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Newsletter

Walking in the Footsteps of Mary: Living Life As a Devoted Mother

By Christine Corbett Conklin

For Catholics, especially mothers and other women trying to lead a holy life in uncertain times, the month of May offers special inspiration. The coming month is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, who set the ultimate example of a mother's love and sacrifice.

The Christian custom of dedicating May to our Blessed Mother began at the end of the 13th century, according to catholicculture.org. It was a way for the Church to "Christianize" secular feasts of the time.

Today, it seems we need the guidance and inspiration of Mary more than ever. With the constant bombardment of messages from a secular culture, a mother's work truly is never done! And that is especially true for many women who work outside the home and also try to raise a family, sometimes as a single parent.

"You can work twice as much trying to be father and mother," observed Juana Rodriguez president of the Guadalupanas of St. Aloysius Parish in Toppenish. For all women, Our Lady is a role model with "so much patience and so much love, especially for her child," Rodriguez says.

"We need to have good role models out there in the world today," added Janice Bommersbach, president of the Young Ladies Institute (YLI), Yakima Institute #96.

"When you watch the news, (you think) 'What can mothers do? What can women do?'" said Burma Arnoux, president of the St. Kateri Tekakwitha Circle in White Swan. "I think mothers have a very big role in what goes on in the world!"

To strengthen their Catholic Faith and support each other in the journey toward Heaven, women across the Diocese of Yakima are joining together in prayer, study and service programs.

"We gather together to pray for each other and we try to help each other out," said Rodriguez of the Toppenish Guadalupanas group, which as its name indicates, is dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. "We're like a big family." Group fundraisers also help to buy needed items for the church.

"We're working to better Catholic women and to better society in general," said Bommersbach, referring to the Yakima YLI. Members pray together, including personal intentions; raise funds for seminarian education and Catholic school scholarships; and assist with community projects.

"You can be a good Christian, a good Catholic



The Blessed Virgin Mary: a loving role model.
-Photo courtesy of turnbacktgod.com

and still have a wonderful life," she contends.

For a mother, an important part of that life is guiding children to "learn more about Jesus and the saints," Arnoux suggests. "It helps knowing that you're not alone, that you've got a place to go to (Church), and someone to talk to: Jesus, Blessed Mother, St. Kateri," she said.

The St. Kateri guild spent some 30 years praying for the canonization of their patroness, which occurred in 2014. Now, as some of the members are aging or facing health challenges, they invite new members to help re-energize their good work.

Gathering with other women can be a real blessing, says Jill Schell, a co-leader of the Women of Grace program at Blessed Sacrament Church in Grandview.

"We gain so much wisdom from the experiences of the women of all ages in the group, from their different perspectives," she said. And, "Mother Mary is at the forefront of the study."

Women of Grace meet in eight weekly sessions to pray, discuss readings on topics ranging from

the Eucharist to forgiveness, then watch a related video.

"It increases your Faith... listening to the experiences of women who have had personal experiences with Christ," agreed Dot Redmann, who serves as facilitator of The Saints class at Christ the King Church in Richland.

Each year, The Saints class meets weekly for 15 weeks, praying and studying about a saint such as St. Therese of Lisieux or St. Benedict. (The group even draws a few male attendees!)

"Our greatest challenge today for young women is to respect life," suggested Redmann, who also is active in sidewalk counseling for women considering abortion. (The Diocese of Yakima recently launched the PREPARES program to assist women and children up to five years of age.)

Alice Goodwin, 85, regent for the Catholic Daughters of America (CDA), Court Wenatchee #255, remembers a "simpler" day and age of raising children. Her family, including six children, used to spend time together in activities such as working in the garden or going camping, she says.

Today, in the midst of societal challenges, women can still have a positive influence on the community through groups like CDA, she believes. CDA members pray, encourage each other and raise funds for priests' retirement and religious education books, for example.

In the home, there's also much you can do with your children, Bommersbach advises.

"Start praying with your children when they're young. Even when you're holding them, you could say a Hail Mary or the guardian angel prayer," she suggested. And keep religion in special occasions such as Christmas, teaching the value of faith and sharing, she adds.

Above all, "trust God, Jesus and Mary that they have a plan for your life. I think, sometimes, we forget to do that in chaotic times," Bommersbach said. "Mary really had to trust. She didn't know what being the Mother of God was all about."

Our ultimate goal is clear, she adds.

"What we're all aiming for is to be up there with Mary."

If you're interested in finding a Catholic women's group in your area, contact your local parish, visit the diocesan website at yakimadiocese.net or attend a parish ministry fair to learn more. There are many other groups for prayer, Bible study and service not mentioned here.

A Message from Bishop Tyson...

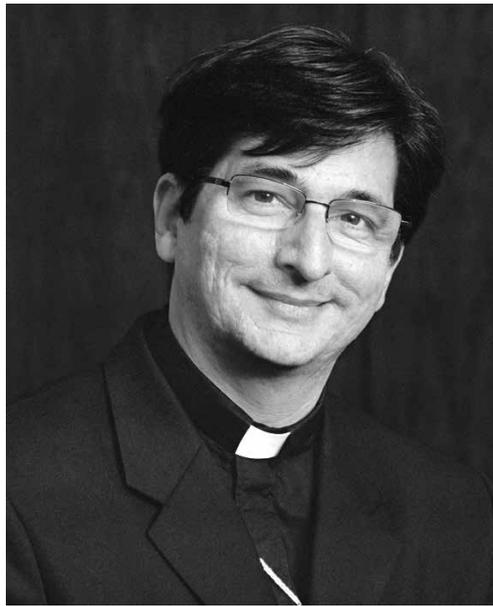
Dear Friends:

One of the points I highlight when teaching Christology in our Diocese of Yakima Magnificat program is that our truths about Jesus point to truths about Mary. Thus, we title Mary as Mother of God and Mother of Jesus because Jesus is fully human and fully divine.

We honor this "motherhood" of Mary in the coming month of May by highlighting "motherhood" in this issue of the Central Washington Catholic. Deacon Mikhail Alnajjar's pilgrimage to the Holy Land reminds us of the way we speak of Church as a "Mother." Indeed, in Spanish we always refer to her as "she." Our blessing of the Mother Joseph Villa speaks of the many ways that the Diocese of Yakima as well as our affiliated Catholic Charities Housing Services is a kind of "mother" for those needing a home.

Our new president of Catholic Charities, Darlene Darnell, has been instrumental in the oversight of so many family services that support mothers in their families. Most recently she's been deeply involved with Syndee Saucedo in developing the mother-mentoring component of our PREPARES program that walks the journey of life with a mother and her child from the first moment of conception up to the fifth year of the child's life.

It's important that we not take this Marian



Bishop Joseph Tyson

month of May for granted. I was reminded of this last summer during our "Quo Vadis" retreat. It's the retreat we do for young men, ages 13-19, introducing the idea of priesthood as a possible vocation in their life.

One of the activities we had was a game called "Catholic Jeopardy." It's a parody of the TV game show "Jeopardy" and like the TV game show gives "answers" so that contestants could ask "questions." The "answer" to this

"Catholic Jeopardy" question given to these young men was this: "This month is known as the main Marian month in the Catholic Church."

Because the vast majority of the retreatants came from families of Mexican heritage, they were stunned to learn that the answer was not "December." I was sitting in the back of the room during the game and listened to a little pack of 9th graders talk amongst each other in disbelief: "It's not December?!" one young man responded incredulously. "Our Lady of Guadalupe's in December and she's shown as about to give birth to Jesus," another noted.

Given the crush of activity and the all-night vigils in honor of Mary during the December 12th celebrations of "Our Lady of Guadalupe," it's easy to grasp their surprise. But this was a chance to talk about how May as the Marian month builds up to the May 31st celebration of the Feast of the Visitation.

Of course this Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary also holds personal significance for me as well. It's the day I was installed as bishop of Yakima five years ago and thus highlights for me the Marian month of May. I've grateful to be with all of you and grateful for this issue that highlights "motherhood" in our midst.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Deacons Daniel and Peter Steele to be Ordained at Cathedral

All are invited to a very special diocesan event, May 27, as Deacon Daniel Steele and Deacon Peter Steele are ordained as priests.

The sacramental rite will begin at 7 p.m. at St. Paul Cathedral in Yakima, with Bishop Joseph Tyson presiding.

A reception will follow in the Assembly Place next to the church.

The two Steele brothers became "brothers in Christ" last May as they were ordained as transitional deacons at St. Joseph Church in Kennewick. They are completing four years of theology studies at Mundelein Seminary in Chicago. They plan to add a fifth year of studies for advanced degrees over the next few summers.

Please keep Deacons Peter and Daniel Steele in your prayers as they take this long-awaited step into the priesthood.

Mother Joseph Villa Dedicated in Granger

Mother Joseph Villa, a 51-unit affordable housing development serving farmworker families in Granger, was dedicated April 15 by Catholic Charities Housing Services (CCHS). The ceremony included a blessing by Yakima Bishop Joseph Tyson.

The project's namesake, Mother Joseph, was a member of the Sisters of Providence. She was among the first architectural planners in the Washington territory, instrumental in building many hospitals, schools and orphanages, including Yakima's first hospital. Providence leaders Sister Jo Ann Showalter, SP and Sister Josie Ramac, SP, who have ministered in the Diocese in the past, were on hand for the ceremony.

The Villa includes 17 two-bedroom and 34 three-bedroom units, including several units specially adapted for handicapped individuals. Tenants are families earning 30, 40 or 50 percent of area median income.

The complex also has a community building, restrooms accommodating those with disabilities, a computer lab, media centers, early childhood education space, strip kitchen and social hall. Walkways and units are wheelchair accessible. Other special features include a "green" design and many energy-efficient components.

The Villa was funded by the Washington State Department of Commerce Housing Trust Fund and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program. Wells Fargo Bank provided the construction loan.

CCHS develops and owns affordable, quality multi-family rental housing serving very low- and low-income individuals and families throughout Central Washington. In addition, CCHS coordinates and provides Resident Services programming at its multi-family housing sites and offers housing counseling and home ownership opportunities to first-time homebuyers through its "sweat equity" programs.

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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Darlene Darnell Named President and CEO of Catholic Charities

Darlene Darnell has been appointed President and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Yakima. She succeeds John Young, who retired in December after 19 years at the helm of the organization.

Darnell, who has served as Vice President of Catholic Charities since 2009, began work with Catholic Family & Child Service (CFCS) here in 1985 as a mental health therapist. She went on to become Clinical Director of CFCS, and then, in 1996, was named Director of the agency.

In 2003, Darnell took on the responsibility of overseeing the entire CFCS network of the Diocese, with offices in Yakima, Wenatchee and the Tri-Cities.

"I'm very pleased that Darlene has accepted this appointment," said Bishop Joseph Tyson, who leads the Board of Members of the Corporation. "Her deep knowledge of Catholic teaching and outstanding record of service with the agency will help maintain and grow the work of Catholic Charities."

Very Rev. Thomas Champoux, pastor of Christ the King Church in Richland and Chairman of the Catholic Charities Board of Trustees, agreed.

"In 1985, when we first hired Darlene Darnell, we knew we had found a really gifted person: intelligent, well-educated, skilled in mental health treatment, interested in working with families (as well as with individuals), and a woman with a truly good heart," he said. "Darlene has continued to grow in her long service with us, and we were delighted when she accepted this appointment."

In her role as Catholic Charities President and CEO, Darnell also will be President of Catholic Charities Housing Services and the St. Vincent Centers.

"I am privileged and honored to take on the role as President and CEO of Catholic Charities," Darnell said. "Catholic Charities has a long-standing mission to serve those most in need within our Central Washington communities. Through our services, we can extend the love of Christ to those who are hurting, alone, and many times have nowhere else to turn."



Darlene Darnell

Catholic End-of-Life Planning Seminars Scheduled

Death is a subject that most people don't like to discuss, but communicating final wishes to loved ones is vital, especially when we do not know where family members will be in terms of faith. To help make decisions while healthy and able, and ensure that personal choices are honored, a series of seminars is scheduled in Central Washington.

The seminars will include presentations by a funeral director, priest, estate planning attorney, estate planning accountant, investment planner, and emergency services representative. Attendees will receive will, living will, power of attorney, healthcare directive, and funeral planning documentation, among other resources.

Free to the public and scheduled for 1 to 4 p.m., the seminars will be held May 18 at Christ the King Parish in Richland; May 24 at St. Pius X Parish in Quincy; May 25 at St. Joseph Parish in Yakima; and May 26 at St. Joseph Parish in Wenatchee.

The sessions are sponsored by the Central Washington Catholic Foundation in conjunction with Catholic Charities and the parishes. To register, call 509-972-3732 or email nprobst@cwatholicfoundation.org.

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NEWS

from Around the Diocese

Corpus Christi Procession Planned –

Holy Rosary Parish in Moxee will celebrate Corpus Christi Sunday, May 29, with a procession from the church to Holy Rosary Cemetery.

The procession will begin at about noon, following the 11 a.m. Mass, and conclude with a parish barbeque and picnic.

Join In Living Rosary For Life —

A Living Rosary for life will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, May 29, at Holy Family Church in Yakima.

All are welcome for this Memorial Day weekend prayer gathering. A huge rosary will be stretched out across church grounds, with one or two people holding each “bead,” and everyone joining in prayer.

Those attending should gather in front of the main entrance of Holy Family at 5315 Tieton Drive.

The Knights of Columbus, Ahtanum Mission Council #6097, are organizing the event.

Memorial Day Mass Is Scheduled —

The annual Memorial Day Mass is planned for 11 a.m., May 30, at Calvary Cemetery, 1405 South 24th Avenue in Yakima.

Monsignor Robert Siler will celebrate the Mass, which is offered for the souls of all buried in Calvary Cemetery and other deceased loved ones. Those attending are welcome to bring folding chairs since seating will not be provided.

After Mass, those who wish may proceed to the Memorial for the Unborn at the cemetery where prayers will be offered for babies lost through miscarriage.

Many Join Mission Cleanup, Planting —

Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts and members of the Troops of St. George joined together April 9 for a cleanup and planting project at St. Joseph Mission at Ahtanum.

Brush was cleared, raking was done and 48 Heritage apple trees, grafted from the original, 147-year-old mission trees, were planted. Hamburgers and hotdogs provided fuel for the workers.

The Saturday event concluded with Mass celebrated by Very Rev. Michael Ibach in the mission chapel.

About 80 people participated, including Knights of Columbus and Boy Scouts from around the Yakima area and Tri-Cities, as well as the new Troops of St. George father-son group based at Holy Family Parish in Yakima. Ron Gamache, a Knight from Council #6097, oversaw the tree-planting project.

Holy Land Tour Gives Color to Bible Stories

By Ellen Tomaszewski, Christ the King Parish, Richland

“After this trip, Bible stories will go from black and white to full color,” our local Christian guide, Nadar, told us. Two days later, we were chugging in a boat across the Sea of Galilee where Jesus spent most of his ministry. As our group of 42 pilgrims (most of whom came from the Tri-Cities) sang and prayed together, I realized that on this water Jesus had walked and calmed the storm. And, as promised, that story and many more grew more colorful for me.

Our pilgrimage, led by Deacon Mikhail Alnajjar, from Christ the King Church in Richland, and his son, Brian, spanned eight days in February. Our first touring day

included a visit to the Hill Country Chapel of the Visitation and the shrine of St. John the Baptist. From there, the bus took us south and east past groves of palm trees, barren desert and mountains (the desert of Jesus’ temptation), to Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan River -- thought to be where Jesus was baptized.

Another day, we traveled to the low soot-covered shepherds’ cave and church where I was reminded how God invited the lowest members of society to His greatest miracle: the Incarnation. Beneath the Church of the Nativity our group entered another small cave thought to be the birthplace of Jesus and sang Silent Night - a blessed, awe-filled moment.

Leaving Bethlehem (which is in Palestine), our bus went through a checkpoint in the 40-foot high wall separating Palestine from Israel. Guards with guns entered and searched our bus, but we saw no fighting and felt safe throughout the trip.

In the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, our group entered a huge courtyard where army youth carrying automatic weapons patrolled. We joined Jewish men and women as they prayed at the old temple wall and stuffed our prayer intentions, on tiny slips of paper, into rock crevices. Visiting the excavated Pool of Bethesda site breathed life into the story of the crippled man who waited 37 years for healing there. A member of our group, Tracy Giles, said, “It was a special moment to be there. We saw what was going on [at the excavated site], and how Jesus fit into that...I can imagine it now.” Beyond the temple, Nadar took us to the Southern Wall excavations and the Teaching Steps where Jesus spoke outside the Temple.

About Jerusalem, group member Dany Kitzman said, “The proximity of everything surprised me. Things were so close to each other.” This was true for many sites. The Church of Gethsemane was not too far from the temple, for instance. It is built over a huge yellow rock, where, it’s said, Jesus sweated blood on the night of his betrayal. Just down the hill stands the High Priest Caiaphas’ house. It contains a deep hole used as a dungeon where Jesus was probably interned overnight.

On our last day in Jerusalem, the weather turned cold – perfect for praying the Stations of the Cross. In a chilly downpour, our group traveled the narrow Via Dolorosa (Way of Sorrows), stopping to pray each station. The last three stations were located in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. There, up a flight of stairs, part of the rock hill of Golgotha still exists. Further back in the church, only three people at a time could enter the rock tomb, where, it was believed, Jesus was actually laid. After that experience, I sat for quite a while, filled with sorrow for Jesus’ death, and my part in it. I felt so thankful for the gift of salvation.

Going to the Holy Land impacted every pilgrim in a unique way, and each was touched by different aspects of the experience. The youngest pilgrim on the trip, eight-year-old Maria Chmura, said, “Seeing all the places in the Holy Land showed me the Bible is real. It happened, and I was just where it happened!” Rose Collado said, “The areas are so vivid in our minds. It makes me appreciate my Catholic Faith even more.”

Of the tour, Deacon Mikhail said, “It was a pleasure for me to see so many people from my church family reach new heights as we journeyed in our faith lives. And what a blessing it was for all of us to have companions Father Richard Sedlacek and Father Steve Werner on our journey to help us be able to celebrate daily Mass to provide us with Jesus’ ultimate spiritual nourishment.”

Deacon Mikhail will host another trip to the Holy Land in February 2017. Anyone interested may contact him at 509-627-4680 or e-mail dmikhail925@gmail.com.



*The pilgrimage group at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
-Photo courtesy of Deacon Mikhail Alnajjar.*