's uncle was cured; and Mexico City, including the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

For more information, contact Father Pulido through the diocesan number, (509) 965-7117, or email fpulido1@gmail.com.

Annulment of Marriage: What It Is – And What It ISN'T =

By Christine Corbett Conklin

Annulment. It's a subject that causes much confusion among Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

People wonder, how can the Church do this? Didn't Jesus say that a divorced person should not remarry? How is "a Catholic divorce" possible after 20 years of marriage? Are the children illegitimate now?

To put the subject in perspective, Very Reverend Michael Ibach, Judicial Vicar for the Diocese of Yakima, spoke with the *Central Washington Catholic* about what a "declaration of marriage nullity" (commonly referred to as an "annulment") is – and isn't.

To begin, a form of annulment has been around since the "early days" of the Church. St. Paul used a process which we now know as the "Pauline privilege," Father Ibach said. By 1917, a more "systematic" approach to the issue began. The Orthodox and Episcopalian/Anglican churches also have processes for declaring marriages null.

Today, after a married couple is divorced and one party wishes to get a declaration of nullity, perhaps preparing for a subsequent marriage, there is a set procedure to follow.

"The (Church) law is very specific on the processes we have to use," Father observed. "We have to be very careful."

An individual may contact his or her parish priest, or even come directly to the diocesan Office of Canonical Concerns in Yakima. After an initial conversation, and a decision is made to proceed with the annulment process, a \$50 fee is charged. Then, with a goal of having a decision on the annulment within 18 months, the work begins.

The applicant will fill out forms, submit other paperwork such as a marriage license, and the former spouse will be contacted and given a chance to offer his or her testimony. Witnesses named by the applicant and former spouse will also be contacted, to give input on what they observed. An additional \$450 will be charged, to help cover staff time and expenses for this process. An individual's financial status will be considered, however, and, as needed, this fee may be paid in



installments and/or reduced, Father said.

To help guide the applicant through the declaration of nullity process, an "advocate" (who may be a clergyman or lay person) will be named as a contact. For balance, a "defender of the bond" will be named, to look at reasons why an annulment should not be granted.

Rather than considering how long a couple has been married or what (reasonable) difficulties may have arisen along the way, the focus of all of these steps is upon the circumstances in which the two persons entered marriage, Father Ibach stressed. This is not a Catholic "divorce," but rather an examination of whether the two parties were both able to give full consent, to reflect upon the obligations and responsibilities they would have, and to fully commit to a lasting relationship in which they would "help each other attain eternal life," Father said.

If these conditions were not met, then it may be decided that the marriage was not valid as a sacrament in the first place, and an "annulment" of that marriage may be considered. Unlike a marriage under civil law, which is similar to a business partnership in which the agreement lasts as long as the parties want it to, a Catholic marriage is a "covenant relationship" meant to last for a lifetime, Father Ibach explained. Even with an annulment, any children born during the marriage are still regarded as legitimate, because the marriage was regarded as legitimate at that time.

The Church, as Jesus expressed, does not take remarriage lightly. Christ warned about people marrying, divorcing, then remarrying. However, "I don't think that was ever God's or the Church's intent" to deny future happiness if there was not a valid

Continued on page 3