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DECEMBER 2020 *Letter*

PREPARES Supports the Gift of Life Throughout Washington State

By Ann Dibble

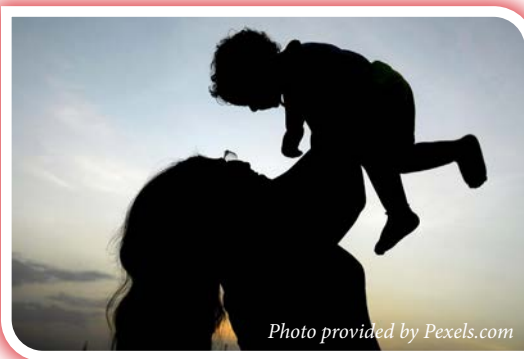
Last year, a child was born in central Washington. This particular baby boy was “super-fragile,” according to Elizabeth, the PREPARES companion working with the family that cares for him. Moses was premature, blind, brain damaged, and suffering from “all sorts of syndromes,” she said. His mother is developmentally delayed, and couldn’t care for him. After a week, his foster family sent him back.

Mary, a woman in town with several children of her own who has received help from the PREPARES program as well, heard about the need, and volunteered to take him in.

For months, Mary made the long trip to the hospital in Spokane every day to be with Moses during his operations. Her husband Joe stayed home to care for the others, costing them income. People told Mary, “you don’t need to be there every day – you have other things to do.”

She answered, “I’m the only one he knows, so I’m staying.” Mary kept a close eye on Moses, and took him to the local clinic when she was worried about his health. When the doctor in her little town dismissed her concerns, she drove Moses back to Spokane, where he received additional treatment.

The Spokane doctor said she had saved Moses’ life. Mary told Elizabeth that the doctor had said, “On the first day I met you, I knew he had found his mother, the one that would protect him, and fight for



what he needs. You are more than his foster mother. You are his guardian angel, and I pray he gets to stay with you forever, because we all see how much you love him.”

This is a true story, although Elizabeth, Mary, Moses, and Joe are not their real names. This is a story of love and endurance. Elizabeth says of Moses, “He is such a happy baby! He’s always smiling – except when he is having a seizure. He’s just learning to sit up, finally, and it’s funny to see him grinning away, as he slowly topples over.

“It is so rewarding to work with families! I love it when I can help a Mom with an encouraging word, or some supplies,” added Elizabeth. “She doesn’t have to do it all by herself. If I’m not working, I’m doing PREPARES, because I know it is the work God has set before me.”

Throughout the state of Washington, inspiring stories such as this have been repeated over and over as PREPARES helps support mothers, children and families

through the first five years of life. The bishops of Washington state launched the program in October 2014.

Six years later, about half of the state’s 309 parishes are participating in the program, which helps vulnerable families meet basic needs, provides one-on-one companionship and mentoring, and offers activities like play groups and parent support groups. Services are free of charge and open to people of all faiths and backgrounds.

Today, PREPARES has nearly 600 trained volunteers who served more than 7,200 families across the state during the year ending June 30, 2020.

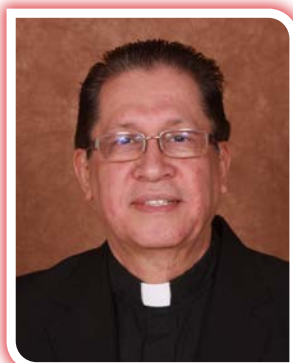
Now the bishops are launching a state-wide fundraising campaign, including a Sunday, February 14 special collection in all parishes, to help expand the reach of PREPARES into more parishes and communities. The program is a way Catholics can “walk our talk” about celebrating the gift of life and making sure that no child – born or unborn – is ever abandoned or alone, according to the campaign flyer.

The campaign is underwritten by Knights of Columbus Seattle Council 686, which means 100 percent of donations will go directly to serve families in need.

Learn more about PREPARES and donate at preparesforlife.org.

Note: Jean Parietti of Northwest Catholic Magazine in Seattle contributed to this report.

Father Chuy Ramirez, Senior Priest of Yakima Diocese, Passes Away



Father Chuy Ramirez

Reverend José de Jesús (Chuy) Ramírez, 69, a senior priest of the Diocese of Yakima in residence at Our Lady of the Desert Catholic Church in Mattawa, died December 3, after several weeks in hospice care in the parish rectory following a cancer diagnosis.

Father Chuy had been one of the first priests in the United States diagnosed with COVID-19 earlier this year, but had made a quick recovery and was of great help to the pastor, Father Alejandro Trejo, during his lengthy recovery from the coronavirus. Father Chuy’s sister, Martha Ramírez, had traveled

from Mexico to help care for him, along with others from the Mattawa parish and from St. Michael’s Church in Royal City, where Father Chuy last served as pastor.

Father Chuy was born in Santiago de Ixcuintla, Nayarit, Mexico, to Filiberto Ramírez and Raquel Curiel Bernal, the oldest of 10 children. For many years, Fr. Chuy’s father lived with him until his death in 2018.

After attending primary, secondary and preparatory school in Nayarit, Father Chuy attended the Instituto Tecnológico de Culiacán in Sinaloa,

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A Message from Bishop Tyson...

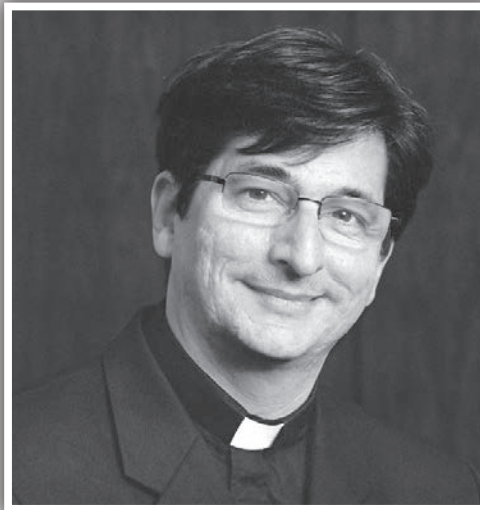
Dear Friends:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah 9:1). In pondering this image from Isaiah, Pope Francis focuses on the word “walking.”

“This verb makes us reflect on the course of history, that long journey which is the history of salvation, starting with Abraham, our father in faith,” the Holy Father said in a Christmas Eve homily. “From that time on, our identity as believers has been that of a people making its pilgrim way towards the promised land.” This promise points us to Jesus, the savior of the world. As our Emeritus Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI so succinctly noted: “God comes as a baby.”

Walking. One of the great joys for me as bishop is to see the many ways you walk with the Lord in your prayer and work with one another. PREPARES uniquely walks the journey of life with moms in need along with their children from the first moment of conception to the fifth birthday. We reach out to their dads, their families and their communities as well. Across the state, more than 600 volunteers have touched the lives of more than 7,200 families.

Most intensely, in the Yakima Diocese, we have 27 trained family companions who work personally as mentors to moms walking the journey for those first five crucial years. We have supported an additional 43 families with parenting support groups, “Play and Learn” support for parents with their children as well as other wraparound supports. We had an additional 84 events such as baby showers, traveling cribs, diaper drives – all to support the gift of the unborn. Nearly all of our parishes are engaged here in the Diocese of Yakima. When I visited Our Lady of the Desert in Mattawa for a special Sunday Mass elevating the many involved in parish ministries, each group brought a little item to help decorate the altar. The last group



Bishop Joseph Tyson

to come was the parish PREPARES volunteers. They brought up a real live baby for me to hold – a baby who had been helped and nurtured through PREPARES. Those words of Pope Benedict XVI take on a whole new meaning when someone brings you a child to hold. “God comes as a baby.”

Walking. Permit me to pivot to the person of St. Joseph. On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Pope Francis opened the “Year of St. Joseph.” Why? Parallel to the arrival of the angel announcing to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she is to give birth to the savior of the world, St. Joseph receives messages from angels through his dreams. Notably troubled by the pregnancy of his soon-to-be wife, he listens to the angel who tells him to have no fear, for it is through the Holy Spirit that his wife has conceived. In that same dream, he learns he is to name him Jesus “...because he will save his people from their sins.” Commenting on this passage, Pope Francis helpfully notes that “... for ancient peoples, to give a person or a thing a name as Adam did in the account in the Book of Genesis (cf. 2:19-21) was to establish a relationship.” In publicly naming

the soon-to-be-born Son of God, Jesus, St. Joseph names the relationship of Jesus to all of us. Jesus is the one who saves us. He saves us from sin. He saves us from darkness. Jesus is the one who walks with us.

Walking. How grateful we can be that even with the COVID-19 pandemic, Christmas gives us the assurance that God walks with us, just as he did with the Chosen People at the time of Isaiah. In turn, through our prayer, our worship and, as in the case of PREPARES, our works of mercy, we can walk with those around us.

Through our prayers this Christmas, may we walk with the many medical personnel as well as the many first responders working extra time and often with fatigue during this COVID-19 crisis. May our prayers accompany the many volunteers at PREPARES who work with our moms and their children born and unborn. May our prayers accompany our Catholic Charities staff as they work with so many in need seeking material, emotional and spiritual assistance through our many programs and services. May our prayers be with our clergy, our religious and our many lay catechists who keep our Church alive and vibrant during this time of COVID-19.

Walking. I am grateful to walk with all of you as bishop. I hope you discover that as you walk with your fellow parishioners across the Diocese of Yakima, you discover in the Christ-child a God who walks with you. May these words be your hope: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah 9:1).

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Father Chuy Ramirez Passes Away *Continued from page 1*

Mexico, where he received a bachelor’s degree in Industrial Engineering.

After discerning a vocation to the priesthood, he attended the Seminario de Monterrey, in Monterrey, Nueva León, Mexico. Wishing to serve the U.S. immigrant community, he studied at Bishop White Seminary in Spokane, then the Catholic University in Washington, D.C., where he met a younger student, now Yakima Bishop Joseph J. Tyson. He received a Master of Divinity degree from Catholic University and was ordained for the Diocese of Yakima in 1986.

Father Chuy became parochial vicar in

Grandview, then parochial vicar at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Moses Lake until 1992, when he was named pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Granger. In 2000, he became pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Royal City until 2019, when he moved to Mattawa as a senior priest. He was active in Encuentro Matrimonial, the Spanish Marriage Encounter ministry.

A funeral was held December 9 at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Moses Lake. Burial took place in Nayarit on December 18. Please keep Father Chuy and all of our deceased priests and religious in your prayers.

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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Deacon Cary Parnell, Formerly of Holy Apostles Parish, Dies

Deacon Cary A. Parnell, 76, of Anacortes, passed away on December 9, after a short battle with cancer.

He was born in 1944 and grew up in Onalaska, Washington, before joining the Navy. He graduated from the Brooks Institute of Photography and received his Masters degree.

Parnell was ordained to the permanent diaconate on Sept. 25, 2010 and assigned to Holy Apostles Parish in East Wenatchee until the move to Anacortes a few years ago.

He is survived by Katherine, his wife of

50 years; children, Jennifer and Megan; his mother, Marie; and his nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by his father, James Westley Parnell.

Parnell focused his life on people and how he could best serve and care for them, as a father and husband, a son, a friend, a photographer, or a deacon. He filled many shoes over his 76 years, and did so with a kind heart and willingness to listen and do what he could to make lives better.

He was laid to rest at Fernhill Cemetery with Funeral Honors and the Knights of

Columbus Fr. Treunet Council #3611 were in attendance as pall bearers and Honor Guard. Fr. Mel Strazicich, pastor of St. Mary Church, presided at the service.

Please keep Deacon Parnell in your prayers.



Deacon Cary Parnell

'Twelve Days of Christmas': Do You Know the Catholic Tradition Hidden Within? *Continued from page 4*

- Answers.**
- Three French hens.** The Theological Virtues are Faith, Hope and Charity. The gifts of the Magi were gold, frankincense and myrrh.
- Four calling birds.** The four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, with these four saints also referred to as the Four Evangelists. The Major Prophets were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel.
- Five golden rings.** The five wounds of Christ were to His hands or wrists, His two feet and to the side of His chest. The first five books of the Bible are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- Seven swans a-swimming.** The seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership and Mercy. The seven Corporal Works of Mercy are feeding the hungry, visiting the imprisoned, burying the dead, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, giving shelter to travelers and offering drink to the thirsty. The seven Works of Spiritual Mercy are instructing the ignorant, counseling the doubtful, admonishing the sinner, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving offenses willingly, comforting the afflicted and praying for the living and the dead.
- Eight maids a-milking.** The eight Beatitudes say, blessed are: those who are poor in spirit, they who mourn, the meek, they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure of heart, the peacemakers, and they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness.
- Nine ladies dancing.** The nine ranks of angel choirs are the: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels and Angels. The nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit are: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Goodness, Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty and Chastity.
- Ten lords a-leaping.** The 10 Commandments concern honoring the one true God, with no other gods before you; honoring His name; keeping holy the Lord's Day; honoring your mother and father; not killing; not committing adultery; not stealing; not lying; not coveting your neighbor's wife; and not coveting your neighbor's goods.
- Eleven pipers piping.** The 11 surviving/faithful Apostles were: Peter, Andrew, James (son of Zebedee), John, Phillip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus and Simon.
- Twelve drummers drumming.** The 12 Minor Prophets were: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The 12 points of belief of the Apostles Creed are: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; Jesus Christ, His only son; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary; suffered, was crucified, died and was buried; descended into Hell and on the third day rose from the dead; ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from thence, He shall come to judge the living and the dead; I believe in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints; forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and life everlasting. For 12 Apostles, see above list of 11 surviving/faithful Apostles and add Judas. The 12 Tribes of Israel included: Reuben; Simeon; Levi; Judah; Issachar; Zebulun; Joseph; Benjamin; Dan; Naphtali; Gad; and Asher.

Whew! That's a lot to remember, especially for children of the 1700s and 1800s!

*"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://cwatholicfoundation.org/>

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NEWS

From Around the Diocese

Novena for Life Set for January

All are invited to join in a nine-day Novena for Life, January 21-29, offered by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Prayers will focus on the protection of human life, with a daily reflection and “suggested actions to help build a culture of life.” There are both English and Spanish versions.

The Novena marks the anniversary of the January 22, 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling which legalized abortion across the United States. Individual days focus on subjects ranging from the value of every life, to responding to women with unplanned pregnancies, assisting them, empathy for those who have had abortions, the Church’s teachings on human life and changing our culture.

To join the Novena, visit <http://bit.ly/2WRhkLA>.

Mass for Life Is Slated

The dignity of human life from conception through natural death will be celebrated at the annual Mass for Life, scheduled for 11 a.m., Sunday, January 31, at St. Paul Cathedral in Yakima.

The Mass marks the 48th 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.

Reservations for the Mass for Life may be made at <https://www.stpaulyakima.org/>.

Communication Collection Set

Throughout the Diocese of Yakima on the weekend of January 16-17, parishes will take up a second collection for the Catholic Communication Campaign, which seeks to connect people with Christ through the internet, television, radio and print media.

Fifty percent of the funds collected stay in the Diocese to support local projects. In 2020, more than \$15,000 was given to parishes and schools to assist with livestreaming Masses and other communication efforts amidst the corona virus. The other 50 percent of donations received helps fund national communications efforts as well as projects in developing countries.

“By generously supporting this collection, you are spreading the Gospel and helping others encounter Christ every day,” said Bishop Joseph Tyson.

‘Twelve Days of Christmas’: Do You Know the Catholic Tradition Hidden Within?

You hear the song often, this time of year. However, few people know of the rich Catholic tradition hidden in the rather unusual melody, “The Twelve Days of Christmas.”

The song lyrics date back as far as 1780 according to a September 2020 article by Jill Gleeson appearing on the msn.com website. The “Twelve Days of Christmas” refer to the time span from Christmas Day to January 6, the feast of the Epiphany, when we mark the visit of the Magi to honor Jesus, she explains.

Catholic sources such as a 1999 newsletter of the Latin Mass Society (LMS) of Great Britain recall the time from the early 1500s to early 1800s when Catholics in England were not allowed to openly practice the Faith. Thus, some believe that the song was written as a coded tool to remember key elements of Catholicism.

The Catholic News Agency (CNA), in a website posting this month, refers to the song as a “catechism song for young Catholics.” The song has two levels of meaning: a sentimental ballad and “a code word for a religious reality” in each element of the song, the website suggests, citing a *Catholic Tradition* article; Father Calvin Goodwin, FSSP; and the publication, *Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals* by Ann Ball.



See how many of the following lists you know by heart! They comprise a good summary of some of the basics of our Faith. Details for the lists are at the end of the article, according to number:

All three sources agree that the **partridge in the pear tree**, presented on the first day of Christmas, is Jesus. The LMS and CNA go on to explain that a partridge will protect its young from danger by drawing predators to itself.

The **two turtle doves** are the Old and New Testaments, and the **three French hens** are the “theological virtues,” the three sources say. The Latin Mass Society publication adds that the **three hens** may also represent the gifts of the three Magi.

As the song builds to a crescendo, the fourth day of Christmas brings a gift of **four calling birds**, calling to mind the four gospels, CNA suggests. This may also refer to the four Major Prophets who announced the coming of Jesus and the four Evangelists who proclaimed Jesus’ message.

Have you noticed how the melody reaches a peak, with extra emphasis, for the gift of **FIVE GOLDEN RINGS**? This represents the five wounds of Christ suffered during the Passion and Crucifixion, as well as five key sacraments (Baptism, Penance, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation and the Sacrament of the Sick), reports the LMS article. It also may symbolize the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, the LMS and CNA agree.

The song continues with **six geese a-laying** (believed to be the six days of creation) and **seven swans a-swimming** (the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit). The LMS article also cites the seven works of Corporal Mercy and the seven works of Spiritual Mercy as possibilities.

As the song moves toward a conclusion, the gifts become even more improbable – on the surface. **Eight maids a-milking** (the eight Beatitudes). **Nine ladies dancing** (which the LMS says represent the nine ranks of angel choirs; the CNA, the nine Fruits of the Holy Spirit.) **Ten lords a-leaping** (the 10 Commandments).

Finally, we have **eleven pipers piping** (the eleven surviving/faithful Apostles who proclaimed Jesus’ Resurrection) and **twelve drummers drumming** (which sources alternately suggest could represent the 12 minor prophets of the Old Testament, the 12 points of belief of the Apostles Creed, the 12 Apostles, or perhaps the 12 Tribes of Israel).

On a lighter note, Gleeson says that the cost today of buying all of the gifts of The Twelve Days of Christmas, according to PNC Bank, would cost “a whopping \$38,993.53 for everything.”

However, the value of our Faith, and all of its rich traditions, is priceless. Merry Christmas!

Continued on page 3