



**CATHOLIC
HOME
MISSIONS**

Power of the Holy Spirit in Spokane and Boise



(Left to right) Erick and Nic from the Diocese of Spokane and Joseph from the Archdiocese of Seattle.

By Beth Griffin

Spokane

Seminary enrollment in the Diocese of Spokane is growing rapidly. Having recovered from an all-time low of four students several years ago, enrollment now stands at an amazing 12 seminarians. Recently, Bishop Thomas Daly moved out of his quarters at the seminary to accommodate an expanded faculty and the additional men preparing to be ordained for service in Spokane and neighboring dioceses. “Great things are happening,” Bishop Daly says.

The bishop spends much of his time on the road, visiting Catholics in 82 parishes and missions spread across eastern Washington. “He prioritizes his schedule to go to parishes in

outlying areas because he sees it as essential, and that has made a real difference,” says Sr. Mary Tracy, diocesan director of stewardship and development and member of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary.

The bishop’s travels are part of a diocese-wide effort to reach churched, unchurched, and non-practicing Catholics alike, Sr. Mary says. The effort includes inviting people of all faiths to Spokane’s Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes for a novena in honor of the cathedral’s namesake, as well as formally declaring the cathedral a place for prayer and gathering in times of crisis.

Eastern Washington is largely rural and agricultural. Its substantial production of labor-intensive crops depends on migrant Hispanic workers. The Church in the Diocese of Spokane therefore works to address the pastoral and temporal needs of a growing Hispanic population in an ongoing way, while also helping non-Hispanic parishioners adapt to cultural and economic changes.

The diocese also emphasizes youth evangelization and collaborates with Gonzaga University in Spokane to celebrate World Youth Day and offer other formation events. Recognizing the connection between youth ministry and vocations, the diocesan director of seminarians works closely with the diocese’s new evangelization program.

To reach Catholics throughout eastern Washington, the diocese has completely revised its communications efforts to reach people in

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Neighbors

ISSUE 2 2018

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM MISSION AMERICA

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In this issue, we can see how the Holy Spirit is moving faithful Catholics in the Dioceses of Spokane and Boise to be powerful witnesses to the Gospel. We see the Holy Spirit at work in Chris, Kenny, and Whitney as they build relationships with Christ, and in Fr. Luke and Nic as they answer their vocational call to ministerial priesthood.

Your support of the Catholic Home Missions Appeal makes ministries like these possible. Because of your support, young people like Chris, Kenny, Whitney, Fr. Luke, and Nic have had beautiful experiences of the Spirit. You have truly made a difference in their lives and in their faith journeys.

That is the power of the Spirit flowing through our communities. With the Spirit, we can strengthen the faith here in the United States, especially in those dioceses that are considered Home Mission territories. For these dioceses, your acts of generosity mean that they can provide basic pastoral ministries to people who long to experience them.

The Father sends us the Spirit to guide us and accompany us on our journey of faith.

As you read this issue of *Neighbors*, I encourage you to pause and say the prayer to the Holy Spirit, as a way to guide us and all those in Home Mission dioceses to be witnesses to the love and mercy of God:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

In the Heart of Christ,

Paul D. Etienne

Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne, DD, STL
Archbishop of Anchorage

VOICES OF FAITH IN SPOKANE

From his post as pastor of the Newman Center at Washington State University in Pullman, Fr. Lucas “Luke” Tomson says, “I had a vision for the priestly life and none of this was a part of that, but I’m happy that God’s plan has occurred and not my own!” He knew from about age eight that he had a vocation. Perhaps it helped that his devout grandmother called him “Little Priest,” even as his father smiled and rolled his eyes at the nickname.

Since Fr. Luke was ordained in 2007, he has taught religion to high school freshmen in Walla Walla, Washington. He has served as parochial vicar in Spokane while teaching Christian spirituality at Gonzaga University, stepped into his first pastoral assignment in rural Okanogan at age 28, helped out at other parishes, and begun work on his doctorate in theology through the Pontifical Lateran University at the Vatican.

The campus ministry post is a missionary one, he says. “It’s really working with youth on the front lines. If they make a decision to come to Mass on their own and live the faith now, wow: they’re going to live it for the rest of their lives.”

When Fr. Luke, now 36, was assigned to the university, a friend advised him to buy a pair of good shoes. “You want to get out there and walk the campus, every nook and cranny,” Fr. Luke explains. “It’s very challenging for me and takes a lot of energy, but I always find parishioners and meet someone new,” he says. One of the students who approached him recently remembered that he helped at her parish when she was a child.

His walking ministry and the presence of Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) missionaries, now in their second year at his campus parish, contribute to enthusiasm among the students. The campus now hosts 19 separate Bible study groups, and Fr. Luke says it’s exciting to see the students’ faces light up when they learn something new about their faith.

Also in Spokane, second-year seminarian Nic Castoldi began to consider the priesthood at the end of a high school retreat when organizers offered to pray over young men and women who thought they might have a vocation. “I never really knew it was an option until someone asked,” he recalls. He worked in youth ministry and spent considerable time among priests for six years before applying to the seminary in Spokane. “Seeing them working and seeing the effects of the sacraments in peoples’ lives had a profound effect on me,” Nic says.

At the seminary, Nic’s mentors include a formation advisor, who guides him in human and pastoral aspects, and a spiritual director, who supports his prayer life and relationship with God. “We have regular conversations, and if I prepare well for the meetings, they can be very fruitful and helpful,” he says.

Nic, now 26, is finishing his undergraduate studies at Gonzaga University and hopes to be ordained in 2023. “I’m open to any assignment, but parish priesthood is the goal,” he says.

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new ways. Now a monthly magazine is mailed to every household. The diocese has expanded its radio broadcasts, and parishes will soon use Flocknote, an online tool that allows them to send text messages and e-mails to parishioners.

“Without Catholic Home Missions, we would not be able to serve the people of eastern Washington, especially in the rural communities, because they do not have resources despite their aggressive efforts,” Bishop Daly says. ☺



(Left to right) Fr. Richard Semple, Fr. Tyler Smedley, and Bishop Thomas Daly of the Diocese of Spokane.

Boise

“I really feel like the Holy Spirit is alive and working with all our ministries. The programs are growing as people simply share their faith one-to-one and are present to one another as they do ordinary, everyday things,” Margaret Hampton says.

Margaret is the development coordinator for the Diocese of Boise, which encompasses the entire state of Idaho. Much of the state is rural. Many Catholics live in small communities, far from the few semi-urban areas. The population is concentrated in a banana-shaped belt in the southern part of Idaho, where warmer temperatures support an agricultural economy.

Diocesan ministries use social media, video conferencing, and remote training programs as innovative ways to reach people in outlying areas, especially in the winter months. Representatives of diocesan divisions such as youth ministry,



Bishop Christensen greets parishioners after Mass.



Kenny Dodge



Young adults pray together at the Young Adult Catholic Conference.



Whitni Willmore

marriage and family life, and parish education also travel together to conduct regional conferences, meetings, and retreats. These multifaceted approaches to outreach are all supported through your generosity to the Catholic Home Missions Appeal.

“Everyone works hard to meet with folks where they are. We try to be creative. Local staff are often volunteers and can’t take off from work to travel,” Margaret says. The diocese’s popular Servant School deacon formation program rotates classes geographically and also conducts distance learning and local mentoring sessions using new technology. Margaret says, “It’s important for us to share our gifts and learn about the struggles of others.”

Among the diocese’s many efforts to serve and evangelize, Bishop Peter F.

Christensen has made youth and young adult ministry a priority. The diocese carries out this ministry through an annual youth conference that draws 2,000 participants, as well as year-round grassroots efforts to train young people to be the face of Christ for others. Margaret says, “People invite their friends and bring others into or back to the Church.” The diocese has implemented the same one-to-one evangelization approach in ministries dedicated to marriage, the diaconate, and prison fellowship.

“Catholic means universal, and we’re all connected, spiritually and financially. That’s the beauty of the Catholic faith,” Bishop Christensen says. “We’re grateful that Catholic Home Missions provides critical support to our many ministries.”

VOICES OF FAITH IN BOISE

Chris Kreslins, director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Evangelization in the Diocese of Boise, says, “The Church as a whole struggles to provide ministry to young adult leaders. At a time when millennials seem to be leaving the Church in a mass exodus, I am encouraged by the way young people who attend our statewide conference are able to articulate their faith and share it with others.”

Kenny Dodge and Whitney Willmore are part of the young adult leadership team in Boise. Kenny described his experience:

During the Youth Adult Catholic Conference (YACC) in Boise in 2016, I was overwhelmed to see hundreds of fellow young adults on fire for their faith and wanting it to grow deeper. It gave me hope, inspiration, knowledge, and a framework to take back home to start building a faith community in Coeur D’Alene, in the northern part of the diocese, based on small-group relationships.

Working with the Office of Youth and Young Adult Evangelization has taught me so much about my own faith journey. I’ve been inspired by the community, educated by great events and speakers, and called to share those experiences with my community, journeying deeper with them in faith and relationship.

And Whitney says:

Before the 2016 YACC, I had little to no relationship with God and considered leaving the Catholic Church and abandoning my faith. During the conference, I experienced something greater than myself: I encountered God. I have since become involved with programs, conferences, and retreats supported by the Office of Youth and Young Adult Evangelization.

Recently, I was given the opportunity to attend SLS18, a student leadership summit in Chicago, Illinois, where I was able to connect with over 8,000 young adult leaders and hear how they are serving Christ through ministry, prayer, and self-growth. Through this, I became renewed in my relationship with Christ [and] gained new skills for discipleship and confidence in my ability to share my journey.



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READ ABOUT HOW the Holy Spirit is moving throughout the Dioceses of Spokane and Boise.



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