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MAY 2022 *Letter*

NEWS

from Around the Diocese

Help Package Food for Haiti

Volunteers are needed on June 18 and 19 at the Pybus Market in Wenatchee to help package meals for the poor in Haiti, with members of St. Joseph Church in Wenatchee and Holy Apostles Church in East Wenatchee assisting.

A truckload of food, including large bags of beans and rice, will arrive at the Market that weekend. Volunteers will help sack components for individual meals. The food then will be sent to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and on to Haiti.

Plans call for packaging 100,000 meals at a cost of about 35 cents per meal. About 500 volunteers are needed for the project. Families are welcome to participate with children age eight and above. A DJ will play music to entertain those who come. Packing sessions will be between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., and 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 18; plus noon to 2 p.m. and 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., Sunday, June 19

Financial donations also are welcome, in person, mailed to CRUDEM, P.O. Box 804, Ludlow, MA 01056 or by visiting <https://www.classy.org/event/feed-haiti-packathons/e324604>.

For more information, contact Dr. Dale Peterson at (509) 679-4112 or email dale1228@nwi.net.

Women's Conference Set for June

Women from around the Inland Northwest are invited to attend a day of inspiration, faith and fellowship on Saturday, June 25, at St. Patrick's Church in Pasco.

The event will begin at 7:30 a.m. with registration, followed by 8 a.m. Mass. A keynote talk by Liz Kelly is scheduled for 9 a.m., followed by music, additional talks, motivational entertainment, workshops, shopping, lunch and personal time to pray. Confession and Adoration will be offered. The event will conclude at 4 p.m., with the option of attending the parish vigil Mass at 5 p.m.

Tickets are \$35 and may be purchased at Eventbrite.

You've Invited to Church Mission Congress

Make plans now to attend the upcoming Church Mission Congress, scheduled for Saturday, October 15 at Holy Family Church, 5315 Tieton Drive in Yakima.

The Congress will provide an opportunity to discuss where we stand as a Church, in the Synod process involving the three elements of "Communion, Participation and Mission."

For more information, or to volunteer to help, contact Valeria Flores at valeria.flores@yakimadiocese.org or call (509) 965-7117.

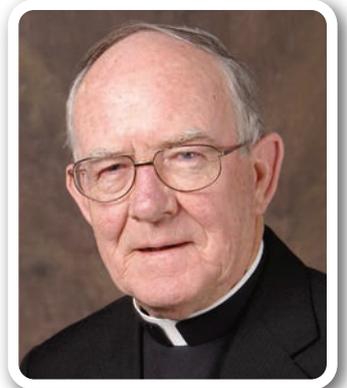
Father John Murtagh: The Warm Irish Brogue Is Silenced

Always ready to offer a blessing or a joke, in his warm Irish brogue and with a twinkle in his eye, the Reverend John Joseph Murtagh, pastor of Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Moxee, died Friday, May 20, in the parish rectory. He was 84 and had been suffering from cancer. Two family members from Ireland were with him along with parishioners from Holy Rosary who provided great care and comfort in his final days.

Father Murtagh was born in 1938 in Sligo, County Sligo, Ireland to James and Margaret (Brennan) Murtagh. He was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Father Patrick Murtagh, who died in the summer of 2019.

He is survived by brothers Charlie,

Francis and Dennis Murtagh, and sisters Catherine Brennan and Angela Murtagh, along with numerous nieces and nephews, including Catherine's son, John Joseph, who came with Angela to be with Father Murtagh and possibly accompany him home to Ireland for a final visit. Father Murtagh attended high school at the Marist College in



Father John Murtagh

Continued on page 2

Father Christian Melendez Brings Unique Talents to Diocesan Priesthood

By Christine Corbett Conklin

As Father Christian Melendez was ordained to the priesthood on May 27, he brought to the Diocese of Yakima a unique combination of education and talents. Melendez, 39, holds a Bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology and a Master's in Divinity. But wait, there's more!



Father Christian Melendez

This multi-talented individual also holds a second Bachelor's degree, plus a Master's and a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology.

"When I was four, I told my parents I wanted to be a priest or a psychologist," Father Melendez recalled. Turns out, he achieved both goals. "Right now, I feel that God always wanted me to be a priest, to serve Him as a psychologist,"

observed this native of Carolina, Puerto Rico, who was ordained in a beautiful Mass at St. Joseph Church in Wenatchee.

For a time, Melendez wasn't sure which vocation to pursue. After studying Clinical Psychology in Puerto Rico, he completed a year of Philosophy at the Seminario Conciliar in Madrid, Spain.

The time was not yet right, however. So he "discerned out" of the seminary and worked in Texas and Oregon for a time as a behavioral health consultant.

God was persistent in His call and, after meeting with Bishop Tyson, Melendez became a seminarian for the Diocese of Yakima in 2018. The meeting helped him realize "that I can do both" – serving as a priest and a psychologist. He went to Mundelein Seminary in Illinois for studies in

Continued on page 3

A Message from Bishop Tyson...

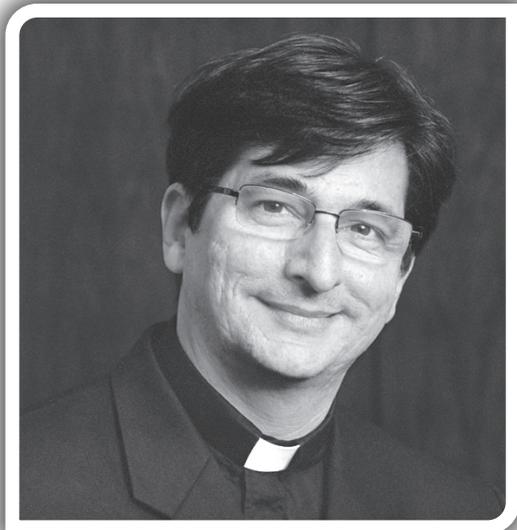
Dear Friends:

Our Annual Catholic Appeal can seem like an abstraction until you consider our sacramental life and the lives of our priests.

Our current issue of the *Central Washington Catholic* features two of our priests: Father John Murtagh who recently died after serving in so many of our parishes here in Central Washington, and Father Christian Melendez, who we just ordained to the priesthood.

What links the funeral of Father Murtagh and the ordination of Father Melendez? In one word: gratitude. I arrived within an hour of Father Murtagh's death at the rectory in Moxee. We prayed and blessed the body. When the funeral directors came, one of the parishioners who had been with Father Murtagh from Holy Rosary very emotionally thanked him and said his final good-bye to him.

Likewise, gratitude is one of the key features of Father Christian Melendez as he speaks about his family, his formators and his brother seminarians and priests as well as the parishioners who have shaped him. Similar to Father César Izquierdo and Father Jesús



Bishop Joseph Tyson

Mariscal, Father Melendez will have a "fifth year" of studies. Only this will not be at an academic institution. It will be here in the Diocese. Father Melendez will be working on his post-doctoral studies towards his Washington State license as a psychologist.

Father Melendez came to the Yakima Diocese as a resident therapist for the Yakima Valley Farm Worker Clinic, working in integrated behavioral health. As a psychologist, he would team up with medical personnel in

addressing patient health care issues. Our clergy are increasingly needing to seek assistance of skilled professionals in the psychological community since often the spiritual and the psychological dimensions need to be considered together in our pastoral care of parishioners.

As you read about them and about the many other events here in Central Washington, I want to again repeat my gratitude to each of you for your support of the Annual Catholic Appeal. Your support assisted us in helping Father Murtagh in his final days of priesthood. Likewise, your support brought Father Melendez into his first days of priesthood, too.

An attitude of gratitude. The very word "eucharist" stems from the Greek verb "to give thanks." Let us give thanks to the Lord our God for His many blessings in our lives and in our Church.

With every best wish and blessing!

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Father John Murtagh: The Warm Irish Brogue Is Silenced *Continued from page 1*

Athlone, Ireland. He joined the Marist Brothers and attended the De La Salle Training College from 1958-60. He became a seminarian for the Diocese of Yakima in 1963, and attended Waterford University College and All Hallows Seminary in Dublin, where he was ordained a deacon in 1968 and a priest in 1969. His first assignment was as associate pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Sunnyside. Recognizing the growing needs of the Spanish-language apostolate, Father Murtagh studied Spanish in Mexico for several weeks in the summer of 1971, then spent a year of immersion studies in 1975-76, returning to the United States able to speak and write fluently in Spanish.

In 1977-78, Father Murtagh served as administrator and then pastor of St. Henry's Parish in Grand Coulee. He was pastor of Christ the King Parish in Richland from 1978 to 1983; pastor of St. Andrew Parish in

Ellensburg from 1983 to April 1987, then pastor of Holy Family Parish in Yakima until June of 2003, when he began a sabbatical in Arizona.

Father Murtagh's final assignment began in 2004, preceded by major surgery to remove a cancerous kidney. He recovered well from the operation. The cancer eventually returned and began spreading, and he had been receiving treatment this past year while continuing to care for his parish.

Donations may be made in his memory to the Diocese of Yakima Seminarian Education Fund, or Priest Retirement Fund, P.O. Box 2189, Yakima, WA 98907-2189.

A Vigil service was held May 25 at Holy Rosary Catholic Church, followed by a Funeral Mass celebrated by Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson, Bishop of Yakima, on May 26, at Holy Family Catholic Church. A reception followed in Murtagh Hall. Father

Murtagh's body was returned to Ireland for another funeral Mass and burial in County Sligo, Ireland. Please pray for him and his family.

Central Washington Catholic

MAY 2022 • Volume 63 • Issue 5

PUBLISHER

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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.

Father Christian Melendez Brings Unique Talents to Diocesan Priesthood *Continued from page 1*

Theology, graduating May 7, with his requirements for the priesthood completed.

For his ordination, family and friends flew in from Puerto Rico, Argentina, Panama, Chicago and Connecticut. Father Melendez wore a vestment and used a custom chalice that each featured a design of three hearts, symbolizing his dedication in 2020 to the Holy Family.

As he begins his priesthood, he wants to emphasize that same gift of “heart” in

all he does.

“Confession will be one of my sacraments that I will treasure for sure,” he observed. With all of the emptiness in the world today, “I think people are in need of feeling something, of feeling God’s love I want them to know that God loves them. I intend to embrace God’s love and mercy in the difficulties a person is having.”

Father Melendez truly believes that he has found the best of two worlds.

“I’m doing what God wants me to do and also what I want to do,” he said. “It gives me joy and happiness.”

After some vacation time in June, Father Melendez will serve as a visiting priest on weekends while living at St. Paul Cathedral Parish in Yakima and studying full time to complete the many requirements to be licensed in Washington State as a clinical psychologist. Please keep him and all of our clergy and religious in your prayers.

How Well Do You Know The Basics of Your Catholic Faith? *Continued from page 4*

5.) In which part of the Mass are the Epistle and Gospel read?

- a. Processional
- b. Novena
- c. Consecration
- d. Liturgy of the Word

6. What is the vessel called which displays the sacred host at Benediction?

- a. Chalice
- b. Tabernacle
- c. Monstrance
- d. Illuminati

7. What does the word “catholic” mean?

- a. Holy
- b. Universal
- c. Mystical
- d. Divine

8. What is the small box which is used to carry the consecrated host to shut-ins?

- a. Pyx
- b. Purificator
- c. Alb
- d. Treasury

9. What is the first Luminous Mystery of the Holy Rosary?

- a. The Birth of Christ
- b. The Baptism of Jesus
- c. The Annunciation
- d. The Presentation in the Temple

Answers

- 1.) a. The Holy See; 2.) c. Jesus Christ; 3.) b. ciborium; 4.) d. sacristy; 5.) d. Liturgy of the Word; 6.) c. monstrance; 7.) b. universal; 8.) a. pyx; 9.) b. The Baptism of Jesus.

Thanks to the “Roman Catholicism Trivia Questions/Fun Trivia” website from which these questions and answers were adapted. Check this site for hundreds of other questions on which to quiz yourself.



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Don't Miss Catholic Youth Camp

Time is running out to register for the third annual Cor Christi Catholic youth camp, June 19-24 at Lazy F Camp in Ellensburg. Formerly known as Central Washington Catholic Youth Camp, the session is open for young people entering fifth grade to those graduating from high school in 2022.

This is a quality, week-long summer camp which will include daily Mass and Rosary, Adoration, Reconciliation, faith talks, plus the presence of priests and sisters. There also will be songs and games, swimming, inner tubing, a climbing wall, zipline, and campfire every night. This year’s theme is “Ocean of Mercy.”

Register now to ensure an available spot. Go to the new website, CorChristi.net/camp, or call Director Michael Drollman for details at (509) 699-1235.

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Where Does The Church Stand On the Moral Issue of Abortion?

As the topic of abortion takes center stage in news headlines across the nation, what's a Catholic to think? The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website offers some guidance as tensions rise on this important moral issue, and many claims are made in the public arena.

What about the controversy over the Supreme Court potentially reversing the 1973 Roe v. Wade court decision which made abortion legal in the United States? In May, following the abortion decision leak from the Court, USCCB leaders asked Catholics "to pray for the U.S. and each branch of the government, that Roe and Planned Parenthood v. Casey (another decision upholding abortion) be overturned ... as the church continues to walk with mothers and families in need, and continues to promote alternatives to abortion, and seeks to create a culture of life."

What about slogans such as "my body, my choice"? In an earlier article on "Mary and Women's History Month," the USCCB noted that, "... slogans of the pro-abortion movement such as 'it's my body, my choice' ... popularized a false philosophy, rejecting the reality that we are not our own but were made

by God in his image, male and female ... Christian humanist feminism – the kind called for by John Paul II – doesn't pit women against men or their unborn children ..."

What about abortion at a very early stage of pregnancy? "God loves each human life from the instant of his or her conception and entrusts this gift to the protection of a mother and father. Abortion ends the life of a child and offends God. It also deeply wounds the women and men involved," states the USCCB on its website.

Isn't abortion healthcare? "In recent years, pro-abortion groups have radically altered their messaging strategy ... (claiming) that abortion is simply essential health care for women," the USCCB noted in a message last year. "... But this claim is contrary to the facts. Abortion is a marginal practice, neither performed nor accepted by most health care providers; it does not improve (and can even jeopardize) women's life and health ..."

What about abortion when a woman has been assaulted? A USCCB website report states that, "A survey of U.S. women's reasons for choosing abortion found that only one percent reported (assault) as a reason and less



than one half of one percent reported that (assault) was the main reason"... In addition, a study "found that the majority of those who had abortions (under these circumstances) regretted having done so and said the abortion caused them additional problems. By contrast, among those who delivered a child conceived (in these circumstances) satisfaction was higher and none stated any regret for having given birth. Abortion, therefore, is not an inevitable choice. The loving support of family, friends and counselors can make a huge difference."

In short, compassion, love and care for both mother and child: it's what the Catholic Church advocates, just as we see in our own PREPARES program in the Diocese of Yakima.



Deacon Agapito Gonzalez, Jr.

Deacon 'Speedy' Gonzalez Dies

A funeral was held on Sunday, May 22 at Queen of All Saints Church in Warden for Deacon Agapito "Speedy" Gonzalez, Jr., with Father Ricardo Villarreal presiding.

Gonzalez, 59, died May 16, after 18 years of service as a deacon. He suffered a heart attack after being hospitalized for a medical procedure. He is survived by his wife, Nena; his children, Erica, Roly, Speedy Jr., Lety, Cecilia and Christian; six grandchildren and one great-

grandchild.

Deacon Gonzalez was described as having "a tremendous influence on so many people, guiding them towards Jesus through parables." He was "a true testament of what a Catholic should be; it seemed that no matter what someone was going through, he always had the right words to lift your spirit up!"

Please keep Deacon Gonzalez and his family in your prayers.

How Well Do You Know The Basics of Your Catholic Faith?

It's time once again to refresh your knowledge on some basics of the Catholic Faith. Try the following quiz to challenge yourself:

- 1.) What is the area called over which the Pope has jurisdiction, as its bishop?
 - a. The Holy See
 - b. St. Peter's Square
 - c. The Vatican
 - d. Rome
- 2.) Who founded the Catholic Church?
 - a. The Apostles
 - b. St. Peter
 - c. Jesus Christ
 - d. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

- 3.) What is the vessel called which holds the hosts at Communion?
 - a. Surplice
 - b. Ciborium
 - c. Patten
 - d. Chasuble

- 4.) What is the room called where vestments and sacred vessels are kept?
 - a. Vestibule
 - b. Lectionary
 - c. Sanctuary
 - d. Sacristy

