

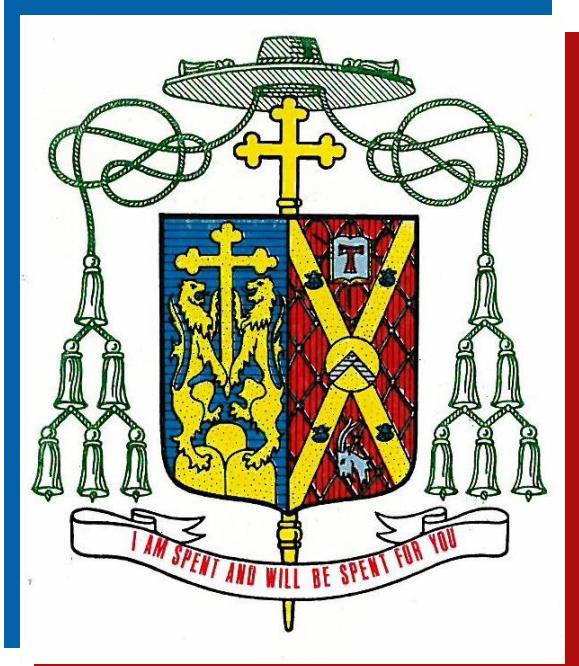


THE DIOCESAN CHRONICLE

NEWS OF THE DIOCESE OF BAKER

May 31, 2015

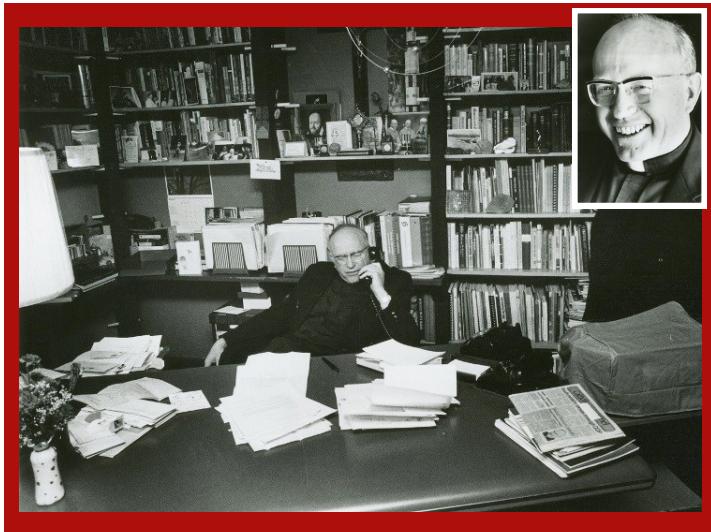
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THE BISHOP

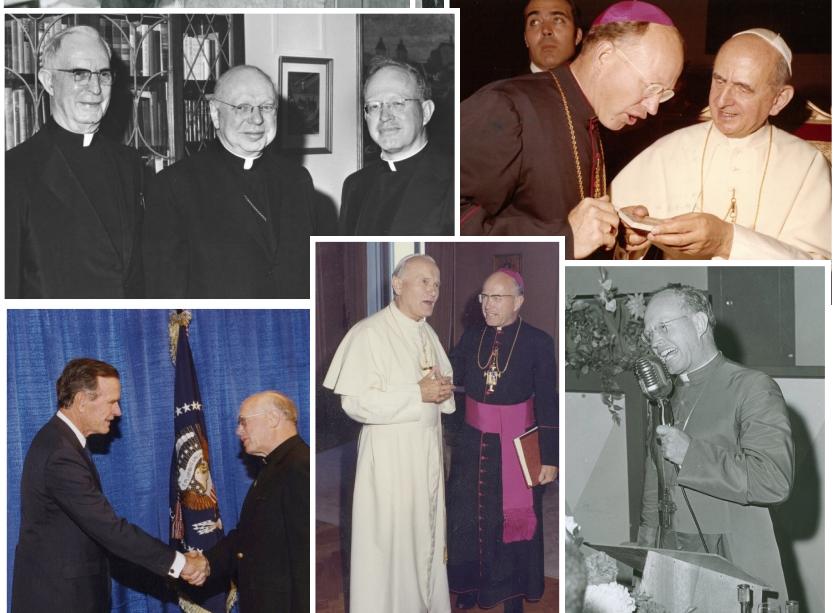
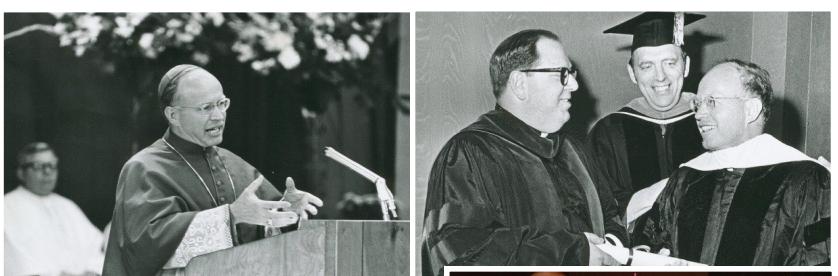
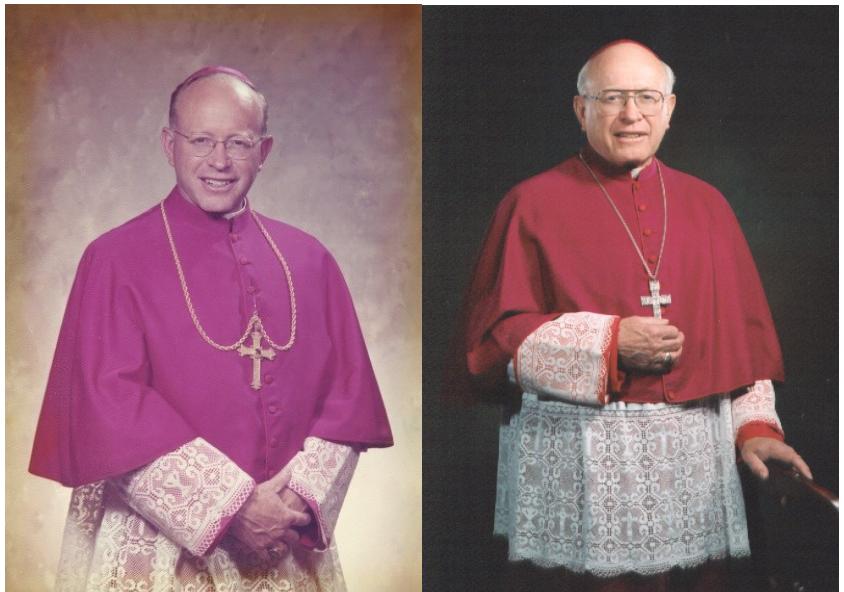
A bishop is one who stands in the midst of his people as one who serves; who is an edification to the flock in truth and holiness; remembering that he who is greater should become as the lesser, and he who is more distinguished, as the servant; yet one who governs as the vicar and ambassador of God, who preaches as an authentic teacher of the faith, vigilantly warding off the errors that threaten the flock; who regards the priests as his sons and friends; who gathers together all God's people in the communion of love.

—Vatican Council II



HIS EXCELLENCY
Thomas Joseph Connolly
Fourth Bishop of Baker

July 18, 1922 ~ April 24, 2015



Giving Bishop Connolly Back to God

Bishop Liam Cary

The following is an expanded version of the homily given at Bishop Connolly's Burial Mass in Baker City on 1 May.

All of us would say that Bishop Connolly was a man called by God. But as young Thomas lived his way into his vocation, God's call to the priesthood was by no means as clear to him as it is to us looking back. His "burning desire" as a boy to "have a beautiful ranch someplace" was not to be realized. Instead, he was raised in town, on his father's lumber yard in Tonapah, Nevada. Early on, his life did not take the turn young Thomas wanted it to take.

At age 11 he learned another, harder lesson about how life can turn away from where the heart wants it to go. In February 1933 Thomas' older brother was diagnosed with leukemia. "That did something," he remembered sixty years later. "You know, we all thought that we were . . . big strong people . . . [But] Dad couldn't do a thing. My mother couldn't do a thing. We prayed and tried every doctor we could. There was nothing we could do." A year later his brother died. Life had taken a turn young Thomas did not want it to take.

Two years after this up-close encounter with death, "it came time for me to decide whether I was going to the seminary or not." He decided to go. But years passed and "[n]o clear light came." "I didn't know whether I wanted to quit and go home, or whether God was . . . or wasn't calling me," he later recalled. "If you want me to do this," he told God, "then you will have to make it possible." God did. Upon Thomas' ordination as deacon the words of the Prophet Isaiah sounded in his heart: "Here I am . . . send me."

At last Thomas Connolly was sure of his calling, but he had not heard the end of it. It turned out that there was to be a further call *within* the call to priesthood. Twenty-four years later he was named bishop—just as the winds of change from Vatican II swept through the Church. "In 1971, being bishop was a different . . . thing than it had ever been," he would recall on his 25th anniversary. The new style of exercising authority downplayed the importance of *telling* people what to do and instead exalted the value of *inspiring* them to do it. "That wasn't an easy... thing to handle," Bishop Connolly reflected years later. "I asked myself, 'Are you capable of shifting gears that much . . . to lead the church in the direction that . . . the Holy Spirit wants it to go?'" His answer was both humble and realistic: "All I could say was that I would try."

Having said "yes" to his episcopal vocation, Father Connolly received a new *mission* when he became Bishop Connolly. "The title of Bishop is one of service, not of honor," he was told at his ordination, "and therefore a Bishop should strive to benefit others rather than lord it over them." For nearly thirty years Bishop Connolly's unfailing fidelity to his service-oriented title much endeared him to his flock. "It impressed me that he'd sit in the sage brush and eat pan bread!" one woman recalled on his 25th anniversary. And a young father remembered the Bishop's behavior at the first Family Camp: "I watched him carry the kids piggy back up the hills, play volleyball so competitively that we called him 'Spike' . . . and generally join right in. I was impressed by his playfulness. The kids loved and admired him. We have been so lucky that he was there, really there, for us." Not for nothing had the Bishop chosen his episcopal motto: "I am spent and

will be spent for you."

Episcopal ordination brought a second responsibility also: to "be mindful always of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep and is known by them." To this mission of mutual recognition Bishop Connolly devoted himself in strikingly memorable fashion. As one lady put it, "The most common thing I've heard people say about him is, he remembers people's names." There were hundreds of names to remember from the retreats he gave in abundance through the decades of his ministry. He much enjoyed these retreats because "I get a chance to work with people on a more personal basis, to get to know them better." He hoped to go on doing so in retirement: "I'd love to have a nice retreat house someplace, in a beautiful spot, where I could meet and encourage people in their own prayer life . . . [w]here they could put aside the cares that they normally have . . . and just consider who they are in the presence of God and who God is." Like the Good Shepherd who says, "I know mine, and mine know me," Bishop Connolly wanted nothing more than to tend his flock to the end of his days.

It was not to be. In his last five years the Bishop's memory departed him. He had known and been known by so many for so long, but at the end to know and to make himself known exceeded the reach of his powers of mind. He could know and be known no longer. As his unknowing gaze fell upon visitors, it provoked in them (as it may have provoked in him) the question the Prophet Isaiah gives voice to: "How long, O Lord?" How long until the return of recognition?

It is a question each of us must face, for at the hour of our death, St. Paul assures us, "knowledge . . . will be brought to nothing." Our memory will turn to dust. Therefore, Jesus promises, "I am going to prepare a place for you"—a place of remembrance. "And . . . I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be."

Until then "I know partially," St. Paul confessed. But "when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away" and my emptied memory will be filled to overflowing. "[T]hen I shall know fully, as I am fully known." I shall know, and be known, "face to face." I will remember myself in full for the first time in the life-giving presence of the Father who has never forgotten me.

In a beautiful coincidence Bishop Connolly died only days after Francis Cardinal George of Chicago, who as Bishop of Yakima in the '90s highly esteemed his neighboring bishop's kindness and consideration. "The only thing we take with us when we die," Cardinal George once said, "is what we have given away."

That insight came to mind during the homily at Bishop Connolly's Vigil Service in Bend. Father Rick Fischer recalled the day that Bishop Connolly conferred the priesthood on him in Ontario many years ago: "When he imposed his hands on me at ordination, he left them on my head for a long time, as if he wanted to give it *all* to me"—all the priesthood he could give. That image gets to the essence of the Christian life and priestly ministry of Bishop Thomas Connolly. He did not hold onto his priesthood; he did not keep the gifts of Christ to himself. He gave them away, to us, the sheep of his flock, over and over again. In doing so, in giving them away, he made them more and more his own. We can be confident that he took them with him when he went to meet his Lord.

Regresando al Obispo Connolly a Dios

Obispo Liam Cary

Lo siguiente es una versión ampliada de la homilía dada en la Misa de Sepelio del Obispo Connolly en Baker City el 1 de Mayo.

Todos nosotros diríamos que el Obispo Connolly fue un hombre llamado por Dios. Pero a medida que el joven Thomas vivió a su manera en su vocación, el llamado de Dios al sacerdocio no era de ningún modo tan claro para él como lo es para nosotros quienes miramos hacia atrás. Su “ardiente deseo” de niño de “tener un hermoso rancho en algún lugar” no se realizaría. En su lugar, él fue criado en una ciudad, en el patio de la maderería de su padre en Tonapah, Nevada. Mientras estaba todavía joven, su vida no dio el giro que el joven Tomás quería que tomara.

A la edad de 11 años aprendió otra lección, más difícil, acerca de cómo la vida puede dar la espalda a donde el corazón quiere que vaya. En Febrero de 1933, el hermano mayor de Tomás fue diagnosticado con leucemia. “Eso hizo algo” recordó el obispo sesenta años después. “Saben, todos pensamos que éramos personas grandes y fuertes. [Pero] Papá no pudo hacer nada. Mi mamá no pudo hacer nada. Oramos y tratamos cada médico que pudimos. No hubo nada que pudimos hacer.” Un año más tarde su hermano murió. La vida había dado un giro que el joven Tomás no quería que tomara.

Dos años después de este encuentro cercano con la muerte, “llegó el momento para mí decidir si iba al seminario o no.” Él decidió ir. Pero pasaron años y “[n]o llegó ninguna luz clara.” “No sabía si quería abandonarlo y regresar a casa, o si Dios me estaba llamando o no,” recordó después. “Si quieres que haga esto,” le dijo a Dios, “entonces tendrás que hacerlo posible.” Dios lo hizo. Tras la ordenación de Tomás como diácono las palabras del Profeta Isaías sonaron en su corazón: “Aquí estoy . . . envíame.”

Al fin Tomás Connolly estaba seguro de su llamado, pero no había oído el final del mismo. Resultó que iba a haber un nuevo llamado *dentro* del llamado al sacerdocio. Veinticuatro años después, fue nombrado obispo—al igual tiempo que los vientos de cambio a partir del Vaticano II se extendieron por la Iglesia. “En 1971, siendo obispo era algo diferente de lo que jamás había sido,” recordaría en su 25 aniversario. El nuevo estilo de ejercer autoridad minimizaba la importancia de *decirle* a la gente lo que deben hacer y en su lugar exaltaba el valor de *inspirarlos* a hacerlo. “Eso no era algo fácil de manejar,” reflexionaba el Obispo Connolly años después. “Me preguntaba, ‘¿Eres capaz de cambiar tanto de mecanismos para dirigir la iglesia en la dirección en que el Espíritu Santo quiere que vaya?’” Su respuesta era a la vez humilde como realista: “Todo lo que podía decir fue que lo intentaría.”

Habiendo dicho “sí” a su vocación episcopal, el Padre Connolly recibió su nueva *misión* cuando se convirtió en el Obispo Connolly. “El título de Obispo es uno de servicio, no de honor,” se le dijo en su ordenación, “y, por lo tanto, un Obispo debe esforzarse para beneficiar a otros en vez de enseñorearse sobre ellos.” Por casi treinta años la fidelidad indefectible del Obispo Connolly a su título orientado al servicio se hizo querer más por su rebaño. “Me impresionó que se sentaba en la artemisa y comía pan!” recordó una mujer en su 25 aniversario. Y un joven padre recordó el comportamiento del Obispo en el primer Campamento de la Familia: “lo miré cargar a cuestas a niños y subir las colinas, jugar volibol tan competitivamente que lo llamamos ‘Spike,’ y generalmente se unía a jugar. Me quedé impresionado con su alegría. Los niños lo querían y admiraban. Hemos sido tan afortunados de que

estuvieron allí, realmente allí, para nosotros.” No es por nada que el Obispo había escogido su lema episcopal: “Estoy consumido y me consumiré por ustedes.”

La ordenación episcopal trajo también una segunda responsabilidad: de “ser consciente siempre del Buen Pastor, que conoce a sus ovejas y es conocido por ellas.” A esta misión de reconocimiento mutuo, el Obispo Connolly se dedicó de manera sorprendentemente memorable. Como puso una señora, “La cosa más común que he escuchado a la gente decir de él es, que recuerda los nombres de las personas.” Hubo cientos de nombre que recordar de los retiros que dio en abundancia a través de las décadas de su ministerio. Él disfrutaba mucho estos retiros, porque “tengo la oportunidad de trabajar con gente de forma más personal, para llegar a conocerlos mejor.” Tenía la esperanza de seguir haciéndolo en su jubilación: “Me gustaría tener una bonita casa de retiro en algún lugar, en un hermoso lugar, donde pueda conocer y animar a gente en su propia vida de oración, [d]onde ellos puedan hacer a un lado las preocupaciones que normalmente tienen y simplemente considerar quiénes son en la presencia de Dios y quién es Dios.” Como el Buen Pastor que dice, “Conozco a las mías, y ellas me conocen a mí,” el Obispo Connolly no quería nada más que atender a su rebaño hasta el final de sus días.

No pudo ser. En sus últimos cinco años la memoria del Obispo se apartó de él. Había conocido y había sido conocido por tantos durante tanto tiempo, pero al final conocer y darse a conocer excedía el alcance del poder de su mente. Ya no pudo conocer ni darse a conocer. Como su mirada de desconocimiento caía sobre los visitantes, provocaba en ellos (ya que puede haber provocado en él) la cuestión que el profeta Isaías puso a Dios: “¿Hasta cuándo, Señor?” ¿Hasta cuando que regresa reconocimiento?

Es una pregunta que cada uno de nosotros debemos afrontar, porque a la hora de nuestra muerte, San Pablo nos asegura, “conocimiento . . . será reducido en nada.” Nuestra memoria se convertirá en polvo. Por lo tanto, Jesús promete, “Voy a preparar un lugar para ustedes”—un lugar de recuerdo. “Y . . . regresare y los llevaré, para que donde yo esté, también ustedes estén.”

Hasta entonces, “conozco en parte,” confesó San Pablo. Sin embargo, “cuando venga lo perfecto, lo incompleto se pasará” y mi memoria vacía se llenará a rebosar. “[E]ntonces conoceré como soy conocido.” Conoceré, y seré conocido, “cara a cara”. Me recordaré a mí mismo en su totalidad por primera vez en la presencia vivificante del Padre que nunca me ha olvidado.

En una hermosa coincidencia, el Obispo Connolly murió solo unos días después de Francisco Cardenal George de Chicago, quien fue Obispo de Yakima en los ‘90 y respeto mucho a su obispo vecino. “Lo único que nos llevamos con nosotros cuando morimos,” dijo una vez el Cardenal George, “es lo que hemos regalado.”

Esto me vino a la mente durante la homilía del Servicio de Vigilia del Obispo Connolly en Bend. El Padre Rick Fischer recordó el día en que el Obispo Connolly confirió el sacerdocio sobre él en Ontario hace muchos años: “Cuando impuso sus manos sobre mí en la ordenación, las dejó sobre mi cabeza durante mucho tiempo, como si quisiera darme *todo* a mí”— todo el sacerdocio que pudiera dar. Esa imagen llega a la esencia de la vida Cristiana y ministerio sacerdotal del Obispo Tomás Connolly. No se aferró a su sacerdocio; no guardó los dones de Cristo para él mismo. Los regaló, a nosotros, a las ovejas de su rebaño, una y otra vez. De este modo, al regalarlos, los hizo más y más suyos. Podemos estar seguros de que él los llevó con él cuando fue a encontrarse con su Señor.

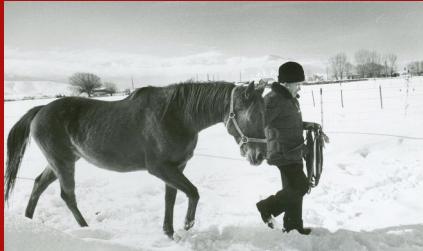
"I am spent and will be spent for you."



Bishop Connolly rides in the Pendleton Roundup Parade, 1971



Renewal of Sisters vows, 1974



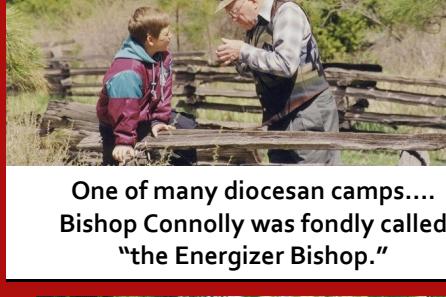
At his home in Baker City, 1985



With Mary Ann Davis,
Msgr. Charles T. Grant
and Fr. Charles Dreisbach
Finance Council meeting, 1988



1995



One of many diocesan camps....
Bishop Connolly was fondly called
"the Energizer Bishop."



Family Camp, 1991



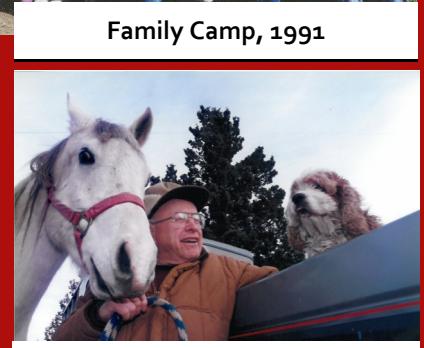
World Youth Day, 1997



Leadership Camp, 1989



Riding partner,
Maureen Caldwell



With Sarkist and Hansie 1998



28 members of the Baker Diocese Clergy presented Bishop Connolly with the keys to a new Buick at his Retirement Dinner
January, 2000



At the "Camp Connolly" dedication, 2009



Bishop Connolly
and Bishop Vasa
2009



Dedication Mass at St. Francis de Sales Cathedral,
Baker City, after renovation of the altar area,
October, 2007. Also Bishop Connolly's 60th
anniversary of his priestly ordination.



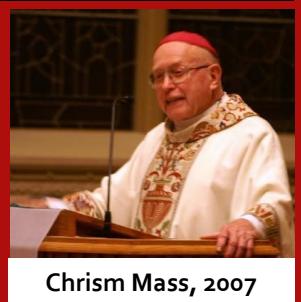
Bishop visits with the Scheimer family after Mass at St. Mary's Chapel, 2009



1994



Bishop Connolly and
Mary Ann Davis, 2009



Chrism Mass, 2007