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Newsletter

Seminarians Reap Many Benefits From Agricultural Work

By Christine Corbett Conklin

When you're a seminarian, it's important to study Philosophy. It's also important to study Theology. However, to learn about the people you will one day serve as a priest, there may be nothing more effective than standing in a field, harvesting asparagus, right in the midst of some of your future parishioners.

That's what seven seminarians from the Diocese of Yakima are learning this summer as they toil in beating sun, rain and wind, earning money for their living expenses – and picking up important life lessons along the way.

"We're just part of the crew," observed Daniel Steele, 27, who will begin his third year in the seminary this fall. "You put in a good day's work and you're tired, but you feel good. Pushing yourself, you find out what you're made of. I also get to know what the people I'll be ministering to someday are going through."

The seven seminarians, including Steele, Kurt Hadley, Antony López, Jesús Mariscal, Andy Mendoza, Ricardo Ruesga, and Peter Steele, Daniel's brother, get up



Seminarian Jesús Mariscal thinned apples in Othello.

in the morning at about 2:30 and work nine- to 10-hour days, six days each week. They began in May, with the asparagus harvest, and have since been cutting back branches on apple trees, thinning apples and harvesting cherries at various sites in Eastern Washington and northeast Oregon.

As they work, they have the chance to talk to others on the crew, learning about

their lives, what makes them happy and sad – and offering faith-filled encouragement along the way.

"It has been exciting," enthused Mariscal, 31, who will begin his third year in the seminary this fall. "It makes me feel like a missionary, like St. Paul. I feel like I am doing what I was born to do: to bring hope to people, to bring the Gospel to people."

He recalls one conversation he had recently with a 16-year-old, as the two worked side by side in the apple orchards of Richland.

"Next to the fields were beautiful homes. At one extreme, here we were – the field workers, most who couldn't read or speak English. In front of us were these mansions. I was telling him what a difference it makes to learn to read (English). I was trying to motivate him," he said.

"Seeing how joyful the field workers are while they work, I also realized that one does not have to have riches or material goods in order to be happy, and while the rich have their mansions here on earth, the poor and hard-working field workers are building their mansions in heaven through

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Diocesan Catholics Observe Fortnight for Freedom

From June 21 through July 4, Catholics across the Diocese of Yakima stood up for religious freedom, in observance of the national Catholic Fortnight for Freedom.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops introduced the "Fortnight" observance in response to the "ongoing erosion of religious liberty here in the United States," said Bishop Joseph Tyson.

"Evidence of this erosion has surfaced in a variety of ways, from the Alabama legislature's recent attempt to criminalize our Church's outreach to undocumented workers to the recent Health and Human Services mandate requiring employers to fund in their health plans the purchase of contraceptives and abortion-inducing drugs," Tyson said.

"While the specific attacks against religious liberty vary in their public policy

details, they all share the one common feature, namely: the government takes to itself the right to define the ministry of the Church," he observed. "In doing so, public policy officials overstep the boundary separating Church from State and thus encroach on the Church's constitutionally-guaranteed religious liberty."

Locally, a group of Catholics from various Yakima parishes, including numerous pro-life supporters, met each morning in the parking lot of Holy Family Church to pray the Rosary and then stand along the sidewalk facing Tieton Drive, witnessing their support of religious freedom to passing motorists.

The Parish of the Holy Spirit in Kennewick incorporated the prayers and



Catholics gathered in front of Holy Family Church in Yakima to observe the Fortnight for Freedom.

petitions for Fortnight observations into its Sunday Masses. St. Joseph Parish in Kennewick held a Fortnight for Freedom rally. St. Joseph Parish in Wenatchee held an interfaith gathering tied to the observation, among other individual and group efforts in the Diocese.

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A Message from Bishop Tyson...

Dear Friends,

First and foremost I want to thank so many of you who have been so responsive to our recent "Fortnight for Freedom" here in the Diocese of Yakima. As many of you know the bishops of the United States have been concerned about the health of our religious liberty here in the United States. Sometimes the erosion comes from executive branch actions such as the Health and Human Services mandate, which has government officials defining what constitutes a religious organization. Other times this erosion comes from the legislative branch, as is the case in the state of Alabama, which attempted to criminalize our Church's care for those without documents.

Because the Diocese of Yakima covers so many towns and cities, it seemed that the best way to uplift "Fortnight for Freedom" was through encouraging the various metropolitan areas around Wenatchee, the Tri-Cities and Yakima to plan local and regional events. We've been posting support for these events online and have been posting pictures of these events on both our Yakima Diocese website as well as our Facebook page. What you see in this current issue is a small sample of our events during "Fortnight for Freedom."

Everything else in this issue of the Central Washington Catholic really flows from the religious liberty we enjoy as a Church here in the United States. That expression of religious liberty is what you can see in the recent renewal of the worship space at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Ephrata as well as the external care of the school,



Bishop Joseph Tyson

the parish, and, most recently the new paint job at the rectory. Our seminarians are learning the centrality of religion in the lives of those who harvest our crops through their work this summer in the fields, orchards and packing plants in the Tri-Cities. Foster grandparents are putting their faith into action through our Catholic Family and Child Service's "Foster Grandparent Program." Even the upcoming canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha in Rome, as the first woman Native American saint in the United States, is a reminder of religious liberty being lived out in the New World. Kateri's story is one of persistence in the practice of her Faith despite cultural resistance within her community and from the growing presence of a North American

community of European heritage.

I hope these stories inspire you to find ways to live out your Faith in the public marketplace as a witness to Jesus Christ. Religious liberty is best lived when people see our Faith in action – not as a theocratic threat – but as a proposition of a way of life open to anyone who desires the common good of all people.

As Catholics, we are privileged to live in the United States. The Catholic Church in America is the largest provider of educational services after the public school system itself. We are the single largest provider of health care in America. We are the largest non-governmental provider of social services. We care for more people dying of AIDS than any institution in America. We serve more immigrants, migrants and refugees than any other non-governmental group. As a Church we are in more places serving more needs here in the United States than any other organization. We do so not because those we serve are Catholic – but because WE are Catholic. That's the religious liberty placed in peril by the recent HHS mandate. But it's also the religious liberty we believe serves all people of every faith and of no faith at all. Again, thanks for uplifting our "Fortnight for Freedom" on behalf of religious liberty. Let's give thanks to God for the gift of our nation, founded for the protection of basic civil rights, and among those most central: the right of religious liberty.

With every best wish and blessing,

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Seminarians Reap Many Benefits From Agricultural Work *continued from page 1*



Daniel Steele thinned apples at Oasis Farms in Walla Walla.

their poverty struggles, trials and sufferings," Mariscal continued.

Although most of us realize that many people in our Diocese have difficult lives and work very hard just to survive, these firsthand experiences can really help these young men to develop empathy, observed Father Felipe Pulido, pastor of St. Joseph Church, Yakima, and vocation director for the Diocese.

"They are walking the journey of life and faith together with the people," he said. Bishop Tyson wanted the seminarians to do something together over the summer and, since this is an agricultural area, it seemed to be an ideal way to learn more about the lives of many parishioners of the Diocese, Pulido explained.

The seminarians say that they have also grown closer to God this summer.

"I've learned to really lean on God more – when I'm tired and when I'm hot," observed Daniel Steele.

"I have to constantly call on God for strength. It helps me remember that He's everything and I need Him for everything," Mariscal agreed. "I see how hard the field workers have to work just for minimum wage. I ask myself, 'How come I'm not (usually) one of them?' Now, I'm so much more grateful for everything I have. I'm grateful for the opportunities God has given me."

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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Foster Grandparent Program: A 'Win-Win' Situation *continued from page 4*

provide lots of attention and help to youngsters. Each is expected to volunteer between 15 and 40 hours per week, with a small stipend available to those who meet income eligibility requirements. Federal funding comes through the Corporation for National and Community Service.

"Some of the children are in elementary schools, and also preschool, migrant education and after-school programs," explained Dorothy Morales, regional director for elder services at CF&CS. "They may be at risk or have special challenges. The 'grandparents' help them succeed, help them to learn good skills so that they'll be successful in school and life." This could involve tutoring in reading or math, just talking with

a child, organizing a game or helping a preschooler learn to set the table for lunch.

"The 'grandparents' have so much to share, and, as many of them tell me, it can also give them a reason to get up in the morning, knowing that the children are depending upon them. They know that they're making a difference for the children," Morales added.

One such volunteer is Clara Fletcher, 74, who has two grown sons and no grandchildren of her own. She has served as a foster grandparent at Carroll Children's Center for 10 years.

"I love children, just being with them, telling them stories, listening to them," she said. "They call me 'Teacher Clara'. It

really gives me a boost."

The foster grandparents offer an extra dimension of care, above and beyond that offered by program staff, observed Kathy Helseth, program manager for Carroll Children's Center.

"We're very appreciative of these foster grandparents who come in and volunteer their time," she said. "It does the children a world of good to have these older folks with them. Many of our volunteers have spent decades raising children, being with children and nurturing them. The life experience and the steadiness that these grandparents offer benefits the children. Everyone benefits from more love and attention!"

Diocesan Catholics Observe Fortnight for Freedom *continued from page 1*

"These are dedicated Americans, faithful people who believe in the principles upon which our country was founded – and who were doing their part to stand up for the Fortnight observance as our United States bishops had asked," said Sandy Kahle, a Holy Family parishioner and Yakima group organizer.



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NEWS

from Around the Diocese

New Director of Stewardship Named

Alma Benitez began work as Director of Stewardship & Development for the Diocese of Yakima on July 2.

A graduate of the University of Washington, with a business degree and marketing major, she comes to the Diocese from RGI Corporation (Research Grants Information) in Sunnyside where she has served as Office Administrator.

Benitez, 27, was born in Toppenish and raised in Sunnyside.

Her responsibilities with the Diocese of Yakima will include working with staff and volunteers of parishes to develop stewardship education, and working with the Bishop and Chief Finance Officer of the Diocese on the Annual Catholic Appeal.

Medallion Recipients Announced

The recipients of the 2012 Francis Cardinal George Medallions have been announced. Those who are being honored for their contributions of time, talent and treasure to the Diocese of Yakima and their individual parishes will receive their recognition in September (see related item below).

They include: Ed Abel, and Don and Sylvia Brule, Holy Family, Yakima; Larry Cleveland, and Mike and Carol Gaulke, Holy Spirit, Kennewick; Herb Goedde, St. Francis de Sales, Chelan; Mildred Greedy, St. Joseph, Wenatchee; Robert Higgins, Holy Apostles, East Wenatchee; Jim Johnson, St. Andrew, Ellensburg; Lydia Johnson, St. Peter Claver, Wapato; Joe and Judy Kauzlarich, Holy Rosary, Moxee; Robyn Klingele, Holy Family, Yakima; Patrick Lynam, John Nebel and Frank E. Piepel, St. Joseph, Wenatchee; Ray St. Mary, Holy Family, Yakima; Colette Sattler, St. Paul, Yakima; Cleo Stevens, Our Lady of Fatima, Moses Lake; Michael Valentine, Christ the King, Richland; and Shira Wise, Holy Spirit, Kennewick. Congratulations to all!

Tickets Available for September Event

Some tickets are still available for the first Celebration of Faith event scheduled for September 15 at the Yakima Convention Center.

This gala dinner event will honor the recipients of the 2012 Cardinal George Medallion and raise funds for Catholic education across Central Washington, including parish religious education programs and Catholic schools.

The keynote speaker will be Father Robert Spitzer, S.J., former president of Gonzaga University.

To reserve tickets, go to cwcatholicfoundation.org or call the Foundation office at (509) 972-3732.

Blessed Kateri Mass Celebrated

Bishop Joseph Tyson was the principal celebrant for the 32nd annual Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha Mass, July 14, in White Swan. The Mass had special significance this year, with Tekakwitha's upcoming canonization as the first American Indian woman saint, set for October 21 in Rome.

Father William Shaw, pastor, and Father John Shaw, representative to the Diocesan Native American Ministry, concelebrated. The event, including a luncheon following the Mass, was hosted by the Yakama Reservation Kateri Tekakwitha Circle and St. Mary's Parish.

Members of the "Circle," representing White Swan, Wapato and Toppenish parishes, have been meeting for years, praying for Blessed Kateri's canonization and striving to imitate her spirituality. From July 17-21, the group made a pilgrimage to the sites of her birth and Baptism, Auriesville and Fonda, New York.

St. Rose of Lima Parish, Ephrata: Just Like Family

Set in the small town of Ephrata, Washington, in the midst of sprawling farmland, St. Rose of Lima Parish has been compared to a family.

There is a "Father," of course, who helps keep everything running. There are some 400 individual households which are part of the clan. There's a revered gentleman whom everyone likes and respects as a trusted "Grandfather." More than 100 children to get to school each day. A group of older members, known as "Snow Birds," who flock to sunny spots such as Arizona in winter. Even some great home cooking – from tacos to cakes – they enjoy together!

"This is not a big city. Because it is small, we know about everybody – who is sick, who is celebrating a birthday or anniversary, who's leaving for Arizona," observed Father Miguel González, pastor of St. Rose since 2010. As in most families, the children – some 120 students who attend preschool through sixth grade at St. Rose of Lima school – are the "center of the community," he said. (This focus also includes another 130 students in Religious Education.)

"Our school is part of the Church," Father González explained. "When we have big Masses, an auction or other big celebrations, we do it in the gym of the school."

It is unusual for a town as small as Ephrata to have its own Catholic school, observed Lynn Stecker, parish office manager for 23 years.

"It grounds us," she said. "We now have the third generation of kids going through our school. People are here for a long time. We're all connected."

Another uniting force in St. Rose parish is Father Seamus Kerr, 83, former pastor and now priest-in-residence, who says some weekend Masses and is in demand for Baptisms, weddings and funerals.

"People love him very much," Father González observed. "He also brings people together."

Armando Escamilla, a permanent deacon who ministers at Mass and also teaches Spanish RCIA, is also a key parish leader. Active parish groups include: the Knights of Columbus, YLI, Spanish Cursillo and the school's Parent Teacher Organization.

St. Rose of Lima traces its history to 1904, when the first Mass was celebrated in the Ephrata area.

St. Rose was officially named a parish in 1941, with Our Most Sorrowful Mother Church in Soap Lake serving as Mission church. The present brick church was built in Ephrata in 1949. St. Rose of Lima School was dedicated in 1961, with the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul staffing the school for almost three decades. The parish celebrated its centennial in 2004. Other recent pastors have included: Fathers Donal Kennedy, Richard Sedlacek, Tom Dahlquist, Richard House, Seamus Kerr, Nicholas Milich and Gary Norman.

Following remodeling of the parish center in 2007-08, the sanctuary of the church was remodeled earlier this year. Father González, who once studied industrial design, painted the ceiling above the altar for the latter project.

"Father is so talented. He can envision how to decorate the church for Christmas or Easter," observed Grace Nelson, a parishioner for 76 years. "He's accomplished a lot. He has a way of encouraging more people to get involved (in the parish). He's very dedicated to his vocation."

This small church has a warm, inviting atmosphere, "especially now that we have Father Miguel here," agreed Emerita Villafana, a parishioner for 27 years.

Special annual events organized by Hispanic parishioners, including celebrations on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Cinco de Mayo, resemble "family reunions," she said. There is prayer, dance and always an abundance of food ranging from tacos to tamales, salads and cake.

"It seems like it's getting better and better all the time," Villafana said. "Both communities (Hispanic and Anglo) are coming together. We're all one family."

Foster Grandparent Program: A 'Win-Win' Situation

There's something very special about the love of a grandparent for a child. Senior citizens also benefit from the joy and enthusiasm that abounds with young children. Put these two groups together and you have a "win-win" situation called the Foster Grandparent program sponsored by Catholic Family & Child Service, Yakima.

About 50 senior volunteers, aged 55 and up, serve as foster grandparents each week at sites throughout Yakima and Kittitas counties. From Carroll Children's Center in Yakima, to more than 20 other community sites in Selah, Wapato, Toppenish, Grandview, Mabton, Sunnyside, Yakima and Ellensburg, these caring individuals



Fr. Miguel González celebrated Mass at St. Rose of Lima Church.



Fr. Seamus Kerr, left, and Fr. Miguel González celebrated with three new Catholics.



Clara Fletcher spent time with children at Carroll Children's Center.