



# A Shepherd's Legacy

JOHN CASTALDO

SPECIAL SECTION OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS | MARCH 2025



## Letter from Cardinal Robert W. McElroy

# A Word of Profound Thanks

As I leave San Diego to be installed as the new archbishop of Washington, I want to express my enormous gratitude for the grace which the People of God in this Local Church have been for me.

While a bishop is called to lead the Church in his diocese, he is also formed as a bishop by the priests, religious women and men, deacons and lay leaders of that diocese. San Diego is my first assignment as a diocesan bishop, and I have learned innumerable lessons of the heart and soul and spirit during the last decade by witnessing the faith of God active and alive in each of you.

I saw that faith in our priests, who struggled heroically throughout the terrible period of COVID to bring the sacramental and communitarian life of our parishes to their people despite seemingly impossible obstacles. And I see it in the men who have been ordained during these years, each of them giving to God the whole of their lives as they approached me for the laying on of hands. This faith and service, too, shines in the retired priests of our diocese, who continue to work tirelessly to ensure that the Eucharist and the sacraments are readily available through San Diego and Imperial counties.

I have seen the grace of God alive in the great annual liturgical celebrations that illuminate our communal life of faith and our cultural diversity: the Pentecost Mass for All Peoples; the Procession and Eucharist for Our Lady of Guadalupe; the festivals for San Lorenzo Ruiz, Our Lady of Peñafrancia and Simbang Gabi; the Mass of the Vietnamese Martyrs and



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the celebration of the Mass on the birthday of Martin Luther King. And of course, the annual celebration of the Rite of Election, the ordination of permanent deacons for service to the Church, and our Annual Mass for Consecrated Women have been for me great sources of spiritual depth and gratitude.

When I came to San Diego, I was immensely impressed by the high level of lay leadership formation that had taken place over the previous 30 years. This is the call that the Synod meeting in Rome last year made to the Global Church: to make clear that the mission of the Church requires dedicated men and women of faith who make great sacrifices in order to preach the Gospel, catechize the young and the old, reach out to the poor and the marginalized, and advocate for the immigrant and the unborn. All of these realities were present in our diocese when I arrived in San Diego, and they have been amplified in the following years

precisely because so many people of deep faith do see themselves as missionary disciples who are called to undertake the vast array of ministries and apostolates that are the treasures of our Local Church.

I remember the participation of thousands of men, women and young adults in the synodal processes that we have had over the past 10 years: the synod on marriage and families, which struggled with how to bring the Church's teaching on marriage to a world which has increasingly lost sight of its importance. The synod on youth and young adults that focused on new pathways to arrest the drift of our young people from the life of the Church; and the synodal processes in 2023 and 2024 that allowed us to share widely and deeply our joys, sorrows and hopes in the Church as a pathway to renewal and reform.

The leadership of the diocese has always been a source of great grace and learning for me. The incredibly competent, dedicated and



faith-filled staff of our Pastoral Center who truly are ambassadors for Christ; the Diocesan Pastoral Council, which so creatively helped us to get through COVID and beyond; the Presbyteral Council that has always been a source of immense pastoral wisdom for me; and the Diocesan Finance Council, which has had to undertake greatly expanded work in grappling with our diocesan bankruptcy. All of these men and women in leadership have enriched our Catholic community and led me toward wisdom in action.

Finally, the four auxiliary bishops that I have ordained here in San Diego are exemplary men and each will, in turn, become a splendid bishop of their own Catholic community. I give them special thanks for all of their support and leadership.

And most of all, I give thanks to God for leading me to this wonderful place of faith, vitality, community, sacrifice, compassion and hope. It is enriched by this treasure which I have encountered here for the last 10 years, that I go forth at the call of the Church, to a new flock. But I go, knowing that I will always keep the joy and faith of San Diego deeply in my heart. And know, also, that we will be always joined in our mission of preaching Christ Crucified and Christ Risen to the whole of the world.

### 2015

Pope Francis names Auxiliary Bishop Robert W. McElroy, of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, to serve as the sixth bishop of the Diocese of San Diego.

San Diego, California

### 2016

Responding to the pope's call, Bishop McElroy launches a diocesan synod on marriage and families.

### 2017

Diocese opens the Office for Family Life and Spirituality as a result of the family synod.

Bishop ordains Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan.

### 2018

Bishop holds eight listening sessions across diocese to listen to faithful on sex abuse and the Church.

### 2019

The bishop launches a synod that consults young adults about how the diocese can better engage them and serve them.

Bishop brings all diocese's employees together for the first time to raise awareness of child abuse and prevention.

### 2020

Churches and schools close due to COVID-19 pandemic. It would be about two years before their operations would return to normal.

Bishop ordains Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano.

### 2021

Bishop launches seven-week Eucharist Initiative at every parish to increase understanding of and affection for the Blessed Sacrament.

Answering pope's call, bishop launches Synod on Synodality, consulting faithful on how parishes can invite all to participate.

### 2022

Pope names Bishop McElroy to the College of Cardinals.

### 2023

Pope invites Cardinal McElroy to participate in a select group of bishops and laity who will analyze findings of the Synod on Synodality at the Vatican and make recommendations.

Cardinal ordains Auxiliary Bishops Michael Pham and Felipe Pulido.

Washington, D.C.

### 2024

As a result of the diocesan synod, Cardinal launches pilot project in 17 parishes to re-imagine parish life and leadership, and forms Women's Advisory Committee to explore the role of women in Church leadership.

### 2025

Pope Francis announces that Cardinal McElroy will lead the Archdiocese of Washington.





LEONARDO ENRIQUE FONSECA

**JOYFUL:** Cardinal Robert W. McElroy celebrated the Imperial Valley Commissioning Mass on Sept. 11, 2023, at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Imperial.

## Cardinal McElroy Transformed Diocese

By Aida Bustos

"I tend to be an idea person," Cardinal Robert W. McElroy said in one of his final meetings with staff members of the San Diego Diocese.

He not only proposed big ideas during his 10 years leading the diocese, but he brought them to life in profound consultation with all members of the Catholic community. Along the way, he transformed the Church in the San Diego-Imperial Valley region — and raised its profile in the Universal Church.

Inspired by Pope Francis, the cardinal launched three consultations, or synods, of Catholics across the diocese and agreed to implement the recommendations they yielded. The latest one, on synodality, is currently under way at 17 pilot parishes whose overarching goal is no less than the renewal of their communities.

He initiated a ministry to care for creation that not only has had a major impact on local parishes and Catholic schools but raised the diocese as a national model for environmental stewardship.

He fostered a Church culture that promotes unity and diversity equally. He named a Vicar for Ethnic and Intercultural Communities who was tasked with supporting the diocese's cultural communities, fostering understanding among them, and bringing them together regularly.

In times of crisis, he extended a compassionate hand to hurting communities. He held a Mass for African American Catholics in June of 2020, following the murder of George Floyd and the outbreak of protests across



AIDA BUSTOS

**ENCUENTRO:** A priority of Cardinal McElroy is to listen to young adult faithful. He's pictured with a delegate from the Diocese of San Diego at the National Encuentro on Sept. 21, 2018, in Gaylord, Texas.

the nation. In April of 2021, after Asian Americans across the country were the target of hate crimes, he celebrated a Mass for Racial Healing. Most recently, he forcefully spoke out against the "war of terror" that the new Trump Administration is waging on undocumented immigrants.

The cardinal listened to the Catholic communities in the Imperial Valley, investing significant diocesan resources there.

Father John Hurley, CSP, has known the cardinal for 34 years, since they both served in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. During that time, they have collaborated on projects and become friends.

Cardinal McElroy tapped Father Hurley to coordinate the three synods he launched at the diocese during his

tenure. In the first one, held in 2016, the faithful explored how the diocese could strengthen marriage and today's families. Pope Francis had published a document, "Amoris Laetitia" (Joy of Love), that asked bishops to accompany and care for individuals and families in complicated situations.

The cardinal asked the delegates to the synod, who were representatives from parishes across the diocese, to truly listen to one another and discern together what the Holy Spirit was calling them to do.

That's the synodal process, and the cardinal was practicing it before the rest of the Catholic world would begin to explore it, Father Hurley said.

"I think this is really a key strength, his willingness to graciously listen to people, even those who don't like

him," he said.

He recalled that the cardinal held eight listening sessions in 2018 to hear from the faithful on the subject of clergy sexual abuse.

"He was willing to listen to people's anguish, anger and disappointment."

The cardinal took this synodal approach in his work with the clergy of the diocese. At meetings, he let the priests share their input, and "very often moved toward a consensus," he said.

"It's trusting in the Holy Spirit," he said. "I think that's the ingredient that he always lifts up for anyone in conversation."

He also highlighted the cardinal's willingness to act. After the synod on marriage and family ended, the diocese quickly launched the Office for Family Life and Spirituality to implement the proposals the delegates had developed, transforming how it serves individuals and families.

When the pandemic led to the sudden closures of schools and businesses, Cardinal McElroy called on Catholic Charities to set up an operation quickly to help feed families facing hunger.

Father Hurley said that the cardinal is "very grounded in the Gospel and Catholic social teaching. "It's no surprise to me that Pope Francis named him to be the Archbishop of Washington. It's a voice and an approach we need in our country today."

Father Hurley is hopeful about the future of the Diocese of San Diego.

"We're going to continue to see the fruits of the great seeds the cardinal planted."



# Cardinal Nurtured a Missionary Church

By Victor Carmona, Ph.D.

From my perspective, three moments in Cardinal Robert W. McElroy's ministry speak to his impact on the life of the Church in San Diego. Together, they point to his commitment to nurturing a missionary Church that is, in the words of the global synod's final document, "capable of radical inclusion, shared belonging, and deep hospitality according to the teachings of Jesus."

One afternoon during the early fall of 2021, then Bishop McElroy unexpectedly called to ask if I would be willing to support the diocese's synodal process. His invitation gave way to the beautiful adventure of joining our community of faith as we all ventured to follow Jesus into deeper waters through the synodal process that Pope Francis had opened. Collaborating with him and the members of the Synod Commission in San Diego was a humbling experience of learning to listen in the Spirit; of being true to the joys, sorrows and hopes in the life of the Church that our brothers and sisters in faith entrusted us with — tensions and all.

The following summer, Bishop McElroy joined the members of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the U.S. at their annual meeting on June 7, 2022, at the University of San Diego. Earlier that week, Pope Francis surprised many of us by announcing Bishop McElroy as cardinal-designate. To our joy, he joined the members of the academy in what was among his first public-facing



**UNITY:** Cardinal Robert W. McElroy proclaimed the cultural diversity in the diocese as a strength and a blessing. Under his leadership, the diocese began an annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King's Call to Service. He celebrated that Mass on Jan. 19, at Christ the King Church.

events in that capacity. His presence and message, echoing the synodal process the diocese had embarked on, affirmed the dignity and gifts that the Hispanic community — which makes up more than 60 percent of the San Diego Diocese — offers the broader Catholic Church in the U.S.

The third moment is the prayer service that took place Feb. 9 at St. Joseph Cathedral. There, Cardinal McElroy and Auxiliary Bishops Ramón Bejarano and Felipe Pulido shared a clear and precise message: The Church stands with immigrants. In the face

of the profound fear that many in our diocese's immigrant communities are experiencing, the cardinal's actions prophetically reminded us that God's compassionate love is not bound by a person's legal status. Unfortunately, it is a simple truth that during our polarizing times increasingly sounds discordant to many Catholics and other Christians.

In each of the previous three moments, Cardinal McElroy nurtured a greater capacity to be radically inclusive of each other's different experiences in the life of the Church

in San Diego. He affirmed our mutual belonging while remaining true to our cultural expressions of faith. And he prophetically reminded us to practice a deeper still hospitality so we may counter fear with compassion. May his ministry in our nation's capital be as much of a blessing as it has been at this Church on the border.

*Victor Carmona, Ph.D., is associate professor of theology and religious studies at the University of San Diego and president of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians.*

## 'You Touched Our Lives With Your Kindness'

By Father Charles "Chuck" Fuld

Yes, Cardinal McElroy, the retired priests of this diocese will miss you.

You touched our lives with your leadership, kindness and compassion.

I speak here mainly for myself, but I have heard similar comments from many of my fellow retirees, as well as priests who are soon to retire.

I remember when my daughter, Linda, died about a year ago. (Yes, I am a widower priest, something with which you never had trouble.) Her death blindsided me, but I was helped so much by your kind words about the eulogy I gave at her funeral service and a reflection of your own personal struggles.

Later, when your mother died, I agreed to keep her in my daily prayers, not because I had to, but out of consideration of all the times you reached out to me and mine.

I will always cherish the many phone calls I received from you. You called each retired priest at Christmas time to check in on how we were doing and to wish us a Merry Christmas.

There were sick calls, too, that helped so many. Then, there was the annual get-together of all retired priests of the diocese at your personal quarters, as well as remembrances at the Annual Priests' Convocation. Add to all of that your numerous visits to our retirement center, Nazareth House, and to the hospitals where a retiree (or non-retiree) had been assigned.

You have shown us that a priest does not lose his value when he retires. I've often had to explain this to lay persons who think that is the case. No, as you, Cardinal McElroy, have made it clear, a priest continues to serve in local parishes and on committees and commissions as long as he can reasonably do so — and that's what we do here in San Diego.

Cardinal McElroy, you have set a beautiful standard for whomever will follow you as bishop of San Diego.

Thank you! And God bless you in your new assignment!

*Father Charles "Chuck" Fuld is a retired priest and editor emeritus of The Southern Cross.*



**PERSONAL TOUCH:** Cardinal McElroy warmly reached out to the retired priests in the diocese. He's pictured on Nov. 15, 2024, before a Mass at Nazareth House.





**CONNECTING:** Cardinal Robert W. McElroy greeted the faithful after a prayer service on Feb. 9 at St. Joseph Cathedral, “The Church Stands with Immigrants.”

## ‘A Shepherd Who Smells of His Sheep’

Individuals who worked with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy share their thoughts on his impact on the Church in San Diego and Imperial counties, and on them.

### ‘A Place of Mercy and Love’

For the past four years, I have served as a member of Cardinal McElroy’s Pastoral Council and the Synod Commission for the Diocese of San Diego. What a joy and honor it has been to work alongside some of the brightest and most influential Catholics in our diocese on critically important efforts that are just now beginning to bear the fruit of synodality.

Accomplishments aside, what will remain in my heart from this experience is Cardinal McElroy’s pastoral way, which I have observed and experienced. Even in a large audience or crowd, when the cardinal becomes aware of one broken heart, he is drawn to minister to that person with kindness and compassion.

When he encounters someone who is dubious or has misunderstood something he has said, he engages and gently clarifies while seeking understanding rather than acquiescence.

And when he sees a community suffering or under attack, Cardinal McElroy gets proximate; he accompanies. I believe he seeks the truth and courageously speaks it for those who cannot.

Our cardinal operates from a place of love and mercy that often goes unnoticed, but is beautiful to observe.

In Cardinal McElroy, the Diocese of San Diego was blessed with a good shepherd to guide us and guard us — a shepherd who smells of his sheep.

— Kate Albrandt, member of Diocesan Pastoral Council

### ‘Brought Dignity to Everyone’

Cardinal Robert McElroy has made our San Diego region grow in faith, kindness and trustworthiness.

It has been such an honor for me, as the District Attorney for San Diego County, to work closely with Cardinal McElroy to make sure that the most vulnerable amongst us are served.

Cardinal McElroy instituted the first partnership with the D.A. in our nation to assure crime victims in our refugee and immigrant community know that they are protected under our laws through an informational, multilingual campaign.

He also launched the first in our nation partnership with my office to train the entire diocese in spotting and reporting child abuse and human trafficking.

Cardinal McElroy’s heavenly light shined on our region and brought dignity to every human being, no matter their background or circumstances.

On a personal note, as a Catholic, I was guided by his example and had the peace of knowing that I was one of the many that Cardinal prayed for, and it helped me make decisions that are grounded in humility, mercy and justice.

San Diego and I will forever be thankful that we had this man of God in our midst.

— Summer Stephan,  
San Diego County District Attorney

### ‘Embodies Accompaniment’

After Jesus’ resurrection, two disciples were walking to Emmaus, confused and discouraged. As they journeyed, Jesus joined them, engaging in conversation — asking questions, listening attentively, and revealing himself through the breaking of the bread. Their hearts burned within them as he opened the Scrip-

tures to them, showing that truth is revealed through dialogue, reflection, and openness to God’s presence.

In this same spirit of encounter and communion, Cardinal McElroy has made an incredible impact in our diocese, answering Pope Francis’ call to build a synodal Church — one that truly listens with an open heart and embraces dialogue. From parishioners, youth, clergy and the marginalized, all were invited to participate in the synod, ensuring that every voice was heard.

His leadership embodies the spirit of accompaniment and renewal, reminding us that the Church is at its best when it listens, dialogues and allows the Holy Spirit to guide its path.

As a young woman serving in the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement, I am deeply moved and honored that Cardinal McElroy recognizes the importance of youth and ensures that our voices have a place at the table.

Through his unwavering commit-

ment to synodality, he has transformed our diocese into a more participatory and united community of faith. We are truly blessed by his leadership and deeply grateful for all he has done — and will continue to do — for the Church.

— Vi Salazar, member of Diocesan Synod Commission

### ‘Wonderful Pastor’

In the early 2000’s, I attempted to recruit the pastor of St. Gregory’s Parish in San Mateo, Father Robert W. McElroy, as the founding Dean of University of San Diego’s new School of Peace Studies.

After visiting the campus and considering a new ministry in the academy, he gently turned me down, saying “I really love being a pastor.”

In 2015, our Local Church received a wonderful pastor who has blessed

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**HELLO!** Cardinal McElroy met the young faithful at the Vietnamese Martyrs Mass on Nov. 6, 2022, at Good Shepherd Church.





**ORDINATION:** Cardinal McElroy ordained a total of 18 men to the priesthood for the San Diego Diocese during his 10-year leadership, including Fathers Bradley Easterbrooks and Guillermo Hernandez, on June 24, 2022, at St. Gabriel Church.

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us abundantly. Without abandoning his scholarly pursuits, he has been courageous, loving and effective as an advocate for the poor and vulnerable. In his preaching and teaching ministry, he has promoted the Catholic intellectual and spiritual life of our diocese; supported its educational institutions and parochial programs; and engaged clergy, laity and faculty of the Franciscan School of Theology to form and educate our future priests. He returned from the global synod eager to promote greater opportunities for the laity, especially for women, to use their many gifts on behalf of the Church's shared mission. We have been, indeed, blessed by this good shepherd, and we are grateful.

— Mary E. Lyons, Ph.D., president emerita, University of San Diego

### 'Made Me Feel at Home'

I feel honored to say that Cardinal Robert McElroy ordained me a bishop for the Diocese of San Diego.

I recall when I arrived in San Diego as auxiliary bishop-elect, it was a Mon-

day afternoon and I was coming from a small diocese in the state of Washington with so many questions. I was nervous and I did not know what to expect. When I arrived at the airport baggage claim, Cardinal McElroy was waiting for me and immediately made me feel welcome and at home.

I encountered a gentle and kind shepherd who knows his flock and, as Pope Francis says, "knows from within the life of God's People, their joys and hardships, their resources and their needs" and who wants everyone to be counted, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Cardinal McElroy has impacted my ministry by being a synodal bishop. In the short time that I have collaborated with him in the mission of the Local Church, I have witnessed a shepherd who despite his status in the global Church welcomes input and is eager to listen to everyone.

His actions are a reflection of his dependence on the Holy Spirit, and his discerning heart keeps the good will of the Church and its people his priority.

I feel extremely blessed to have

ministered and collaborated in furthering the mission of the Church with Cardinal McElroy.

— Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido, Diocese of San Diego

### He Is Not a 'Boss'

Every once in a while, Cardinal McElroy will pop into our offices to say hello and check in. He will ask about how the young people are doing in ministry and, more times than not, our answer is busy, busy, busy, which would spark a conversation about upcoming events. Cardinal McElroy's leadership and genuine interest in the well-being of young people has been what drives ministry with young people further.

Five years after the diocese's Young Adult Synod, we are witnessing the fruits of those proposals, with many parishes across the Imperial Valley and San Diego, now having their own young adult ministries. On average, our office hosts 17-20 events a year, all with Cardinal's vision as a guiding post for why we have these events.

"But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part

that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another.

"If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy" (1 Cor 12:24-26).

A few weeks ago, I was sitting in Mass and this reading was a reminder of Cardinal's servant leadership. He is not a "boss"; he walks with his flock. He makes it known that we are not individual parts of a body, but we are one body.

— Maricruz Flores Strauss, director, diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry

### Cardinal 'Helped Me Thrive'

On the last day of April 1975 was when my family left Vietnam after the collapse of Saigon. We were war refugees. That year was a Holy Year. In that dark night at sea, I wondered about God's will for us, the Vietnamese people.

We arrived in San Diego the same year and found refuge both socially and spiritually at Mass and at the various churches. Holy Family Parish in Linda Vista would become our home parish.

It is now 2025, also a Holy Year. I have come to appreciate the Church of San Diego and its mission increasingly over time. Here, thanks to the vision and the works of Cardinal McElroy, I find the larger Vietnamese community of San Diego thriving. The Church is not just a place of refuge, it has become a place where one can thrive.

For me personally, the works of Cardinal McElroy have helped me thrive spiritually.

I have witnessed the wonderful results of the various communities in San Diego coming together, where we share our faith in the Church and in God in our annual Pentecost "Gather as One" celebration.

— Giai Do, past president, Vietnamese Catholic Community

### 'He United Us'

The cardinal ordained me as a deacon in 2017, and I have officiated and participated in various Masses with him. He is a person totally open to the Spirit, open to listening to everyone else. He is totally exemplary, with the gift of transmitting the word of God.

He's a great communicator, always focusing on the word of Christ, on love and mercy. He has a charisma that he transmits to others, inspiring great confidence in him.

He taught us to be really united, to participate in the Body of Christ, that we all live in the same vine, regardless of our different ideologies.

In the Imperial Valley, he brought us together a lot. He taught us that we were not a parish in Brawley or one from El Centro; that we were one single community in Christ. It was incredible. And that's what we have lived.

— Deacon Alberto Moya, Sacred Heart Parish, Brawley



**ON THE ROAD:** The diocese covers nearly 9,000 square miles, which Cardinal traveled tirelessly to serve his flock. He celebrated the 200th anniversary Mass on Sept. 16, 2018, at the Santa Ysabel Indian Mission.

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**UNPRECEDENTED:** Cardinal Robert W. McElroy ordained four auxiliary bishops during his time in the diocese: John Dolan, ordained on June 8, 2017; Ramón Bejarano, on July 14, 2020; and Michael Pham and Felipe Pulido, on Sept. 28, 2023. They were photographed after the ordination of Bishops Pham and Pulido at St. Thérèse of Carmel Church. From left to right, Bishops Bejarano, Pulido, Pham and Dolan.

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### 'Opened Many Doors'

Cardinal McElroy's leadership and guidance opened many doors for our diocesan social ministry to engage with Catholics and other community members throughout San Diego and Imperial counties.

The cardinal's vision for synodality and building synodal parishes will have a lasting, positive impact for the People of God here.

Cardinal supported and resourced our ministry to engage and lift up the voices of the most vulnerable members in our communities, most notably the incarcerated, the homeless, the newly arriving immigrant, and the unborn child.

Cardinal McElroy will be missed in San Diego, and we feel confident that his legacy of pastoral leadership, wisdom and compassion will continue to thrive in our diocese and the ministries we serve and support.

— Robert Ehnou, Ph.D., director, diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice

### 'Fostered Dialogue'

ADL San Diego extends its sincere appreciation to Cardinal McElroy for his steadfast support of our interfaith efforts with the Diocese of San Diego.

Over the years, his leadership has been instrumental in fostering dialogue between our communities and strengthening our partnership against antisemitism and hate. Through initiatives like co-hosting the ADL Bearing Witness Summer Institute for Catholic Educators and participating in Interfaith Passover Seders, the diocese has significantly enhanced understanding and connectedness between the Catholic and Jewish communities.

As Cardinal McElroy embarks on his next mission, we wish him the best of luck and look forward to seeing the positive impact he will continue to make.

— Fabienne Perlov, regional director, ADL San Diego



**DEACONS:** Cardinal McElroy ordained Victor M. Villagomez to the permanent diaconate on June 1, 2024, at Our Lady of Grace Church. He ordained a total of 51 deacons during his time at the diocese.

### 'Fearless, and Unwavering'

In the last decade, the Diocese of San Diego has prospered in many ways. Our Local Church has greatly benefitted from Cardinal McElroy's collaborative and consultative leadership and vision for a Church on mission, which listens and is called to action.

This was accomplished through three diocesan synods, "Amoris Laetitia" (2016), "Christus Vivit" (2019), and "Synodality" (2021).

Cardinal McElroy's shepherding is zealous, fearless and unwavering. He invited all the faithful to a deeper more intentional understanding of being in communion with one another. His sense of understanding of the signs of the times on a universal level allows for the pastoral application at the local level of how we must journey together as one holy, Catholic and apostolic Church.

Elevating the role of women in the administration and decision-making process within the Church has been one of his outstanding marks throughout his tenure. He appointed women to key roles in diocesan administra-

tion such as chancellor, chief financial officer, and superintendent for schools. The role of women in Church leadership, though prominently present on various levels of ministry and professional office, continues to be further explored through a Women's Advisory Committee commissioned by Cardinal McElroy.

The diversity of our Local Church has always been dear to Cardinal McElroy's heart. His pastoral outreach to the changing needs of the communities in both San Diego and Imperial counties has left a lasting mark.

Cardinal McElroy has sown the seeds of the Gospel. We must now continue to till the soil and allow them to grow.

Thank you, Cardinal McElroy for your guidance and may the Holy Spirit be with you!

— Marioly Galván, chancellor and director of pastoral ministries

### 'Served as Bright Light'

During his tenure as bishop of San Diego, Cardinal McElroy's impact upon the work and teaching of Cre-

ation Care has been incomparable. His embrace of this ancient aspect of our faith and willingness to apply it to today's environmental crisis has served as a bright light, offering leadership through example throughout the U.S. Catholic Church.

Cardinal McElroy began his time in San Diego just as Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si" (On Care for Our Common Home), was published. Through Cardinal's encouragement, over half the parishes and many schools installed solar energy systems, greatly reducing our overall contribution to climate change.

In 2022, at Cardinal's direction, the diocese totally divested from fossil fuels, the first in the nation to announce such an action. That same year, a full-time associate director was added in the Office for Life, Peace and Justice dedicated to Creation Care.

— Christina Bagaglio Slentz, associate director for Creation Care, diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice

### 'Transformative Initiatives'

The diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry has been significantly influenced by Pope Francis' vision of being a synodal Church. This vision, championed in the Diocese of San Diego by Cardinal McElroy, has led to a series of transformative initiatives that have positively impacted all our areas of ministry.

Two of the most recent ones were to collaborate with the Office for Schools to embark on a three-year process to offer formation in faith and science, targeting middle school and high school students within our areas of ministry.

Also, we have provided courses to equip our parish leadership to be more welcoming to families, especially to those who have children with special needs.

Our primary focus is listening to the

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**LEARNING DAY:** On Feb. 8, 2016, the staff of the Diocesan Pastoral Center traveled to Calexico for a day of reflection on what it means to be a border diocese. The day included a procession to the U.S.-Mexico border led by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, accompanied by the local Catholic community.

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needs of our communities and striving to meet them. We are a synodal Church that journeys with the San Diego and Imperial Valley communities and values each of our constituents.

— Leticia Trent, director, diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry

### 'Think Outside the Box'

I had the opportunity to work with Cardinal McElroy in a number of capacities representing the Franciscan School of Theology. What I appreciated most about him was his willingness to think outside the box. Whether one was trying to solve pastoral problems or advance the Gospel and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition, one found a listening ear in Cardinal McElroy. I believe he was always trying to move us toward dialogue at a time when many were retreating to their comfort zones.

The cardinal helped us at the Franciscan School of Theology as we tried to propel the Franciscan Movement forward through speaking at our conferences and embracing the environmental concerns of Pope Francis so rooted in the patron saint of ecology, St. Francis of Assisi.

I was most touched by a priest who told me that he received a call from him on Christmas Eve. He was wondering what the problem was, but Cardinal McElroy just wanted to check in on him at a busy time of year. In his more than 30 years of ministry, this had never happened before. We will miss Cardinal McElroy's humanity.

— Father Garrett Galvin, OFM, president/rector, Franciscan School of Theology



**GETTING SCOOP:** Cardinal McElroy visited Father Joe's Villages on March 18, 2016, accompanied by its CEO, Deacon Jim Vargas.

### 'Great Servant Leader'

Cardinal McElroy is the most compassionate servant leader that I have ever met.

Working with him these past four years has been an extraordinary experience. I was blessed to be asked to be on the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

His leadership and compassion were exemplified in how he led our diocese through the uncertainty and challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how he worked with pastors as we came out of it to bring the people of God back to the source and summit of our faith: Eucharistic celebration.

The cardinal brings us closer to God by his example of leadership, his extraordinary teaching and by being a loving missionary disciple of Christ.

He exemplifies synodality in everything he does. He listens attentively, encourages participation and leads us to that continuous conversion to become missionary disciples walking

together in this journey of faith.

I was privileged to be involved as coordinator for St. Jude's Synod Re-imagining Team and have been blessed to learn so much from the cardinal, and have come closer to Christ, and to our Church.

He is a patient, thoughtful, compassionate and intelligent disciple of Christ that has been a great servant leader for our San Diego Diocese. He emanates the presence of Christ. We know that God is calling him to serve the People of God elsewhere. We will miss him.

— Irma Covarrubias-Lugo, St. Jude Parish

### 'Never Felt So Cared For'

Cardinal McElroy came to our diocese in 2015 and straight away began to get to know the priests of the diocese. Some mentioned to me that they had never felt so cared for and seen.

In the same year, my husband, Michael Akong, and I founded Pax in Familia, an international ministry dedicated to peace and to the prevention of violence in Catholic families.

The cardinal recognizes the severe threat that intimate partner violence presents to families here and throughout the world.

Apart from his spiritual and moral support, he assisted us in our petition for African Episcopal Conferences, through the USCCB's Solidarity Fund for Africa, to receive funding for our eight-week teaching trip to Africa in 2018.

He also provided a video introduction to our online course, "Violence and Abuse in Catholic Families: Preparing an Effective and Compassionate Pastoral Response," in 2022.

We will greatly miss him, and the example he has given us of listening to the Holy Father and his teaching on synodality, while bringing it to bear fruit in our diocese.

— Dr. Christauria Welland, founder and director, Pax in Familia

### 'Embodies Hospitality'

Cardinal McElroy has significantly impacted Catholic Charities' work in the San Diego and Imperial Valley region. His leadership and dedication to social justice have been instrumental in guiding the organization's efforts to serve the community's most vulnerable.

He embodies the values of mercy and hospitality in his ministry.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cardinal McElroy was crucial in mobilizing Catholic Charities to respond. He asked me, "What can we do?" This question led to the rapid establishment of the Emergency Food Distri-





**PROCESSION:** Cardinal Robert W. McElroy joined Filipino Catholics as they celebrated San Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint and martyr, with a Mass and fiesta on Sept. 10, 2022, at St. Charles Church.

## Voices *Continued from Page 8*

tribution Network Plus, which began on April 6, 2020. Initially composed of 21 parishes, the network distributed food to low-income families and homebound individuals. The number of households served grew from 2,500 in the first week to 10,000 by the fourth week. The network continues to serve those who are food insecure.

The cardinal's influence extended to fostering interfaith relations. He facilitated meetings and discussions with leaders from other faith communities, such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Episcopal Diocese, to explore areas of cooperation and support for Catholic Charities.

His leadership has been marked by a compassionate and proactive approach, ensuring that Catholic Charities continues to fulfill its mission of serving the poor, vulnerable and marginalized in the San Diego and Imperial Valley region.

— *Vino Pajamor, CEO, Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego*

### 'Embodied God's Mercy'

Whether I presented Cardinal McElroy with a detailed proposal for a diocesan liturgy or confessed a liturgical malfunction, he would, without fail, softly utter, "That's fine!"

This simple "That's fine!" was puzzling to me until Pope Francis declared a Jubilee Year of Mercy (ending in 2016).

It finally came clear to me that the cardinal was the embodiment of God's gentle, yet powerful mercy. This undeserved mercy flowed from God through Cardinal and on down through the Pastoral Center staff.

And it truly was fine! Until it wasn't.

One day, immediately after an ordination, Cardinal, observing that the sanctuary was filled with only men, declared that all future diocesan liturgies were to include women servers



**FIRSTHAND LOOK:** On May 12, 2023, Cardinal McElroy accompanied a team from Catholic Charities that gave food and water to desperate asylum-seekers who had set up a camp near Jacumba. The agency had responded for a call for help from the town.

and women in diocesan leadership seated in the sanctuary. This reflected Cardinal's ongoing respect and inclusion of women on the diocesan Curia, and in many leadership positions.

I am grateful to Cardinal for giving me the opportunity to serve the Diocese of San Diego and to be the recipient of his mercy. Both have been a tremendous blessing that I will always treasure.

Cardinal, be assured of my prayers as you follow God's call to Washington.

— *Noreen McInnes, director of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality*

### Engaging All Members

St. Paul's passage in 1 Corinthians 12:12-30 that was proclaimed at Mass on Jan. 26 comes to mind as a suitable expression of the episcopal ministry of Cardinal McElroy in our diocese for the past 10 years.

St. Paul speaks about the indispensable contribution that each person makes as a member of the Body of Christ. For me, this characterizes the priority Cardinal McElroy gave in

seeking the participation of everyone.

I know he will do the same in his new ministry in the Archdiocese of Washington.

— *Msgr. Steven Callahan, judicial vicar on the Diocesan Tribunal and pastor of St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach*

### 'Most Pastoral Priest'

I was Augustinian provincial for a total of 13 years in two stints, ending last year.

Cardinal McElroy was the ideal diocesan bishop for a religious community in his diocese. He saw the Augustinians as valued co-workers on our shared pilgrimage to Heaven. I personally have witnessed him to be the most pastoral priest – not just bishop – I have ever known.

— *Father Gary Sanders, OSA, former provincial, Province of St. Augustine in California*

### 'Empowering Leadership Style'

Cardinal McElroy impacted my ministry in this Local Church in a powerful and enabling way! His support

and affirmation both of myself and the women religious of the diocese greatly assisted my moving into this ministry with confidence, joy and enthusiasm. Such is his empowering, pastoral leadership style!

Respected throughout the country by women religious, he is deeply appreciated by our sisters. His belief that women are to be included in Church leadership is demonstrated by his appointments/decisions. His support for inclusion of women in the diaconate is well known.

He supported the establishment of a Sisters Council for the diocese and met annually with the Council. Eager to hear the voice of the sisters, he regularly made himself available to the women religious. His annual Appreciation and Jubilee Celebration is a highlight of our year.

Cardinal McElroy holds St. Francis of Assisi in high esteem in part due to his radical message regarding the poor, the planet and peacemaking. A description of St. Francis strikes me as most applicable to our servant leader and brother, Cardinal McElroy:

One who is "swift to forgive, slow to grow angry, free in nature, remarkable in memory, subtle in discussing, careful in choices, simple in everything, as well as kind, discerning and very humble."

Thank you, Cardinal McElroy!

— *Sister Kathleen (Kathy) Warren, OSF, director, diocesan Office for Women Religious*

Find additional views online at:

[thesoutherncross.org/voices2025](https://thesoutherncross.org/voices2025)





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**San Diego Office**

402 W Broadway, Suite 1025  
San Diego, CA 92101  
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**Mahal naming Cardinal Robert McElroy,**  
**Taos puso kaming nagpapasalamat sa inyong walang sawang pag-aruga at pagmamahal na ipinadama ninyo sa**  
**sambayanang Pilipinong Katoliko ng San Diego. Kami'y nanalangin na kayo po ay pagpalain ng ating Poong Hesu Kristo**  
**ng lahat ng biyaya upang magtagumpay sa inilaang tungkulin para sa inyo ng ating Santo Papa Francisco.**

Diocesan Commission for Filipino Catholics



Parishes: Ascension, Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd, Holy Family, Mater Dei, Mission San Luis Rey, Most Precious Blood, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Resurrection, St. Charles, St. Columba, St. Gregory, St. Mark, St. John of the Cross, St. Joseph Cathedral, St. Mary-Escondido, St. Mary - National City, St. Sophia, St. Michael- Poway, St. Michael- San Diego, St. Pius X, St. Rita, St. Rose of Lima, St. Therese of Carmel



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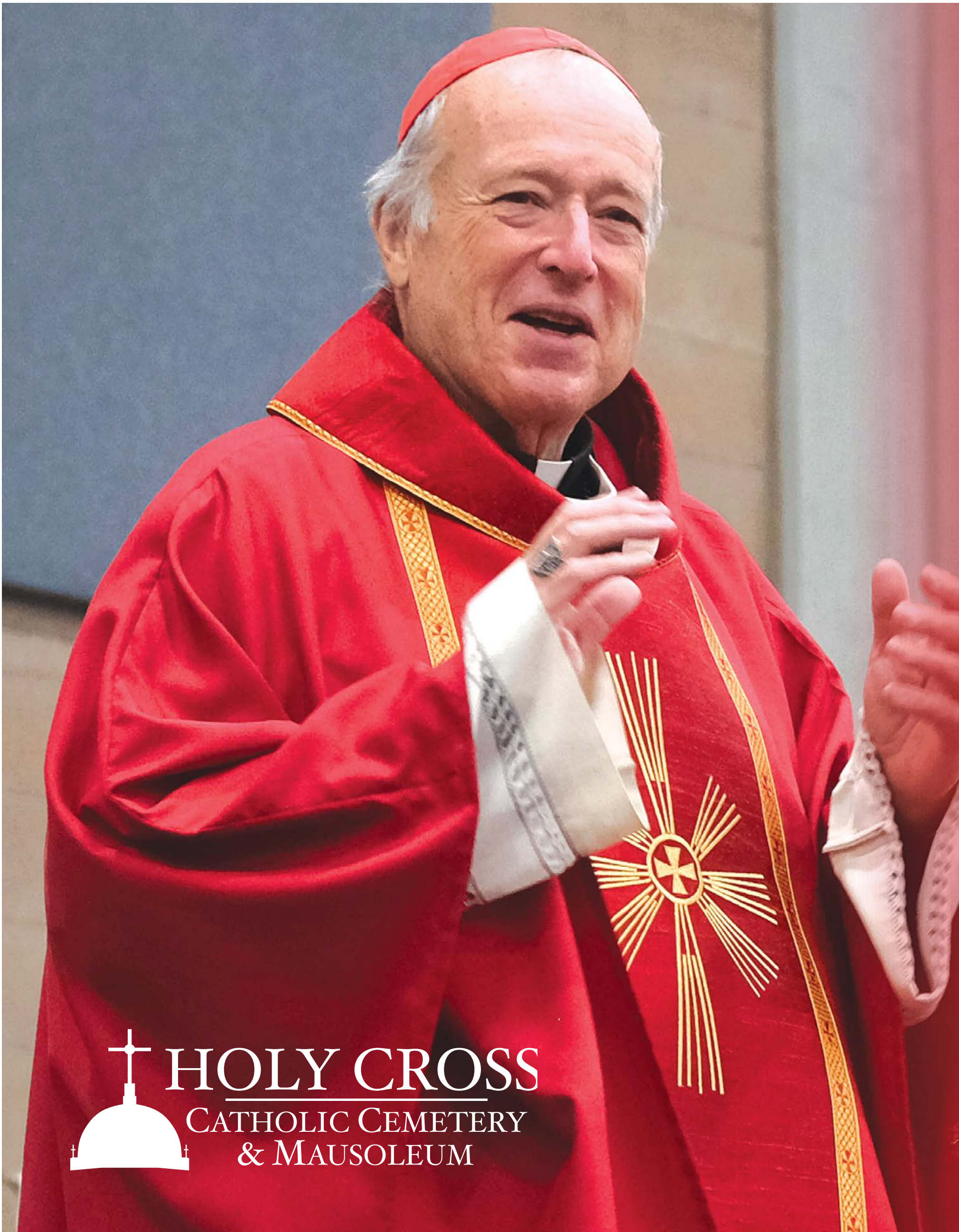
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Cardinal McElroy.

While you will be deeply  
missed, we thank you for  
shepherding your flock with  
such love and compassion  
for the past decade.

May God continue to bless  
you on your journey.

We will keep you  
in our prayers.



Warmest wishes and blessings to  
**Cardinal McElroy**  
 as you embrace your new responsibility.

Please know that you have our prayerful support and accompaniment.

*With heartfelt regards from the Office for Missions*

*Fr. Soney Sebastian  
 Sr. Doreen Lai  
 Sr. Eva Rodriguez  
 Joy Chan*



**THANK YOU FROM OUR SCHOOLS!**

On behalf of the Office for Schools, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for Cardinal McElroy. His love, dedication and contributions to our schools have made a lasting impact. Thank you to Cardinal for his invaluable and outstanding service!



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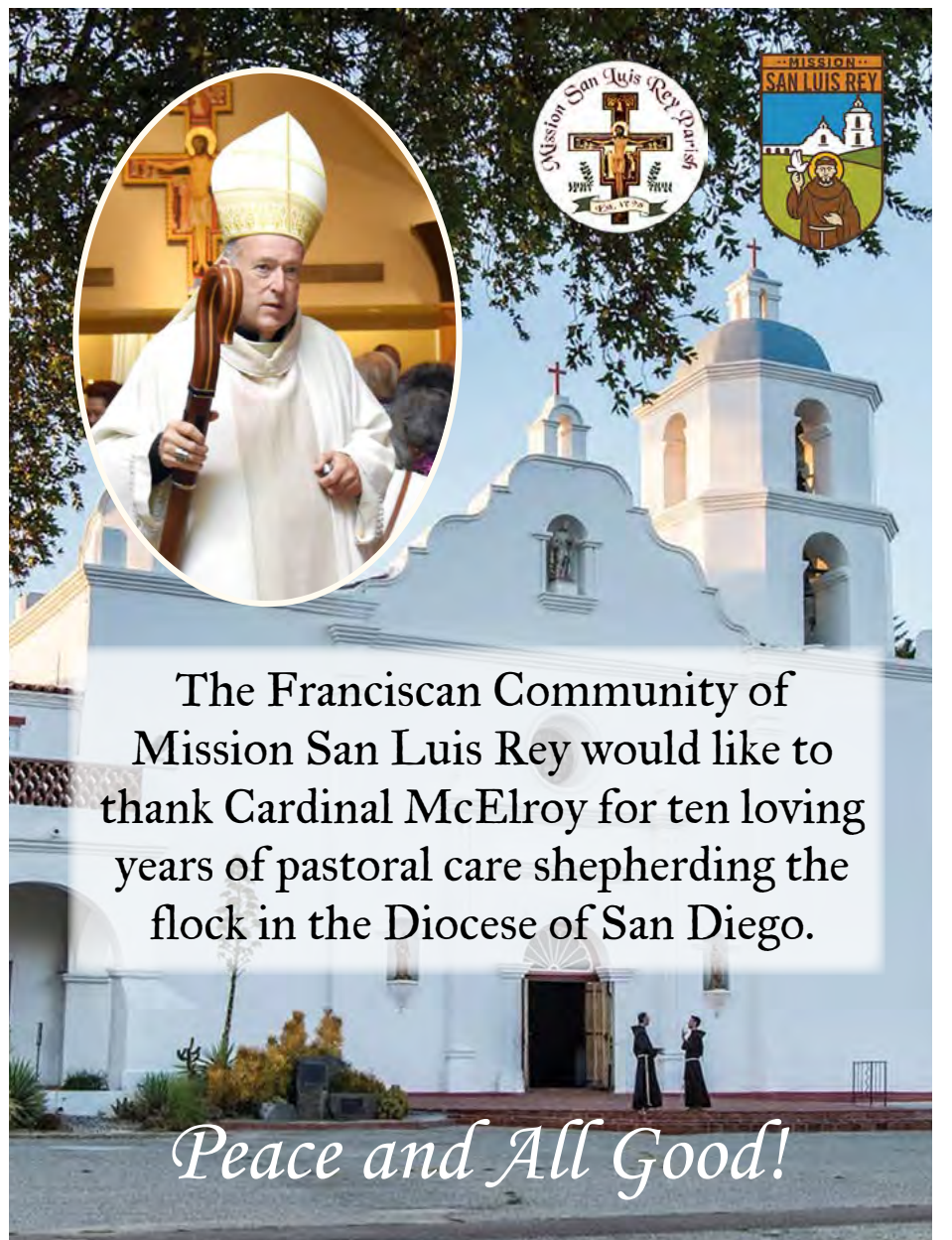


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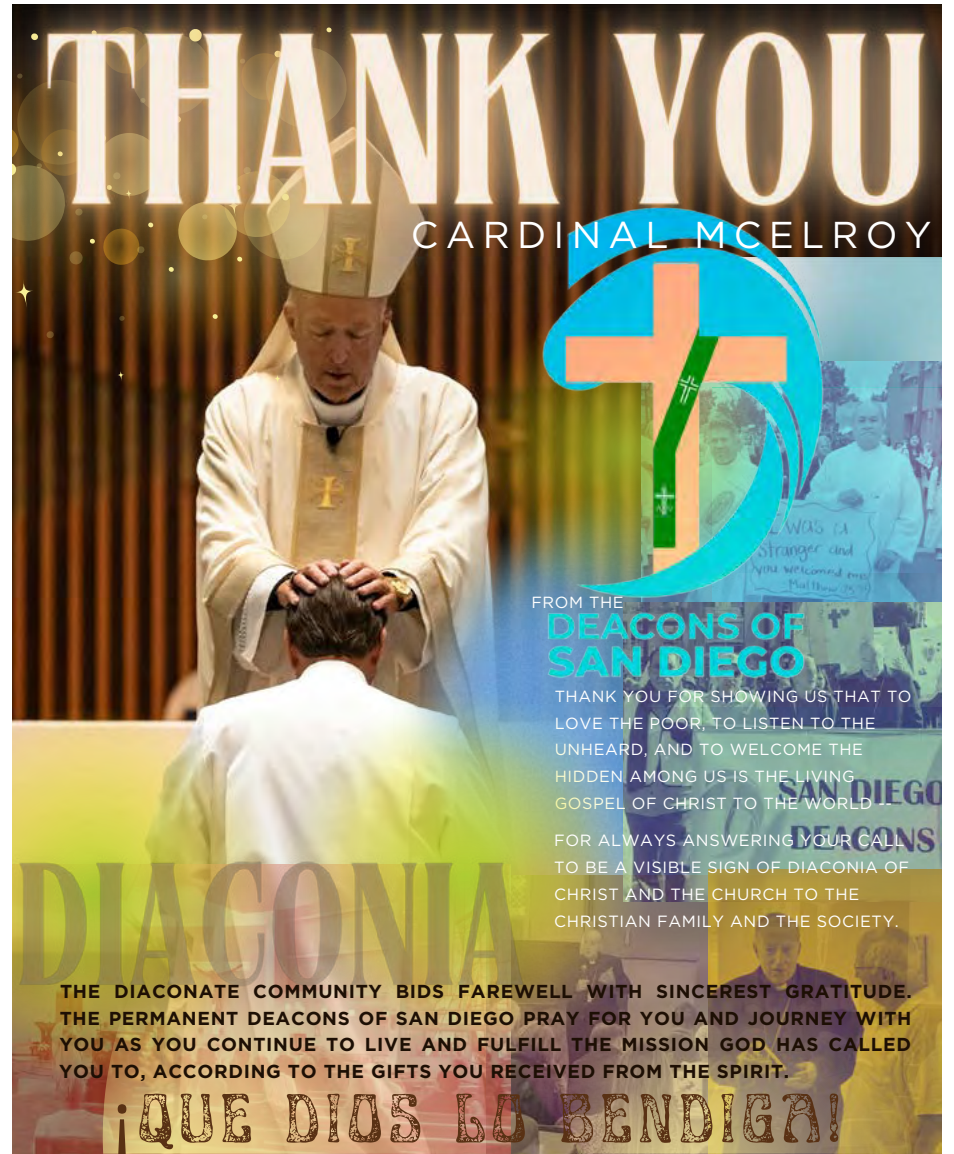
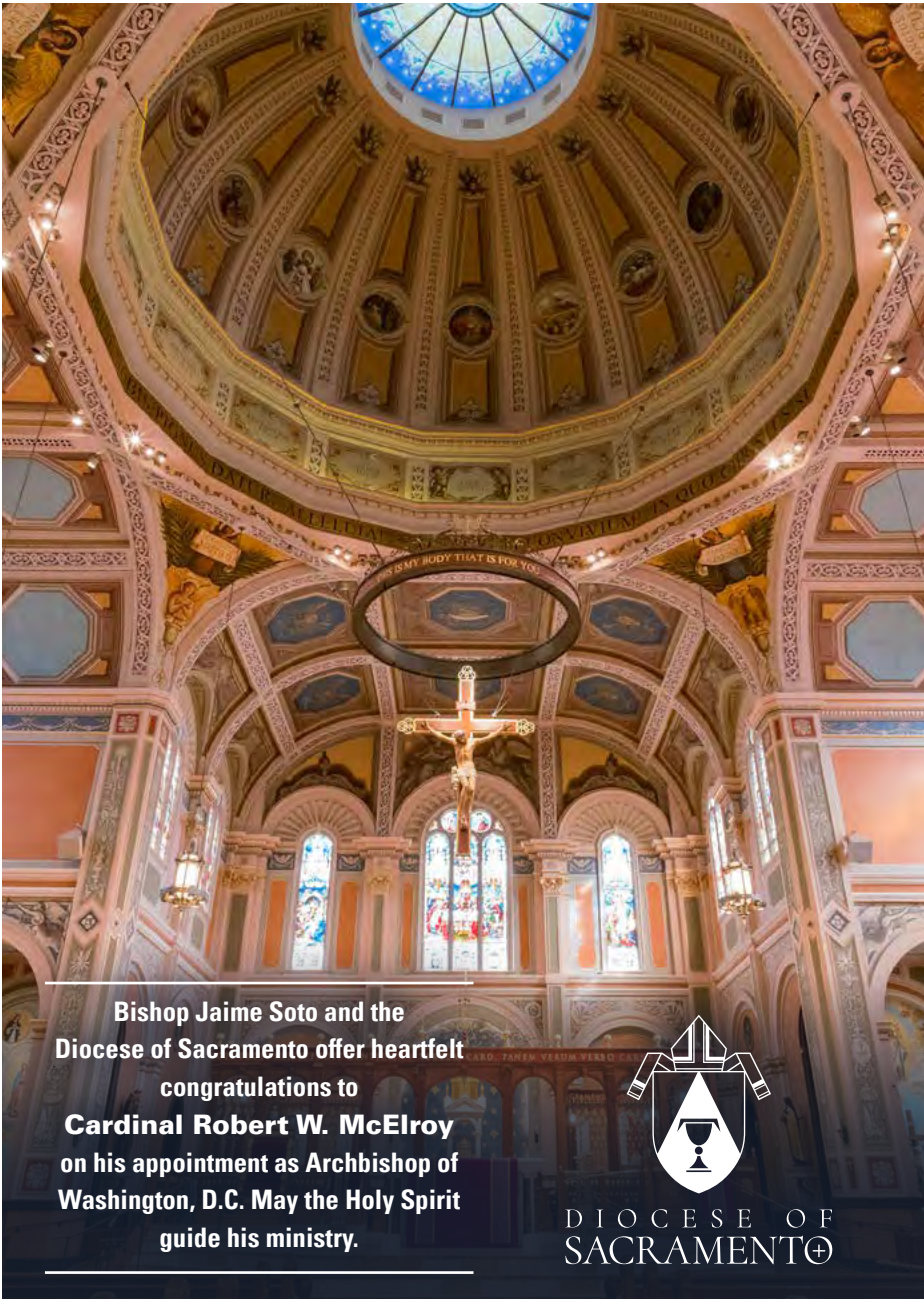


The Franciscan Community of Mission San Luis Rey would like to thank Cardinal McElroy for ten loving years of pastoral care shepherding the flock in the Diocese of San Diego.

*Peace and All Good!*









## Carta del Cardenal Robert W. McElroy

## Una Palabra de Profundo Agradecimiento

Al salir de San Diego para ser instalado como nuevo arzobispo de Washington, quiero expresar mi enorme gratitud por la gracia que el Pueblo de Dios en esta Iglesia local ha sido para mí.

Si bien un obispo es llamado a liderar la Iglesia en su diócesis, también es formado como obispo por los sacerdotes, religiosos, religiosas, diáconos y líderes laicos de esa diócesis. San Diego es mi primera asignación como obispo diocesano, y he aprendido innumerables lecciones del corazón, del alma y del espíritu durante la última década al ser testigo de la fe de Dios activa y viva en cada uno de ustedes.

Vi esa fe en nuestros sacerdotes, que lucharon heroicamente durante el terrible período de Covid para llevar la vida sacramental y comunitaria de nuestras parroquias a su gente a pesar de obstáculos aparentemente imposibles. Y lo veo en los hombres que han sido ordenados durante estos años, cada uno de ellos entregando a Dios toda su vida al acercarse a mí para la imposición de manos. Esta fe y servicio también brilla en los sacerdotes jubilados de nuestra diócesis, quienes continúan trabajando incansablemente para garantizar que la Eucaristía y los sacramentos estén fácilmente disponibles en los condados de San Diego e Imperial.

He visto viva la gracia de Dios en las grandes celebraciones litúrgicas anuales que iluminan nuestra vida comunitaria de fe y nuestra diversidad cultural: la Misa de Pentecostés para Todos los Pueblos; la Procesión y Eucaristía de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe; las Fiestas de San Lorenzo Ruiz, Nuestra Señora de Peña-



JOHN GASTALDO

francia y Simbang Gabi; la Misa de los Mártires Vietnamitas y la celebración de la Misa por el Cumpleaños de Martin Luther King. Y, por supuesto, la celebración anual del Rito de Elección, la ordenación de diáconos permanentes para el servicio a la Iglesia y nuestra Misa Anual para Mujeres Consagradas han sido para mí grandes fuentes de profundidad espiritual y gratitud.

Cuando llegué a San Diego, quedé inmensamente impresionado por el alto nivel de formación de liderazgo laico que había tenido lugar durante los 30 años anteriores. Este es el llamado que la reunión del Sínodo en Roma el año pasado hizo a la Iglesia universal: dejar claro que la misión de la Iglesia requiere hombres y mujeres de fe comprometidos que hagan grandes sacrificios para predicar el Evangelio, catequizar a los jóvenes y a los viejos, llegar a los pobres y a los marginados, y defender a los inmigrantes y a los no nacidos. Todas estas realidades estaban presentes en nuestra diócesis cuando llegué a

San Diego, y se han amplificado en los años siguientes precisamente porque muchas personas de fe profunda se ven a sí mismas como discípulos misioneros llamados a emprender la amplia gama de ministerios y apostolados que son los tesoros de nuestra Iglesia local.

Recuerdo la participación de miles de hombres, mujeres y jóvenes en los procesos sinodales que hemos tenido durante los últimos diez años. El sínodo sobre el matrimonio y las familias, que luchó por cómo llevar las enseñanzas de la Iglesia sobre el matrimonio a un mundo que ha perdido cada vez más de vista su importancia. El sínodo sobre jóvenes y adultos jóvenes que se centró en nuevos caminos para detener el alejamiento de nuestros jóvenes de la vida de la Iglesia. Y los procesos sinodales de 2023 y 2024 que nos permitieron compartir amplia y profundamente nuestras alegrías, tristezas y esperanzas en la Iglesia como camino hacia la renovación y la reforma.

El liderazgo de la Diócesis siempre ha sido una fuente de gran gracia y aprendizaje para mí. El personal increíblemente competente, dedicado y lleno de fe de nuestro Centro Pastoral que verdaderamente son embajadores de Cristo; el Consejo Pastoral Diocesano, que tan creativamente nos ayudó a superar el Covid, entre otras cosas; el Consejo Presbiteral que siempre ha sido para mí fuente de inmensa sabiduría pastoral; y el Consejo de Finanzas Diocesano, que ha tenido que emprender un trabajo mucho más amplio para lidiar con nuestra bancarrota diocesana. Todos estos hombres y mujeres en liderazgo han enriquecido a nuestra comunidad Católica y me han guiado hacia la sabiduría en acción.

Finalmente, los cuatro obispos auxiliares que he ordenado aquí en San Diego son hombres ejemplares y cada uno de ellos, a su vez, se convertirá en un obispo espléndido de su propia comunidad Católica. Les doy un agradecimiento especial por todo su apoyo y liderazgo.

Y, sobre todo, doy gracias a Dios por guiarme a este maravilloso lugar de fe, vitalidad, sacrificio comunitario, compasión y esperanza. Enriquecido por este tesoro que he encontrado aquí durante los últimos diez años, salgo, a la llamada de la Iglesia, hacia un nuevo rebaño. Pero voy sabiendo que siempre guardaré profundamente en mi corazón el gozo y la fe de San Diego. Y sepan, también, que estaremos siempre unidos en nuestra misión de predicar a Cristo Crucificado y Cristo Resucitado a todo el mundo.



2015

El Papa nombra al obispo auxiliar Robert W. McElroy, de la Arquidiócesis de San Francisco, a servir como sexto obispo de la Diócesis de San Diego.

2016

En respuesta al llamado del Papa, el obispo McElroy lanza un sínodo diocesano sobre el matrimonio y la vida familiar.

2017

La diócesis abre la Oficina para la Vida Familiar y la Espiritualidad como resultado del sínodo sobre la familia.

El obispo ordena al Obispo Auxiliar John Dolan.

2018

Realiza ocho sesiones de escucha en toda la diócesis para escuchar a los fieles sobre el abuso sexual y la Iglesia.

2019

El Obispo lanza un sínodo para consultar a los jóvenes adultos sobre cómo la diócesis puede involucrarlos mejor y servirlos.

El obispo reúne por primera vez a todos los empleados de la diócesis para concientizar sobre el abuso infantil y su prevención.

2020

Las iglesias y escuelas cierran debido a la pandemia de COVID-19. Pasarían más de dos años antes de que sus operaciones regresaran a la normalidad.

El obispo ordena al Obispo Auxiliar Ramón Bejarano.

2021

El obispo lanza la Iniciativa Eucarística de siete semanas en cada parroquia para aumentar la comprensión y el afecto por el Santísimo Sacramento.

En respuesta al llamado del Papa, el obispo lanza el Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad, consultando a los fieles sobre cómo las parroquias pueden invitar a todos a participar.

2022

El Papa nombra al obispo McElroy al Colegio de Cardenales.

2023

El Papa invita al cardenal McElroy a participar en un grupo selecto de obispos y laicos que analizarán los resultados del Sínodo sobre la Sinodalidad en una asamblea de dos años en el Vaticano y harán recomendaciones.

El cardenal ordena a los Obispos Auxiliares Michael Pham y Felipe Pulido.

2024

Como resultado del sínodo diocesano, el Cardenal lanza un proyecto piloto en 17 parroquias para reimaginar la vida y el liderazgo parroquial, y forma el Comité Asesor de Mujeres para explorar el rol de la mujer en el liderazgo de la Iglesia

2025

El Papa Francisco anuncia que el Cardenal McElroy liderará la Arquidiócesis de Washington.

Washington, D.C.

San Diego, California





**ALEGRE:** El cardenal Robert W. McElroy celebró la Misa de Envío del Valle Imperial el 11 de septiembre de 2023 en la Parroquia de San Antonio de Padua en Imperial.

## Diez Años de Grandes Avances y Logros

Por Aida Bustos

“Tiendo a ser una persona de ideas”, dijo el cardenal Robert W. McElroy en una de sus últimas reuniones con el equipo de la Diócesis de San Diego.

Lo cierto es que durante sus 10 años al frente de la diócesis, no solo tuvo grandes ideas, sino que, en colaboración con párrocos, líderes laicos y fieles, las hizo realidad. A lo largo de este tiempo, el Cardenal transformó la Iglesia en la región de San Diego-Valle Imperial y fortaleció su presencia dentro de la Iglesia Universal.

Durante esa década, el Cardenal impulsó tres consultas con los Católicos de toda la diócesis y se comprometió a implementar rápidamente sus recomendaciones. La más reciente, sobre sinodalidad, se está llevando a cabo actualmente en 17 parroquias piloto, con el propósito de revitalizar sus comunidades.

El cardenal McElroy también inició un apostolado para el cuidado de la creación, que ha tenido un gran impacto en las parroquias y escuelas Católicas locales, pero además ha convertido a la diócesis en un modelo nacional de responsabilidad ambiental.

Fomentó una cultura eclesial que promueve la unidad y la diversidad. Designó a un vicario para Comunidades Étnicas e Interculturales, cuya misión fue atender las necesidades de las diversas comunidades culturales de la diócesis, fortalecer el entendimiento entre ellas y reunirlos periódicamente.

En tiempos de crisis, tendió una mano compasiva a las comunidades que sufrían. En junio de 2020, tras el asesinato de George Floyd, celebró una Misa para los Católicos afroamericanos. En abril de 2021, cuando los estadounidenses de origen asiático fueron blanco de crímenes de odio, celebró una Misa por la Sanación Racial. Más recientemente, alzó la voz con firmeza contra la represión a los inmigrantes indocumentados por parte



**BENDICIÓN:** El cardenal McElroy recorrió la diócesis y, en esta ocasión, visitó el Santuario de San Judas del Oeste el 2 de noviembre de 2019.

de la nueva administración de Trump.

El Cardenal apoyó incansablemente a las comunidades Católicas en el Valle Imperial, destinando importantes recursos diocesanos a la región.

El padre John Hurley, CSP, conoce al Cardenal desde hace 34 años, cuando ambos servían en la Arquidiócesis de San Francisco. Durante ese tiempo, han colaborado en diversos proyectos y forjado una amistad.

El cardenal McElroy encargó al padre Hurley la coordinación de las tres consultas o sínodos que se llevaron a cabo en la diócesis durante su mandato. En la primera, realizada en 2016, los fieles analizaron cómo la diócesis podría fortalecer el matrimonio y las familias de hoy en día.

El Cardenal pidió a los delegados del sínodo, representantes de las parroquias de toda la diócesis, que se escucharan verdaderamente entre sí y discernieran juntos lo que el Espíritu Santo los estaba llamando a hacer.

El cardenal McElroy ya hablaba de “sinodalidad” años antes de que el resto del mundo Católico comenzara a familiarizarse con el concepto, señaló el padre Hurley.

De hecho, el estilo de liderazgo

del Cardenal está definido por este enfoque, afirmó.

“Creo que esta es realmente una de sus mayores fortalezas: su disposición a escuchar con amabilidad a las personas”, señaló.

El sacerdote recordó que el Cardenal organizó ocho sesiones de escucha en 2018 para escuchar a los

fieles sobre el tema del abuso sexual por parte del clero.

“Estaba dispuesto a escuchar el sufrimiento, la ira y la decepción de la gente”.

El Cardenal adoptó este enfoque sinodal también al dirigir al clero de la diócesis, continuó.

“Siempre está escuchándolos y comprometiéndolos en la solución”.

Destacó la disposición del Cardenal para actuar. Después de que finalizó el sínodo sobre el matrimonio y la familia, la diócesis lanzó rápidamente la Oficina para la Vida Familiar y la Espiritualidad para implementar las propuestas presentadas por los delegados.

Cuando la pandemia provocó el cierre de escuelas y negocios, pidió a Caridades Católicas que establecieran rápidamente una operación para ayudar a alimentar a las familias que enfrentaban el hambre.

“No me sorprende que el Papa Francisco lo haya nombrado arzobispo de Washington. Es una voz que necesitamos en nuestro país hoy”, dijo el padre Hurley.



**CERCANO:** Siempre se acercaba a su rebaño, como lo hizo después de la Misa en honor al Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., el 4 de enero de 2020, en la Iglesia de Santa Rita.



# El Cardenal Fomentó una Iglesia Misionera

Por Victor Carmona, Ph.D.

Desde mi punto de vista, hay tres momentos en el ministerio del cardenal Robert W. McElroy que reflejan el impacto que tuvo en la vida de la Iglesia en San Diego. Juntos, muestran su compromiso de construir una Iglesia misionera que, como dice el documento final del sínodo global, sea “capaz de una inclusión radical, de crear un sentido de pertenencia compartido y de ofrecer una hospitalidad profunda, conforme a las enseñanzas de Jesús”.

Una tarde, a principios del otoño de 2021, el entonces obispo McElroy me llamó inesperadamente para preguntarme si estaría dispuesto a apoyar el proceso sinodal de la diócesis. Su invitación dio paso a la hermosa aventura de unirnos como comunidad de fe en el camino de seguir a Jesús hacia aguas más profundas a través del proceso sinodal que el Papa Francisco había iniciado. Colaborar con él y con los miembros de la Comisión del Sínodo en San Diego fue una experiencia profundamente enriquecedora, un aprendizaje sobre cómo escuchar en el Espíritu y ser fieles a las alegrías, dolores y esperanzas en la vida de la Iglesia que nuestros hermanos y hermanas en la fe nos confiaron, con todo y sus tensiones.

El verano siguiente, el obispo



**COMPROMETIDO:** El entonces obispo Robert W. McElroy celebró la procesión y Misa en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 4 de diciembre de 2016, en el centro de San Diego.

McElroy se unió a los miembros de la Academia de Teólogos Católicos Hispanos de los Estados Unidos en su reunión anual el 7 de junio de 2022, en la Universidad de San Diego. A principios de esa semana, el Papa Francisco sorprendió a muchos al anunciar al obispo McElroy como cardenal-designado. Para nuestra alegría, nos acompañó en lo que fue uno de sus primeros eventos públicos

en esa nueva función. Su presencia y mensaje, en sintonía con el proceso sinodal que la diócesis había emprendido, reafirmaron la dignidad y los dones que la comunidad hispana, que representa más del 60 por ciento de la Diócesis de San Diego, aporta a la Iglesia Católica en los Estados Unidos.

El tercer momento fue el servicio de oración que tuvo lugar el pasado 9 de febrero en la Catedral de San José.

Allí, el cardenal McElroy y los obispos auxiliares Ramón Bejarano y Felipe Pulido compartieron un mensaje claro y preciso: La Iglesia está con los inmigrantes. Ante el profundo miedo que muchas personas en las comunidades inmigrantes de nuestra diócesis están experimentando, las acciones del Cardenal nos recordaron proféticamente que el amor compasivo de Dios no está limitado por el estatus legal de una persona. Lamentablemente, es una verdad simple que, en nuestros tiempos de polarización, suena cada vez más discordante para muchos Católicos y otros Cristianos.

En cada uno de los tres momentos anteriores, el cardenal McElroy fomentó una mayor capacidad de ser radicalmente inclusivos con las diferentes experiencias en la vida de la Iglesia en San Diego. Afirmó nuestro sentido mutuo de pertenencia mientras permanecía fiel a nuestras expresiones culturales de fe. Y nos recordó proféticamente practicar una hospitalidad aún más profunda para que podamos contrarrestar el miedo con compasión. Que su ministerio en la capital de nuestra nación sea tan bendecido como lo ha sido en esta Iglesia en la frontera.

*Victor Carmona, Ph.D., es profesor asociado de teología y estudios religiosos en la Universidad de San Diego y presidente de la Academia de Teólogos Católicos Hispanos.*

# Sus Dones han Iluminado Nuestras Vidas

Por el Padre Bernardo Lara

En los últimos días, la Diócesis de San Diego ha estado viviendo un periodo de cambios y transición: cambios en algunas parroquias, en el panorama político, en el clima y, más recientemente y con gran pesar, cambios en el liderazgo de la Iglesia Católica local.

Como ya se ha anunciado, hace unas semanas el Papa Francisco nombró al cardenal Robert McElroy como el nuevo arzobispo de la Arquidiócesis de Washington.

En medio de la tristeza y las emociones que este cambio puede traer, también se nos presenta la oportunidad de orar y reconocer que Dios sigue caminando con nosotros. Si leemos la Biblia, veremos que de principio a fin está llena de historias de personas, ciclos, transiciones y momentos de cambio que prepararon el camino para la acción de Dios. Aunque ciertamente hay momentos de prueba, en ningún momento Dios abandona a su pueblo. Más bien, permite que se cierren capítulos para preparar el terreno para su obra.

Tengo muchos amigos en otras diócesis que, sin conocerse entre sí, me han dicho exactamente lo mismo: “Lamento que tu diócesis pierda a un gran obispo, pero ahora es todo el país el que gana un gran líder”. Y yo también lo creo.



**COMPAÑERO:** El obispo McElroy acompañó de cerca a los sacerdotes de su diócesis, incluido el padre Bernardo Lara, quien aparece junto a su familia en su ordenación el 29 de mayo de 2015.

## El Académico

Es bien sabido, incluso a nivel mundial, que el cardenal McElroy es, en la actualidad, una de las mentes más brillantes dentro de la Iglesia Católica. La forma en que logra articular conceptos teológicos complejos en palabras sencillas, sus libros y los múltiples artículos que ha publicado, especialmente en *America Magazine*, son prueba de ello. En un artículo del *National Catholic Reporter* se destacó que “el trabajo intelectual del cardenal McElroy es una de las cosas que más lo distingue”.

Sus dones académicos fueron pieza clave en su liderazgo. Nunca fueron simples posturas populares ni meras opiniones; su liderazgo siempre estuvo centrado en Cristo.

## El Pastor

Sin embargo, más allá de su brillantez intelectual, el cardenal McElroy siempre mantuvo como prioridad la dimensión pastoral de la Iglesia. El cuidado del pueblo de Dios fue el centro de su ministerio, y su compromiso con el acompañamiento pastoral era evidente.

Incluso para nosotros, los

sacerdotes, su cercanía era palpable. Siempre que hablabas con él, sentías que te escuchaba de verdad, que lo que decías tenía importancia para él. El Cardenal siempre se mostró cercano, accesible, atento... como un buen obispo, un pastor, un sacerdote, un amigo.

Desde luego, cerrar este ciclo nos llena de tristeza, pero recordamos que somos de Dios y que Él llama a sus servidores a donde más los necesita.

*El padre Bernardo Lara es el párroco de las tres parroquias de la Comunidad Católica de Brawley.*





**HONRADO:** El entonces obispo Robert W. McElroy reconoció al obispo auxiliar retirado Gilberto Chávez durante la Misa en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 4 de diciembre de 2016.

## ‘Nos Sentimos Muy Privilegiados’

### Un Obispo Sinodal

Me siento honrado de decir que el cardenal Robert McElroy me ordenó obispo para la Diócesis de San Diego. Recuerdo cuando llegué a San Diego como obispo auxiliar electo, venía de una pequeña diócesis en el estado de Washington, con muchas preguntas en mi mente. Estaba nervioso y no sabía qué esperar. Sin embargo, cuando llegué al área de reclamo de equipaje del aeropuerto, el cardenal McElroy ya me estaba esperando y, de inmediato, me hizo sentir como en casa. Encontré a un pastor amable y bondadoso que conoce a su rebaño y desea que todos sean contados, sin importar quiénes sean o de dónde vengan.

El cardenal McElroy ha impactado profundamente mi ministerio al ser un obispo sinodal. En el corto tiempo que he colaborado con él en la misión de la Iglesia local, he sido testigo de un pastor que, a pesar de su estatus en la Iglesia global, está dispuesto a recibir opiniones y tiene un genuino deseo de escuchar a todos. Sus acciones reflejan su dependencia del Espíritu Santo y su corazón discernidor, siempre poniendo como prioridad el bienestar de la Iglesia y de su pueblo.

— Obispo auxiliar Felipe Pulido,  
Diócesis de San Diego

### Elevó el Rol de la Mujer

En la última década, la Diócesis de San Diego ha prosperado de muchas maneras. Nuestra Iglesia local se ha beneficiado enormemente del liderazgo colaborativo y consultivo del cardenal McElroy, así como de su visión de una Iglesia en misión, que escucha y está llamada a la acción. Esto se logró a través de tres sínodos

diocesanos: “Amoris Laetitia” (2016), “Christus Vivit” (2019) y “Sinodalidad” (2021). El pastoreo del cardenal McElroy ha sido zeloso, valiente e inquebrantable. Invitó a todos los fieles a una comprensión más profunda e intencional de la comunión mutua. Su capacidad para entender los signos de los tiempos a nivel universal ha permitido la aplicación pastoral a nivel local sobre cómo debemos caminar juntos como una Iglesia única, santa, Católica y apostólica.

El elevar el rol de la mujer en la administración y toma de decisiones dentro de la Iglesia ha sido una de sus marcas más destacadas. El Cardenal nombró a mujeres para puestos clave en la administración diocesana, tales como canciller, directora financiera y superintendente de escuelas. El rol de la mujer en el liderazgo eclesial, aunque ya está presente de manera destacada en varios niveles del ministerio y en cargos profesionales, sigue siendo explorado a través

de un Comité Asesor de Mujeres comisionado por el cardenal McElroy. La diversidad de nuestra Iglesia local siempre ha sido una prioridad para él. Su alcance pastoral a las cambiantes necesidades de las comunidades en los condados de San Diego e Imperial ha dejado una huella perdurable. El cardenal McElroy ha sembrado las semillas del Evangelio, y ahora debemos continuar labrando la tierra y permitir que crezcan. ¡Gracias, cardenal McElroy, por su guía y que el Espíritu Santo lo acompañe siempre!

— Marioly Galván, Canciller y  
Directora de Ministerios Pastorales



**¡HOLA!** El entonces obispo McElroy se aseguró de saludar a quienes se unían a la Iglesia durante la celebración del Rito de Elección de la diócesis, como lo hizo el 10 de marzo de 2019.

### Gratitud Hispana

Los miembros de la Comisión Diocesana de Habla Hispana nos sentimos muy agradecidos con el cardenal Robert McElroy porque ha hecho de esta Diócesis un lugar donde se puede sentir el amor de Dios a través de su carisma de discernimiento y entrega a la comunidad hispana. Nos sentimos muy privilegiados de haber compartido parte de nuestra misión con “un pastor que siempre huele a oveja”.

“Yo soy el buen pastor; y conozco mis ovejas y las mías me conocen a mí”. (Juan 10,14)

Que el Espíritu Santo lo siga acompañando y le dé la sabiduría para seguir guiando a su pueblo donde quiera que se encuentre.

¡Gracias, gracias, gracias!

— Luis Barajas, presidente de la  
Comisión de Habla Hispana

**Voces** Continúa en página 20





**REGALO:** El Cardenal celebró la Misa en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe el 3 de diciembre de 2023 en el gimnasio de la Preparatoria San Agustín.

## Voces *Viene de página 19*

### 'Nos unió mucho'

El Cardenal me ordenó como diácono en el 2017, y he oficiado y participado en varias Misas con él. Es una persona totalmente abierta al Espíritu, abierta a escuchar de los demás. Es una persona totalmente ejemplar, con el don de transmitir la palabra de Dios.

Es un gran proyector, siempre enfocándose en la palabra de Cristo, en el amor y en la misericordia. Tiene un carisma que transmite a los demás y les causaba una gran confianza.

Nos enseñó realmente a estar unidos, y ser partícipes del cuerpo de Cristo, de mantenernos en la misma

viña, aunque tuviéramos diferentes ideologías.

En el Valle Imperial, él nos unió mucho. Nos enseñó que no éramos la parroquia de Brawley o la de El Centro, que sí éramos una sola comunidad en Cristo. Y fue algo increíble. Y así lo hemos vivido.

— *Diácono Alberto Moya, Parroquia El Sagrado Corazón, Brawley*

### Gran Líder

El cardenal Robert McElroy es el líder servidor más compasivo que he conocido. Trabajar con él durante estos últimos cuatro años ha sido una experiencia extraordinaria. Tuve la bendición de ser invitada a

formar parte del Consejo Pastoral de la diócesis.

Su liderazgo y compasión se ejemplificaron en la manera en que condujo a nuestra diócesis a través de la incertidumbre y los tiempos desafiantes de la pandemia de COVID-19, y cómo trabajó con los párrocos para traer de vuelta al pueblo de Dios a la fuente y cumbre de nuestra fe: la celebración eucarística.

El cardenal McElroy nos acerca a Dios a través de su ejemplo de liderazgo, sus extraordinarias enseñanzas y por ser un discípulo misionero amoroso de Cristo.

El cardenal McElroy ejemplifica la sinodalidad en todo lo que hace. Escucha atentamente, fomenta la

participación y nos conduce hacia esa conversión continua para convertirnos en discípulos misioneros, caminando juntos en este viaje de fe.

El Cardenal es un discípulo paciente, reflexivo, compasivo e inteligente de Cristo y ha sido un gran líder. Lo extrañaremos.

— *Irma Covarrubias-Lugo, Parroquia de San Judas*

### "Trajo Dignidad a Cada Ser Humano"

El cardenal Robert McElroy ha hecho que nuestra región crezca en fe, bondad y confianza. Ha sido un honor para mí, como fiscal del condado de San Diego, trabajar estrechamente con el cardenal McElroy para asegurarnos de que los más vulnerables sean atendidos.

El Cardenal instituyó la primera asociación con la Oficina del Fiscal en nuestra nación para garantizar que las víctimas de delitos en nuestra comunidad de refugiados e inmigrantes sepan que están protegidos por nuestras leyes a través de una campaña informativa multilingüe.

También lanzó la primera sociedad en nuestra nación con mi oficina para capacitar a toda la diócesis en la identificación y denuncia del abuso infantil y trata de personas.

La luz celestial del cardenal McElroy brilló sobre nuestra región y trajo dignidad a cada ser humano, sin importar su origen o circunstancias.

San Diego y yo estaremos siempre agradecidos de haber tenido a este hombre de Dios entre nosotros.

El cardenal McElroy ejemplifica Mateo 25:40: "Y el Rey les responderá: En verdad os digo que, en cuanto lo hicisteis con uno de estos mis hermanos más pequeños, conmigo lo hicisteis".

— *Summer Stephan, Fiscal del Condado de San Diego*



**SALUDO:** El cardenal McElroy se reunió con jóvenes miembros de la comunidad de la Parroquia San Juan de la Cruz después de la Misa el 23 de octubre de 2022.



**SERVICIO:** El cardenal McElroy ordenó un total de 51 diáconos durante su tiempo en la diócesis.





**ALEGRE:** Los obispos auxiliares Ramón Bejarano, Michael Pham y Felipe Pulido acompañaron al cardenal Robert McElroy el 3 de diciembre de 2023 durante la procesión en honor a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

### La Voz del Cardenal

“Al igual que el pueblo de Israel que emprendió su camino por el desierto, comenzamos este camino sinodal sin saber a dónde nos llevará, confiando en que nuestro Dios guiará nuestro camino y profundizará nuestro sentido de la comunidad a la que estamos llamados a ser”.

17 de octubre de 2021, en la homilía de la Misa para dar inicio al Sínodo Sobre la Sinodalidad en la diócesis.

“Nuestra fe no es solo para darle gloria a Dios, lo cual debemos hacer, ni solo para convertir nuestros propios corazones y almas de manera individual, sino para transformar el mundo en el que vivimos a través de nuestras acciones y pensamientos”.

14 de enero de 2024, en la homilía de la Misa para conmemorar el Llamado al Servicio del Dr. Martin Luther King.



**MISA EN EL VALLE:** El entonces obispo McElroy celebró la Misa en la Conferencia del Valle Imperial el 17 de noviembre de 2018 en la Preparatoria Vincent Memorial en Calexico, con el diácono Alberto Moya.



**BENDICIÓN:** El entonces obispo McElroy, acompañado por el obispo auxiliar John Dolan, ofreció una bendición en la valla fronteriza que separa San Diego y Tijuana el 9 de junio de 2018.



**ENCUENTRO:** El entonces obispo McElroy acompañó a los líderes laicos de la comunidad hispana de la Diócesis de San Diego al Encuentro Nacional el 21 de septiembre de 2018 en Gaylord, Texas.

“Es el acto de escuchar de verdad lo que construye los lazos de comunidad dentro de la vida de la Iglesia. Nos acerca cada vez más cuando llegamos a entender que todos estamos en el mismo camino en esta vida”.

20 de mayo de 2024, en la homilía de la Misa de Pentecostés para Todos los Pueblos.



Thư của Đức Hồng Y Robert W. McElroy

Một Lời Cảm Ơn Sâu Sắc

Vào lúc tôi rời San Diego để được bổ nhiệm làm Tổng Giám mục mới của Washington DC, tôi muốn bày tỏ lòng biết ơn sâu sắc của mình đối với ân sủng là chính Dân Chúa tại Giáo hội địa phương này.

Trong khi một giám mục được mời gọi lãnh đạo Giáo hội trong giáo phận của mình, ngài cũng được thành lập là giám mục bởi các linh mục, tu sĩ nam nữ, phó tế và lãnh đạo giáo dân của giáo phận đó. San Diego là nhiệm sở đầu tiên của tôi với tư cách là giám mục giáo phận, và tôi đã học được vô số bài học của con tim, linh hồn và tinh thần trong suốt thập niên qua với sự chứng kiến đức tin vào Thiên Chúa cách tích cực và sống động trong mỗi anh chị em.

Tôi thấy đức tin đó nơi các linh mục của chúng ta, những người đã đấu tranh anh dũng trong suốt thời kỳ khủng khiếp của Covid để mang đời sống bí tích và cộng đồng của các giáo xứ đến với tín hữu của họ bất chấp những trở ngại dường như không thể vượt qua. Và tôi thấy điều đó nơi những người đã được thụ phong trong những năm này, mỗi người trong số họ dâng hiến trọn cuộc đời mình cho Chúa khi họ tiến đến tôi trong nghi thức đặt tay. Đức tin và sự phục vụ này cũng tỏa sáng nơi các linh mục đã nghỉ hưu trong giáo phận chúng ta, các cha tiếp tục làm việc không mệt mỏi để đảm bảo Bí tích Thánh Thể và các bí tích luôn sẵn có tại các Quận San Diego và Imperial.

Tôi đã thấy ân sủng của Thiên Chúa sống động trong các buổi cử hành phụng vụ trọng đại hàng năm vẫn tỏa sáng đời sống đức tin chung và sự đa dạng văn hóa của chúng ta \_Thánh lễ Chúa Thánh Thần Hiện Xuống cho Mọi Dân tộc;



Cuộc rước và Thánh Thể kính Đức Mẹ Guadalupe; các Lễ hội San Lorenzo Ruiz, Đức Mẹ Peñafrancia và Simbang Gabi; Thánh lễ các Thánh Tử đạo Việt Nam và Thánh lễ kỷ niệm Sinh nhật của Martin Luther King. Và tất nhiên, việc cử hành Nghi thức Tuyển Chọn Dự Tòng hàng năm, việc phong chức các phó tế vĩnh viễn để phục vụ Giáo hội, và Thánh lễ thường niên dành cho các nữ tu tận hiến đã là những nguồn cao cả của tâm linh sâu sắc và biết ơn đối với tôi.

Khi đến San Diego, tôi vô cùng ấn tượng trước sự đào tạo cao độ cấp lãnh đạo giáo dân đã thành đạt trong 30 năm trước đó. Đây là lời kêu gọi mà cuộc họp Thượng Hội Đồng tại Rôma năm ngoái đã đưa ra cho Giáo hội hoàn cầu: làm rõ ràng sứ mệnh của Giáo hội đòi hỏi những tín hữu nam nữ tận tâm, hy sinh rất nhiều để rao giảng Tin Mừng, dạy giáo lý cho người trẻ và người già, đến với người nghèo và người bị gạt ra ngoài lề xã hội, và bệnh vực cho người nhập cư và các thai nhi. Tất cả những thực tế này đã hiện diện

trong giáo phận của chúng ta khi tôi đến San Diego, và chúng đã được mở rộng trong những năm tiếp theo chính vì rất nhiều người có đức tin sâu sắc đã nhận mình là những môn đệ truyền giáo được mời gọi đảm nhận vô số sứ vụ và hoạt động tông đồ vốn là kho báu của Giáo hội địa phương của chúng ta.

Tôi nhớ sự tham gia của hàng ngàn người nam, nữ và thanh niên vào các tiến trình hiệp hành mà chúng ta đã có trong hơn mười năm qua. Hội nghị hiệp hành về hôn nhân và gia đình đã đấu tranh với việc làm thế nào để đưa giáo huấn của Giáo hội về hôn nhân đến với một thế giới ngày càng mất đi tầm quan trọng của nó. Hội nghị hiệp hành về giới trẻ và thanh niên tập trung vào những đường hướng mới để ngăn chặn sự trôi dạt của giới trẻ chúng ta ra khỏi đời sống của Giáo hội. Và các tiến trình hiệp hành vào năm 2023 và 2024 đã cho phép chúng ta chia sẻ rộng rãi và sâu xa những niềm vui, nỗi buồn và hy vọng của chúng ta trong Giáo hội như một hướng đi dẫn đến sự đổi mới và cải cách.



Tập thể lãnh đạo của Giáo phận luôn là nguồn ân sủng và học hỏi lớn lao đối với tôi. Hàng ngũ nhân viên với năng lực vượt tầm, tận tâm và tràn đầy đức tin của Trung tâm Mục vụ của chúng ta thực sự là đại sứ cho Chúa Kitô; Hội đồng Mục vụ Giáo phận đã giúp chúng ta với những sáng kiến để vượt qua Covid và hơn thế nữa; Hội đồng Linh mục luôn là nguồn mạch mục vụ rất khôn ngoan cho tôi; và Hội đồng Tài chính Giáo phận, đã phải đảm nhiệm nhiều công việc mở rộng hơn trong việc giải quyết vấn đề phá sản của giáo phận chúng ta. Tất cả những người nam nữ lãnh đạo này đã làm phong phú cộng đồng Công giáo của chúng ta và dẫn tôi tới sự khôn ngoan trong hành động.

Cuối cùng, bốn giám mục phụ tá mà tôi đã tấn phong ở San Diego là những người gương mẫu và mỗi vị sẽ lần lượt trở thành một giám mục xuất sắc của cộng đồng Công giáo của họ. Tôi gửi lời cảm ơn đặc biệt đến họ vì tất cả sự hỗ trợ và lãnh đạo của họ.

Và hơn hết, tôi tạ ơn Chúa đã đưa dẫn tôi đến nơi tuyệt vời này của đức tin, sức sống, sự hy sinh cộng đồng, lòng trắc ẩn và hy vọng. Sự tôi ra đi theo tiếng gọi của Giáo hội, đến với một đàn chiên mới, được thêm phong phú nhờ vào kho tàng mà tôi đã gặp được tại đây trong mười năm qua. Nhưng tôi đi, biết rằng tôi sẽ luôn giữ niềm vui và lòng trung tín của San Diego sâu sắc trong trái tim mình. Và cũng biết rằng chúng ta sẽ luôn cùng tham gia vào sứ mệnh rao giảng Chúa Kitô Chịu Đóng Đinh và Chúa Kitô Phục Sinh cho toàn thế giới.

**2015**  
Đức Thánh Cha Phanxicô bổ nhiệm Giám mục phụ tá Robert W. McElroy, của Tổng giáo phận San Francisco, làm giám mục thứ sáu của Giáo phận San Diego.

**2016**  
Đáp lại lời kêu gọi của Đức Thánh Cha, Đức Giám mục McElroy khai mạc Thượng hội đồng về hôn nhân và gia đình.

**2017**  
Giáo phận mở Văn phòng Đời sống Gia đình và Tâm linh sau Thượng hội đồng gia đình. Đức Giám mục tấn phong Giám mục phụ tá John Dolan.

**2018**  
Vị giám mục tổ chức tám phiên họp trong toàn giáo phận để lắng nghe các thành viên cộng đồng về vấn đề lạm dụng tình dục và giáo hội.

**2019**  
Đức Giám mục khai mạc một Thượng Hội đồng nhằm tư vấn cho những người trẻ tuổi về cách giáo phận có thể tham gia và phục vụ họ tốt hơn. Lần đầu tiên, vị giám mục tập hợp tất cả nhân viên của giáo phận lại với nhau để nâng cao nhận thức về việc ngăn ngừa và lạm dụng trẻ em.

**2020**  
Nhà thờ và trường học đóng cửa do đại dịch Covid. Sẽ mất khoảng hai năm để hoạt động của họ trở lại bình thường. Đức Giám mục tấn phong Giám mục phụ tá Ramón Bejarano.

**2021**  
Đức Giám mục McElroy phát động Sáng kiến Thánh Thể kéo dài bảy tuần tại mọi giáo xứ nhằm tăng cường sự hiểu biết và lòng yêu mến đối với Bí tích Thánh Thể.

Đáp lại lời kêu gọi của Đức Thánh Cha, Đức Giám mục khai mạc Thượng hội đồng về Tính đồng nghị, tư vấn cho các tín hữu cách các giáo xứ có thể mời tất cả các thành viên tham gia.

**2022**  
Đức Thánh Cha bổ nhiệm Giám mục McElroy vào Hồng y đoàn.

**2023**  
Đức Thánh Cha mời Đức Hồng Y McElroy tham gia vào một nhóm được chọn để phân tích những phát hiện của Thượng Hội đồng về Tính đồng nghị tại Vatican và đưa ra các khuyến nghị. Đức Hồng Y tấn phong Giám mục phụ tá Michael Pham và Felipe Pulido.

**2024**  
Kết quả của Thượng Hội đồng là Đức Hồng Y khởi động dự án thí điểm tại 17 giáo xứ để hình dung lại đời sống và vai trò lãnh đạo của giáo xứ. Ông cũng thành lập Ủy ban Cố vấn Phụ nữ để khám phá vai trò của phụ nữ trong vai trò lãnh đạo hội thánh.

**2025**  
Đức Thánh Cha công bố Đức Hồng Y McElroy sẽ lãnh đạo Tổng Giáo phận Washington.



# Tri Ân Đức Hồng Y McElroy

Ngày 6 tháng 1 năm 2025 vừa qua đánh dấu một thay đổi lớn trong Hoa Kỳ, khi Tòa Thánh thông báo ĐGH Phanxico bổ nhiệm Đức Hồng Y Robert W. McElroy làm Tổng Giám Mục Washington DC.

Đây là tin vui cho mọi người, vì với tài lãnh đạo, bản lãnh quyết tâm và ham học hỏi, kinh nghiệm dồi dào cùng với sự thông thái... thì quyết định này không là một bất ngờ với nhiều người, vì từ lâu đã có nhiều dự đoán nói đến một vị thế khác xứng với khả năng của Ngài hơn.

Nhưng đây cũng là một thiệt thòi cho giáo phận San Diego, mất đi một chủ chăn tận tụy, đáng kính nể trong gần 10 năm chăm sóc đoàn chiên, đem lại sức sống mạnh mẽ, hăng say, và tích cực cho đời sống giáo dân.

Chúng ta còn nhớ khi Ngài từ giáo phận San Francisco đến San Diego, nhiều người nói là San Diego trúng số độc đắc. Thật vậy, trong mười năm vừa qua, thời gian tuy không dài, nhưng ĐHY McElroy đã để lại một di sản thiêng liêng đáng trân trọng trong đời sống giáo dân. Hơn thế nữa, không thể chối cãi tầm ảnh hưởng lớn lao của Ngài trong tương quan xã hội, chính trị và văn hóa của vùng San Diego, và cả nước Mỹ.

Khi ĐHY McElroy đến San Diego, việc đầu tiên là Ngài tìm cách đi thăm tất cả các giáo xứ, họp mặt với anh chị em linh mục, nam nữ tu sĩ, phó tế... nhằm tìm hiểu thực tế đời sống đạo, và tiến hành các chương



**CHỦ CHIÊN:** Đức Hồng Y Robert W. McElroy đã chủ tế Đại Lễ Kính Các Thánh Tử Đạo Việt Nam vào ngày 6 tháng 11 năm 2022 tại Nhà thờ Chúa Chiên Lành

trình mục vụ có hiệu quả nhất. Ngài đưa ra kế hoạch với 5 tổ chức cụ thể là Hội Đồng Gia Đình, Hội Đồng Giới Trẻ, Cố Vấn Gọi, Thông Tin, và Giáo Dục Công Giáo... để thăng tiến đời sống đạo.

Bên cạnh đó, Ngài quan tâm đến mục vụ đa sắc tộc mà cụ thể là thánh lễ Chúa Thánh Thần Hiện Xuống hàng năm của giáo phận, những dịp lễ Đức Mẹ Guadalupe, lễ San Lorenzo Ruiz, lễ Ấn Độ, lễ Các Thánh Tử Đạo Việt Nam, lễ Simbang Gabi, lễ Dr. Martin Luther King, lễ Junteen .v.v.

Một điểm son tiên khởi của giáo phận là khi Đức Giáo Hoàng Phanxicô công bố Sứ Vụ Hiệp Hành của toàn giáo hội, giáo phận San Diego là một trong những giáo phận tiên phong quy tụ và lắng nghe giáo dân theo chủ đích của Hiệp Hành (Synodality). Tạ ơn Chúa là chương trình Hiệp Hành này được giáo dân chúng ta tham gia tích cực và hữu hiệu.

Chúng ta Tạ ơn Chúa đã gửi ĐHY McElroy đến với giáo phận, dù thời gian không dài, nhưng đã để lại dấu ấn sâu đậm trong mọi chương trình mục vụ.

Xin Thiên Chúa qua lời cầu bầu của Mẹ Maria là Mẹ Giáo Hội luôn ban cho Ngài ơn khôn ngoan, can đảm và khỏe mạnh để diu dắt dân Chúa ở Tổng Giáo Phận Washington DC. Kính chúc Ngài thượng lộ bình an.

— ĐGM Micae Phạm Minh Cường

## Sự Lãnh Đạo Của Đức Hồng Y Khiến Cộng Đồng Cảm Xúc Sâu Sắc

### Cộng đồng đang phát triển nhờ Đức Hồng Y

Sau khi Chúa Giêsu phục sinh, hai môn đệ trên đường đi Emmaus mang trong lòng sự hoang mang và thất vọng. Khi các ông đang trò chuyện, Chúa Giêsu đã đến gần, đồng hành cùng họ, đặt câu hỏi và lắng nghe cách ân cần trước khi tỏ mình ra trong việc bẻ bánh. Lòng họ bừng cháy khi Người giải thích Kinh Thánh, cho thấy rằng chân lý được mạc khải qua đối thoại, suy ngẫm và sự mở lòng đón nhận sự hiện diện của Thiên Chúa.

Cũng trong tinh thần hiệp hành và lắng nghe này, Đức Hồng Y Robert W. McElroy đã có những đóng góp sâu sắc cho Giáo phận San Diego, đáp trả lời mời gọi của Đức Thánh Cha Phanxicô về một Giáo Hội hiệp hành. Ngài đã mời gọi mọi thành phần dân Chúa, từ giáo dân, giới trẻ, hàng linh mục, tu sĩ cho đến những người bên lề xã hội, cùng tham gia, để mọi tiếng nói đều được lắng nghe trong

Giáo Phận. Các tiếng nói ấy được gửi đến Giáo Hội Hoàn Vũ. Không ngừng đổi mới, Đức Hồng Y McElroy đã khởi xướng những sáng kiến quan trọng từ tiến trình hiệp hành, như “Ủy ban Cố vấn Phụ Nữ trong Vai Trò Lãnh Đạo” và “Tái Tư tưởng Thời Sứ Mệnh Giáo Xứ & Vai Trò Lãnh Đạo trong Giáo Hội Hiệp Hành”. Sự hướng dẫn của Ngài phản ánh tinh thần đồng hành và canh tân, nhắc nhở chúng ta rằng Giáo Hội phát triển mạnh mẽ nhất khi biết lắng nghe, đối thoại và để Chúa Thánh Thần hướng dẫn.

Là một người trẻ phục vụ trong Phong trào Thiếu Nhi Thánh Thể Việt Nam tại Hoa Kỳ, con cảm thấy thật vinh dự và đầy hạnh phúc khi Đức Hồng Y McElroy nhìn nhận vai trò quan trọng của giới trẻ, và đã tạo điều kiện để chúng con có thể đóng góp tiếng nói của mình. Qua sự lãnh đạo tận tâm của ngài, Giáo phận San Diego đã trở thành một cộng đồng đức tin hiệp nhất và tinh thần hăng hái hơn bao giờ hết. Chúng con thật sự biết ơn và cảm

tạ những gì Đức Hồng Y đã, đang và sẽ tiếp tục làm cho Giáo Hội của chúng ta!

— Vi Salazar

*Liên Đoàn Trưởng - Liên Đoàn San Diego, Phong trào Thiếu Nhi Thánh Thể Việt Nam tại Hoa Kỳ*

### Đức Hồng Y ‘Đã Giúp Chúng Tôi Phát Triển’

Vào ngày cuối cùng của tháng Tư năm 1975, gia đình tôi rời Việt Nam sau khi Sài Gòn sụp đổ. Gia đình cha mẹ, anh chị em tôi là những người tị nạn chiến tranh. Năm 1975 là một Năm Thánh. Trong đêm tối trên biển, tôi đã tự hỏi về ý Chúa dành cho con dân Việt Nam.

Chúng tôi đã đến San Diego vào cùng năm đó và tìm được nơi nương náu cả về mặt xã hội và tinh thần nơi thánh lễ và tại các nhà thờ khác nhau. Giáo xứ Holy Family ở Linda Vista đã trở thành giáo xứ chính của gia đình chúng tôi.

Giờ đây là năm 2025. Năm 2025 cũng

là một Năm Thánh. Tôi đã cảm kích Giáo hội địa phương San Diego và sứ mệnh của giáo phận qua những năm tháng qua. Tại San Diego, nhờ vào tầm nhìn và công việc của Đức Hồng Y McElroy, tôi nhận thấy cộng đồng công giáo Việt Nam ở San Diego đang phát triển tốt đẹp. Nhà thờ không chỉ còn là nơi nương náu, mà đã trở thành nơi mà mọi người có thể tăng trưởng.


Đối với riêng tôi, công việc của Đức Hồng Y McElroy đã giúp tôi tăng trưởng về mặt tinh thần.

Tôi đã chứng kiến những kết quả tuyệt vời của các cộng đồng sắc dân khác nhau ở San Diego tụ họp lại với nhau, nơi mọi người chia sẻ niềm tin vào Giáo hội và vào Chúa trong thánh lễ “Tập Hợp Nên Một” trong ngày Lễ Chúa Thánh Thần Hiện Xuống.

— Giai Do

*Nguyên Chủ tịch Cộng đồng Công giáo Việt Nam*





## Thank you, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy for Your Decade of Service to San Diego

The University of San Diego congratulates Cardinal McElroy on his appointment by Pope Francis to become the Archbishop of Washington, D.C.

As he prepares for his new role, our entire family of Toreros wishes to thank him for his service to San Diego, for his dedication to Catholic higher education, and for his wisdom and commitment to human dignity and to caring for our common home through the principles of *Laudato Si'*.

Cardinal McElroy has meant so much to the University of San Diego and we offer our prayers, our gratitude and our blessings as he takes on this new role.



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