

Hello. Good morning or good evening.

Three weeks ago, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders prepared a special Friday prayer service to honor and thank Father John for being our pastor. Everyone dressed in green; the students shared some special memories; and sang a blessing prayer. You could feel the honor and love the students have for him and I wish you all could have been there. Before exiting the school hall each child gave Father John a hug or high 5. I was near the end of the line and after my turn he said, “stay right here I want to talk to you.” After the last good wishes, he turned and said “I think it would be good if you made the presentation for the Archdiocesan Annual Appeal. You’ve had lots to do with the CYO and you could tell some stories”. Now, my mind was swirling but he is my boss and pastor so, of course I said yes. I would like to share a few stories with you that demonstrate how the ministries of the Catholic Church in Western Washington have influenced my life.

A little of my history: I grew up in Rainier Beach and St. Paul’s was my parish and school. When I was nine I attended Camp Don Bosco for the first time and I was hooked. We played CYO sports during the school year, but CYO camp was my highlight of each summer. When I was 13, I was accepted into the Order of the Cross that recognized young people who demonstrated the traits of leadership, initiative, and kindness. I have valued those ideals all of my life. I began working as a counselor on the CYO staff when I was 16 and returned to camp each summer until after I graduated from Seattle University.

Around that time, Leo Gallagher donated some land just across from Herron Island and Camp Gallagher was created. In 1970, Camp Gallagher opened as a resident camp for teenagers for the first time. The girls would be at Camp Gallagher during the first part of the summer and the sessions for the boy campers would follow. I was selected to be the first director for girls’ camp and Fred McCarthy directed boys’ camp. Life at Camp Gallagher that first summer was primitive but no one cared as we stopped to watch the sunset each evening and sing *Hurry Sundown*. Since my days at CYO camp, I have been involved in the parish and the school in many ways and have been fortunate and blessed to serve as the teacher librarian at Holy Rosary School for more than 20 years.

My husband Joseph was born in West Seattle; attended Holy Rosary Parish School and went to O’Dea High School. After his sophomore year, he entered the minor seminary of the Maryknoll Missionaries located in Mountain View, California. During the summers, he also worked for Gordie Hamilton, the head of the CYO camping program. Joseph happened to be Gordie’s driver when they visited the Gallagher property for the first time. During Joseph’s deacon year, he

decided to leave Maryknoll in New York and headed back to Seattle. When I met him, he was working at the Chancery and came down for some work parties at Camp Gallagher. We began dating at the close of the second summer of Camp Gallagher so technically it wasn't a "camp romance" but when we got married Gordie sent a busload of our friends from the training session to attend our wedding. They had the guitars and provided the entertainment.

The only telegraph I ever received was on our wedding day with best wishes from Archbishop Connolly. Joseph was working at the Chancery and the Archbishop, his boss, was out of town and unable to attend our wedding, hence the telegram. Secretly, I think my mom was relieved that the Archbishop was out of town. We moved to West Seattle after our first year of marriage and Holy Rosary has been an integral part of our lives ever since.

Our first-born arrived a few years later. We were still in the hospital with the baby under the billi lights on Tuesday when Archbishop Connolly informed Joseph that since he was leaving town, he would be happy to baptize Sean that Saturday. Needless to say, Father Van Gough, the pastor at Holy Rosary at the time welcomed the Archbishop and Sean received the sacrament of Baptism that Saturday. It is amazing what a boss will do for you. Joe and I were blessed with four more babies, all baptized of course, but none by an Archbishop.

Father Mallahan, our pastor during the 80s was and continues to be an important influence in my life. One day during Mass, he commented that it was silly to have the families with little kids sit in the back of church. He believed that participation was easier if the kids could see what was going on. So, we all moved up to sit closer to the front and I think it really worked.

He would call me and say "there's a little lady at Mt. St. Vincent who needs to hold a baby". With five kids that was a simple request so off we went. There were many other requests through the years and we were always happy to complete them, following Father Mallahan's example of helping others. As our pastor, he reminded us of the obligations we all have to this community of Holy Rosary. Some of you may remember a time when we used some cloth bags during the collection. Father Mallahan said that we should each put our hand into the bag as it passed by. If someone was in need they should put their hand in and take something out.

"The Annual Catholic Appeal is about us recognizing there are needs throughout the Archdiocese and we try to do something about them: social services for the needy and poor, Catholic schools to sustain and grow, retired priests and nuns to support, and activities for the children and young adults. There

are more than 60 ministries and services funded through donations from parishes all over Western Washington.” Small individual steps collectively taken make a huge difference.

I believe that we all need to make prayerful practical decisions and this includes the Annual Appeal. There have been years that our family’s donation was small and then other years we could contribute more. I firmly believe that it is the participation, not the amount that is most important. We see constant reminders of the value of people working together in our parish: in the power of prayer, work parties, primrose planting during Catholic Schools Week, donations piling up under the Giving Tree, lunches of love, making soup, supporting the shelter, Shoulder to Shoulder Ministry and on and on.

We are fortunate here at Holy Rosary to have had inspiring pastors who understood and lived out the message of our second reading today. We heard “Children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth.” They have lived this in all they did and inspired us to do the same. So proudly put your dollar or your huge check into the Annual Appeal envelope. Together we can accomplish so much.

If you have any CYO stories you want to share, I am here to for you. Thank you.