

Dear Parishioners and Friends of 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 Cristero 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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THE RITE AID MARATHON & 10K

will take place in downtown Cleveland **this Sunday, May 19**. You will need to allow extra time to arrive at the Cathedral on that day, **especially for the 8:00 am Mass**. Many downtown, and near west-side streets will be closed, or have lanes blocked as part of the marathon course. Changes include closing E. 9th Street north of St. Clair Avenue, from 6:30-8:30 am. For the **8:00 am Mass**, we recommend approaching the Cathedral via East 9th Street from the South (I-90/I-71). For the **10:30 am & 12:15 pm Masses**, the way is clear from the East via surface roads, I-90, or Rt. 2. From the West, the clearest possible route to the Cathedral would be the innerbelt (I-90) or the Shoreway (Rt. 2). Parts of many surface roads from the West, especially Detroit & Franklin, will be blocked until the race finishes at about 3:15 pm. In order to make your drive to and from the Cathedral as smooth as possible, a **Worship Service Access Pass** is available here: Place this pass in view on the dashboard of your car; it will make the police aware that you need to cross the race course as quickly as possible. Please keep those participating in the race in your prayers.

Catholic Charities - Next weekend



we will be participating in an important Follow-Up Parish Appeal for Catholic Charities. Funds raised through this effort will support improving the camp experience for campers with disabilities through camperships to help reduce financial burdens, programing and activities for campers with special needs, and cabin renovations that are adaptive for campers of all abilities. With your support, Catholic Charities will be able to serve more campers with special needs and enhance their experience once they arrive at Camp Christopher. Double your Impact! All new, increased, and additional gifts returned in the In-Pew Envelopes next weekend or donated online at <CatholicCommunity.org/Camp> will be matched up to \$100,000. We hope you see the benefits that camp can have on persons with special needs. Prayerful consider the impact you can have on all who attend Camp Christopher, and please give as generously as possible. For more information, contact Karen Joyce at 216-696-6525 x 1910. Thank you for making a difference.