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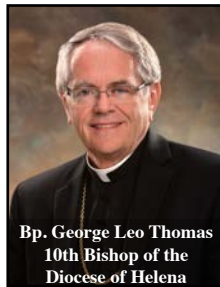
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Bp. George Leo Thomas
10th Bishop of the
Diocese of Helena

Amidst "Hardship and Miracles" Bishop Visits Mission in Guatemala

I have just returned from another mission trip to Guatemala, a place of hardship and miracles, poverty and blessings.

Since 1966, the Diocese of Helena has maintained a strong missionary presence among the rural villagers three hours west of Guatemala City.

In the early years of the mission, our priests, religious women, and lay workers immersed themselves into the lives of the Guatemalan people, enduring great hardships, and at times risking life and limb as they sowed the seeds of the Gospel among the people.

The fruits of their labor are everywhere.

Santo Tomás la Unión

Sixty years ago, Guatemala was virtually devoid of indigenous clergy, religious and seminarians. The two dioceses in which we serve now have their own native clergy, an impressive coterie of religious women, and over 100 seminarians. Four enthusiastic young priests have taken the place of Father Jim Hazelton, who singlehandedly pastored the parish and the outlying missions for over five decades. At the very mention of his name, the people at Sunday Mass erupted in sustained and thunderous applause.

Father Hazelton is a spiritual giant in Guatemala.

At Santo Tomás, young families are in evidence everywhere, accompanied by teenagers and droves of small children. As I gathered the young adults of the parish on Sunday evening, they warmly remembered and acclaimed the work of Father Kevin Christofferson, who organized and empowered this young adult ministry during his tenure in Guatemala. His is a legacy that will pay dividends for years to come.



Bishop Thomas with a family attending a nutrition class at Clínica Maxeña.

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Clinica Maxeña

Our clinic provides care to nearly 15,000 patients each year, many facing serious and life-threatening illnesses.

Butte native Sheila McShane has served the poor in Guatemala as a registered nurse and angel of mercy for over 30 years. In addition to providing primary care for the poor, Sheila has been an unrelenting proponent of preventive medicine, good nutrition and healthcare education for clinic patients.

At Clinica Maxeña, the eyes of the blind are opened by two teams of visiting physicians. Sheila has managed to secure a steady flow of life-giving insulin for diabetic patients, providing them with a new lease on life. Through her efforts, cancer patients are receiving the hope and help that was once an unreachable dream. Youngsters once disfigured by cleft palates now smile broadly and confidently. Young mothers are learning maternal skills, with special emphasis on nutrition and neonatal healthcare.

Clinica Maxeña now has its own Guatemalan physician, along with an indigenous medical director, and a small but highly efficient cadre of laboratory and pharmacy technicians.

The staff does so much with so little. Clinica Maxeña is truly a place of miracles.

Santiago de la Asuncion

Long ago, Father Jim Hazelton recognized the import and impact of basic education in the lives of the young. Twenty years ago, he found-



Bishop Thomas blessing a very ill patient at the clinic.

ed La Asuncion School, providing a passport from poverty to some of the neediest Guatemalan youth.

The school presently has an enrollment of 275 students who are receiving an education for little or no cost. The student body has a somewhat higher number of female students, who rarely have the opportunity for education beyond middle school.

The unemployment rate in Guatemala has been exacerbated by the mechanization of sugarcane harvesting and a highly competitive coffee bean market.

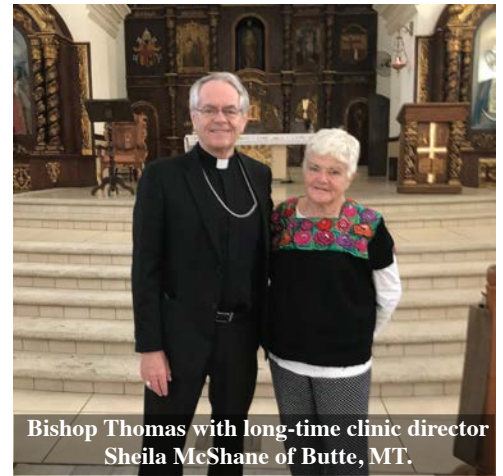
In hopes of creating new job opportunities for the Guatemalan youth, the school administrators are planning an innovative vocational curriculum that includes computer education, sewing and tailoring, welding and car repair, all highly marketable skills.

Earthquake

In September, 2017, Guatemala was shaken by an earthquake that left the infrastructure of our school seriously damaged. The convent occupied by eight Sisters of the Eucharist is no longer safe to occupy.

Carroll College's Engineers without Borders, in conjunction with Helena engineer Michael Brennan, has provided the Diocese with a forensic analysis of the damage. We are taking immediate steps to stabilize the school and to repair the convent. Funds are desperately needed.

It is my hope that our parishes will respond to the needs of our students and Sisters during the upcoming Lenten season.



Bishop Thomas with long-time clinic director Sheila McShane of Butte, MT.

In Closing

I am so grateful to Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen for founding the Guatemala Mission in the years surrounding the Second Vatican Council.

The mission provides a direct and grace-filled connection for the people of the Helena Diocese with the Universal Church. I always return home with a heart full of thanksgiving to God.

In a word, the poor are wonderful teachers. Their deep faith, their love of family, and their reliance on the hand of Providence are lessons they teach all of us.

The Psalmist says in few words what I know in my heart: "The Lord hears the cry of the poor. Blessed be the Lord."

Throughout Lent

Donations can be made to the
Guatemala Repair Projects Lenten Appeal
at: www.diocesehelena.org



Students at La Asuncion School gather to greet Bishop Thomas.

Seminarian Spotlight: Aidan Toombs

Cody Tredik

In the opening verses of chapter 20 of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells a parable of an estate manager who hires workers for his vineyard at 9 a.m. and at 5 p.m.

"I'm the 5 o'clock vocation," joked Aidan Toombs, a seminarian for the Diocese of Helena. At 54 years old, Aidan has walked a beautiful path of conversion and discernment. Currently in his first year of Theology, Aidan is studying at Pope St. John XXIII Seminary for late vocations.

Aidan grew up in Seattle in a secular family. It wasn't until he attended Catholic school that he began to feel a calling to the Church. "I was 12 years old when I had my first experience of the Mass. I was profoundly struck by that and, most importantly, the Eucharist, but at the time I wasn't sure how. Looking back it is so easy to see that I didn't go looking for Jesus, He came looking for me."

Upon this experience of the Eucharist, he approached his mother with a desire to convert. "She said, 'let's wait and see'." His next major call came while he was a graduate student and research scientist at the University of Arkansas.

"That time was one of great turmoil and anxiety for me. I remember one day out of desperation picking up the Gospel of Matthew and reading 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest...For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' For me it was like the scales fell off of my eyes as they did for St. Paul. I saw that the Lord was there, and calling me."

Two years later, Aidan enrolled in RCIA to learn more about the faith. "I was led to the Catholic Church by the Eucharist, and by Easter I was hooked." On a Marian retreat after that Easter, the first call to the priestly vocation came.

"At this retreat, for the first time I felt the call to follow Him in a radical and different way. At this time I was in my late 30's, and so it took some time for me to continue to discern this with spiritual direction and lots of prayer."

Now a member of the Church, Aidan continued to discern his vocation. He eventually spent some time at Our Lady of Guadalupe,



Toombs (center) at Christmas with fellow seminarians.

a Benedictine monastery in Pecos, New Mexico. He met and befriended Dana Ciallella, of Anaconda, an Oblate of St. Benedict. Ciallella's friendship helped lead to Aidan discerning priesthood for the Diocese of Helena. His journey with our diocese continues through prayer and formation as he looks forward to ordination and service in Montana.

Celebrating Catholic Schools: Forming our sons into men through community.

Bob and Becky Byrne
Missoula, MT

Missoula Catholic Schools (MCS) has been a vital component in the development and maturation of our two boys. These schools, Saint Joseph Elementary and Loyola Sacred Heart, have solidified our family faith values, promoted strong character, and reaffirmed our family value of personal responsibility. Our boys could have received an education anywhere in Missoula, but the compassion of the MCS family and community forged our two boys into young men of character.

Our decision to send our children to MCS has enriched our lives. The bonds and friendships we have formed from being a part of this tight knit community will last forever. We have found the more we are involved, the greater the experience. When there is a need at our schools, families and teachers rally to get things done. When parents come together to improve the school experience for the students, these friendships grow and our community is strengthened.

We have enjoyed spaghetti feeds the night before games, helping paint the football field, parent bus trips to games, and

decorating our gym for fundraising events. Our schools need parent involvement to be successful. We have become passionate and committed to these schools for the valued relationships we have formed with parents/families, teachers, priests and administrators.

For us the key has been the formation of our boys – drawing forth their best selves as young men. It was certainly a community wide formation from teachers to coaches, from priests to lunch ladies; what has been fostered is a lifetime of curiosity and growth.



Catholic education at MCS at its core is about students coming to know God, and thus know themselves and their abilities more deeply. Our lives are woven together in the beautiful partnership between our parish, St. Francis Xavier, and our school because Christ is the center.

It is so clear to both of us that this will be a life-long gift which started with our decision to send our boys to MCS when they both entered Kindergarten.

Making the sacrifice to become a part of Missoula Catholic Schools has been the best decision we ever could have made for our sons and entire family.

Women's Retreat 2018
at **Legendary Lodge**

GIVING LIFE, HOPE AND LOVE
IN THE SPIRIT OF POPE FRANCIS

With: Sr. Noreen Walter, SCL
July 13, 4 p.m. to July 14, 5 p.m.

80 person limit
women 21 and over

register/info at:
www.showmyevent.com

Reflections on Human Life and the Dignity of the Human Person



Matthew Brower
Executive Director of the
Montana Catholic Confer-
ence

January 22nd marked the 45th anniversary of Roe v. Wade—a tragic and unjust decision which paved the way for a horrific practice that has claimed the lives of over 60 million unborn children.

The scars of countless women and men testify to the truth about abortion—it is gruesome, violent and demeaning to women. Those who witness to this truth by sharing their stories remind us the “unthinkable” must never become acceptable.

Clearly the efforts of pro-life advocates are bearing fruit as abortion numbers continue to decline. Sadly, abortion remains all too common and as long as it is legal some will promote it as good and necessary. Consequently, we continue to pursue legal protection of unborn children.

But, what ought pro-life “work” look like moving forward? Certainly it calls for prayer, outreach, legislative advocacy and “faithful

citizenship” exercised in accord with our baptismal mission, but are these alone sufficient?

Ask yourself, “If I knew abortion would remain legal forever, how would I build a culture of life and ensure that no expectant mother think she has no “choice” but abortion?” The point is we must not become constrained by the weight of the laws we seek to change. We are never powerless to act on behalf of human life. But, to do so most effectively our witness must be credible.

Credibility requires consistency so it’s important we consider the degree to which we embrace a “consistent life ethic.” Of this ethic Saint John Paul II said, “Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good. We need then to show care for all life and for the life of everyone” (Evangelium Vitae, 87).

Are we showing “care for all life and for the life of everyone?”

This question isn’t intended to suggest a moral equivalency between abortion and every other moral issue. However, we should examine our own heart for it is the same heart called to love the unborn that is also called to love the poor, the incarcerated, the immigrant, and the marginalized.

Our hearts weep for children killed in the womb and for those who have chosen abortion. But do our hearts weep for the poor? Do our hearts weep for refugees? Do our hearts weep for immigrants brought here as children now fearing deportation? Do our hearts weep for victims of war, racism and abuse? Do our hearts weep for the neglected, drug-addicted, abandoned and lonely?

And if our hearts do weep for each of these would anyone looking at the lives we lead know this to be true?

We cannot feign true love or fool “pro-choice” critics waiting to call out real or imagined hypocrisy. More importantly, we cannot fool God.

A heart on fire for life shines in a selfless outpouring of loving deeds directed at life’s dark crevices and it effectuates change in the hearts of those unaccustomed to the joy, hope and love such light brings.

So, let us never weary in our labors for life or allow setbacks to diminish our joy. Be not afraid! And let us ask God to transform our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh so that through us he may do the same for others.

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Progress at Trinity Center Development

The Trinity Center development located in Helena off the Interstate 15 Custer Avenue interchange is a joint venture benefitting the Resurrection Cemetery Association (RCA) and the depositors in the Diocese of Helena Deposit and Loan fund (D&L Fund). Development already includes Helena Self Storage as well as a nearly completed Hilton Home2 Suites.

Helena Self Storage opened in September of 2016 and continues to add clients. The 434-unit facility is managed by an outside management firm knowledgeable in

the self-storage industry. While it will likely take several years to become net cash flow positive, funds from the business will be used for the “perpetual care” promised to families who have laid loved ones to rest at RCA cemeteries.

Construction is nearly finished on the 95-room Hilton Home2 Suites. Located at 3325 N. Sanders St., the hotel will have standard studio suites and one-bedroom suites that offer Hilton quality stays. The property is part of the first five-acre devel-

opment which has been annexed into the City of Helena. The hotel is managed by Hilton Management Services, has hired a General Manager and plans to open in April. Proceeds from this project will benefit parishes with deposits in the Deposit and Loan Fund.

Trinity Center has an available building pad adjacent to the hotel. This pad is available immediately and ideally suited for a restaurant or other retail tenant. Efforts to identify additional development opportunities continue.

Trinity Center’s website envisions full development of the entire property at www.trinitycenter.com.



Transformative Theology at the Heart of Carroll College Mission



Eric Hall, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Theology and Philosophy
Archbishop Raymond G. Hunt-
hausen Professor of Peace and Justice

Being trained to the highest levels in philosophy and theology, it can be frustrating and disheartening sometimes to look within a broader culture and see that most persons ascribe no real sense of importance to these subjects, except maybe that they teach critical thinking skills. True. So do chess and poker. But I get it. These subjects seem useless; they seem to give no one any other skills.

On the other hand, I learned in and through these academic areas to pursue the truth in all things and to do so with an iron will. I also learned to evaluate my life with a keen, honest, and critical eye, asking myself whether I'm merely living a life that brings me pleasure to live or a life that brings me and others goodness. Moreover, these disciplines even led me and my family into full communion with the Catholic Church and its incarnational mission.

What I'm saying is that these disciplines are intellectually, morally, and spiritually metamorphic. For these reasons alone, they more than deserve their place within the modern, Catholic academy. After all, the Truth, and the pursuit of it far beyond our reductions of it to pragmatics, transforms us into good people.

The question then is quite simple: how can we reinvigorate these disciplines and others like them within a jobs-oriented culture? How do we find the academic and institutional value of a degree like theology again?

In theology, we asked ourselves: what if we do actually take ourselves seriously as a transformative discipline? Our answer to that question has emerged into a new motto: Explore the Deep. This motto is an intellectual translation of Pope John Paul II's declaration that we all

ought to "Go Out Into the Deep" (duc in altum). What we mean by this translation is simple: we want students—any and all students—to have the chance to 'Explore the Deep' of their faith, whatever their major or career path.

To foster this exploration for students, the theology department has made some big changes to the major. We've reduced the major credits from upward of 55 credits down to 34 credits total, which is in line with theology majors at our peer institutions as well as many other majors at Carroll. We've also shifted the classes within the major to allow for maximum flexibility while retaining the rigor deserving of a Carroll degree. We reduced the minor to 18 credits and created flexibility within that too, to allow students pursuing, say, nursing and engineering degrees to continue to explore the deep of their faith as well.

In other words, we've created maximum flexibility so as to open up to students the possibility of double-majoring, or simply minoring, with us. We've re-envisioned our degree, not as a stand-alone degree, but as a degree that integrates with any other degree, helping the student not only become more versed, intelligent, and trained, but also to learn to live within the transformative truth of Catholic theology and the truths pursued by all persons of good will.

You might note that we're missing an important link to this particular vision. If we're exploring the deep, how are we also going into the deep of our communities? The answer is simple: we've begun to implement a new ministry program including an emphasis in ministry within the theology major or minor. Now we're not only transforming our students, but also engaging directly with our diocese to transform our broader community!

This new emphasis uses six credits from the electives of the existing major. Now students have the option to engage in the following curriculum: a one-credit discernment course used to develop a sense of what it means to be called to ministry, including site visits to various institutions and a penumbra of reflective exercises; a three-credit ministry internship at local parishes, ministries and philanthropic organiza-

tions; and a two-credit, cohort style Ministry in Action course where students will reflect together on their diverse experiences through their internships.

Of importance, here, is to note that the term ministry has a very broad meaning to us. We want to go out even deeper. Of course there is priestly and pastoral ministry, and we've many students interested in these forms of direct service. However, one of the elements that we've also developed is the chance for students to use internships in their other majors as their internship for theology as well.

For instance, we've established a double-major with psychology with a focus on pastoral care. This double-major allows students to use their psychology internship for theology, and we ask the student to write a senior thesis integrating the psychology, theology, and clinical work into a final reflective and academic product.

What I want to convey to you all is simple: in theology, we're both exploring the deep of our faith and going out into the deep of the community. Our students have responded strongly. We now have 13 majors including business/theology; pre-med/theology; and psychology/theology double majors, to name a few. We also have at least 20 minors.

In this vein, perhaps our broadest hope in the theology department is that at Carroll College, as a liberal arts and pre-professional institution, absolutely no student should graduate without the type of education that lies within the heart of the mission. That is, should a student serve through a concrete career? Absolutely. But that student should also gain a transformative education through a degree like theology that can only bolster and deepen a pre-professional degree.

You'll note that I think that theology should of course be students' first choice, but we're more than willing to share the work of transforming lives with other colleagues. What I'm saying is that you ought to be ready for a future where your heart will drop as your child tells you that she's getting a theology degree; just remember, it'll be paired with business!



CYC Convention is a three-day, two-night gathering of high school Catholic youth from all over the Diocese of Helena and beyond. We will pray, worship, learn and celebrate our faith together on the campus of Carroll College.

Experience the vibrancy of the young Church and return home with tools to make the Gospel of Christ come alive in your parish, school, family and community.

Cost: \$85 (\$100 after February 15th)
Scholarships Available
Information at: www.dohyouth.org



The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Helena

NEWSLETTER

February, 2018

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Father, you call each one of us by name and ask us to follow you.

*Bless your church by raising up dedicated and generous leaders
from our families and friends who will serve your people as Sisters,
Priests, Brothers, Deacons, and Lay Ministers.*

*Inspire us as we grow to know you,
and open our hearts to hear your call.*

*We ask this in Jesus' name
Amen.*

Please Continue to Pray for Our Seminarians



From Left: Matthew Christiaens, Tyler Frohlich, Nathan Scheidecker, Bishop Thomas, Shannon Augare, Kyle Tannehill, Codi Krueger, Fr. Marc Lenneman.
Not pictured: Aidan Toombs