

# FR. PERRY KENASTON

## BIO

### BACKGROUND:

I was born in Wenatchee, Washington and a few years later we moved to Lake Wenatchee area because my dad's boyhood dream was to own a farm/ranch. He convinced my mother that this investment in Lake Wenatchee property was a good investment. However, after a year, mom **strongly** insisted on returning to "civilization" in Wenatchee.

After returning to Wenatchee, my brother attended Wenatchee High School and I attended Saint Joseph Catholic grade school.

At Saint Joseph's, it was the school policy that at least once a week the local Catholic priest visit all the classrooms and hold a weekly Mass.

It was while at one of his visitations in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade that the Holy Spirit spoke to my inner being.

John 15:16

"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you."

After graduating from University High School in Dishman, Washington, Mom and I had a meeting and she gave me three choices: stay with her and live rent-free if I continued going to school, pay rent and get a job, or move to Wenatchee and stay with my father.

My decision was an easy one. I moved to Wenatchee and dad basically gave me the same choices. As a result, I enrolled in Wenatchee Valley College and went to Smithy's Pancake House to find work. This is where I began my culinary vocation. First as a busboy, then working in the kitchen and, after proper training, became one of the main cooks.

Because of academics, I relocated to the Tri Cities (Washington) and enrolled in their local college. From there, I decided to return to Spokane and continue my college education and Food Service degree. Within a couple of years, I graduated from Spokane Community College with a 2-year Culinary Arts degree while still working at the Spokane Smithy's Pancake House.

Shortly after graduation, Uncle Sam asked me to join the military service.

After graduating from basic training and the Army's cooking class, I received my first assignment and headed to Seoul, Korea. I was there for 21 months and returned to the USA with an honorable discharge.

As I returned to civilian life, my father asked me to join him in selling real estate, which I did for a year when we decided that this was not the right time for this to take place. Through my selling of real estate, I made several contacts, and one of them was a builder of homes. During one of our many conversations, I mentioned to him and his wife that I was thinking of relocating. He suggested that I try Las Vegas, Nevada where he had several contacts in a variety of fields. So, by the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit and Blessed Mother Mary, I was off on another spiritual adventure.

After arriving in Las Vegas, I met one of Jerry's contacts and he put me in touch with an elderly woman who took in temporary boarders, and after a call, I went to her house and was given a room. The next day, I went to the Desert Inn Hotel HR department. After filling out their employment form, they asked me if I could start as a busboy on the midnight shift. Of course, I said yes. Later, I moved out and found an apartment and continued to look for food services managements positions.

One day, I read an ad and went to see the manager/owner for Village Inn restaurant. After a brief discussion, I was hired as a kitchen-manager-in-training. The purpose of this training was that he and his wife were moving to Pueblo, Colorado and wanted me to manage their new store's kitchen, among other things. This lasted for a period of time, and I felt that the Holy Spirit was calling me to rejoin the USA military. After a brief orientation, I was assigned to Germany, where I became once again very involved in the church. During one of our

conversations, the Catholic Chaplain mentioned to me that it was time for me to return to civilian life to start my education so I can take the necessary courses for ordination to the Catholic Priesthood.

Has God ever sent you someone that helped you along the way? This happened to me during registration at Spokane Falls Community college (SFCC). His name was Mr. Ed Reynolds. After I shared my story and desires, he mentioned to me that he would be my counselor for the next two years and would make sure that every class I took at SFCC would be transferred to Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington.

After graduating from Gonzaga University with both a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and a minor in Religious Studies, I also received a Master's degree in Pastoral Ministry.

Several years later, I graduated from Holy Apostles' College and Seminary from Cromwell, Connecticut with a Master's in Divinity.

#### FAMILY:

As shared before, my father was one of three children who lived on a farm in the state of Iowa and at an early age moved to Wenatchee, Washington and started out working at the local Western Auto store. However, was very much interested in selling both insurance and real estate and became one of the first salespeople for both in the Wenatchee area. In time, the business grew so much that he invited his brother to join him in Wenatchee.

Mom graduated from high school in Manson, Washington and went to school to be a cosmetologist. As the story goes, they met one day, and the rest is history.

My brother, after graduating from high school, joined the US Navy and took their course in pharmacy technology and after an honorable discharge pursued that vocation for his entire working career. My sister-in-law worked as an airline reservations person and while overseas met my brother and the rest is history. My niece is married, and her daughter is married also and all live in the Seattle, Washington area.

In September of 2023, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit them for a weekend and it was great to catch up and just share our collective experiences over the many years.

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Besides my food service background where I earned the honor of being an executive chef, I also sold real estate with my father and worked for consumer opinion services a market research company located throughout the Pacific Northwest area.

#### PRIESTHOOD:

As I shared earlier, it was back in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Saint Joseph grade school that I felt that gentle tug and whisper from both the Most Holy Trinity and Our Blessed Mother their calling to become someday a Roman Catholic priest.

During my early years, as in all families, there were tensions and because of them my parents eventually divorced and, as time would have, they both remarried. However, during this time, I tried to remain as close as possible working for the church. And even in my military service tried to work closely with the local Catholic military chaplain.

It was the local Catholic military chaplain in Nuremberg, Germany who strongly suggested that I return to civilian life so I could begin my academic career.

During my academic career I was involved in many church activities which included visiting the sick, in nursing homes, hospitals and various liturgical functions.

So, after many years of prayers from a lot of people and the blessings of the Most Holy Trinity and Our Blessed Mother, on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999, at Centennial Hall in Juneau, Alaska at 7pm on the feast of Saint Pope Leo the Great, I was given the gift of Ordination to become a Roman Catholic Priest. During the Rite of Ordination and after my mother put the priest's stole on me, Niagara Falls hit: she looked with those eyes only a mother has and said, "You did it." Almost immediately, I shared with her, "No, Mom, we all did it."

My journey over the past 23 years has been interesting to say the least. Because of being ordained for the Diocese of Juneau I spent 23 years traveling to various communities such as Tenakee Springs, Angoon, Hoonah, and others. Transportation was either small plane or the Alaska Ferry System.

Overall, the experience has been most interesting and, for the most part, I am enjoying my stay at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, helping the local parish.

#### HOBBIES/INTERESTS

My hobbies have included tent and RV camping. I enjoy walking, back packing, and also both deep water and stream fishing. I have traveled from the United States to the far east (Philippines), and seen a good portion of Europe because of the pilgrimages I have led, particularly to the Holy Land.

#### CLOSING:

John 15:16 NAB

"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you."

From the very beginning of my priesthood, I have always believed that with the full cooperation of the Holy Spirit and Our Blessed Mother that we can, in humility, do these works that are described above. Too many times as history has demonstrated humankind has because of original sin has done things/events that are contrary to their wishes (Holy Trinity and our blessed Mother) and has paid the price and until all of humankind returns to a better way of thinking (beatitudes) it will continue to travel down that spiritual rabbit hole that it may never escape.

WWJD—What Would Jesus Do

Respectively submitted in the Names of the Most Holy Trinity and Our Blessed Mother Mary,

Father Perry Myer Kenaston