



CENTRAL WASHINGTON CATHOLIC

El Católico de Washington Central

Pāchu Washintin Chmuk Tātpas

NOVEMBER 2020

What Is the Purpose of Prayer? Does God Hear Us in Difficult Times?

By Christine Corbett Conklin

In these days of pandemic fears and political unrest, it's common to wonder about the purpose of prayer. Is there a magical combination of certain prayers, in a certain number, perhaps with certain people, that brings results? Has God already decided how things will go, so prayers really don't matter?

"Prayer is not a magical moment," explained Very Rev. Michael Ibach, judicial vicar for the Diocese of Yakima and parochial vicar of Holy Family Parish, in talking with the *Central Washington Catholic*.

"Prayer is the opportunity to talk with God about our issues, our concerns, our gratitude and appreciation for the blessings we have in our lives," he said in a telephone interview. It's a means "to grow in our relationship with God, our trust in Him. We want to demonstrate that we really are relying upon Him."

It's alright to be persistent in prayer, to express the desire that, "Lord, this is something I have a concern for. I want You to help me. It's like calling on a friend," Father Ibach said.

Praying in the name of Jesus Christ or through the intercession of saints includ-



Photo provided by Pexels.com

ing Blessed Mother is also commendable. "We're calling upon them to add their appeal for whatever we're praying for," Father said. "It's like asking family members to pitch in and mow the lawn. I'll edge and you mow." We're showing God how sincere we are, that we want someone to make the appeal for us. And remember, Jesus "sits at the right hand of the Father. He's praying with us and for us."

The Bible also tells us that "when two or more are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Praying along with others "strengthens the prayers of those who are there," Father Ibach observed.

Sometimes, individuals feel as though they have been abandoned by God, that life is a mess, that God doesn't consider them worthy to answer their requests. However, "that is when prayer is the most important," Father said. "We should be able to pray what's in our hearts, to say, 'I don't know where the light is,' to be honest with God about what's going on in our lives."

Remember, our prayers express OUR expectations, not necessarily God's expectations. "We also have to sit back and listen to Him," Father Ibach suggested. "We might be so caught up in our need that we're not seeing other ways that God may be answering our prayer." For example, a person in financial need might not win the lottery, as requested. However, a gift of money might come in from someone who cares about him, or a new work opportunity might emerge. "It's not always that God's going to give us the big, spectacular thing," he said.

In a time of family crisis, "prayer can be the start of healing," he added. "I become more aware of what I need to do."

The Catholic Church also recognizes the gift of "indulgences" through prayer.

Continued on page 2

New Liturgical Year Begins November 29

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Councils

The First Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of a new Liturgical Year! The season of Advent will always have four Sundays, but it may not have four full weeks, depending on which day December 25 may fall.



Photo provided by Pexels.com

We live in a time when the "Christmas season" begins when the holiday decorations fill the stores and the songs fill the airwaves. But it is important that we Christians truly celebrate the Advent season in its fullness. Advent has a two-fold character – a season to prepare for Christmas – when we celebrate that Christ first became flesh and dwelt among us – and "as a season when that remembrance directs the

mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time" (*Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar*, 39).

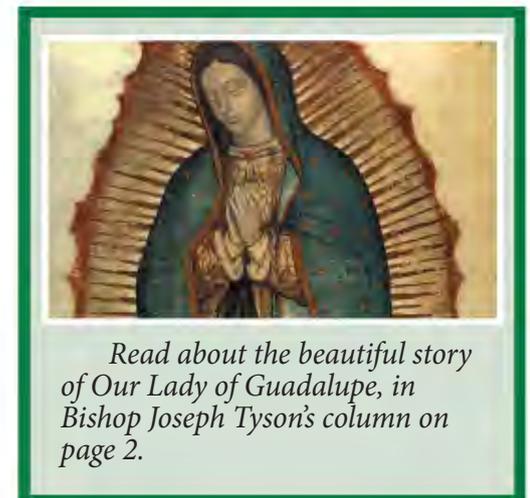
The readings and prayers in the first weeks of Advent focus on preparation. We read from the prophet Isaiah, and in the Gospel we read about John the Baptist who is calling the people to repentance. After December 17, the readings focus on a more proximate preparation for the birth of Christ and we read about Mary and Joseph as they prepare to welcome God's Son.

THE ADVENT WREATH

Although the Advent Wreath is not an official part of the Church's Sunday liturgies, it does enjoy the status of a venerable custom.

Originally, the wreath might have been a cart's wheel, wound with greens and decorated with lights, strung up in the halls of the sun-worshiping tribes of Northern Europe. Christians, preparing for their feast of light and life, the Nativity of the Lord, adapted this wreath to their purposes.

Continued on page 3



Read about the beautiful story of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in Bishop Joseph Tyson's column on page 2.

A Message from Bishop Tyson...

Dear Friends:

As we celebrate the December 12 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, it might be wise to highlight that her apparitions of 1531 on the hill of Tepeyac in Mexico came at a time not unlike ours. They came at a time of pandemic.

“Cocoliztli” was the Nahuatl name of a disease that struck thousands across ancient Mexico. Bacterial genomic studies suggest that this disease may have stemmed from salmonella – specifically a serotype of *Salmonella enterica* known as Paratyphi C. This form of the disease seems at least partially responsible for historic outbreaks in 1520, 1545, 1576, 1736 and 1813. These outbreaks may not have been only in Mexico. A codex from Florence, Italy (1540-1585) depicts victims of this plague.

This is why San Juan Diego was on his way to see his sick uncle. He was suffering from this dreaded disease, “cocoliztli,” and was approaching death. It is on his way to care for his sick uncle that Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to him.

The four apparitions of our Lady of Guadalupe are all written in Nahuatl in the 16th century work “Nican Mopohua,” the Nahuatl phrase that means “here recorded.” Many of you know the story better than I. Meek Juan Diego is told by Our Lady to go to the bishop and tell him that a church is to be built so that she can offer mercy and consolation to her people. Juan Diego takes in the message but then goes on his way to tend to his sick uncle. The next day, in order to avoid her, he goes again to visit his sick uncle by a different route. But she appears again and repeats the same request.

Juan Diego responds that he is not worthy, or of high enough status, to be asked to go to a bishop.



Art source: Wikimedia Commons, public domain.

What Is the Purpose of Prayer? *Continued from page 1*

This means that by saying certain prayers, and sometimes also receiving the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, we believe that we have the ability to eliminate some or all of our “temporal punishment” or time in Purgatory after death. “This is a means to grow in our relationship with God,” Father said. In addition, we can pray for those who have already died, since it is not believed that we can pray for our own souls after we die.

We can see that prayer has many benefits, but “I would hope that we would not just think of it as bargaining with God,” Father Ibach said. “It’s meant to be a development of our relationship with God and



Bishop Joseph Tyson

He is a Nahuatl native. He suggests that she should send someone more important with more stature and gravitas. One Spanish rendering has Juan Diego saying, “No soy nada más que una escalera de tabla.” That is, “I am so lowly that I am like wooden plank that people walk on.” But she is insistent. “A ti,” she tells him. “Yo te he elegido a ti.”

“You,” she insists. “I want you to go.”

Note well! Our Lady does not demand from Juan Diego that he stop tending his sick uncle. Juan Diego had already lost his parents to this same epidemic. Now Juan Diego faces losing his beloved uncle Juan Bernardino, who has become a new father to him. The loss seems unbearable. Our Lady does not demand that he turn away from his sick uncle. Rather, knowing his attentiveness to the sick, Our Lady asks Juan Diego to expand the mission beyond his sick uncle. She wants him – and uniquely him – to go to the bishop so that everyone will know the consoling help and

mercy she wants to give to all of her children, including Juan Diego.

We might want to pause at this point of the account, given our own challenges with COVID-19. So many of us have been busy tending the sick with COVID-19. Some of us have attended – or been forced to miss – more funerals due to COVID-19 than we want to think about. We also have been coping with loneliness and isolation due to social distancing. In turn, we have seen a doubling of overdose deaths due to opioids. Not all of us are coping well.

Perhaps some time gazing upon the specific image of Our Lady of Guadalupe is the precise meditation we need at this time. We can see precisely what San Juan Diego sees. This is the only apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary where she is visibly pregnant. The designs artistically woven into her fabric are actually Aztec fertility symbols. They reminded the Aztec peoples then, and us today, that indeed, the Blessed Virgin Mary is not only the mother of Jesus, but she is fully capable of bearing us and being our mother, too.

Perhaps most undernoted in the “Nican Mopohua” is the fifth apparition. This apparition is not to Juan Diego. It was to his uncle, Juan Bernardino. She not only appears to Juan Diego at Tepeyac, but she appears to Juan Bernardino as he lies at home sick and in bed. He is miraculously cured.

Given the stresses around the COVID-19 pandemic, we might want to pay more attention to this fifth apparition to Blessed Juan Bernardino. In the isolation of our sickness, the Blessed Virgin Mary is here to console us, too. This Advent season, the presence of Mary punctuates our daily and Sunday scriptures. May we follow her as she shares her Son Jesus with us. In her, may we find our consolation and the care we need during this time of pandemic. Be assured of my prayers for all of you.

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Central Washington Catholic

NOVEMBER 2020 • Volume 61 • Issue 11

PUBLISHER

Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson

MODERATOR

Monsignor Robert M. Siler

EDITOR

Christine Corbett Conklin

TRANSLATIONS

Indiana Blandón

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.

Email: robert.siler@yakimadiocese.org

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

Christmas Collection to Help Families, Individuals in Need

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, Catholics throughout the Diocese will have the opportunity to answer Christ's call to serve one another by supporting the work of Catholic Charities Serving Central Washington, with donations to the Christmas Collection.

This year, perhaps more than ever, Catholic Charities has responded to the needs of individuals and families with direct assistance. Through the Light of Hope Fund, Catholic Charities has provided grants and gift cards to more than 600 individuals and families. In addition, the agency has awarded \$73,000 to parishes to allow them to help those who are struggling in their communities.

Catholic Charities brings hope to life by...

Strengthening Families – Offering therapeutic child care and support to families struggling with a child's out-of-control behavior.

Embracing People – Keeping the elderly in their own homes by matching them with volunteers to help with housework, provide

transportation, and supply the companionship they need to feel valued and loved.

Empowering to Thrive – Integrating primary care with behavioral health to remove barriers and give those suffering from mental illnesses access to much-needed health care services.

Since 1949, programs have evolved to meet the changing needs in the communities served, but the agency has remained focused on serving children, adults and families in the areas of counseling and behavioral health, basic needs, child care and early learning, affordable housing, and elder services. With primary offices in Yakima, Wenatchee, Richland, and Moses Lake, Catholic Charities serves 50,000 people throughout Central Washington each year.

An outreach effort of the Diocese of Yakima, Catholic Charities is a separate 501(c)3 charitable organization. The agency is funded in part by state and federal contracts and fees for service, but relies on the



Photo provided by GettyImages

generosity of donors to serve all clients regardless of their ability to pay.

"The support we receive through the Christmas Collection is essential because it allows us to help those who are most in need," said Darlene Darnell, Catholic Charities president and CEO. "We are grateful to parishioners throughout the Diocese for supporting our mission."

Information on Catholic Charities and donation envelopes will be available in parishes preceding the collection.

New Liturgical Year Begins November 29 *Continued from page 1*

The wreath, without beginning or end, stands for eternity. The greens represent life and growth. The four candles (traditionally three purple and one rose) represent the ages sitting in darkness, each candle adding more light

until Christmas and the dawn of the light of Christ. Ideally, the first candle to be lit is opposite the rose candle, since that will be lit on the Third Sunday of Advent. We also call that Sunday "Gaudete Sunday," since the word "rejoice" is used in the

opening antiphon for Mass that day (see Phil 4:4-5).

The blessing of the Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent (or its vigil Mass). On successive Sundays, the candles are lit before Mass or before the Opening Prayer without

*Lord God,
your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior,
who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.
Pour forth your blessings upon us as we light the candles of this wreath;
may their light reflect the splendor of Christ who is Lord, forever and ever.*

Amen.

*"And the angel said unto them,
Fear not: for, behold,
I bring you good tidings of great joy,
which shall be to all people."* – Luke 2:10



Blessings from the Central Washington Catholic Foundation during this holiday season.



<https://cwcatholicfoundation.org/>

additional rites or prayers (cf. *Book of Blessings* nos. 1509-1514, 1519, 1526)

The Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent (or its vigil Mass).

On successive Sundays, the candles are lit before Mass or before the Opening Prayer without

We take your injury personally.™

The more things change,
the more they stay the same.

Jesse Tree Recalls the Family Tree of Jesus

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Councils

The Jesse Tree is an Advent tradition which recalls the family tree of Jesus Christ. The tree of Jesse was a common subject in medieval and early Renaissance art representing the royal genealogy of Christ from Jesse, the father of David. The image of the tree was taken from Isaiah 11:1, "But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse and from his roots a bud shall blossom." The shoot has been interpreted as the Blessed Virgin Mary and the blossom as her Son, Jesus Christ.

There are many online sources for ornament templates. When making the tree, look for symbols that can represent important people or events in Christ's life or in the Old Testament. The tree can be made out of many things; you can use an actual tree limb, or it can be made on a piece of felt or fabric. All family members can help create the symbols. They can be placed all at once, or placed ceremoniously each day of Advent. It is suggested that you make them out of sturdy materials so that they can be used from year to year.

SUGGESTED SYMBOLS

Serpent and Fruit	Promise given to Adam and Eve
Slain Lamb	Abel/ Christ
Ark	Noah
Ram	Promise given to Abraham
Ladder & Star	Promise given to Jacob
Scepter	Judah
Lion	Judah
Colorful coat	Joseph
Tablets of Law	Moses
Star of David	David
Harp or Lyre	David
Hand	Isaiah
Cloud	Prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah
New Heart	Prophecies of Jeremiah
Broken Chain	Prophecy of Ezekiel
Whale	Jonah
Altar	Prophecy of Malachi
Hour Glass	Daniel
Bethlehem	Micah
Shell	John the Baptist
Carpenter's Square	Joseph, husband of Mary
Crown of Twelve Stars	Mary, Mother of Jesus
Chi-Rho	Jesus Christ



PREPARES Assists Farmworkers Who Have Housing Challenges



Winter has come early to the orchards of Central Washington. At a time when agricultural laborers are usually stocking up to prepare for a winter with no income, some have no work. In some places, wildfires destroyed homes. And of course, the pandemic also has cut the income of many.

This is particularly true of our most vulnerable communities. "I had no idea that anywhere in Washington was that poor," said PREPARES Area Coordinator Alma Ramos. She says that in Bridgeport, most people cannot afford houses, and there are no apartments,

so everyone lives in trailers. One family of seven, burnt out of their home, has broken up the family to survive. The grandfather is staying in one place, the oldest son in another, and the parents live in a tent next to a relative's trailer with the three remaining children, as there is no room inside for them. They have no refrigerated space to store food, no water, and no heat. With their bad credit, there is little chance of buying another trailer.

This is going to be a very long winter for some of us. PREPARES will be there for struggling communities.