



CENTRAL WASHINGTON CATHOLIC

El Católico de Washington Central

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AUGUST 2020 *Letter*

Catholic Schools in Yakima Diocese Reopen Under Strict Guidelines

By Christine Corbett Conklin

In an effort to provide the best possible education for some 1,100 students across the Diocese of Yakima, the majority of our Catholic schools soon will reopen for in-person classroom instruction. In recognition of the coronavirus pandemic, strict health standards will be reinforced in each school, stressed Doug Rich, director of schools and parish services for the Diocese.

"A lot of individuals are excited to be back at the school," said Diana Aparicio, vice chancellor for personnel and policies for the Diocese, noting that, when schools closed

in spring due to the pandemic, remote learning continued, to "satisfy all academic requirements."

"The vast majority of our parents want to see some form of in-school learning as an option – as a safe option," Rich observed. "We've also got parents who want to keep their kids at home ... We want to make sure that parents have the choice ... We certainly are going to have (the alternative of) remote learning, too."

As of our publication date, Christ the King School in Richland; St. Joseph/Marquette and Christ the Teacher schools, both in Yakima; and St. Rose of Lima School in Ephrata all plan to open between late August and the third week of September, with in-classroom instruction five days a week. St. Joseph School in Kennewick is planning a mixed schedule of in-classroom and remote learning. St. Joseph School in Wenatchee plans to begin the year with remote instruction only, through Zoom or other livestreaming options. La Salle High School in Yakima, which is under the jurisdiction of the Lasallian Christian Brothers opened for classroom instruction on August 20.

To maintain a safe environment, all students, administrators, teachers and other

school personnel participating in in-person instruction will be required each day to answer 11 health questions about potential symptoms and exposure to coronavirus. In addition, they must wear masks and observe social distancing, Rich said. For now, all P.E. classes, sports, choir and use of band wind instruments will be eliminated. Some schools will even have a "health and safety oath" for parents, to ensure that all health rules are followed. And seating charts will be kept, so

plans are in place to quickly switch to remote learning in any and all Catholic schools.

"Local conditions and Health Authority directives differ throughout our Diocese, just as they do for our 40 parishes. We need to be patient with our local authorities and be partners with them as we best approach the education and safety of our students, family and community," said Bishop Joseph Tyson in a statement he issued on the reopening of schools.

Many public schools in Central

Washington are taking a different approach, offering only remote learning for the beginning of the new school year. However, Catholic schools tend to have smaller class size, better

accommodating issues such as social distancing, said Aparicio. In addition, unlike public education, parents of Catholic school students pay tuition, putting an extra burden

on them if required to "facilitate the work of students."

"Please be mindful that while the Public Schools serve the public, our Catholic Schools serve the parents, who are charged with the responsibility of raising their children in the Faith," Bishop Tyson confirmed in his statement. "We assist them through our collective and cooperative efforts."

As much as possible, diocesan officials are leaving decisions about in-person versus remote learning to the individual parish and school administrators, Rich said.

"We pray that God's hand is on us as we attempt to do the best we can for the safety and education of our children," Rich concluded.

"Even though these are hard times, having faith and hope that we're going to get through it all is very helpful," Aparicio added.

Stay tuned to social media outlets of your school, parish and Diocese for updates on constantly changing health regulations.



Christ the King School - Richland



St. Joseph School - Kennewick



Christ the Teacher School - Yakima



St. Rose of Lima - Ephrata



St. Joseph School - Wenatchee



St. Joseph/Marquette School - Yakima

that if a student is found to have been exposed to coronavirus, prompt notification can be made to parents of other students seated in the same area.

Lunch might be offered in the school gym, for example, to make more room for social distancing, Aparicio said.

Every effort will be made to work with school employees who have particular concerns about potential coronavirus exposure, Rich said. Teaching specialists, for example, might be able to work from home more easily. Flexible job descriptions or even a medical leave might also be considered.

"We will work with the employee as best we can," he said.

Trying to follow all of the Centers for Disease Control and state health guidelines, which are constantly in flux, has been "very difficult," Rich admits. "We're all kind of learning this thing together." Should the coronavirus outbreak worsen, contingency

A Message from Bishop Tyson...

Dear Friends:

This back-to-school edition of the *Central Washington Catholic* highlights the efforts we are making in assisting our many dedicated parents, grandparents and guardians in their primary role in passing on the Faith.

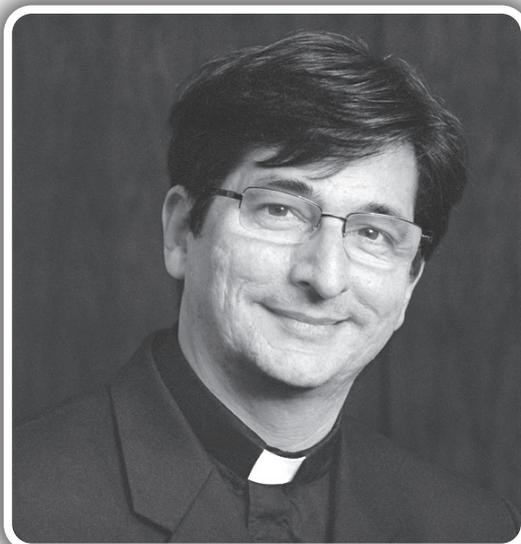
From where does this parental role stem? Permit me to take you back to the baptism ritual. No matter the language, our Catholic Rite of Baptism asks three key questions: your child's name, your desire to have the child baptized, and your accepting responsibility for training your child in the practice of the Faith.

That third question is the kicker! In the Order of Baptism for Several Children, the minister says: "In asking for Baptism for your children, you are undertaking the responsibility of raising them in the Faith, so that, keeping God's commandments, they may love the Lord and their neighbor as Christ has taught us. Do you understand this responsibility?"

Who among us knows what we are getting into the day we get married? Who among us knows what we are getting into with the birth of our child – especially the first child? Even with our celibate clergy, who among us knew what we were getting into the day we were ordained? The "yes" the parents give at the baptism of their child is not a "yes" from a strong knowledge base. Quite the opposite. It is the "yes" of Mary. It is the "yes" of faith.

I dare say that in these COVID-19 days, just about everything we do comes from a basis of that "yes." Eight months ago, none of us could have possibly guessed where we would have been today with COVID-19 protocols, school delays, online learning platforms, livestream Facebook Masses as well as celebration of the sacraments with very limited numbers. None of us would probably have guessed that we would spend any time outside our home wearing a mask, either. But here we are! Imitating the "yes" of the Blessed Virgin Mary in ways we never would have expected. As we enter a new school year with the new COVID-19 protocols, let me touch upon the ways we are working to assist parents to pass on the Faith.

First, in terms of faith formation, we have invited all the catechists across the Diocese of Yakima to webinars sponsored by our three main publishers: RCL-Benziger, Sadlier and Loyola. I have co-hosted with each publisher two webinars – one in Spanish and one in English via Zoom. We also taped each of those webinars and posted them both on our Diocese of Yakima website (www.



Bishop Joseph Tyson

yakimadiocese.org) as well as our diocesan Facebook page. I am grateful for the many volunteer catechists as well as Catholic grade school teachers who have jumped onto these webinars.

Second, we are working with local health department officials as we reopen our Catholic schools across the Diocese of Yakima. Each school has a different plan. Given the various local health districts, each school may have a different reopening plan as well. Some will be totally online due to local health department requirements. Some will be hybrid with limited face-to-face instruction. Some will be face-to-face. All schools will have a totally online option for those parents who desire this.

Why? Why the emphasis on reopening our Catholic schools? Because even in a COVID-19 era, Catholic schools are uniquely posed to anchor academics in our rich Catholic intellectual heritage. Because of COVID-19, we are needing to find a variety of ways to carry out this mission: sometimes live instruction, sometimes remote learning, sometimes a mixture, sometimes we start live and will have to go remote. It all depends on the local condition. So, in advance, I thank our Catholic school parents for their patience (My letter to the school community can be found at this link: <https://bit.ly/3hmGDOF>).

Second, for our volunteer catechists we are also hosting a series of technical webinars to complement the publisher content webinars. Our technical webinars will walk participants through the technical aspects of how to use Zoom as a teaching platform, how to integrate Zoom into Google classroom and other learning platforms. For those reluctant to engage in this new technology, we also want to uplift pathways that involve downloading

lessons from the publishers' websites, printing them out, creating hard paper classroom packets that can be delivered or sent to the parents of our young people in our catechetical programs, and then talking through how catechists can provide support and coaching through a follow-up phone call with parents.

Third, starting in September we have an expanded offering in both English and Spanish of our Magnificat catechetical program for adult catechists and Catholic school teachers in both English and Spanish. Zoom teaching times continue to be Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Additionally, we will have a Zoom teaching time in Spanish on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. In English, we will have an additional teaching block Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. We plan to record these live teaching events and post them on our webpage for later referral. Those on the Magnificat mailing list will receive regular email blasts reminding them class by class of what is going on and when. We also will post these links for the classes on our Facebook page. If you would like more information, contact Valeria Flores at valeria.flores@yakimadiocese.org.

Fourth, we will continue our partnership with Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., and his Magis Institute. We plan a few live learning opportunities this year at St. Andrew in Ellensburg under the direction of their new pastor, Fr. Jaime Chacon, who is Vicar for Faith Formation. This will be a small number of pre-registered people, with a small donation to cover the cost of their lunch, while following the current COVID-19 protocols for small church meetings. Again, Valeria Flores will have information on this for you.

Finally, we are moving ahead with our annual Church Mission Congress. But this year it will be totally online. It will be Saturday, October 10, 2020. Sister

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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

Stay Connected with Flocknote

Wouldn't it be great if there were an easy way for Religious Education to reach students, or for Catholic Daughters to plan together, now that we don't see each other after Mass as frequently? Wouldn't it be great if the Church could reach all of the parishioners who don't attend Mass every week? There is! The Yakima Diocese recently signed on with Flocknote, powerful communication software developed for the Church.



Bishop Tyson is enthusiastic about the opportunities. "This is the future," he said. "This is our new normal." The Diocese is now sending out its communications through Flocknote, writing to seminarians, priests, and deacons, as well as the wider community. Other frequent users include

Holy Spirit in Kennewick, St. Joseph in Wenatchee, and Holy Angels in Coulee City. Sandra Barrós, the director of Faith Formation and Evangelization for the Diocese, says that one of Flocknote's biggest advantages is that she can send text messages to the faithful who do not use email. Since the open rate for emails is 40 percent, and the open rate for texts is 99 percent, this is a huge plus, even for reaching those who have email.

"It is a beautiful tool to evangelize," she said. She sends uplifting messages, and notices of upcoming events to groups of parishioners, including residents of the summer migrant camps. "Flocknote helps me keep people connected with the living Church."

LuAnne Sells, parish secretary for

St. Joseph in Wenatchee, said that once they had to close the church this spring, registration for Flocknote jumped 240 percent. "People want to connect with their church community," she said. "And they love it! We post videos, and other things, as well as let them know what is going on."

Another group that is setting up to use the software is PREPARES. The ministry will use it to communicate with volunteers with much less effort than the current system.

Ten of our 40 parishes have already signed up to set up their own networks which could include youth ministries, diocesan school teachers, eucharistic ministers, and texts from the bishop. Even if your parish has not yet reached that step, you can sign up by texting the code word "yakima" to the following number: [for English] 84576 [for Spanish] (202) 765-3441.

A Message from Bishop Tyson... *Continued from page 2*

Norma Pimentel, M.J., who spoke at our Cornerstone Conference last year, will be speaking via Zoom both in Spanish, and English. In Spanish, we will also feature Seattle Auxiliary Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S., who will talk about outreach to youth. In English, we will also feature Doug Tooke, formerly of REACH Youth Ministries, which got its start here in Yakima. He is our consultant in the Grant-Douglas Deanery on regional approaches

to youth ministry.

Thank you for your patience as we learn new ways to pass on the Faith. Thank you for your continued support of the Annual Catholic Appeal, which makes all this possible. Thank you for remembering your parish too, even if you can't physically be present for Sunday Mass.

Thank you for the many ways you live out that third key question in the Church's Rite of Baptism, assisting parents

in passing on the Faith. May we imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary in our "yes" to life, to children and to the new situation in which we find ourselves as a Church.

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Visit our Website!



Faith Education Funding Available

College Scholarships Religious Education Programs Tuition Assistance

Welcome New Foundation Director

The Central Washington Catholic Foundation would like to welcome **Nicole St. Mary-Franson** as the new Executive Director. Nicole looks forward to leading the Foundation in Catholic philanthropy and to pass the Faith heritage to future generations through scholarships, religious education support, and tuition assistance to the 40 parishes and seven Catholic schools in the Yakima Diocese.

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NEWS

From Around the Diocese

Donors Continue to Be Generous Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

The continued generosity of donors amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic is inspiring, leaders for the Diocese of Yakima and Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington have said.

As of Monday, August 24, the annual collection for Priests Retirement and Seminarian Education had raised \$205,891.25, nearly \$6,000 more than its goal. The Diocese had to rely more on direct mailing appeals, with online giving options and videos featuring seminarians, since public Masses continue to be limited.

"It has been your generosity and kindness that continues to give new life to the senior priests who have faithfully served our local Church so generously for so many years. It is also in your spiritual and financial support of those studying for the priesthood that we see the seeds of future servants of our Diocese sowed and nourished," Bishop Joseph Tyson said in a letter to donors in early July.

The Light of Hope Fund, which was established by Catholic Charities and the Diocese during the early months of the pandemic, continues to raise money to assist families who have exhausted other avenues of help. As of August 24, \$164,510 has been donated, and \$104,100 given out to those in need through the parishes of the Diocese, as well as to clients of Catholic Charities.

In a letter to donors being sent out in early September, Bishop Tyson and Charities President Darlene Darnell recount the story of "Amy," a single mother of seven children whose former husband has been unable to provide child support after losing his job due to the pandemic. Money from the Light of Hope Fund and other community resources has helped this family cope with the crisis.

"It is because of generous people like you that families like Amy's have a chance for a better life," Bishop Tyson and Ms. Darnell wrote in their letter.

Bishop Tyson is encouraging pastors to take up special collections in their own parishes, if they haven't done so already, to help the parishes recover from a shortfall of Sunday collections due to the pandemic. Also, beginning in mid-September, parishes will be asked to take part in the "Be Christ's Light for Others" campaign, to raise money the Bishop can give directly to parishes that are struggling financially.

"We want to give every single Catholic in Central Washington a chance to help their neighboring parishes in need," Bishop Tyson said in a letter to pastors earlier this year.

Holy Family Celebrates 'Extraordinary Rite' As Part Of 'Faith Journey'

A beautiful High Latin Mass held August 15 at Holy Family Church in Yakima represented "a journey that began 11 years ago" for Father Cesar Vega, pastor.

With ornate vestments, incense, bells and a blessing with holy water, the "Extraordinary Rite" of the Mass was attended by more than 90 people, marking the feast day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Attendees wore masks and practiced social distancing for the outdoor celebration, with temperatures climbing to the high 80s, said B.J. Becker, sacristan. A small choir, who also remained at a required distance, added to the solemnity.

Father Edgar Quiroga celebrated the Mass with Father Vega, while two servers assisted.

"It was quite different from what I'm used to, but it was lovely," observed "Dolores," 34, who said that she usually attends a Spanish Mass. "The music and the reverence were lovely."

The inspiration to hold the Mass began years ago, first with his Grandfather's special devotion for the feast day of the Assumption, his Mother's love for a monthly Mass for Divine Providence, and finally, a request from a group of local residents 11 years ago to begin holding a simpler "Low" Latin Mass each month, Father Vega said.

At first, Father said that he wanted to make sure that the request for an ongoing Latin Mass at Holy Family was rooted in "a true longing of the heart" and not just a turning away from the Novus Ordo or "Ordinary Rite" of the Mass initiated by

the Second Vatican Council and celebrated in the "vernacular" or native tongue of the place where it is held.

The "faith journey" for Father Vega, and his parish, continued through the 2018-19 Jubilee Year of the Mass, during which the parish had speakers, videos and reflection on the meaning of the Catholic liturgy, he said.

"We looked at how can we enhance our appreciation for our liturgical celebrations, particularly the Mass," he recalled.

Father Vega also studied the writings of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and was moved by the "complementary" nature of the old and new Masses, the idea that "what earlier generations held as sacred remains sacred and great for us." He was inspired by Pope Benedict's concept that "the tradition of the Church and the Roman Rite have two children: the Ordinary Rite (of the Mass) and the Extraordinary Rite ... They are children of the same parents."

"As a Catholic, a priest, a pastor, my appreciation for the Extraordinary Rite came about as a faith journey to see how we can praise God through these two forms," he said, noting that Pope Francis now has a survey out, to Catholics throughout the world, asking for their thoughts on the Extraordinary Form of the Mass.

Father Vega said that he and Bishop Joseph Tyson will work together to discern the potential for future High Latin Masses at Holy Family Church. The monthly Low Latin Mass has continued at the church since 2009, with an interruption for the past few months due to the pandemic.

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Photo courtesy of Connor Henning

The outdoor altar stood ready for the Latin Mass.



Photo courtesy of Connor Henning

Father Cesar Vega blessed Mass attendees with holy water.

We Work Together To Meet a Need

Life is often a struggle in Basin City. The parish of San Juan Diego serves a community where the median wage of a full-time worker is just above \$26,000 per year. "The men work in the fields, and the mothers of young children stay home with them," reports Yolanda Castillo, a PREPARES Area Coordinator. "Due to COVID-19, some are not working, and they don't qualify for any public assistance."

San Juan Diego is in the Spokane Diocese, very near the border with the Yakima Diocese. PREPARES staff from Central Washington have been reaching out to several parishes in the area. Yolanda found that many of the women who came

to volunteer were in the same dire situation as the families they hoped to serve. "They try," she said. "They all contribute to meals for families they know are struggling."

Informed of the need, Catholic Charities Eastern Washington loaded hundreds of pounds of rice, beans, oil, and other necessities into two vehicles and delivered the food to San Juan Diego, where local PREPARES volunteers broke the big sacks down into family-sized portions, and distributed the food to hungry residents.

Life is often a struggle in Basin City. PREPARES and Catholic Charities Eastern Washington are glad we could help them keep going.