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MAY 2020 *Letter*

Father Edgar Quiroga: Our Newest Priest, Inspired By Pope John Paul II

By Christine Corbett Conklin

In 2005, when Pope John Paul II died, Edgar Quiroga was just 13 years old. At his home in Tecalitlan, Jalisco, Mexico, he recalls being tremendously impressed by the worldwide acclaim for this humble man.



Father Edgar Quiroga

“I said that I wanted to be like him,” he recalled in a telephone interview with the *Central Washington Catholic*. “You could see that he was a great man, a holy man.” Quiroga soon visited his parish priest, asking about entering the seminary, and thus taking the first step toward his May 22, 2020 ordination to the priesthood at St. Paul Cathedral in Yakima.

In a small, yet moving ceremony, with Bishop Joseph Tyson presiding, Deacon Edgar Quiroga became the newest priest of the Diocese of Yakima. He was robed in a vestment made in Mexico for him of fabric he bought last year on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Although his biological family could not make the journey from Mexico, due to pandemic restrictions, he was able to offer them a livestream blessing as part of his ordination ceremony. He also expressed particular thanks to his American host “parents,” Dr. Jon and Erin Shirey, who have cared for him since

he arrived in the United States five years ago.

Just days before the ordination, Father Quiroga observed that his ordination was not an end goal, but rather “just the beginning of the adventure and the beauty of the priesthood ... a commitment for my life.”

Noting that it had been “roughly 15 years since I started” the journey to ordination, he said that he was still

“trying to realize what I’m going to be.” The journey required determination, he remembered, with that first visit to his parish priest resulting in a turn-down, being told that he should come back when he was “a couple of years older.” At that time, “I didn’t even know what the seminary was,” he said.

At age 15, he was granted permission to enter the seminary in Jalisco. After eight years of studies there, he came to the United States and the Diocese of Yakima, being assigned to Central Washington University

in Ellensburg for a year of English language classes. Then, it was on to Mundelein Seminary in Illinois for four more years of training. He is currently at Christ the King Church in Richland.

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Erin and Dr. Jon Shirey of Yakima were the host family for Father Edgar when he first arrived in the Diocese to study English.

Deacon Michael Kelly: From ‘Quo Vadis’ to The Road to the Priesthood

By Christine Corbett Conklin

Deacon Michael Kelly credits a Quo Vadis retreat he attended at age 14 with starting him on the road to the priesthood. Invited by Monsignor Perron Auve to attend, Kelly recalled that, afterwards, “I knew I had experienced something. It took time to be able to understand what the Lord wanted ... I came to have a very strong suspicion that the Lord was calling me to be a priest.”



Deacon Michael Kelly

Ordained as a transitional deacon on May 15 at St. Paul Cathedral, Kelly is slated to be ordained to the priesthood next year. Immediate family members and Deacon Mike Gaulke, Kelly’s confirmation sponsor, attended the small but beautiful ordination rite presided over by Bishop Joseph Tyson. Deacon Gaulke, from Holy Spirit Parish in Kennewick, vested Kelly, including placing a special stole which was made by Kelly’s aunt over the new deacon’s shoulders.

In a phone interview with Deacon Kelly just days before his ordination, he confided that, “I feel like I’m good to go, calm and content ... I kind of expected

to be nervous. I haven’t experienced much of that. Now, I’m starting to feel excited.”

Born in Denver, Colorado, Kelly lived for a time in Montana with his family, then in Covington and Kennewick, Washington. He wasn’t one of those young boys who used to “play Mass,” always knowing that the

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Stay tuned for COVID-19 updates regarding reopening of churches and resumption of other services. Any news will be listed on this website at yakimadiocese.org.

A Message from Bishop Tyson...

Dear Friends:

Those of you who follow our Wednesday livestream Mass with the seminarians know I preached on the Memorial of Our Lady of Fatima – one of our featured articles in this month's *Central Washington Catholic*.

I showed the seminarians as well as those on livestream the original bilingual catechism used by my grandparents. The edition also was used here at St. Paul Cathedral in Yakima for bilingual religious education. In those days, bilingual did not mean Spanish and English but GERMAN and English. The entire catechism had one page in German and the opposite page in English. Used for decades here in Central Washington, it was printed, interestingly enough, right before the apparition of Our Lady of Fatima in 1917. Thus, the section on the Rosary has no Fatima prayer and none of the extra prayers so much a part of our own popular devotion today.

Germans from Russia made up the predominant ethnic community here in Yakima well into the Second World War. My grandmother recalled moving out with my grandfather here to Yakima, escaping the Dust Bowl as well as the poverty of the Great Depression. Many homesteads settled by immigrants from Southeast Europe failed at that time. But my grandmother had a deep attachment to the devotion of Our Lady of Fatima. A key reason was her call to "Pray for the Conversion of Russia." This was particularly key for Germans from Russia. Older Catholics remind me of their sending CARE packages to Europe during the war. At the time of the 1920 hunger famine in the home regions of the Germans from Russia, one person died every two seconds.

No wonder then that when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 my grandmother, who was well into her 80s, elevated her Rosary and said "See, it works!" Pope Saint John Paul II had consecrated the whole world, including Russia, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1984, and my grandmother believed that the end of communist rule took hold because she and so many others followed the request from Our Lady at Fatima to pray for the conversion of Russia.

Perhaps this story of my grandmother is a way to pivot to a second key point. I notice in our



Bishop Joseph Tyson

Spanish-speaking communities, as well as the heritage of my own family, a great number of devotions, especially those that honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. It seems to me that at this time when we cannot gather for Eucharist, we have space in our spiritual lives to take more time for prayer, for devotions such as the Rosary, for scripture and for spiritual reading.

I also hope you will all consider FORMED.org, which is our Catholic streaming service available to you, your family and your friends without any charge to you or to the parish. The code is generally the postal zip code of your parish. But you can contact Valeria Flores at the Pastoral Center during regular office hours at (509) 965-7117 or pop her an email at valeria.flores@yakimadiocese.org and she can get you set up. Note this, too! Everyone of any faith background is welcome to join FORMED.org at no charge. FORMED.org can be a tool of evangelization in our neighborhoods and communities with its rich religious education resources as well as its over 200 family-friendly movies.

Yet even as I elevate these devotions, practices and spiritual resources, I am keenly aware that nothing can replace our coming together for the Eucharist. I am grateful for the many ways our parishes have reached out with livestream Masses. I am also grateful for the many phone calls made by priests, lay catechists and key parish leaders. These are all ways of staying connected even when we cannot gather for Mass.

But also know that I and my brother bishops have been in regular contact with the Governor and his staff. In

mid-May, we submitted a plan for the reopening of our churches. As I write this, we are preparing to discuss this Catholic state-wide plan with the priests who serve as deans in our regions. I am also sending the plan to all the clergy in hopes that they will be in contact with their elected dean for our consultations.

The Governor has allowed earlier openings for 10 counties in the State of Washington. Most of these counties are located in the Diocese of Spokane. Most likely, Yakima County will be one of the last to open up due to having the highest rate of infection per 100,000 people of any county on the West Coast. Most likely our rural counties, such as Kittitas County, may open before our more highly populated areas, such as Yakima and Benton Counties.

So, in advance, I thank you for your patience. I also thank you for your prayers. I am grateful that Fr. Alex Trejo is making a good recovery from COVID-19, as is Fr. Chuy Ramirez whom I saw last weekend when I was in Mattawa at Our Lady of the Desert Parish for Mother's Day blessings.

Sadly, this is not the case everywhere. We have many agricultural workers who work closely in packing plants and as a result are becoming infected. One of our pastors held a service for a mother and son who died of COVID-19. The dad is in the intensive care unit as I write this column, close to death. The family is devastated. There are other similar cases going on, particularly in Yakima County.

So even as we look for ways to reopen, we will need to do so cognizant of the local situation. Different parishes may open at different times due to local situations.

Let me close on this upbeat note.

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PUBLISHER

Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson

MODERATOR

Monsignor Robert M. Siler

EDITOR

Christine Corbett Conklin

TRANSLATIONS

Indiana Blandón

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Email: robert.siler@yakimadiocese.org

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

A Message from Bishop Tyson... *Continued from page 2*

This issue features the ordinations of Michael Kelly as a transitional deacon as well as Deacon Edgar Quiroga as a priest for the Diocese of Yakima. We are also awaiting a legal window for Lalo Chavez to be ordained a deacon since he, like many here in our area, has had to overcome significant immigration hurdles.

I asked the men if they wanted to delay their ordinations due to COVID-19. All wanted to move forward. Michael Kelly suggested that

it was precisely for times such as these that we ARE ordained. Indeed, it is for times such as these, when we cannot gather as Church, that we ARE Church.

So, ultimately my thanks go to all of you for your prayers and your patience these many long weeks and months during this COVID-19 pandemic gripping the world. Better days lie ahead. But we still have a cross-and-resurrection journey with Jesus before we get to those better days. Let us keep each other in prayer. Let us remember

the many victims of the COVID-19 crisis, not only the sick, but the many harmed by the economic fallout, the many fatigued first responders and medical personnel, and the many who walk the journey with the sick, too.

With every best wish and blessing,

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

Father Edgar Quiroga: Our Newest Priest, Inspired By Pope John Paul II *Continued from page 1*

Father Quiroga said that he is especially looking forward to preaching, and to administering the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

"I like preaching," he said. He's honored to be able to "give people the Eucharist, which is given by God through me for the people." Another "undeserved gift" is the ability to hear

confessions. "It humbles me that people would open their souls to their priest, that, in the name of God (I'll) be able to forgive sins."

During this era of priest shortages, Father Quiroga also welcomes the opportunity to "step in and help bear the load for other priests," he said.

So, after all of these years, has

Edgar Quiroga finally achieved his goal of being like Pope John Paul II? "Not even close," he responds with a laugh. However, with God's grace, he'll have a long and blessed priesthood ahead in which to draw nearer to his goal.

Please keep Father Quiroga and all of the clergy and religious of the Diocese in your prayers.

Deacon Michael Kelly: From 'Quo Vadis' to The Road to the Priesthood *Continued from page 1*

priesthood would be his future, he recalled. Thoughts of the priesthood didn't emerge until his teenage years.

Kelly received an Associate of Arts degree from Columbia Basin College prior to two years in the seminary at Mt.

Angel, Oregon, then spending a year in Mexico City studying Spanish. He has been at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois for three years, with one year of studies remaining there.

Deacon Kelly says that he is particularly looking forward to preaching and to being able to hear confessions, as a priest.

"I find preparation for preaching enjoyable," he said, "spending time over Scriptures and thinking, 'What does the Lord want me to do?'" He regards hearing confessions as



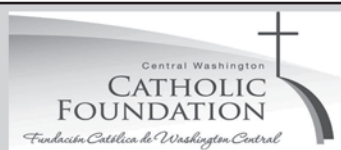
Michael Kelly lay prostrate in humility during his ordination to the transitional diaconate.

"being a conduit of the mercy of God.

"I'm looking forward to getting to work," Deacon Kelly concluded. "I've spent years preparing. Please keep me and (Father) Edgar (Quiroga) in your prayers. We appreciate the prayers."

We wish many blessings for Deacon Kelly and his life of service to the Diocese.

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NEWS

From Around the Diocese

Sister Rita (Mary Lauren) Dies



Sister Rita Marie Ferschweiler, SP, age 102, a Sister of Providence for 76 years, died April 25, at St. Joseph Residence in Seattle.

Sister Rita entered the Sisters of Providence in November 1942 at

Mount St. Vincent, Seattle. In November 1952, she professed final vows.

Sister Rita graduated in 1935 from Mount Angel Academy, Mount Angel, Ore. She completed nursing school in 1948 at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Yakima, Wash., followed by a bachelor's degree in nursing from Seattle University, a master's degree in nursing service administration from St. Louis University, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Portland.

Sister Rita served from 1948-84 primarily as a medical-surgical nurse and administrator at locations including St. Elizabeth Hospital, Yakima. She also ministered in pastoral care, was a member of the Provincial Council of Sacred Heart Province, and ministered as the sister representative for Providence St. Peter Hospital and Mother Joseph Care Center. In 2011, Sister Rita moved to St. Joseph Residence, Seattle. She was the recipient of many awards during her ministries.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Sisters of Providence Retirement Fund, 1801 Lind Avenue SW, M1-C, Renton, Washington, 98057. To view Sister Rita's obituary and to sign her memory book, visit the website for Bonney-Watson Funeral Home at bonneywatson.com.

Medjugorje Pilgrimage Still Planned

Plans are still underway for a pilgrimage to Medjugorje, Bosnia, with added time in Italy, from October 28 to November 10.

Father Richard Sedlacek, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Selah, will serve as spiritual director on this journey which will visit the site where Blessed Mother is reported to have appeared in 1981.

For more details, including costs and itinerary, or to register for the pilgrimage, contact Gary at (877) 333-9290 or visit magnificattours@aol.com.

Feast Day of Our Lady of Fatima Has Special Meaning Locally

On May 13, we celebrated the feast day of Our Lady of Fatima. It recalled the first appearance, on May 13, 1917, of Blessed

Mother to three children tending a flock of sheep near the village of Fatima, Portugal. For one Yakima priest, the feast day also brought back special memories of saying Mass for a congregation which included one of those three individuals.

Very Rev. Michael J. Ibach, who serves as Judicial Vicar of the Diocese of Yakima, was honored to say Mass, in the mid-1980s, at the Carmelite convent of Santa Teresa, near Fatima. He was told that Sister Maria Lucia of Jesus and of the Immaculate Heart, who resided at the convent, might be in attendance. Indeed, as Mass was beginning, a veiled Sister – better known as Lucia, the eldest of the three children at Fatima – quietly entered the choir loft.

"She was the only one up there," he recalled. Since the order of sisters was cloistered, Sister Maria Lucia did not actually speak with Father. However, she gave a slight bow of respect as he went to the presider's chair and glanced toward the choir loft.

Lucia Abobora, as she was christened, would go on to live a long life, dying in 2005 at the age of 97. Her two cousins, Francisco Marto and Jacinta Marto, died at a very young age, in 1919 and 1920, respectively. Although Lucia said that she was the only one of the three to hear what the Blessed Virgin said in six appearances over a period of months, all three children saw Mary and many people witnessed the so-called "Miracle of the Sun" in which the sun was said to have twirled in the sky for numerous minutes.

In 1930, the Catholic Church, after an exhaustive study, officially sanctioned the visions at Fatima. In such a study, the

Food = Love = Hope

Thirty million Americans filed first-time unemployment claims between mid-March and the end of April, leaving countless families in a precarious financial position. These are difficult times, and the problems are so large, that one might conclude that a single good-hearted individual can't make a dent.

We heard a story a few years ago which bears on this situation...

At a PREPARES introduction, one parishioner interested in volunteering said, "I can see that people are dealing with complicated, stressful situations which won't be resolved easily. What I don't see is how taking them a pot of chili or a PREPARES bag is going to make any difference?"

Another parishioner, a small, slender woman with grey hair, spoke up. "Twenty-five

Church gathers extensive detail as to what the visions entail, Father Ibach explained. Investigators look at how the visions affect the individuals involved, whether they begin living holier lives and remain humble or if they become proud and boastful. There is also consideration as to how the general populace is affected. Do the visions bring more people to God, deepen prayer life?

Some years later, the Church released information on the "three secret revelations" given at Fatima. The first urged repentance for sins, with a vision of hell. The second warned against the ills of Russia and foretold that the nation would be redeemed by Mary. The third, most controversial secret allegedly referred to the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II and the challenges to be faced by the Church in the modern age.

The appearances by Our Lady at Fatima are among only a handful of sanctioned appearances throughout history, noted Father Ibach. These include visions at Lourdes and Guadalupe. Such appearances continue to have value in our world today, he stressed.

Not only were prayers needed for Russia, for example, but we need to pray today "for the conversion of people, our own self-conversion and for all conversions for a deeper life in Christ," he said. "We need to continue to pray for one another, to do penance, fasting, to keep our lives in order. We know how easy it is to fall."

At Fatima, Mary encouraged praying the Rosary, even teaching the three children the proper way to say the prayers. "The Rosary goes to the whole mystery of the life of Christ," Father observed. "It helps us to be more meditative.

"Mary was trying to say it's important for us to listen to what Jesus is teaching us, conforming to His way of life," he added. "She was telling us, 'Listen to my Son. Rely on Him.'" It's a timeless message for us all.



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years ago, I was a single mother with an infant, living in a trailer. There came a day when I had almost nothing left. I had one can of food. I had no idea what to do for my son or myself, and that kind of desperation is terrifying. There was a knock on the door, and a man stood outside with a box of food for me from Catholic Charities. I don't know how they found me, but it made such a difference ..."

PREPARES is distributing diapers through food banks, holding online support groups, and staying in touch not only with vulnerable families, but vulnerable volunteers. Compassionate gestures can spark hope in the hearts of the recipients. Please donate to PREPARES through the Catholic Charities Light of Hope fund, (<https://catholiccharitiescw.org/>), or call about volunteering, (509) 965-7100.