

Dear Parishioners, Friends, and Visitors to the Cathedral,

On May 21st, we will celebrate twenty-five martyrs – Saint Christopher Magallanes and his twenty-four companions (21 diocesan priests and 3 laymen). These men were shot or hanged between 1915 and 1937 for their Catholic faith, during a turbulent period of Mexico's history that tried to eradicate Catholicism in the country. At the heart of this period was a rebellion known as the 'Cristero War' which took place during the mid-1920's when an anti-Catholic government rose to power in Mexico under President Plutarco Calles. He wanted the Mexican people to belong to a socialist state and did not want anyone, other than the government, forming the minds of its people. In his opinion, as well as others, the Church was poisoning the minds of Mexicans, and so he wanted to ensure that it would have no voice in forming the moral makeup of society. So, using the law, the government expelled all foreign priests, closed churches, Catholic schools, and seminaries. Baptism and the celebration of Mass were outlawed, and anticlerical laws were enacted to prohibit the faith from being practiced or spread. This led to a three year violent revolution in Mexico from 1926 – 1929 where approximately 90,000 people were killed. If you are interested, there was a movie made about these very events that came out a few years ago entitled, 'For Greater Glory.'

It was during this tempestuous time that Saint Christopher and his companion martyrs worked as part of the Cristero Movement, who pledged their allegiance to Christ and His Church no matter the consequences. These men secretly preached and ministered to the faithful throughout Mexico, and Christopher, himself, even established a clandestine seminary in his parish so that the work of educating and training priests would continue. He was arrested while on the way to celebrate Mass in 1927, and executed by a firing squad without trial for being a part of the Critero Movement. His last words were: "I am innocent and I die innocent. I forgive with all my heart those responsible for my death, and I ask God that the shedding of my blood serve the peace of our divided Mexico."

At his canonization in the year 2000, Pope Saint John Paul II said to those who had traveled from Mexico for the celebration: *"They are saints because they put God at the center of their lives and made seeking and extending his kingdom the purpose of their existence; saints because their deeds continue to speak of their total love for the Lord and for their brethren by bearing abundant fruits, thanks to their living faith in Jesus Christ and their commitment to loving as he loved us, including their enemies... the Church rejoices in canonizing these children of Mexico: Cristóbal Magallanes and his 24 companion martyrs, priests and laymen... You Mexican pilgrims have come in great numbers, accompanied by a large group of Bishops, to take part in this solemn celebration honoring the memory of these illustrious children of the Church and of your homeland. I greet you all affectionately. The Church in Mexico rejoices at relying on these intercessors in heaven, models of supreme charity who followed in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. They all dedicated their lives to God and their brethren through martyrdom or by generously serving the needy. The firmness of their faith and hope sustained them in the various trials they had to endure. They are a precious legacy, a fruit of the faith rooted in the lands of Mexico, a faith which, at the dawn of the third millennium of Christianity, must be preserved and revitalized so that you may continue to be faithful to Christ and to his Church as you were in the past."*

It is when we are faced with the ultimate choice, that depth of our faith becomes manifest. Every martyr knew what they had to do if they wanted to avoid death, but none of them was willing to pay that price, because, to them, survival in this world was not more important than fidelity to Christ.

Father Sean Ralph



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Please Pray for Fr. Soohyun (Peter) Bang, Fr. Jacob B. Bearer, Fr. James M. Cosgrove, Fr. Eric S. Garris, Fr. Matthew W. Jordan, Fr. Robert D. McWilliams, Fr. Peter A. Morris, & Fr. Anthony J. Simone who were ordained to the Priesthood by Bishop Thomas on May 19th. May God bless them abundantly in their ministry to the Church.



Catholic Charities - This weekend, we will be participating in a follow-up In-Pew Appeal for Catholic Charities, which will benefit the Hungry and Homeless throughout our Diocese. All of the money raised from next weekend's Appeal will provide for fundamental needs, such as food, hot meals, shower facilities, and clothing, as well as future needs through training and case management programs.



DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT! Each **NEW** or **INCREASED** donation to the Catholic Charities Annual Appeal during this weekend will receive a dollar for dollar match, up to \$100,000. **Gifts must be made through the in-pew envelopes or online at < catholiccommunity.org/challenge > to be part of the match.**

Marathon Sunday - Please keep the safety of the runners and their route in your thoughts and prayers this weekend.