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Saving Lives, One Baby at a Time



TIRELESS: An army of faithful, among them Lulú Valdivia, works compassionately around the clock to reach women in crisis pregnancies, offering them support and alternatives to abortion.



Meeting Others

Young adult series to focus on conversations, friendships and dating. **Page 5**



Taking the Reins

San Diegan now leads Knights of Columbus in California. **Page 6**



Powerful Stories

In a series of recent homilies, Cardinal McElroy shares stories of love, mercy, faith. **Pages 10-11**

Listening Continues Through October

sdcatholic.org/synod



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The Diocese of San Diego runs the length of California's border with Mexico and serves more than 1.3 million Catholics in San Diego and Imperial counties. It includes 98 parishes, 49 elementary and secondary schools, Catholic Charities and various social service and family support organizations throughout the region. It also includes five historic sites, the most well known of which is the Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá, the first mission established in California by St. Junipero Serra in 1769.

MORE FOR YOU

This colored triangle indicates that we have more content related to a particular story in our digital edition, **thesoutherncross.org**, including photos, videos, and at times an extended version.



Survey Continues Through October

By Aida Bustos



More than 15,000 people took the electronic survey

the San Diego Diocese is conducting in just the first 15 days it was available, said the diocesan team leading it.

The goal is to gain a greater understanding of the views and priorities of the Catholic community in San Diego and Imperial counties.

The survey, launched Sept. 6, will be open to the end of October. It's available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese by selecting the preferred language at the right-hand top of the initial page of the electronic survey. All responses are anonymous.

The diocesan team, including two university professors with expertise in survey design and analysis, worked for months to develop the survey, which was fine-tuned by two commissions and tested in key groups.

The 39 survey questions are based on the experiences shared by around 11,000 people who participated in 1,100 small-group sessions held at parishes and schools earlier this year.

The diocese held these sessions as part of a consultation of Catholics worldwide. The consultation, known as a synod, is a multi-year initiative launched by Pope Francis to bring everyone in the faith together to listen to each other and to discern ways to increase the participation of the faithful at all levels of the Church.

The survey is being conducted to reach as many people as possible, including those who have stopped coming to Mass regularly. The diocese wants to understand what contributed to their decision to leave.

The survey asks a few demographic questions, such as age, gender and education. And it asks a few questions regarding the level of participation in the Church. Most of the questions are related to the major themes that emerged during the small-group sessions.



EASY: Catechists take the diocese's electronic synod survey during a reception following the Commissioning Mass on Sept. 12 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Imperial.



Scan this code to take the survey in English or Spanish.



Scan this code to take the survey in Vietnamese.

neutral on a given statement," said Robert Ehnw, who co-leads the diocesan synod team. "We want to know their true opinions."

The survey does not offer an opportunity to add a personal comment. "Marioly" Galván, the diocese's chancellor and co-leader of the diocesan synod team, said it would be difficult to analyze thousands of comments. She said that the design of the survey was not meant to limit responses, rather to better understand the issues that arose from the small-group sessions.

"The results that are gathered at this level, will guide our next step in this consultation process," she said.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy is inviting everyone to take the survey.

"It will be of great assistance to us in understanding what the Catholic community believes and wants," he said in a video message promoting it.

"The results of the survey will help to strengthen our path forward to better minister at all levels of our Church."

A link to the survey was sent to everyone who is registered with their parish or ministry through the Flock-note platform. Individuals can visit the web page sdccatholic.org/synod to take the survey in all three languages. They can also scan the QR codes on this page to take the survey. The survey in a paper format is available through the parishes.

In many of the questions, survey-takers have to choose among four options after reading a statement — "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," or "Strongly Disagree."

"We intentionally did not offer an option for someone to say they were



Faithful Gift

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano celebrated a Commissioning Mass at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Imperial for catechists in the region on Sept. 12. Faith-formation programs in English and Spanish are starting across the diocese, including for adults and families. Contact your nearest parish for information or call (858) 490-8232.

Teenage Girl Begins Abortion Process Until ...

By Denis Grasska



For more than 16 years, Lulú Valdivia has worked tirelessly for the pro-life cause.

Valdivia, who directs the post-abortion healing ministry Rachel's Hope (*Esperanza de Raquel*) in Spanish, said she might receive as many as 10 phone calls a month from women who are trying to convince a family member or friend not to go through with an abortion.

Though she doesn't keep a record, she can think of at least 15 to 20 unborn babies whose lives were saved and whose mothers were spared from a potential lifetime of grief and regret through her intervention.

The Catholic Church in California recently launched the "We Were Born Ready" campaign, which seeks to raise awareness of the many resources available to women, children and families in the state and encourages Catholics to step up their support for them. Valdivia and those who collaborate with her are emblematic of the campaign's core message — that faithful, caring individuals can act to save a life.

One particularly dramatic account of Valdivia's work comes from last November.

Valdivia was at the diocesan Pastoral Center when she received a message via Facebook from a frantic mother, whose 16-year-old daughter had taken the first dose of the abortion pill. The mother pleaded with Valdivia to come to her home and convince her daughter to keep the baby.

For support, Valdivia reached out to her friend Jasmine (who asked that her last name not be used to maintain her privacy), a fellow pro-life advocate who prepares baskets of baby items for mothers in crisis pregnancies, and also enlisted the help of Gabriela Garcia, a St. Didacus parishioner who only about a week earlier had publicly shared her own past experience of unplanned pregnancy.

Until that day, Valdivia and Garcia had never met.

Valdivia was the first to arrive at the girl's home. The girl, whose name is Miriam, had locked herself in her bedroom and was not only unwilling to speak with Valdivia, but angrily demanded that she leave. Joining the girl's mother and grandmother, praying the rosary on their knees, Valdivia waited for Jasmine and Garcia to arrive.

"At the beginning, I was scared because I didn't know what to do," recalled Garcia. "(Miriam) was being aggressive. She was cursing at us. ... I was feeling scared for myself, but at the same time, I was praying to God that He was the one who (would be) talking to her, not me."

Garcia was able to convince the girl to open the door and let her in for a face-to-face conversation. Her youthful appearance and background — Garcia



"ANGELS": Gabriela Garcia, left, and Lulú Valdivia, right, responded to the frantic call of a mother of a 16-year-old girl, who had already decided to take the first dose of the abortion pill. Their tireless efforts are emblematic of what people of faith are called to do to defend life.

is 28 and had become pregnant for the first time as a 16-year-old — may have given her credibility in the girl's eyes.

While the two young women spoke, the others continued to pray.

"I see (Garcia) as my baby's angel because, if it wasn't for her, I wouldn't have done it," Miriam said in recent days of her decision to keep her baby.

"I'm very thankful because (the baby is) the best thing I've ever had," she added.

But the decision not to abort her child was complicated by the fact that she had already taken the first dose of the abortion pill. Though Dr. George Delgado, medical director of Culture of Life Family Services (COLFS), had pioneered an abortion pill reversal protocol, the clock was ticking.

Jasmine took the initiative to get the girl and her mother from their home in central San Diego to COLFS' medical office in Escondido. However, it was rush hour and they had to take a cab because Jasmine did not have a car to use that day.

These weren't even the last challenges they faced.

After getting a prescription from COLFS for the reversal regimen, the first pharmacy they went to was closed, recalled Jasmine, who credits God with saving the baby's life.

"I said, 'God, I need Your help with this. This is impossible by human standards.' ... And the Lord absolutely made it possible. He is the reason this child is here," said Jasmine, who continued to provide the girl with transportation for follow-up visits to

COLFS throughout her first trimester.

Garcia echoed those sentiments.

"I know it was not me. ... I know it was God that helped us out," she said.

Garcia kept in touch with Miriam during the pregnancy. She said that, upon returning from COLFS, Miriam threw away the drug paraphernalia that she had in her room; the girl also distanced herself from friends who were involved in gangs and is currently enrolled in sacramental preparation classes for confirmation.

Miriam remembers hearing her mother making a series of phone calls that afternoon, desperately seeking someone to help prevent the abortion.

"And then, it goes quiet. It goes really quiet. And I was like, okay ... she didn't find anybody to help her. I don't think anybody really wants to interfere in something like this," she recalled.

But, as the events of that day later proved, she was mistaken.

For Valdivia, this ministry is personal. She faced a pregnancy crisis when she was 21 years old and a man who had abused her took her to a clinic to have an abortion.

She said that Miriam's story underscores that there is help available for women and families facing crisis pregnancies, especially through the Catholic Church and its members.

Valdivia said that everyone who finds themselves in a position to encourage a pregnant woman to choose life over abortion should recognize that they have received "a blessing."

"God has opened the heavens for

you, and the Holy Spirit is going to give you the exact words that you need," she said, adding that the Holy Spirit is "the one that's going to do the job; we're just the instruments."

It's important to demonstrate sensitivity and compassion, and sometimes to be silent.

Garcia emphasized that women in crisis pregnancies have many resources available to them and, despite how it might seem, they are not alone. She noted how powerful it can be to see an ultrasound of one's baby, hear its heartbeat, and find out how far along it is in its development; with that experience, she said, "everything changes" for the mother who had been considering abortion.

While some believe that a crisis pregnancy will ruin a young girl's life, Garcia suggested that the unexpected child is sometimes conceived at a time when the girl's life is already in shambles and the child can be the "miracle" that leads to a fresh perspective and a new way of life.

Garcia shared the message she has given to her oldest daughter, who is now 12.

"I tell her, 'You changed my life, but it was not a bad thing.'"

Pregnancy resources are available at sdcatholic.org/chooselife. For information, contact Maria Valencia, (858) 490-8323 or mvalencia@sdcatholic.org, in the Office for Life, Peace and Justice.



Bishops Urge Faithful to Reject Proposition 1

The Southern Cross



The bishops of California are urging all Catholic voters to vote "no" on Proposition 1, which would add the right to an abortion to the state's constitution.

Current California law limits late-term abortions after "viability" (when the baby can survive outside the womb) unless medically necessary to protect the mother. Proposition 1 has no limits on abortion; it allows abortion for any reason, at any time up to the moment of birth, even if the baby is healthy and the mother is in no danger.

Proposition 1 also asks taxpayers to foot the bill for the additional abortions that would be provided in California as other states highly restrict the procedure. According to a recent UCLA analysis, an estimated 10,600 more women will come to California each year for an abortion.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy has called for people of faith to reject the proposition.

"Unfortunately, our state political leaders are seeking to make California an abortion sanctuary and adopt policies that would dramatically increase abortions," he said.

Rather than help a woman with an unplanned pregnancy, these leaders wish to incentivize more abortions, he said.

"As Pope Francis has stated, 'It's not progressive to resolve problems by eliminating a human life,'" the cardinal said.



SIGN OF THE TIMES: A long-time, pro-life activist in the Imperial Valley, Danny Ramirez, has put up signs in Calexico urging voters to reject Proposition 1.

"My fellow Catholics, we are called to protect innocent life in California. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moments of its existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person."

The cardinal spoke in a video message promoting a campaign launched by the bishops to highlight the resources available to women facing unplanned pregnancies and to encourage the faithful and parishes to step up and help them and their families. The bishops launched the campaign, called "We Were Born Ready," in May.

Cardinal McElroy will celebrate a Respect Life Mass on Oct. 23, 10 a.m., at St. John of the Cross Parish.

The California Catholic Conference is part of a coalition of organizations working to inform voters about the proposition and calling for its defeat.

The coalition includes the California Alliance of Pregnancy Care, California Family Council, Knights of Columbus, Californians for Life, American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Christian Medical and Dental Association, Life Legal Defense Foundation, Pacific Justice Institute, Students for Life, Tepeyac Leadership Institute and The American Council of Evangelicals.

ELECTION INFORMATION

Election Day is Nov. 8. California mails a ballot to every registered voter before the election. Mail it back or drop it at a designated drop-box before Nov. 8., or vote in person. California offers early voting.

Registration Deadlines

Online: Oct. 24 by 11:59 p.m., at covr.sos.ca.gov

By mail (postmarked by): Oct. 24
In-person at voting location on Election Day: Nov. 8

Voting Deadlines

Return ballot by mail (postmarked by): Nov. 8
Return ballot in person: Nov. 8 by 8 p.m.

GET INFORMED AND ACT

The Church urges people of faith to affirm life every day. These websites offer information and options to do so.

Catholic Diocese of San Diego

Culture of Life

sdcatholic.org/chooselife (English)

sdcatholic.org/sialavida (Spanish)

California Catholic Conference

cacatholic.org

"We Were Born Ready" campaign to support women and families
wewerebornready.com

USCCB

Walking with Moms campaign
walkingwithmoms.com

Catholic Social Teaching
usccb.org/resources/themes-catholic-social-teaching

Respect Life MASS

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Series on Tap to Help Young Catholics with Dating

By Denis Grasska

Are you a young adult who finds it hard to start conversations, make new friends, and even ask someone out on a date?

If so, save the date (pun intended) for the October series of “Theology on Tap.”

All young adults, ages 18 to 39, are welcome to attend any or all of the three installments, which will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays, Oct. 11, 18 and 25; the location is still to be determined. Attendees will enjoy tacos and craft beer while listening to each evening’s talk.

Admission is \$15, including food and drink. More information is available at sdcatholic.org/theologyontap.

Maricruz Flores, director of the diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, and associate directors Pamela Poe and Brilema Perez said the need for this series was confirmed after recent encounters with young adults who spoke candidly about dating woes and expressed dissatisfaction with online dating in particular.

Flores said the topic is timelier than ever in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many young adults dealing with social anxiety after two years of social distancing.

“If it was hard to date before the pandemic, it’s even harder now,” she said.

Poe noted that human beings are “made for relationship,” even if modern culture doesn’t always provide the most positive examples. She said the



FAITHFUL FRIENDS: Young adults find faith, food and fellowship at Theology on Tap in this file photo. The upcoming series will focus on conversation skills, friendship and dating.

purpose of the upcoming Theology on Tap series is to offer “a healthy, holistic formation in how to grow an authentic relationship.”

The Theology on Tap series will begin with “The Art of the Conversation,” co-presented by Poe and her husband, Nathan.

Perez stressed the importance of getting out of “that (dating) app mode,” where interactions are merely a way to find out how someone measures up on your “dating checklist,” and instead simply trying to have “a genuine conversation.” She said the upcoming series itself provides “a perfect opportunity for meeting people outside of the apps.”

Week Two will be dedicated to “Authentic and Virtuous Friendship,” presented by youth minister and Catholic speaker Jamie Cleaton.

“How many of us actually take the time to discern a friendship, like, ‘Is

this person really good for me? Are they leading me towards Christ?’” Flores asked, offering a preview of what the series’ second installment will explore.

The final installment will be on “Dating and Relationships.” Presenters Raphy and Sara Feolino, certified relationship coaches and founders of the Journey to Marriage ministry, will offer practical advice on both beginning and developing relationships.

Perez suggested that attendees will be able to “put those skills to practice” when asking someone out to the Diocesan Young Adult Christmas Gala this December.

Theology on Tap is offered about two or three times a year in the Diocese of San Diego, with each series typically consisting of three weekly installments.

This is not the first time that Theology on Tap has explored the topic of

dating and relationships. Poe noted that it was also the focus of a one-night, standalone installment in 2019, which drew more than 200 young adults.

“We saw there’s definitely a need for this,” said Poe, who began developing the idea for the upcoming series in Fall of 2021.

That series won’t be the last word on the subject either.

“We wanted to follow up (with) a continuation and accompaniment for young adults,” explained Flores, “not just to leave them hanging like, ‘Oh, here’s 10 tips for dating life. Hope everything goes well.’”

For that reason, the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry is collaborating with the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality on a one-day conference, scheduled for early March, that will build upon the insights offered by the Theology on Tap series.



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San Diegan Leads Knights of Columbus in Calif.

By James Aitchison



The unassuming man who just took over the reins of the Knights of Columbus in California is a powerhouse.

Newly elected State Deputy Rene Trevino's motto for the Knights this year is the motivational slogan of California's own patron saint, Junipero Serra: "*¡Siempre adelante, nunca atras!*" (Always forward, never back!)

Trevino, who joined the Knights of Columbus in 2004, shares the same energy and gusto for Catholic evangelization as St. Junipero, founder of the California missions.

"Anything worth having is worth fighting for," said Trevino, 67, who was recognized as California Knight of the Year in 2017. "If we have a hope, destiny, dream, marriage, business, vision, or any aspiration we would like to see happen, we must pray for them, act on them."

The State Deputy Supreme Knight for the California State Council is the fraternal organization's highest-ranking state-level position.

Originally from Corpus Christi, Texas, Trevino moved to California with his family at age 4 and has lived in San Diego ever since. He can trace his ancestors to Mexico and Spain.

He spent 31 years as a senior civilian with the U.S. Navy, where his last position was as the executive director of Navy Region Southwest. There, he was responsible for the mission of 10 major naval installations, 29 program



HEAD OF STATE: Rene Trevino is the highest-ranking Knight of Columbus in California. He is pictured with his wife, Carla, at Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

managers and an annual budget of over \$1 billion. His awards include the Superior Civilian Service Award (twice) and the Meritorious Civilian Service Award.

He retired in 2010, but "retirement" seems to be a foreign concept to him. Since 2012, he's been a member of the Sheriff's Volunteer Patrol, where he trains officers and leads the Sheriff's Department Volunteer Honor Guard.

Trevino and his wife, Carla, are parishioners at St. Gregory the Great in Scripps Ranch, where Trevino served as Grand Knight of Council 10094

from 2005 to 2006.

"We were determined to take the approach that we were not just going to retire *from* something, but *to* something," he said.

In early July, Trevino was installed as the state deputy by Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly at St. Mary's Parish, the birthplace of the Knights of Columbus, in New Haven, Conn. His previous leadership posts with the Knights include district deputy (2011-2013), president of the San Diego Diocese Chapter of the Knights of Columbus (2015-2016), operations director for

the State Council (2016-2018), and state warden for the California State Council (2018-2022).

As state deputy, Trevino is responsible for the growth of the Knights and management of more than 750 councils, composed of nearly 80,000 brother Knights, and the 16 chapters.

In a recent message to the state's Knights, he laid out his objective for the 2022-2023 Columbian Year: "Our mission is to revitalize Christianity in California with the same fervent evangelizing spirit as those early missionaries led by St. Junipero Serra who set out to establish a chain of missions that changed the human history of California in profound ways."

Trevino is prioritizing spiritual growth and membership growth. Among the Knights' other program objectives for this year are:

- to make pilgrimages to all 21 California missions;
- to dramatically enhance the organization's contributions to first-responders across the state, honoring those who have supported the Special Olympics/Law Enforcement Torch Run and the American Wheelchair Mission program;
- to address the post-pandemic spiritual malaise by spearheading the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Eucharistic Revival and with their "Prayers in the Pew" prayer card and newsletter program; and
- To double-down on their efforts to defend the dignity of human life from the moment of conception to natural death.

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Conference a ‘Great Honor’ for Augustinians

By Denis Grasska

The local Augustinian community hosted an international gathering of their confreres — an event that is unlikely to ever happen again.

“It is a great honor for us,” said Augustinian Father Gary Sanders, prior provincial of the Province of St. Augustine in California. “I believe that we were chosen as the site because, this year, we are celebrating 100 years of Augustinians in California, specifically San Diego.”

The Order of St. Augustine held its Intermediate General Chapter, Sept. 11 to 23, at the Catamaran Hotel Resort and Spa in Mission Beach.

Augustinian superiors and representatives from around the world gather for a General Chapter every six years in Rome, during which they elect their international leaders and make decisions about the order’s future and where the Church is calling it to be. An Intermediate General Chapter is held at the halfway point between General Chapters and in a city other than Rome.

Father Sanders said this was the first time the gathering was held in California and only the second time in the United States.

With so many places in the world where Augustinians serve, he said, few cities will ever have the opportunity to host the Intermediate General Chapter, making it likely that “it will never happen in San Diego again.”



WELCOME TO SAN DIEGO: Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, with Augustinian Father Gary Sanders, celebrates Mass at an international gathering of Augustinians Sept. 12 at the Catamaran Hotel.

Among the highlights of the meeting, on Sept. 12, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy spoke to the Augustinians and presided over a Mass at the Catamaran Hotel.

Four days later, the visiting Augustinians attended a special Mass at St. Augustine High School that kicked off the school’s centennial year. The school unveiled an icon of Our Mother of Good Counsel — a title of Mary with special significance to the order — that now adorns one of the outer walls of the school’s Villanova Hall. The icon is the school’s gift to the Order of St. Augustine, given in appreciation of the 110 Augustinian friars who have ministered at the school.

Augustinian Father Max Villeneuve, who oversaw the logistics for the event, likens the Intermediate Gen-

eral Chapter to “a progress report,” explaining that it provides an opportunity for Augustinian provincials to discuss how their provinces are doing in implementing the agenda set at the most recent General Chapter.

He said the major topics addressed at the last General Chapter, held in 2019, included migration and care for creation. So, at the recent Intermediate General Chapter, provinces shared how they have assisted migrants and applied the principles of Pope Francis’ environmental-themed encyclical “Laudato Si” during the past three years.

The Augustinians’ prior general, Father Alejandro Moral Antón, and about 50 Augustinians from other provinces traveled to San Diego for the Intermediate General Chapter.

In his homily, Cardinal McElroy re-

flected on “The Tree of Life,” the 2011 film from director Terrence Malick.

The film begins with the juxtaposition of “the way of nature” and “the way of grace.”

Cardinal McElroy explained that the former is a harsh, demanding and self-seeking outlook on life, whereas the latter is marked by beauty, kindness and compassion.

“‘The Tree of Life’ is about the struggle between the order of nature and the order of grace, and I hesitate to talk about these themes in front of Augustinians, who know them better than I do,” he said. “But I just want to suggest that, in our lives of leadership, there are four temptations about the order of nature and the order of grace.”

The first is to become “enmeshed in the order of nature,” allowing oneself to get “sucked into ... solving a problem” without “seeing the deeper realities at work.”

The second temptation is to “see (a problem) only as a problem” and fail to recognize where God’s grace is “already present in the situation.”

“In leadership,” said Cardinal McElroy, “we have to discern, ‘Where is the grace of God at work, even in this situation that may seem terrible?’”

The third temptation is the failure to realize that leaders are called to bring grace into problematic situations, acting as “instruments of God’s grace.”

The fourth temptation is not to see that, ultimately, it is God who will heal the situation and, at a certain point, leaders must stand back, accept that God is in charge, and allow Him to take over.



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Community Rosary Returns to Imperial Valley

By Roman Flores



EL CENTRO — Our Lady of the Valley will be holding

its second annual Community Rosary on Thursday, Oct. 6, as a vigil celebration for the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The event's coordinator, Eddie Madueño, the city's retired police chief, said the event will be held outdoors again at St. Mary Catholic Church in El Centro. Faithful from across the Imperial Valley and the surrounding areas of Yuma, San Diego, and Mexicali, Mexico are invited to join.

The Community Rosary started last year in the courtyard between St. Mary Church and its parish center. It will again be held there and will be in English and Spanish.

Madueño said about 200 Catholics attended the Community Rosary last year, with another 100 having attended the same day at Sacred Heart Church in Brawley.

Madueño said the idea for the Community Rosary came from his interest in the movie "Pray: The Story of Father Patrick Peyton," wanting to hold an event to bring Catholics together after the pandemic shut-downs, and his own devotion to the Blessed Mother.

"I reached out to Father Mark (Edney) last year and asked if I could organize a Community Rosary. I recruited volunteers to read a different mystery, the Knights of Columbus and office staff to help, José Martinez to



LABOR OF LOVE: Eddie Madueño makes rosaries, which he gives away as part of his personal ministry, at his home in El Centro. He is organizing the second annual Community Rosary.

sing, and it just worked out," he said.

"The event was supposed to be a one-time shot," Madueño said, "but the response was positive, so we decided to make it an annual event."

The idea also stemmed from "Live Fire Rosary," an online recitation of the rosary that is streamed every Monday evening at 7:30 p.m. (Pacific) on Facebook.

"Two parishes in San Diego already had the same (Community Rosary) idea going, so I reached out to them," he said, "and they sent us some supplies. We had a raffle. I made some rosaries; my wife, Margie, made some prayer journals; and we raffled them off."

The former pastor of the Catholic Communities of Brawley and Westmorland, Father Ed Horning, has returned to El Centro as assistant pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. He will be giving a talk on the rosary at this year's Community Rosary.

In addition, Madueño said he hopes a public showing of the "Pray" movie on July 27 at St. Mary's will spark interest in the Community Rosary.

Madueño said fellow Christians are invited, as are atheists and agnostics.

"On a personal level, if people pray the rosary, I believe they'll get a sense of peace," he said. "We need to pray to know God's will and to bring us that peace."

Father Mark Edney, pastor of Our Lady of the Valley, agreed.

"It was a beautiful experience last time because it was one of the few experiences where we were back together, and I think there was a strong sense of solidarity," Father Edney said. "We need that still, so come out and join us."

The Community Rosary will be held Oct. 6, 6:30 p.m., at St. Mary Catholic Church, 795 S. LaBrucherie Road.



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Father Joe's Villages



Valley Focuses on Celebration of Eucharist

By Roman Flores



EL CENTRO — Imperial Valley Catholics gathered

at the St. Mary Parish Center to both mull over the International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles on display there — designed by Blessed Carlo Acutis — and learn about the Real Presence of Jesus at Mass in a talk by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano on Sept. 20.

The 81-panel exhibition featured 4-by-3-feet, full-color panels — printed on front and back — which highlighted images and information about approximately 137 Eucharistic Miracles throughout the world. The Vatican-approved exhibition was displayed in El Centro from Sept. 17 to 25.

Blessed Carlo Acutis was between the ages of 10 and 14 when he put together the exhibit. He died in October of 2006 at the age of 15.

The exhibition coincides with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' three-year initiative, the National Eucharistic Revival, being held to respond to the lack of understanding among Catholics of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Bishop Bejarano said during his presentation.

"The bishops in the U.S. are inviting all of us to truly enter into deeper reflection and precise understanding,



SHEPHERD: Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano spoke before dozens of faithful at the St. Mary Parish Center about the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

as Catholics and Christians, especially those people who don't understand the sacramental presence of Jesus in the Eucharist," the bishop said.

Everyone in the Church "should become a missionary of the Eucharist," he added.

That's what the exhibition coordinators for St. Mary's, Betty Kakiuchi and Irma Ortiz of Our Lady of the Valley, have taken to heart.

Kakiuchi said she learned about the exhibition in an advertisement in *The Southern Cross* that announced that it was being presented at Mary, Star of the Sea Parish in La Jolla. She

reached out to the parish coordinator, a contact that eventually resulted in the exhibit coming to the Valley.

Ortiz sees their work as "all related to the Eucharist. We have to concentrate on the Holy Eucharist because, as Catholics, it is the main source and summit of our faith."

"Sometimes, we forget about that. Sometimes, we don't go to Mass and appreciate what we really have in that Jesus is there," Ortiz said. "We need to take advantage of the great miracle that we can have every day when we go to Mass."

The bishop had advice for those who doubt the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

"Be honest and say, 'Jesus, I don't really believe that You are present there, but if You are present there, show me.' I know the Lord will hear that sincere prayer, and something will happen."

"The best thing that we can do is always live the celebration of the Mass with all our heart. And, if you don't believe in the Real Presence, then just give it a chance," he continued. "Try your best, and maybe God will surprise you. God is a God of surprises."



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The Southern Cross



Cardinal Robert W. McElroy returned to the San Diego

Diocese at the beginning of September, fresh from being elevated to the College of Cardinals at the Vatican. In just one four-day stretch, he celebrated three special Masses for distinct communities, whose members joyously welcomed their shepherd. In his homilies, he highlighted acts of mercy and love that transformed lives — and called on us to do the same.

'I will carry that guilt from here'

Cardinal McElroy celebrated a Mass on Sept. 11 at St. Columba Church, San Diego, for the Korean community to mark their traditional Thanksgiving. An excerpt from Cardinal McElroy's homily follows.

The parable of the prodigal son is one of the most beautiful passages from the Gospels (Luke 15:11-32) for it speaks to us of the boundless mercy of God, which is showered upon us as a grace, and of our need to incorporate that boundless forgiveness into our own lives.

The prodigal son has squandered his inheritance on hedonistic living and is left destitute in a far-off land. The son resolves to return to the father and family that he had abandoned. On the surface, he is seeking merely a place on his father's lands that will allow him to live, but in reality, he is seeking forgiveness, a far greater gift.

But even before the son has the chance to apologize, the father embraces him and welcomes him back into the family without ever confronting him with his own failures and betrayal.

This is the extravagant forgiveness that God bestows upon each of us in our lives. It is not a begrudging forgiveness.

It does not involve God constantly reminding us of our failure. The forgiveness of God is complete and unmerited. It is bestowed upon us whenever we are genuinely sorry and ask for it.

One of the great tragedies of life is that so many men and women cannot comprehend the limitless nature of God's forgiveness. They feel unforgiven and alienated from God because they cannot believe that the Lord will forgive them for grievous sins.

As Pope Francis has stated so many times, the mercy of God stands at the very center of our human existence and our life of faith. We approach the Lord not as self-righteous, but as sinners, and it is precisely as sinners that God has redeemed us. And if we fail to understand the mercy of God, we cannot find the strength to forgive others with that same mercy.

I pray that you will comprehend the limitless nature of God's forgiveness in our lives. I pray that you can forgive yourselves for those sins in your past which you would give anything to undo but cannot. It is in these moments that the Christ, who suffered for us on the cross, tells us, "I will carry that guilt from here."

Finally, I pray that, in your family life, your Catholic community, your neighborhoods and our world, you might be sacraments of God's forgiveness reflected in your own lives by what you say and what you do.

As the father of the prodigal son rushed out to embrace his sinful son in joy, so God constantly rushes out to embrace us when we are sorrowful. There is no greater grace in our lives than this.

'Martyrdom is a reality of today'

Filipino faithful from across the region joyously welcomed Cardinal McElroy at a Mass at St. Charles Church in South San Diego on Sept. 10 to honor San Lorenzo Ruiz, the first canonized saint and martyr from the Philippines.



JOHN GASTALDO

TRIBUTE: Members of the Korean Catholic community honored their ancestors during the presentation of the gifts at their traditional Mass at St. Columba Church on Sept. 11.

Love Transformed a Martyr and a Prodigal



CAMPUS SPIRIT: Cardinal Robert W. McElroy celebrated the annual Mass of the Holy Spirit on Sept. 8 at the University of San Diego.

In 1637 in Japan, where he had been imprisoned, Ruiz was given the chance to live if he renounced his faith. While being tortured, he reportedly responded just before his death: "I am a Christian and wholeheartedly do accept death for God; Had I a thousand lives, all these to Him shall I offer."

An excerpt from Cardinal McElroy's homily follows.

Martyrdom is a reality of today for those who proclaim Jesus Christ around the world — in the Amazon, in the Philippines, throughout Asia, in Latin America, in Africa, and in our country. Men and women who have paid literally with their lives because they proclaim Jesus Christ.

Today, we remember their sacrifice, their willingness to take on the cross of Christ Himself.

We will not face martyrdom. But we, in our own lives, face circumstances that make it difficult to follow our faith — sometimes it's at work, at school, in our neighborhood; sometimes within our own family.

But we are called to make the same affirmation in our faith that San Lorenzo made, and every martyr before and after him.

We are called to place our lives in the person of Jesus Christ and understand that in the cross of Christ crucified and Christ risen that we see a pathway to our own salvation.

'Love that is constant and pure'

Cardinal McElroy celebrated the Mass of the Holy Spirit at The Immaculata Church at the University of San Diego on Sept. 8 before students, faculty and staff to mark the beginning of the academic year. An



YOUNG HEARTS: Altar servers joined the festivities of the Mass of the Holy Spirit at St. Charles Church. San Lorenzo Ruiz, the first canonized Filipino saint.

a Circus 'Freak,' Illegal Son



DAVID MAUNG

The Immaculata Church to mark the beginning of the academic year at the University of San Diego.

excerpt of his homily follows.

John Merrick was born in London in 1835. His father didn't pay much attention to his family. But his mother was a radiant presence in his life, the source of the loving that he knew in this world. But when he was 9, she died.

He came into the care of his father and, worse, he began to develop a terrible skin disease which left him deformed, with terrible-looking scales all over his body. His father rejected him. He had no place else to go. He ended up in a circus sideshow, as a freak. And for several years, he lived in a cage; and all he knew were the taunts and the scorn of those who came to see him. He was never treated with any humanity by any single person.

And then, one day, a doctor came along from a great hospital in London because he had heard about the illness, and he wanted to research it. He gave the owner of the circus money so that he could take him.

He brought John back to the hospital, and he and other doctors tried to figure out how they could help him, but they were stymied because they had not seen this type of illness before. He was mute. Finally, they just gave him a room and gave him care. And the nurses would come visit him. And the doctor would show him friendship and love. And, as a result, John spoke; he wasn't mute at all.

He had simply not been treated as a human being for so much of his life that he had ceased to think of himself as human and had been silent. And when he spoke, he spoke with a great beauty of his soul, a great wisdom that had come from his suffering and pain.

And gradually in London, people took note of this. He became something of a celebrity. People came by to see this man who was so beastly in his appearance, but they left captivated by the beauty that was within him. There was gentleness to his soul and spirit.

And then one day, the owner of the circus, seeing how prominent he had become, breaks into the hospital and steals John away and takes him to a circus and again puts him in the cage. He was a freak once more. But after a few months, there's a fire in the circus and John escapes. He makes his way back to London. He has a large coat over him to keep his face and figure from being seen by anyone. But the coat came loose, and a crowd came upon him and severely beat him.

The police took him to the hospital. When the doctor saw that it was John, he ran down to meet him. And he said, "Can you ever forgive me for not having guarded you better, for not understanding that as a celebrity your safety was at risk?"

John said to the doctor, "Forgive you? Everything I have known from you has been love. Love freely bestowed upon me, love that was constant and pure and transformed my life by loving me without reservation and without price."

This is the love that God has for us. God, our Creator, looks upon us in our humanity and sees our fragility and our wonders, our strengths and our sins, the beauty of our hearts and souls and the corruptions that occur in the world we live in. And God entered into human existence in order to make God's destiny united with ours in the person of Jesus Christ. That's the Gospel, the gift of God's love, which is total, and without hesitation.

God's love is called to take root in our hearts and souls, not only in helping us to form a relationship with God, but also to help us understand what we are called to do to live with one another. We live in a world now which is so often coarse and deprived of the basic love that people are called to show one another — within family life, places of work, schools, and society as a whole.

And we, as recipients of God's love, we, as men and women in the society in which we live, are called to be a counter-witness to that coarseness and to that harshness. It's not easy. There are so many ways in which we fall easily into focusing on ourselves and ignoring those around us.

There are many wonderful things you will undertake this year here at the university. You will learn the beauty of the human heart and what the mind has accomplished. The most important thing you can learn is how to make our world a less coarse, a less harsh place. And that is done only in small increments. That is done only on the interpersonal level of treating others not only with dignity, but with affection, even when there are people who tend to put us off.

I hope and pray that this is a time in which the love that animates us, that gives us solidarity, that tells us who we really are and why we're here in this world; that this love reigns in this university community and helps transform this place and the world in which we live.

Read the full versions of
the cardinal's homilies at
thesoutherncross.org/092210.



DAVID MAUNG

The Mass for San Lorenzo Ruiz on Sept. 10 at St. Charles, is the patron saint of altar servers.



DAVID MAUNG

PERSONAL TOUCH: Cardinal McElroy warmly greeted USD community members after Mass.



Human Touch Sustains Life



The air was charged with emotion. We were gathered at a special Mass to remember and pray for those who have had a member of their family die by suicide. Each person carried to the altar, during the presentation of the gifts, a rose in memory of the loved one who had taken his or her life.

Suicide is a hard, devastating reality to face, full of emotions, such as rage, guilt, shame and profound sadness, accompanied by countless “whys,” which are left unanswered and only deepen the desperation.

The Gospel of the day certainly was good news, a balm for the heart: The parable of the shepherd who does not rest until finding his lost sheep. The

Associate Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality

Ricardo Márquez



power of the pastor’s homily resounded in my heart: “The Lord does not lose any of His sheep.” Leaving His 99 sheep, the Shepherd goes looking for the missing one and carries her home.

For those of us who have had a family member or friend die by suicide, these words were healing ones, confronting the language of damnation and judgment that have accompanied us and stigmatized suicide victims and their family members.

No human being, regardless of how educated he is, or thinks he is, in psychology or theological sciences, can claim to be an expert in the mystery of life and all its manifestations. One

can find explanations and theories, but the internal mystery and the complexity of what happened in the mind of someone who decided — in desperation, pain or depression — to take his or her life can never be fully understood. We leave this sacred space to the intimate relationship between Creator and His tormented creature.

In those moments, fractions of seconds or long periods, the Shepherd tends to His “sheep.” Even if the person ends his life, in that singular encounter between Creator and creature, alchemy of the soul can occur, where light can emerge from darkness, where distance can fade to intimacy, because the Creator’s infinite love can transform all things and situations.

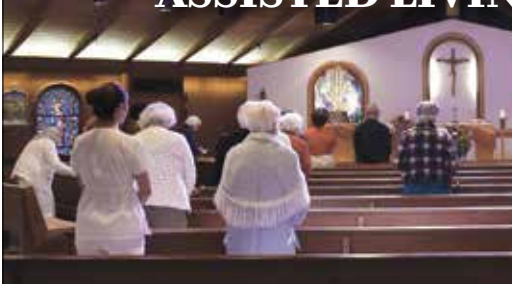
A woman in a wheelchair was among the participants in the Mass. Her facial expressions revealed her emotions, screams of joy and pain. Her parents were by her side, and I noticed that

each had their hand on each of her arms, caressing it, tenderly and gently. Seeing that, for me, was a revelation, a ray of light to my conscience of the power of simple love that accompanies, consoles and heals.

Those parents for me, at that moment, were a sign, a “sacrament” of love and its fruits. They reminded me of the promises that we make when we get married: “I will love you in health and in sickness, all the days of my life.” Their loving gestures invited me to look inward and ask myself: How do I express my love today? How can I be an instrument of consolation, a loving presence to those who need it, who feel rejected and alone?

If I practice it, if I ask for the grace to be an instrument of love and healing, I can possibly contribute to the rediscovery of a love of life among those who feel like they want to end it.

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Event Inspires Faithful to Be 'Prophets in Mission'

By Iliana De Lara



Hundreds of Hispanic faithful learned from world-class speakers and musicians how they could be "Prophets in Mission" in their own lives and communities.

That's the title of the conference held Sept. 17 at the Good Shepherd School gym, organized by the diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry and the Hispanic Commission. Publisher William H. Sadlier sponsored the Spanish-language, day-long event, which included a food and information fair.

Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, executive director of the Institute for Higher Guadalupe Studies in Mexico City, served as the keynote speaker. He shared the history of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico in four sessions, delighting his audience with entertaining anecdotes along the way.

The faithful also heard the moving testimony and music of Tony Meléndez, who overcame being born without arms to become a musician who has played worldwide, including for a pope. And they were entertained by Diego Cardona, a popular Catholic musician from Colombia, and his band.

Msgr. Chávez shared the history of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico, starting with the social and historical context in which she appeared in 1531 to the peasant Juan Diego.

"Our Lady of Guadalupe does not come alone; Jesus is with her," he said.

He asserted that Jesus came to Mex-



CAPTIVATING: Msgr. Eduardo Chávez, from the Archdiocese of Mexico City, was the keynote speaker of a daylong conference Sept. 17 at Good Shepherd Parish School that brought together Latino faithful from across the San Diego region.

ico through the Virgin of Guadalupe, given that her image on the cloak of St. Juan Diego indicated that she was pregnant.

"In other Marian apparitions, she is not accompanied. But in Guadalupe, it's God who asks His mother, 'Take Me with you because I always want to live among them,'" he said.

The Virgin's home is Tepeyac Hill, where she first appeared, "and then she went to work in other nations," he joked, referring to countries where she appeared.

Msgr. Chávez spoke about the symbols and messages the Holy Mother brought to the land.

"Her image is a code that the indigenous people as well as the Spaniards

understood," he said. For instance, he said her mantle is a blue-green color, identifying her as nobility, an empress.

Carolina Rosas, from Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in San Ysidro, said she was excited at all she was learning.

"This is beautiful because Msgr. Chávez is a great teacher, a man who is clearly in love with our Holy Mother," she said, adding that the conference gave her an opportunity to reconnect with so many people after the pandemic.

Along with his music, Meléndez shared his personal life and how God, at the center of it, had helped him and his family overcome adversity.

He was born in Nicaragua without arms because his mother had been prescribed Thalidomide, later found

to cause severe birth defects. The family immigrated to the United States in search of a better life for him.

With tenacity and discipline, he began to use his feet as his hands, and not only learned to feed himself and to write, but also to play the guitar.

"When people visited our house and heard music, they asked, 'Who is playing?'" he said. "When they were told it was me, they just couldn't believe it."

He got the opportunity to play before St. John Paul II in 1987, during his visit to Los Angeles.

"Tony, you're truly a courageous young man; you give all of us hope," he said the pope told him afterward. "My hope is that you continue giving hope to everyone."

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By Christina Bagaglio Slentz



Monarch butterflies can be seen in the San Diego region

from October to March. But did you know the monarch butterfly is now an endangered species?

Monarchs Endangered

This vibrant North American migratory creature has experienced population decline, with the eastern population decreasing 48% from 1996 to 2014 and continuing to drop another 72% in the past 10 years. Even worse, the western monarch population, which traditionally winters on the California coast, has plummeted 99.9% in recent decades. Habitat loss, pesticides, the absence of milkweed on which they lay their larvae, and extreme weather related to climate change are major factors to blame.

Threat of Biodiversity Collapse

This rapid decline of the beloved monarch points to what scientists are observing as biodiversity collapse. Biodiversity encompasses the existence of almost every living thing — ranging from plants, animals and humans, to even bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms. All these living creatures are interconnected, or dependent on each other. Healthy biodiversity is critical to a thriving ecosystem, and human lives depend on ecosystem productivity. We, too, are interconnected, part of God's brilliant design!

The biodiversity of God's creation

"It is not enough to think of different species merely as potential 'resources' to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see because they have been lost forever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right."

Pope Francis, No. 33, "Laudato Si"

fosters the survivability of living things, the general stability of a species, and ecological capacity to support life. Biodiversity collapse is what can happen when too many living things are lost — like pieces removed from a puzzle or a Jenga game.

According to The Living Planet Index, wildlife populations around the world have, on average, declined by 68% since 1970, and this trend is not yet slowing down. Scientists have equated the crisis in biodiversity loss to the mass extinction event over 60 million years ago, at the end of the Cretaceous period when dinosaurs were wiped out. Sadly, humans pose the biggest threat to biodiversity through habitat destruction, resource overexploitation, and contribution to global warming.

In his encyclical, "Laudato Si," Pope Francis observes the earth's resources are "being plundered" for

short-sighted benefits, resulting in the loss of forests and woodlands, which in turn result in the loss of species "which may constitute extremely important resources in the future, not only for food but also for curing disease and other uses." The good news is we have the power to turn this environmental degradation around and preserve this gift of creation.

What One Parish Is Doing

In 2018, St. Thomas More Parish in Oceanside began planning a pollinator garden plot at the suggestion of Father Mike Ratajczak, who already had milkweed and other pollinator-friendly flowers planted at the rectory. Pollinators are key to fostering biodiversity! In particular, Father Mike held great hope for the monarch butterflies, as the California population had declined by 86% that year from the previous year. So, the garden volunteers rolled up their sleeves, determined to be

self-sustaining, and used donated construction materials, mulch, soil and plants to build two plots. One plot offers edible herbs, while the other offers a pollinator paradise.

A critical feature of the St. Thomas More pollinator plot is native milkweed, which is the larval host plant for monarchs. In addition, parishioners have planted butterfly bush, lantana, and sages, which attract other butterflies, moths and bees. Thanks to a small grant from the Victory Noll Sisters, along with funds raised by recycling, cash donations from parishioners and the Vista VFW Auxiliary, and a generous grant from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, an irrigation system is being installed to nourish their ever-growing community garden surrounding the pollinator plot. Twenty-four fruit trees and five other flowering trees offer a valuable habitat for butterflies, bees and other pollinators, ensuring the next generation of plants.

St. Thomas More parishioner Sondra Parks donated a plaque to the pollinator garden in memory of Father Mike, who passed away last year. She also created and donated a beautiful succulent garden, planted in an old, "up-cycled" baptismal font, adding to the biodiversity of the gardens.

Christina Bagaglio Slentz is Associate Director for Creation Care Ministry in the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice.

Laudato Si' Movement
Biodiversity Loss Video



San Diego Natural History
Museum, Information on
Monarch Butterflies



St. Teresa Documentary Is 'Work of Holy Spirit'

By Kurt Jensen



WASHINGTON — A new documentary about St. Teresa of Kolkata, produced by the Knights of Columbus, aims to show how her mission and spirit continues in the work of her order, the Missionaries of Charity.

"Mother Teresa: No Greater Love," directed by Emmy award-winning filmmaker David Naglieri, was shown at the Vatican on Sept. 2 and had its American premiere Sept. 11 at the St. John Paul II National Shrine in Washington.

On Oct. 3 and 4, the film will be shown in about 900 theaters as part of Fathom Events' Saints series, including at various AMC and Regal theaters in San Diego County. Showtimes and locations can be found at fathomevents.com.

Supreme Knight Patrick Kelly told the audience that the film intends to reach a younger audience that might not be as familiar with the work of the saint, who died 25 years ago.

A papal letter of Aug. 25 says: "Thank you for promoting this type of initiative that helps, in a creative manner, to make accessible the zeal for evangelization, especially for the young generations promoting the desire to follow the Lord who loved us first."



PROMOTERS: Supreme Knight Patrick E. Kelly, CEO of the Knights of Columbus, is seen with members of the Missionaries of Charity at the Sept. 11, 2022, opening of the Mother Teresa Institute.

The Washington screening capped a weekend of events dedicated to the saint, including a special Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception and the dedication of the Mother Teresa Institute in Washington, designed "to preserve, protect, promote, and develop the authentic legacy of St. Teresa of Kolkata to the Church and to the world."

In a panel discussion about the new documentary after its screening, Naglieri said the process of filming new interviews and finding footage for the documentary took 11 months and was "very much the work of the Holy Spirit."

cal biography," Naglieri said. Instead, the goal was to "show how her mission and her spirit continues today."

As a result, the documentary shows the Missionaries of Charity working with children and adults in Brazil, India, Kenya and New York City. The sisters serve in more than 130 countries, and have a significant presence in the San Diego-Baja California region.

Sister Mary Bernice, a Missionary of Charity in the Bronx, New York, retells a story in the film about Mother Teresa encountering a gang-infested neighborhood in Chicago in the 1970s that quickly moved into legend.

She ordered the sisters: "Take me now to the door where they are shooting (at) us."

"As we were walking toward the door, all these buildings surrounding us, the rifles were pointed out and kept shooting at us. Not one bullet touched us. And when we reached the door, this big man said to Mother Teresa: 'Mother, you can't come in here. I have business in here.'

"And Mother looked up at him and she said: 'I, too, have business in here. Let us make a deal.' The man was so shocked that Mother would speak this way. He said: 'You can come in here, Mother. I can't stop my business. But I will protect your sisters.'"

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News Briefs

Cardinal on Hand for Parish's 60th Anniversary

SANTEE — Guardian Angels Parish is marking its 60th anniversary with its patronal feast day celebration on Sunday, Oct. 2.

Masses will be celebrated at 8:30 a.m., with Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano presiding, and at 10 a.m., with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as principal celebrant. Father André Ramos, pastor, will be concelebrating the Masses.

A reception will follow, beginning at 9 a.m., in the Cunnane Parish Center. It will include a ministry fair and a "Taste of Guardian Angels," with each parish ministry bringing a food sample to share. There will be activities for children, a photo booth and souvenirs to mark the occasion.

The annual fall festival, which is anniversary-themed this year, will be held the following weekend, Oct. 7 (5-10 p.m.), Oct. 8 (noon-10 p.m.) and Oct. 9 (11 a.m.-4 p.m.).

'Big Night Out' to Benefit Rise Up Industries

Rise Up Industries, a nonprofit that operates an 18-month reentry program for formerly gang-involved individuals recently released from incarceration, will hold its annual fundraiser on Saturday, Oct. 8, at The Westin San Diego Gaslamp Quarter.

Among the keynote speakers will be Jesuit Father Greg Boyle, bestselling author and founder of Homebody Industries, the nation's largest gang intervention and rehabilitation program.

All funds raised will expand Rise Up Industries' reentry services and support the launch of a program that will support youth.

This event "is a chance for the community to celebrate an organization that ... tries to imagine a circle of compassion and then imagine nobody standing outside that circle," said Father Boyle. "I invite you to celebrate one of the best organizations I know — Rise Up Industries."

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit <https://bit.ly/BigNightOut2022>.

Indian Community Celebrates Its First Layman to Become a Saint

The San Diego Indian Catholic community will hold its annual celebration on Saturday, Oct. 8, at San Rafael Parish.

There will be a Mass at 10:30 a.m., to be celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano, followed by a lunch and fellowship.

The celebration will honor St. Deva-sahayam Pillai, who was born a Hindu and converted to Christianity in the 18th century. On May 15, he became the first Indian layman to be declared a saint.

San Rafael Parish is located at 17252 Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego 92128. All are invited to attend, but registration is encouraged at sdicc.org.

Cristo Rey H.S. Hosting Charity Golf Tournament

The second annual Cristo Rey San Diego High School Charity Golf Tournament will take place on Monday, Oct. 10, at the Grand Golf Club at the Fairmont Grand Del Mar, with a shotgun start at 12:30 p.m.

A reception featuring hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and student speakers will follow the tournament.

All proceeds support the education of Cristo Rey San Diego students. The school provides underserved and

under-resourced students with an excellent education that combines rigorous college-preparatory academics and a unique Corporate Work Study Program.

Single players are \$300; foursomes are \$1,200; and reception-only tickets are \$75. A box lunch and reception ticket are included for all golfers.

For more information, visit cristoreysandiego.org/golf-tournament.

Healthcare Professionals Invited to Special Mass

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will celebrate a Mass for Healthcare Professionals at 10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 15, at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch.

The liturgy will recognize the service, sacrifice and compassion of physicians, nurses, pharmacists, hospital medical staff, medical students, mental health specialists, hospice workers, pastoral caregivers, and others dedicated to the healing profession of medicine.

Medical personnel are invited to wear their white coats or uniforms. A reception will follow in the parish hall. RSVP to ecasillas@sdccatholic.org.

Cardinal to Receive Humanitarian Award

Casa Cornelia Law Center, a faith-based organization sponsored by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus, will honor Cardinal Robert W. McElroy with the 2022 Lucy Howell La Mancha Humanitarian Award.

The cardinal will join this year's other La Mancha Award recipients at the awards presentation on Thursday, Oct. 13. Awarded by Casa Cornelia

Law Center's board of directors, La Mancha Awards honor individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions in meeting the needs of victims of human and civil rights violations.

The Lucy Howell La Mancha Humanitarian Award, which Cardinal McElroy will be receiving, is named in honor and appreciation of former board member Lucy Howell for her outstanding contribution to humanitarian service, leadership and commitment to Casa Cornelia's mission of justice with compassion.

Cardinal McElroy is being honored for his dedication to practicing and encouraging compassion and justice for the immigrant community.

For more information, visit casacornelia.org.

Oktoberfest to Support Trafficking Survivors

Children of the Immaculate Heart, a San Diego-based nonprofit that serves survivors of sex trafficking, is holding an Oktoberfest fundraiser.

The event will be from 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 15, at St. Mary Parish in Escondido. It will include a live oompah band, an art workshop for children, traditional German food and drinks, a silent auction, and Children of the Immaculate Heart speakers on the fight against trafficking.

Tickets are \$30 for adults and \$10 for children ages 3 to 12. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit childrenoftheimmaculateheart.org/events.

Briefs Continued on Page 17



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Briefs *Continued from Page 16***Healing Retreat Offered for Post-Abortive Women**

Rachel's Hope is offering an after-abortion healing retreat for Catholic and Catholic-friendly women who are suffering with grief and shame over a past abortion.

The professionally led retreat will take place from Friday, Oct. 14, to Sunday, Oct. 16, at the diocesan Pastoral Center. It will include a closing Mass.

Confidentiality will be maintained. Group size is limited.

The cost to attend is \$60 per person; partial scholarships are available. Housing is also available if needed.

For more information or to register, visit rachelshope.org or contact Rosemary Benefield by phone at (858) 581-3022; text at (858) 752-9378, or email at rachels_hope@juno.com.

Academy of Our Lady of Peace Names New Board Chair

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP), the oldest all-girls' high school in San Diego, has named Danitza Villanueva as chair of its board of directors.



Born in San Diego, Villanueva spent her youth with family in Tijuana and grew up on both sides of the border.

She has transferred her unique insight of cross-border culture, trends and philanthropy to her business and community interests.

"We are deeply blessed to have Danitza as our new board chair," said Dr. Lauren Lek, OLP's head of school. "For the past several years, she has co-chaired the OLP Women's Symposium, an event that brings together women leaders across various fields and is focused on giving the next generation of women leaders the inspiration to see new heights for their future."

"As a high school graduate from the Academy of Our Lady of Peace (1998) and the first woman from her family to graduate from college, she brings experience and empathy along with a commitment to progress for this generation of our students."

Widowed, Divorced Invited to Healing Weekend

OCEANSIDE — Beginning Experience, an almost 50-year-old international ministry that helps the widowed, divorced and separated move beyond grief, will hold its next weekend retreat Oct. 7 to 9.

It will be held at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, where organizers promise a supportive and caring environment with others that are going through or have gone through the same experiences.

The cost is \$300, which covers individual rooms, food and materials. Scholarships are available for those in need.

**Joyous Arrival**

More than 1,500 Filipino faithful turned out for the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia Mass on Sept. 17 at Good Shepherd Church, celebrated by Father Michael Pham, vicar general, accompanied by more than a dozen priests. The celebration included a novena that started on July 26 and was held at various parishes.

For more information, email beginningexperiencesd@gmail.com or call (858) 748-2273 in English or (330) 607-8774 in Spanish.

Catholics Can 'Encounter' Jesus in Rancho Peñasquitos

"Encounter," a Spirit-filled evening of inspiring music, prayer and Eucharistic adoration, is held on the second Friday of each month at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Rancho Peñasquitos. Sponsored by the parish's Hearts of Fire Ministry, the event runs from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Remaining dates in 2022 include: Oct. 14, Nov. 11 and Dec. 9.

For more information, email olmcheartsoffire@gmail.com.

Street Evangelization Brings Gospel to Public Square

St. Paul Street Evangelization is a grassroots, nonprofit organization dedicated to taking the Gospel message to the streets.

Participants in the ministry do this in a non-confrontational way, allowing the Holy Spirit to move in the hearts of those who witness their public Catholic presence.

For more information or to get involved, visit streetevangelization.com, call (619) 515-3267 or email scb@procopio.com.

Briefs *Continued on Page 18*

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Briefs *Continued from Page 17*

Festivals

Julian Parish Hosting Fall Celebration

JULIAN — St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish will welcome the fall season with its annual Oktoberfest.

The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 1, at Julian Town Hall and Julian Town Square, located at 2129 Main St. in Julian. Admission is free.

There will be live music, great food, local beer on tap, craft vendors, kids' activities, and both silent and live auctions. Auction items will include cabin rentals at Lake Cuyamaca.

New this year will be a "Sip and Paint a Madonna and Child Icon" activity, led by artist Ann Reilly Cole. This is limited to 15 participants. To register, call the parish office at (760) 765-0613 or email office@stelizabethjulian.org. Call the parish office to inquire whether there is still space available in the class.

'Begin a New Tomorrow' at Parish's Fall Festival

Holy Family Parish will hold its annual fall festival on Saturday, Oct. 1, and Sunday, Oct. 2. The theme is "Together We Begin a New Tomorrow."

There will be live entertainment, accompanied by Mexican, Filipino, Vietnamese and American food booths. Carnival games and a bounce house will be available. There will also be raffle prizes up to \$3,000; winners are not required to be present.

The festival will run from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is free.

Ladies Guild Selling Crafts

For almost four decades, the Father Joe's Villages Ladies Guild has provided volunteer services for homeless children residing at Father Joe's Villages.

The organization will hold its annual craft sale, beginning at 10 a.m., Monday, Oct. 10, at St. Gregory the Great Parish.

For more information, contact Margie Mills at (619) 733-7410 or margie.r.mills@gmail.com.



Funding Behavioral Health

The San Diego community was invited to double its donation power Aug. 25 to 31 in a matching gift campaign to support behavioral health services at Father Joe's Villages.

The campaign ultimately raised \$279,491, with the donations matched 100% up to \$250,000. The matching funds were provided by dedicated donors in memory of Michael D. Brooks.

The donation match supports behavioral health services, including psychiatric care, substance use disorder treatment, therapeutic child care development services and other support services offered by Father Joe's Villages.

Substance use disorder and mental health needs are on the rise among homeless San Diegans and can serve as barriers to housing and employment. Through the comprehensive behavioral health services offered at Father Joe's Villages' Village Health Clinic, neighbors struggling with mental health challenges can access the tools they need to manage their mental health symptoms and move toward recovery.

Pictured, Father Joe's Villages Street Health Team provides on-the-spot care to people who cannot or do not want to seek care in traditional centers or clinics.

Knights of Columbus Holds 'Evening in Bavaria'

An "Evening in Bavaria," an Oktoberfest sponsored by Knights of Columbus Valley of Angels Council 9170, will begin at 5 p.m., Friday, Oct. 14, in the church hall at San Rafael Parish in Rancho Bernardo.

The menu will include bratwursts, sauerkraut, German potato salad, pretzels, and strudel with ice cream. Beer, wine and soft drinks will also be for sale.

An oompah band will provide entertainment. New this year will be a Bavarian costume contest. Children are welcome with a kids' menu and a clown providing entertainment.

Tickets at the door are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children ages 6 to 18; ages 5 and under are free. Discounted pre-sale tickets (\$15 and \$7, respectively) are available after all weekend Masses Oct. 1-2 and 8-9 at San Rafael Parish.

All net proceeds benefit the needs of San Rafael Parish, seminarians and religious vocations, and other charitable organizations supported by the Knights of Columbus.

Holiday Craft Fair, Bake Sale Returning

EL CAJON — The Our Lady of Grace Parish Catholic Women's Club will hold its annual holiday craft fair and bake sale on Saturday, Nov. 5.

The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parish center and patio area. Admission is free.

There will be more than 70 crafters, whose handiworks will include fashion apparel, home decor and artwork for the upcoming holidays. There also will be freshly baked items, fudge, peanut brittle and cakes. Lunch will be available.

For more information, call (619) 980-6841.

Ready for Christmas? Let Advent Mini-Retreat Help

Whispering Winds Women's Auxiliary is hosting an Advent mini-retreat.

Led by Anamaria Anthony, chair of the Theology department at Mater Dei Catholic High School, it will take place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 30, in Mission San Diego de Alcalá Parish's St. Francis Chapel.

Participants will be invited to ponder Mary's humble "yes" and reflect on the areas in their own lives where they may be challenged to say "yes" to God's plan.

There is no cost to attend the event, which is open to both men and women, but a "love offering" will be collected.

For information, call, text or email Judy Lemm at (619) 507-1152 or judylemm@cox.net.

Carlsbad Man Commissioned as Salesian Lay Missioner

HAVERSTRAW, N.Y. — Five Salesian Lay Missioners were commissioned Aug. 18, toward the end of their retreat at Don Bosco Retreat Center in Haverstraw, N.Y.

Among them was Timothy Hughes, a member of St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Carlsbad. Hughes, 24, is the son of Patrick and Regina Hughes of Carlsbad. He earned a B.F.A. degree in Acting at Pace University in New York City.

Hughes has been assigned to the St. Dominic Savio School and youth center in Colima in the Salesian province of Guadalajara, Mexico, a new site for the SLM program.

"I hope to give of myself in some small way that may benefit others and to receive whatever they have to give to me," Hughes said. "I hope to be a participant in the Body of Christ. Most of all, of course, I hope to do God's will."

Hughes was preceded in 2019 by another volunteer from the San Diego Diocese, August Konrad, who served as a high school teacher and youth minister at the Salesian mission in Lungi, Sierra Leone, for a year.



Obituary

SISTER ELEANOR MCNALLY, CPPS

DAYTON, Ohio — Sister Eleanor McNally died on Aug. 29 in Dayton, Ohio. She was 103.

Born in 1918 in Hollywood, she entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Dayton in 1933. For 89 years, she faithfully served God, His people and her religious congregation.

Sister McNally began her life in ministry as a teacher throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati; in Phoenix; and at San Luis Rey Academy in Oceanside. She served on the administrative team of the Sisters of the Precious Blood as councilor and Western Region director for 12 years.

Sister McNally spent the next 39 years in the Diocese of San Diego as executive secretary of the Sisters' Senate; an administrative assistant in the chancery office; and assistant to the vicar for religious; as well as in parish ministry at Sacred Heart (Ocean Beach) and Blessed Sacrament parishes. In retirement, she continued to serve others.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Sept. 7 at the Salem Heights chapel in Dayton, with burial following in the Maria Anna Brunner Memorial Garden. Online memories and condolences may be left for the family at bakerhazelsnyder.com.



Priest Assignments

The following has been announced by the Office of the Cardinal:

Father Raul Armando Sanchez-Flores has been serving as associate pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Vista since Aug. 6.

Jesuit Father Brad A. Mills became associate pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in San Diego, effective Sept. 3.

Father Miguel Romero Mozo, a member of the Missionaries of St. Paul, began his assignment as associate pastor of St. Mark Parish in San Marcos on Sept. 6.

Church Is Vibrant at UCSD Newman Center



COURTESY NEWMAN CENTER CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AT UCSD

By Denis Grasska



Father Christopher Nguyen is in his third year as director of the Newman Center Catholic Community at UCSD.

The Newman Center provides for the spiritual and sacramental needs of Catholic students at the University of California, San Diego, where classes resumed Sept. 19. The center uses the facilities of Good Samaritan Episcopal Church, located at 4321 Eastgate Mall, San Diego 92121.

Born in Vietnam, Father Nguyen emigrated to the United States with his family in 1975, as part of the first wave of refugees at the conclusion of the Vietnam War.

Discerning a call to religious life, he entered the Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits, in 1990. Father Nguyen, 58, was ordained to the priesthood on June 16, 2001.

Question: What role has the Catholic faith played in your family?

Answer: Back in Vietnam, my father taught the older students in our K-12 parochial school. As a family, we always went to Sunday Mass and were very involved with our parish. Whenever my grandmother came to visit, she would go to daily Mass at 6 a.m. and take us with her.

On my father's side, my family has always been Catholic. My mother was Buddhist, but converted when she married my father. The faith goes back many generations in my family, to the 16th century. Some of the Vietnamese Martyrs canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1988 are among my ancestors.

When did you first sense a call to the priesthood?

It happened when I was in college at UC Irvine. At the time, I wasn't especially religious or devout. I went to Mass every Sunday, but other than

Director, Newman Center Catholic Community at UCSD

Father Christopher Nguyen, S.J.



that, a relationship with God was the last thing on my mind.

That started to change after some Catholic friends invited me to attend a silent preached retreat led by a Jesuit priest. They had paid my retreat fee, so I felt obligated to go. For me, that retreat was the beginning of a personal relationship with God. After that, my friends and I founded an on-campus faith-sharing group that still exists.

In my senior year, I took part in what's called the 19th Annotation, an adaptation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola for busy people who can't get away to attend the traditional retreat. That's when I first felt my calling.

However, while I was discerning and praying about it, the voice in my head said, "This isn't the right time." A week later, my dad lost his job and I felt obligated to go to work to help support the family. I'm the oldest boy among 11 siblings and, in the Asian culture, the oldest boy is responsible for the parents and the younger kids. So, I began working as a lab researcher in the medical school at UC Irvine.

About two years passed and, while in prayer one day, God seemed to say, "This is the right time." I was unconvinced at first, but sensed that, if I didn't apply then, it was never going to happen for me.

When I entered the novitiate, I was very much at peace about my decision and I trusted that God would take care of my parents. And that's what happened. Some of my siblings, who had moved to other states, began chipping in a few hundred dollars a month to support our parents.

What was it that attracted you to the Jesuits?

What attracted me to the Society of Jesus was its charism: It's all about evangelization. To me, evangelization isn't just about going out and baptizing people. It's also about helping people to encounter God in their daily life and to have a deeper and more meaningful relationship with Him. What better role for a priest than to help people to experience God?

What is the Catholic community at UCSD like?

The community consists mostly of students. But there are also professors and alumni, as well as adult professionals who live in the neighborhood, find it convenient to attend Mass with us, and just like the spirit of Newman and the way things are done here.

Often, you hear that young adults don't participate in the Church anymore, and you tend to see only old people at Mass. But at a Newman Center, it's the opposite. You see a lot of young people. You can see that the Church is vibrant.

Because I'm the only priest serving this community, I want the students to take charge of the ministry. So, I have a team of about 25 "student ministers." My staff and I focus on empowering them so that they can empower other students. It's sort of like a domino effect. When they graduate and return home, I want them to be leaders at their parishes.

The former director said we probably had about 450 people each week-end before the pandemic. During the lockdown, with Zoom Masses and a limited number of in-person Masses, we had about 150. Last year, when students wore masks and attended in-person, it was 400 at best. I think this year, attendance will be higher than last year.

What are some of the events and activities at the Newman Center?

We have two Sunday Masses, as well as daily Masses on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and weekly faith-sharing for the undergraduates, the graduate students and the residents.

On Wednesday evenings, we alternate between Eucharistic adoration and "contemplative Masses." At "contemplative Masses," instead of delivering a long homily, I will pose a question for the students to reflect on for about 10 to 15 minutes while other students play soft, instrumental music; this liturgy appeals to the senses through candlelight, incense and prayerful silence.

There are also regular social events, like community dinners and intramural sports, and service opportunities with organizations like Father Joe's Villages, Birthline, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, which is run by the Jesuits. Though we didn't do it last year because of the pandemic, we build houses in Tijuana over spring break. And we also offer retreats in the fall, winter, spring and summer.

What advice do you have for parents concerned that their college-age children might fall away from the faith?

I would say to tell your kids to look for a Newman Center.

Young people want to see their friends, to interact with their friends. If they make friends with other young Catholics at the Newman Center, that can provide the motivation to go to Mass.

If they want community, they'll find that at the Newman Center. If they also want to grow in their faith or to find opportunities to help others in need, we offer that, too.

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