

2006 Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen  
Humanitarian Award Recipient:

**Rev. James L. Boyle**

# Father Jimmy

A compassionate leader in the Catholic community

OFTEN WE LEARN about Jesus' love from unlikely sources. That has been the experience of Father James L. Boyle, a priest of the Archdiocese of Seattle who has spent most of his life serving people with developmental disabilities.

Father Boyle was the recipient of the 2006 Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen Humanitarian Award, which recognizes compassion and leadership in the Catholic community. The award is presented annually by Catholic Community Services of Western Washington. While Father Boyle says he is humbled by the award, he prefers being out of the spotlight and would rather be known simply as "Father Jimmy."

He grew up with a loving family in rural Puyallup, followed a brother to the seminary, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1961. When told he looks younger than his age of 72, Father Boyle responds, "Confession begins in 10 minutes."

Parish assignments early in his



*Father James L. Boyle walks with his longtime friend, Ricky Durham.*

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priesthood included Holy Rosary in West Seattle and All Saints in Puyallup. In 1972, something happened that led to profound changes in his faith. Along with becoming pastor of St. Aloysius Parish in Buckley, he assumed responsibility for ministry at the Rainier School – a state-operated institution for developmentally disabled persons. The school had about 1,900 severely handicapped residents at its peak in the early 1960s. Today there are about 300 residents.

"It became a tremendous place of

learning," says Father Boyle. "I was in the midst of their loneliness. The deepest cry in their hearts was to belong and to be accepted. Yet we constantly imply to others, 'If you change, maybe I'll love you more, maybe less. You're not good enough the way you are.' They became my teachers. They taught me about faith."

Two colleagues of Father Boyle also received daily lessons in "what it means to be a human being." Anna Lotto worked with the priest as a pastoral care consultant at Rainier School. Sue

Hudacek is an assistant at L'Arche Tahoma Hope, a community for persons with disabilities where Father Boyle regularly celebrates Mass.

Lotto describes Father Boyle as a "very respected and revered person" who has the wisdom to know there isn't a thing he can do to change a person's illness or diagnoses. Instead, she says, he responds to those around him in a genuine way – he listens and "shares his deep faith."

Like Father Boyle, Hudacek discovered who the "real teachers in life" are by working with those who have mental and physical disabilities.

"When you welcome someone with a disability into your life, or anyone who challenges you, your life is turned upside down," she says. "You'll find a love like you never expected. You'll discover the presence of God."

Hudacek says she sees the presence of God in Father Boyle, as do others who know him. That makes Father Jimmy a little uncomfortable.

"I'm not a very important person," he says. "I try to do good things. I'm still learning."

Father Boyle faced every human emotion while working in institutions – suffering, separation, despair and joy.

Joy is something he learned from Ricky Durham, a developmentally disabled man. Father Boyle took Ricky and a group of students to a summer camp many years ago. Ricky wore a football helmet because he had frequent seizures and other kids stayed away from him. They were afraid of him.

Father Boyle saw Ricky sitting alone by the edge of a pool at the crowded camp. He sat down next to Ricky and asked him what he was thinking about. Ricky responded with a one word answer: Jesus. He went on to describe Jesus as a "friend" who helps him "do everything."

"Most of us go through our whole lives without understanding Jesus' love the way he does," says Father Boyle.

– Linda Thomas

## A Call for Recommendations

for the 2007 Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen Humanitarian Award



Catholic Community Services of Western Washington has announced a "Call for Recommendations" for the 2007 Hunthausen Humanitarian Award.

The award, in its 17th year, is presented annually to a practicing Catholic who provides outstanding, faith-based service to poor and vulnerable people in Western Washington, and who advocates for change in the systems that cause human suffering. It is named for retired Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen of Seattle.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, Aug. 24, 2007.

Recommendations must be received at the offices of Catholic Community Services of Western Washington by that date. The recipient of the 2006 award was Father James L. Boyle, chaplain at the Rainier School for developmentally disabled persons in Buckley.

In a letter inviting recommendations for this year's award, Archbishop Alex J. Brunett states: "The Church in Western Washington is blessed by the selfless service that so many Catholics offer to persons in need. As Archbishop, I want to honor a person who loves unflinchingly, seeks justice passionately, and walks humbly with our God."

Any practicing Catholic in Western Washington involved in faith-based service to persons in need can be recommended for the award. The life and service of a person recommended for the award must be consistent with Catholic social teaching.

Currently compensated employees of Catholic Community Services and the Archdiocesan Housing Authority (AHA), and currently seated members of the CCS/AHA Board of Trustees, are not eligible. Individuals cannot be recommended two consecutive years.

The CCS/AHA Board of Trustees reviews all recommendations, and from these selects nominees for the award. The finalist for the award is chosen from among the nominees by the Selection Committee of the board, in consultation with Archbishop Brunett. CCS family centers and AHA present awards to, and celebrate the service of, all persons recommended.

Persons submitting a recommendation are asked to provide a thorough response, two typewritten pages in length, to the following two questions:

- *How would you describe this person's specific actions, achievements, and approach to faith-based service to the poor and advocacy to change the systems that cause human suffering?*
- *Why does this person's service stand out above others?*

The recommendation must include the name, mailing address, phone number, and parish/faith community of the person being recommended; the name and phone number (daytime and evening) of the person submitting the recommendation; and a letter of recommendation from a local Catholic pastor. Supporting materials may be included.

Recommendations must be complete at the time of submission. They should be sent before the August 24 deadline to:

**Archbishop Hunthausen Humanitarian Award Committee**  
**Catholic Community Services of Western Washington**  
**100 23rd Avenue South**  
**Seattle, WA 98144-2302**

Further information about the 2007 Hunthausen Humanitarian Award is available from Kay Lagreid, CCS Director of Communications, at 206-328-5786.