



CENTRAL WASHINGTON CATHOLIC

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NOVEMBER 2018 *Letter*

Canonization of Archbishop Romero is 'Intensely Personal' for Wenatchee Pastor —

By Christine Corbett Conklin



Father Osmar Aguirre attended the recent canonization in Rome of Archbishop Oscar Romero, Pope Paul VI and five other persons.

For Father Osmar Aguirre, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Wenatchee, attending the recent canonization of Archbishop Oscar Romero in Rome was intensely personal.

The October 14 ceremony, which also included the canonization of Pope Paul VI, two Italian priests, two religious sisters from Germany and Spain, and a young Italian man, brought back many memories of Father Aguirre's own experiences in war-torn Central America.

Archbishop Romero was from El Salvador, where Father Aguirre was born and raised. Shortly after the Archbishop was shot and killed in March 1980, while he said Mass at the Church of the Divine Providence in San Salvador, Father Aguirre fled the country at the age of 16 and became a political refugee in the United States.

Father Aguirre had met Romero on numerous occasions.

"He was my bishop before he

became archbishop," Aguirre recalled. "He was a very simple man, a very devotional man, a very traditional man, too." Aguirre describes Romero as "very shy at the beginning" and often dressed in a traditional, long black cassock. As time went on, the Archbishop became more outspoken and politically active, however.

"He felt that he couldn't be silent," in the face of "military crimes" and guerrilla warfare, Aguirre recalls. "He wanted to stop the violence."

Romero impressed Father Aguirre in that "he never thought of himself or what benefits he would get. He was only concerned with the needs of others You could see that, first and foremost, he was a man of prayer." Father Aguirre credits Romero and the late Father Ronald Patnode with inspiring him to become a priest.

As violence filled El Salvador, Father Aguirre experienced the death of "half of (his high school) class" and was himself arrested and held for seven days for the crime of gathering with others in church to teach his fellow countrymen to read by using the Bible. Within several months of Romero's death and Aguirre's attendance at the funeral, Aguirre's

older brother was killed. Aguirre then left the country with a friend, coming to the United States.

Attending the canonization ceremony in October, Aguirre was part of a crowd of over 100,000 people, including some 10,000 people from El Salvador, he said. The day before the canonization, Father Aguirre and Father Jesus Mariscal attended a play on Archbishop Romero at St. Ignatius Church in Rome.



Banners featuring pictures of the new saints were displayed at the Vatican.

"At first, it was more like it transports you to the times I was down there. It kind of revived the experiences of violence," Aguirre said. Then, the wonder of the experience took over.

"It was powerful to realize that he (Saint Oscar Romero) would be someone who would reach out to the whole world," he said. "He would be a blessing and an intercessor for the universal church."

Learn more about becoming a saint on page 3!

A Message from Bishop Tyson...

Dear Friends:

The Gospel of Luke speaks of how Mary “pondered.” She not only pondered the message of the angel but as we know she pondered the life of Jesus day by day and year by year. Indeed, the devotional prayer of the Rosary is one that invites us to ponder the life of Jesus as did Mary.

This capacity to “ponder” might be the best launching point for grasping what occurred during the annual November meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Baltimore.

As you know, we bishops were set to review some national norms regarding accountability of bishops as well as how to handle allegations of sexual abuse against bishops. We also were set to adopt a code of conduct for bishops.

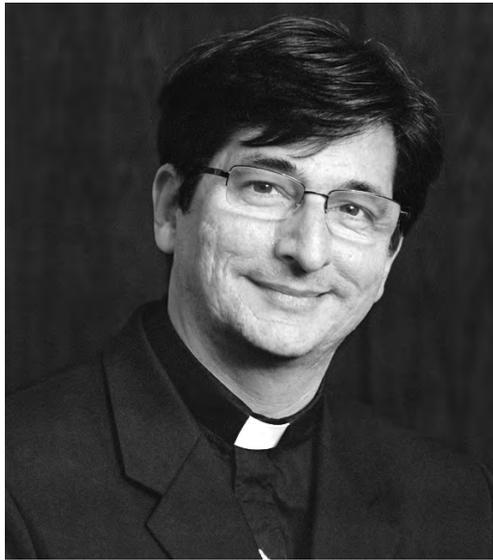
On the regional agenda, I and other bishops were raising the question of posting names of abusers on diocesan websites. About half the dioceses in the United States have done so. But there are lots of different kinds of lists. Offenders with the same profile might be listed in one diocese and not another. Even more, while some victims and survivors will feel validated by seeing the names posted, other victims and survivors may feel re-traumatized by seeing the names again. These points were all noted during one of our discussions.

Taken together, given the time and expense of an independent file review that precedes a posting of names, I was hoping for some common standards that would draw on best practices rather than the current hodgepodge of standards and practices we now have.

So, you can imagine our surprise as bishops when at the opening of the November meeting we learned that the Holy See asked us to delay voting on our code of conduct and standards of accountability for bishops.

What are we to make of this? I think perhaps the larger universal Church is calling us to ponder more – as did Mary. Indeed, the Holy Father himself asked us not to meet at all this November for any business. Rather, he asked us to replace our agenda with a retreat – a discernment time of prayer and of pondering prior to taking up any administrative action on the sexual abuse crisis.

Given the media-saturated nature of the English-speaking world, such a proposal was not deemed appropriate. Bishops were concerned this might be read as stalling or inaction on our part. We also were adopting a pastoral letter on racism



Bishop Joseph Tyson

(a topic I’ll touch on in my December column).

But our USCCB leaders agreed to the idea of a retreat in January which is now scheduled. Even more, the Holy Father is summoning the leaders of all the bishop conferences from around the world in February for a coordinated response to the sexual abuse crisis. We were prepared to meet all the requests from Pope Francis on a different time line. We would take action in November and ponder in prayer in January and our conference leadership would meet with other conference leaders in February.

Clearly, the direct and unprecedented intervention by the Holy See showed that this was not deemed acceptable. Ponder first. Pray first. Discern first. Then out of this, act. Act in union with the entire Church and not just with other American Catholics. That’s the clear message from the Holy Father.

How have I come to accept this? A casual comment over lunch – and not necessarily positive – unlocked the conflict for me. One befuddled bishop suggested that it might be helpful for the larger church if the U.S. church developed a template prior to the February discussions.

But this might be precisely what the Holy See does not want. It’s where we can all feel the rub of being part of a global and universal church that doesn’t meet our expectations, on our time line.

It seems what the larger church is asking of us is to “ponder,” and to “ponder” at a pace in union with others facing the same challenges raised by the sexual abuse scandal.

So what is next? The fact that we passed no national norms does not mean

local bishops and local dioceses cannot act. Indeed, it’s a little-known fact that the Diocese of Yakima – unique among many other dioceses – already has a protocol on how to handle allegations against a bishop. That is still in place.

I would also add that every week since the August crisis broke, I have communicated about it with our pastors. We spent our October Yakima priest convocation in prayer and reflection on the topic of sexual abuse in the church. Abbot Peter Eberle, OSB, spent a day working with us on the psalms of lamentation found in the Liturgy of the Hours that we pray for you and for the entire church around the world. He spent time on the topic of the cross – so key in our preaching – and so present in the lives of the victims.

I will be looking carefully at how I as the local bishop can adopt as policy and canon law for the local church much of the work we would have adopted as bishops. I will be consulting with the pastors as well as our Diocesan Lay Advisory Board, getting their insights. And as new insights come from the Holy See after February, then we will make the necessary adjustments.

As we prepare for Christmas, it’s time to ponder as did Mary. “God comes as a baby,” noted Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI. The U2 rocker Bono once suggested that it was “artistically appropriate” that God is born in the midst of “straw poverty.” It seems that if we look to Mary and ponder as she did, we will discover Christ anew in the sometimes messy stable we call “Church.”

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

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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

Rejoice and Be Glad: Becoming Saints

Unless an exception is made by the Holy Father, the process for being beatified and then canonized a saint can begin no sooner than five years after a person known for his or her holiness has died. It includes an extensive review of the person's life and at least one miracle attributed to the person's intercession.

In his March 2018 Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad: On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*, Pope Francis noted that the Church's

processes for beatification and canonization "recognize the signs of heroic virtue, the sacrifice of one's life in martyrdom, and certain cases where a life is constantly offered for others, even until death. This shows an exemplary imitation of Christ, one worthy of the admiration of the faithful."

He also reminded us of the important teaching from the second Vatican Council that "Strengthened by so many and such great means of

salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord – each in his or her own way – to that perfect holiness by which the Father himself is perfect."

Pope Francis' reflections on the universal call to holiness included a deep reading of the Beatitudes, along with his customary wit and many practical suggestions. The document can be accessed online through the following link: <https://goo.gl/jtqpvx>.

Collection to Benefit Catholic Charities

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 their donations to the Christmas Collection.

As the social service arm of the Catholic Church, Catholic Charities brings hope to life. Catholic Charities serves people throughout the life cycle – from walking the journey with

families facing unplanned pregnancies to helping the frail elderly live independently in their own homes.

Since the agency was established in 1949, programs have evolved to meet 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 Ya-

ties is a separate 501(c)(3) charitable organization. The agency is funded in part by state and federal contracts and fees



kima, Wenatchee, and Richland, Catholic Charities operates out of more than 30 service locations and serves nearly 50,000 people each year.

An outreach effort of the Diocese of Yakima, Catholic Char-

ity for service, but relies on the generosity of donors to serve all clients regardless of their ability to pay.

Information on Catholic Charities and donation envelopes will be available in parishes preceding the collection. For further information on the services provided by Catholic Charities, contact Leanne LaBissoniere, parish outreach coordinator, at (509) 367-5291 or llabissoniere@catholiccharitiescw.org.

Give **thanks** to the Lord
for He is **GOOD**; His love
endures *forever*.
(Psalm 107:1)

Wishing you the gift of faith
and the blessing of hope this
Advent Season!

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NEWS

From Around the Diocese

Celebrate Mary in December

Saturday, December 8, is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is the patronal feast of the United States and a holy day of obligation. In view of the great devotion many of our people have for Our Lady of Guadalupe, Bishop Joseph Tyson is dispensing the obligation to attend Mass December 8 for those who attend a Guadalupe Mass on Wednesday, December 12.

As is already the case, Catholics who are unable to attend Mass on a holy day of obligation may seek a dispensation from a priest or deacon of the Diocese, who can either excuse the person from the obligation completely, or commute it to another pious work, such as praying the Rosary.

Stand Up for Life!

Would you like to make a difference in our culture by supporting respect for life?

Young people between the ages of 13 and college age are invited to join Students for Life. Yakima has an established group, and a new group has just formed in the Tri-Cities. If you or someone you know would be interested in joining one of these groups or starting a new group in your community, call Christine at (509) 985-6248.

Meetings include free food, door prizes and speakers. Students also have the chance to attend conferences, and plan other fun activities.

Donations are needed to help support the formation and supervision of these groups. If you could make a donation, please send it to: Pro-Life Coalition of Central Washington, 4001 Summitview Ave., Suite 5, #16, Yakima, WA 98908.

Breakfast With Santa Is Scheduled

The Catholic Daughters of America will hold their annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 8, in the Father Murtagh Gathering Hall of Holy Family Church in Yakima.

The event, which runs from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., will include a pancake breakfast, prize drawings and an opportunity for children to shop for Christmas in a "country store." Families are encouraged to bring their cameras to take photos with Santa.

The cost is \$4 for children age 3 to 12, and \$7 for anyone over the age of 12. Tickets will be available at the door.

How Will You Celebrate the "12 Days of Christmas"?

By Christine Corbett Conklin

There is often a feeling of letdown on Christmas night, when gifts have been opened, dinner completed and (hopefully) everyone has been to Mass. However, in the Catholic tradition, Christmas is really just beginning on December 25!

On this day, we start the "12 Days of Christmas," a phrase which, to many of us, only refers to the name of that often-played holiday carol. In the Catholic calendar, the Christmas season actually lasts until January 6, the feast of the Epiphany (coming of the Three Kings) and beyond, to the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, celebrated in 2019 on January 13. This means more days of special Mass readings, a holy day of obligation on January 1 (Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God) and more time to reflect upon the miracle of Jesus' birth, when all of the commercialism of Christmas has come to a merciful end.

Even the holiday carol, with its strange assortment of images, offers religious significance. It is said that the "12 Days of Christmas" song, which dates back to the 16th century, was written by Jesuit priests as a teaching tool, using a type of code to "help catechize children in the faith," according to the Catholic Education Resource Center website. This was a time when the practice of the Catholic Faith was forbidden in England.

The Catholic News Agency, quoting from the "Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals" by Ann Ball offers the following interpretation of this song. Father Calvin Goodwin, FSSP, also is credited with this material.

First of all, both the "true love" referenced in the song and the partridge in the pear tree refer to



Jesus, since a partridge is known to be willing to sacrifice its own life to draw predators away from its young. Two turtle doves represent the Old and New Testaments, while the three French hens refer to the virtues of faith, hope and love.

Next, we come to the four calling birds – or four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, while the five golden rings (always sung a little louder, for some reason) stand for the first five books of the Bible. Six geese a-laying recall the six days of creation, while the seven swans a-swimming stand for seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, including prophecy, serving, teaching, exhortation, contribution, leadership and mercy.

Continuing on, we have eight maids a-milking, or the eight Beatitudes; nine ladies dancing, or nine fruits of the Holy Spirit, including charity, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, mildness, fidelity, modesty and chastity; and 10 lords a-leaping, representing the 10 Commandments. Finally, there are 11 pipers piping, standing for the 11 faithful Apostles; and 12 drummers drumming, or the 12 points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.

It's an interesting perspective on this traditional carol! The Christmas season is a perfect time for all of us to refresh our knowledge of the Catholic Faith and its teachings. Why not follow the "12 Days of Christmas" outline with your loved ones during this blessed time of year?

Merry Christmas!