

# THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



VOLUME 115 • NUMBER 05

THESOUTHERNCROSS.ORG

MAY 2026



## 'God Is Always By Your Side'

Pages 10-12

ADOBESTOCK

**LIFE LESSONS:** From late May to mid-June, more than 2,200 eighth- and 12th-graders will be graduating from Catholic schools across the region. A sampling of this year's graduating eighth-graders shared the lessons they will be taking with them. One of them was Kai Holden, from the School of the Madeleine: "I definitely am going to remember how everyone has a little bit of Jesus inside of them."



### Unwavering Presence

Clergy and volunteers to continue accompanying immigrants despite challenges. **Page 2**



### A Few Good Men

Eight to be ordained to lives of service as permanent deacons. **Page 3**



### Minors on Mission

At annual Mass, students recognized for supporting Catholic missionary work. **Page 17**

### Pentecost Mass for All Peoples

Page 8



P.O. Box 81869  
San Diego, CA 92138-1869

TELEPHONE: (858) 490-8266  
E-MAIL: socross@sdcatholic.org  
WEB: THESOUTHERNCROSS.ORG

# THE SOUTHERN CROSS

**PUBLISHER**  
Bishop Michael Pham

**EDITOR EMERITUS**  
Father Charles L. Fuld

**EDITOR**  
Aida Bustos

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**  
Denis Grasska

**ADVERTISING/CIRCULATION**  
Donna Lightsey

**CONTRIBUTORS**  
Roman Flores, Father Bernardo Lara, Illana De Lara, Ricardo Márquez

**DESIGN**  
Pinomaki Design

Founded in 1912,  
The Southern Cross  
is the official newspaper of the  
Catholic Diocese of San Diego.

**The Southern Cross**  
(ISSN 0745-0257) is published  
monthly by the Roman Catholic  
Diocese of San Diego,  
3888 Paducah Drive,  
San Diego, CA 92117-5349.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address  
changes to The Southern Cross,  
P.O. Box 81869,  
San Diego, CA 92138-1869.

Periodicals Postage Paid at  
San Diego, CA.

**TELEPHONE:** (858) 490-8266.

**EMAIL:** socross@sdatholic.org

**WEB:** thesoutherncross.org

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:**  
Monthly print subscription:  
\$15 per year

**CONTACT:** (858) 490-8266;  
dlightsey@sdatholic.org



**DIOCESE OF  
SAN DIEGO**

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 96 parishes and 13 missions, 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 symbol indicates where readers can go online to obtain more information about the subject at hand, including additional photos, video and other content.



## Unwavering Presence For Immigrants

**REVERENCE:** Clergy members and volunteers with the FAITH ministry turned out on April 1, during Holy Week, in front of the federal courthouse in downtown San Diego to proclaim that they would continue praying with and for immigrants at their court hearings and ICE check-ins.

By Aida Bustos



At times in recent weeks, federal authorities have made it more difficult for clergy members and volunteers to accompany immigrants at their hearings and ICE check-ins at the federal courthouse.

On the gray morning of April 1, during Holy Week, about 100 volunteers stood outside the courthouse and responded.

“We are here today to publicly proclaim that we are not going away,” Bishop Michael Pham told the gathering. “We are not afraid. We will not be intimidated to stop doing what we do. We will pray. We will not loiter. Instead, we will bear witness to the dignity of our sisters and brothers.”

He continued his message, as those around him held palms.

“Our vision of humanity is that all people are made in God’s image and likeness,” the bishop said. “Our dignity does not come from any country’s government; our dignity comes from God alone. We see the immigrant jour-

**Bishop Pham leads prayer service in the Imperial Valley, “To Be United in Christ.”**  
Page 6

ney as a holy one, knowing our own Savior Jesus was himself a refugee.”

Almost a year ago, the San Diego Diocese launched an ecumenical ministry called Faithful Accompaniment in Trust and Hope (FAITH) to stand with immigrants at their court hearings, in collaboration with Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and the San Diego Organizing Project.

They did so after the federal government, as part of its massive deportation campaign, began detaining migrants immediately after their hearings and taking them away, leaving devastated families behind.

Since then, more than 700 clergy members and volunteers have received training to accompany the migrants in court.

The situation inside the courthouse changes day to day, volunteers said. At times, the authorities have stopped them from accompanying the migrants

into their hearings. One day, they cited one of them.

The ministry coordinators held a listening session with Bishop Pham and Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido to discuss these challenges. Jesuit Father Scott Santarosa, of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, said that the overwhelming sense was that the program should continue, “even if the officials made it harder to accompany people.”

They announced that decision publicly in front of the courthouse in the event called “Prophetic Witness, Sacred Kinship: Bearing Palms for the Holy.”

Bishop Pham shared his own experience living in a refugee camp in Malaysia as a boy with two of his siblings, after fleeing Vietnam, not knowing what the future held for him and his family. He described his experience accompanying migrants who are also fearful about what the future has in store.

He said that journeying with immigrants was not a political act, rather serving as disciples of Jesus “to bring Christ to the world.”

Information about the FAITH ministry: [olgsd.org/FAITH](http://olgsd.org/FAITH)



### Message from Bishop Michael Pham

San Diego Bishop Michael Pham issued the following statement on April 13 regarding Pope Leo’s advocacy for world peace:

“I echo the sentiment expressed in the statement of Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Our world is under tremendous turmoil by leaders who execute decisions disregarding the moral implications that lead to greater division, hatred and death. It is important to reaffirm the value of respectful dia-

logue across differences in perspective. Religious leaders and political figures each play distinct roles in shaping public discourse, and their words carry significant influence.

“Throughout history, the papacy has served as a vital voice for peace, justice and the care of the most vulnerable. Pope Leo’s leadership continues in that tradition, offering guidance that transcends politics and speaks to shared human values. May we all join Pope Leo in advocating for world peace.”



# Eight Men Answer Call to Become Deacons

By Denis Grasska



OCEANSIDE —  
Bishop Michael  
Pham will ordain

eight men to the permanent diaconate on Saturday, May 30, at St. Thomas More Church in Oceanside.

Attendance is by invitation-only due to limited capacity, but the liturgy will be livestreamed at 10 a.m. at [sdcatholic.org](http://sdcatholic.org).

**Those being ordained include:**

## CHRISTOPHER HAACK

*St. Mary, Star of the Sea Parish, Oceanside*

Christopher Haack, 56, had thought about becoming a deacon for perhaps as many as 12 years. But every time he discussed it with his wife, Gloria, they agreed that “it wasn’t the right time yet.”



That changed after their youngest child was in college.

Haack said that diaconal ministry is “all about service and surrender.”

“I want to really embrace my diaconal ministry with an openness and sense of excitement (and) adventure,” he said. “Who knows what God will throw my way?”

Haack is a Senior Environmental Health and Safety engineer. He and his wife, Gloria, will celebrate their 35th anniversary in August. They have three children and have been members of St. Mary, Star of the Sea Parish since late 2019.

## KEVIN R. JOHNSON

*Immaculate Conception Parish, San Diego*

Kevin R. Johnson recognized his call to the diaconate as he watched his wife serving others and felt a “quiet but persistent pull” to do the same.



“There was a strong sense that this wasn’t optional,” said Johnson, 47, “that I was being asked to step up and serve more intentionally.”

Johnson sees the deacon’s role as “living at the intersection of the altar and the people.”

Reflecting on what that means for “a historic and diverse community” like Immaculate Conception Parish, he said, “My goal is to honor the parish’s rich traditions, while helping foster a community that is welcoming, grounded in faith, and active in service.”

Johnson is the training director at the Electrical Training Institute of San Diego and Imperial Counties. He and his wife, Bridgette, have been married

for 21 years and have three children. They’ve attended Immaculate Conception Parish for 19 years.

## MIKE MACIE

*St. Rose of Lima Parish, Chula Vista*

Mike Macie was volunteering with the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults process, when fellow OCIA



facilitators told him that he had “a deacon’s heart.”

About five years ago, around 15 years after first feeling the call and shortly after turning 55, Macie was asked by an auxiliary bishop and two co-workers at the diocesan Pastoral Center — on the same day! — when he was going to become a deacon. Macie and his wife agreed that evening that he should pursue it and “see what happens.”

As a deacon, he said he plans “to humbly and gently lead and to serve in ministries, groups and organizations ... with enthusiasm.”

Macie, 60, is executive director of the Services Corporation for Parishes and Schools in the Diocese of San Diego. He and his wife, Mary, have been married for 33 years and have five children. His connection to St. Rose of Lima Parish goes back to the 1970s, when he made his First Communion there.

## FRANCISCO MARTINEZ

*St. John of the Cross Parish, Lemon Grove*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Francisco Martinez was a sacristan for his parish’s outdoor Masses.



“Having the keys to the church allowed me a private moment one night before the Blessed Sacrament,” recalled Martinez, 58. “In the silence of the empty chapel, I prayed, ‘Lord, if you want me to be a deacon, let one of your priests ask me.’”

Within two weeks, that prayer was answered.

Martinez, a handyman for the past 26 years, said that a deacon is “the ‘eyes and ears’ of the bishop and the pastor in the local community.”

“The opportunity to accompany people in their most vulnerable moments ... has given me a sense of purpose that I never imagined when I first started this path,” he said.

Martinez and his wife, Sofia, have been married for 25 years, have six children, and have attended St. John of the Cross Parish for 19 years.

## JOSEPH NAVAL

*Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, Rancho Peñasquitos*

Joseph Naval spent most of his professional life as a graphic artist. But, recently, he was hired as a pastoral associate at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish and soon will be ordained a deacon.



“I’ve simply found a bigger canvas,” said Naval, 50. “I spent two decades drawing for clients, but now, my greatest joy is helping others draw closer to Christ.”

He said that the call to the diaconate “intensified” during the COVID-19 pandemic, when, though public Masses were suspended, he assisted at a few private liturgies.

“One day, during the elevation of the Host,” he recalled, “I felt as if God was holding me, whispering, ‘I love you. You are mine.’ This encounter ... changed me forever.”

Naval and his wife, Laarni, have been married for 22 years and have three children. They have attended Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Rancho Peñasquitos for about 20 years.

## JOSEPH PARKER

*Resurrection Parish, Escondido*

Joseph Parker might never have become a deacon were it not for his wife, Erika.



“During our courtship, she invited me to Mass and, over time, I could feel God calling me to the Catholic Church,” said Parker, 51, who entered the Church during his engagement and later became actively involved in parish ministries.

“All of this service led to being invited to our parish rectory with our pastor inviting us to consider the diaconate,” he said.

“I am most looking forward to bringing our community’s needs in service at the altar,” he said, while also focusing on service with youth, young couples preparing for marriage, and those in need.

Parker has been a registered nurse and a member of Resurrection Parish for the past 28 years. He and his wife, Erika, have been married for 27 years and have two children.

## JUAN PABLO RODRIGUEZ

*St. Charles Parish, Imperial Beach*

Juan Pablo Rodriguez honestly answered no when his wife asked him if he had ever considered becoming a deacon.



But “that question remained with me, quietly stirring my heart” for the next 15 years, said Rodriguez, 49, who serves as the director of infrastructure and cloud services at a local education agency.

During the COVID pandemic, he helped with the sound system for outdoor Masses.

“I began to sense that inner voice growing stronger and clearer, gently asking, ‘Juan Pablo, would you like to be a deacon?’ And my response became, ‘Yes, Lord, here I am; send me.’”

“I am open and willing to serve wherever I am most needed,” he said, but he is “especially interested” in marriage preparation and family life ministry and also feels called to provide spiritual direction.

Rodriguez and his wife, Ana, have been married for 27 years and have three children. They have been members of St. Charles Parish for about 14 years.

## DAVID WILLIAM VACCHI

*Newman Center Catholic Community at UC San Diego*

David William Vacchi met his future wife, Rosaura (“Rosy”), as a student at the University of San Diego.



Attending Mass together in USD’s Founders Chapel, he said, they “fell in love with each other and Christ.” But, several years into marriage, Vacchi informed his wife that the upcoming Sunday Mass was going to be his last.

Heavy traffic forced them to attend Mass someplace new: the Newman Center Catholic Community at University of California, San Diego.

“As we walked through the doors, something felt different. ... It was like we had come home,” said Vacchi, 50, who has served as business manager and campus minister at the Newman Center for the past 10 years.

Encouraged to pursue the diaconate by the priests there, he hopes to help others to “accept God’s love and pour forth that love onto and into the world around them.”

The Vacchis celebrated their 26th wedding anniversary on April 29 and have attended the Newman Center for at least 18 years.

**ONLINE: The deacons’ ordination Mass on May 30 at 10 a.m. will be livestreamed at [sdcatholic.org](http://sdcatholic.org).**



# ‘We Need Everyone .. on This Mission’

By Denis Grasska



At the conclusion of this year’s Chrism Mass, Bishop

Michael Pham asked the assembly to recall that he had celebrated last year’s Mass, too, but that had been a “trial run,” while this year’s was “the real one.”

The quip was a reference to the fact that Bishop Pham, who was installed as bishop of San Diego last July, had been serving as diocesan administrator during the interim between Cardinal Robert W. McElroy’s installation as archbishop of Washington and the selection of a new bishop of San Diego by the pope.

The diocese celebrated the annual Chrism Mass on March 26 at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa. At the Mass, the bishop blesses the oil of the sick, which is used in the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, and the oil of catechumens, which is used as a preparation for baptism. With concelebrating priests, he also consecrates the holy chrism, a mixture of oil and balsam that is used to anoint the hands of priests and the heads of bishops at their ordinations; to dedicate churches and altars; and in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.



**HOLY ORDERS, HOLY OILS:** Bishop Michael Pham celebrates the Chrism Mass on March 26, flanked by some of the many priests who concelebrated the Mass. In the foreground are urns containing the sacred chrism and the oils of the sick and of the catechumens.

After Mass, representatives from each parish received the oils allotted for their parish, where they would be solemnly presented during the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on the evening of Holy Thursday and used at the Easter Vigil and in sacramental celebrations throughout the year.

The Chrism Mass is also a celebration of the institution of the ministerial priesthood. It’s typical for around 200 priests to attend, vested for Mass and occupying several rows of pews. After the homily, the bishop asks the priests to publicly renew the promises that they made on the day of their priestly ordination, and he asks the faithful to pray for the diocese’s priests and for

him as their bishop.

In his homily, Bishop Pham said that those gathered for the Chrism Mass had “come together with a shared mission: to proclaim the Good News.”

“We are sent by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Good News by our words and deeds, as Jesus did. We, too, are called to be missionary,” the bishop said. In today’s world, missionary outreach isn’t something that requires travel to “far countries,” but rather is something that can be done “right here where we live.”

Pope St. John Paul II used to refer to this as the “new evangelization,” Bishop Pham said.

“We need to reach out to the luke-

warm Catholic Christians and ... to continue to proclaim Jesus to those who still do not know Jesus yet,” he said. “We are to do this with all the new resources that we have available for us today, from Internet to social media — whatever we can use to share the word of God to the four corners of the world.”

Bishop Pham said, “We need everyone to take part in this mission, because we are the Body of Christ. Jesus is our head; we are his body. Every member of the body is important.”

“Every one of us,” he said, “has an important role to play in this world, so that the kingdom of Heaven can become more visible.”

*Memorial Day*  
**MASS**

**Monday, May 25 • 11 am**

Presided by  
**Very Rev. Efrain Bautista**

Followed by Procession  
to the Veterans Memorial

**HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC  
Cemetery and Mausoleum**

*Serving Our Catholic Community Since 1919.*

**4470 Hilltop Dr., San Diego, 92102 • 619.264.3127**

# ‘Mutual Learning’ Blossoms at Valley Parish

By Roman T. Flores

**EL CENTRO** — “I see myself as a bridge-builder — between generations, between cultures, between intellect and devotion, between doctrine and daily life.”

That’s how one of the newest priests serving in the Imperial Valley describes himself, Father Kizito Uzoma Ndugbu, who hails from Nigeria.

Known as “Father Kizito” (Key-see-toh), he has served at Our Lady of the Valley Parish since July of 2025.

The joyful priest, age 43, emphatically said his new assignment “has been a gift.”

“The name itself, ‘Our Lady of the Valley,’ evokes a sense of humble, fertile ground, and that is exactly what this community is,” he said. “From the first day, the people have been incredibly warm and welcoming. They have been patient with my adjustment to a new culture and have embraced me as one of their own.”

“It has been a year of mutual learning — they are teaching me about American Catholic life, and I am sharing with them the richness of my own spiritual and cultural heritage.”

Father Kizito was born in the town of Amuzi in southeastern Nigeria. The eldest of four siblings, he developed de-



**JOYFUL:** Father Kizito Uzoma Ndugbu said he’s learning about U.S. Catholic life from the faithful at his new assignment, Our Lady of the Valley Parish, while sharing his own African heritage.

vout Catholic practices early in his life.

His parents, father Emmanuel and mother Augustina, were both professors. As a child, he enjoyed playing soccer “in the dusty streets with my siblings and friends, using a ball made of rolled-up plastic bags.”

“Church was not a Sunday obligation; it was a family identity. From an early age, I witnessed how faith sustains people through suffering and transforms storms into opportunities of growth. That early foundation shaped my understanding that faith is not simply intellectual assent; it is lived

communion.”

In his adolescence, he became an altar server and joined the choir. He began to ask deeper questions about life, delving into prayer, and feeling drawn to the Holy Eucharist as “Someone who was calling.”

The more he surrendered to the Lord’s will for him, the more peace he found, he said.

“Over time, that peace matured into conviction.”

It took about 16 years for his journey from minor seminary to becoming a Catholic priest. He was ordained on

July 30, 2011, for the religious order Sons of Mary, Mother of Mercy, in the Diocese of Umuahia.

Father Kizito arrived in the United States in June of 2021 and was assigned to the Diocese of San Diego. He served as a chaplain at Scripps Mercy Hospital in November of 2022, with residence at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Parish, which overlooks Mission Bay.

Last July, he was assigned to serve in the Imperial Valley.

“I carry within me both African spirituality and Catholic universality — a deep reverence for mystery, community and the sacredness of life,” he continued.

He shared his approach to ministry.

“Pastorally, I am passionate about helping people discover that their trials are not interruptions to their calling but often the very path through which God shapes it,” he said.

“I have learned that people do not need more noise; they need more meaning. Listening heals more than speaking, pastoral presence often speaks louder than theological precision, and resilience is stronger in community than in isolation.

“I have also learned that effective ministry requires emotional intelligence as much as spiritual depth. Many people carry silent burdens. The priest must be attentive not only to what is said, but to what is unspoken.”



Franciscan School of Theology  
at the UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO



## DISCOVER GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT FST

Graduate degrees and certificate programs rooted in the Franciscan tradition.

MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (MTS)	ONLINE MTS - FRANCISCAN THEOLOGY
MASTER OF DIVINITY (MDIV)	DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT IN PRACTICE
MASTER OF ARTS (MA)	ONLINE CERTIFICATE IN FRANCISCAN THEOLOGY

START YOUR JOURNEY TODAY: FST.EDU

 [www.fst.edu](http://www.fst.edu)
 619-574-5800
 



**Mater Dei Catholic High School**

## CLASS REUNIONS



**CLASSES OF**  
1966 · 1971 · 1976  
1981 · 1986

September 19th, 2026



**CLASSES OF**  
1991 · 1996 · 2001  
2006 · 2011

September 26th, 2026



**CLASS OF 2016**

October 3rd, 2026

**Scan to buy tickets:**

(619) 423 - 2121

MHART@MATERDEICATHOLIC.ORG



# 'We Are Called to Be One Human Family'

By Roman T. Flores



CALEXICO — “We live in a world where it is easy to become divided, but as followers of Christ, we are called to do something greater: We are called to be one human family.”

That’s what Bishop Michael Pham said in his homily at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church.

He led a Lenten prayer service, themed “To Be United in Christ,” held on the evening of March 23, co-hosted by Catholic Charities. Around 350 faithful from Calexico and neighboring towns turned out for the event.

He was accompanied by Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido, nine priests and two deacons, and Bishop John Stowe, of the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky, who was visiting to give a retreat in Brawley.

Earlier that day, Bishop Pham led a clergy visit to the Imperial Regional Detention Facility, which included a Mass for about 40 detained immigrants. The facility houses around 650.

The bilingual prayer service was structured as a Liturgy of the Word, with two Gospel readings. The first was from the Gospel of Luke (10:25-37), while the second was from the Gospel of Matthew (25:31-40). The



**PRESENT:** Bishop Michael Pham leads a prayer service March 23, accompanied by (from left) Father Tony Stanonik, Deacons Alberto Moya and Fred Thornton, and Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido.

bishop’s homily centered on their main themes: compassion and taking action to serve the vulnerable.

“Jesus says, ‘I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me,’” Bishop Pham said, referring to Matthew 25. “And then he tells us something that we must never, ever forget: ‘What you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.’”

“We also heard the story of the Good Samaritan ... Jesus ends that story with a command: ‘Go and do likewise.’”

“Jesus does not separate himself from the poor, from the suffering, the vulnerable. He identifies himself with

them. So, when we serve them, we are not simply doing a good work; we are encountering Christ.”

The bishop noted that he had once been a refugee, having arrived in the U.S. after his family fled from Vietnam. He said he will never forget what it was like “to be vulnerable, to be uncertain, to rely on the compassion of strangers. And I will never forget that it was through that compassion that I encountered God’s mercy.”

“That experience shaped my life,” he continued. “It taught me that hope is real. It taught me that kindness can save a life. And it taught me that we

are called to give back what we have received.”

He said that church is not only a place to pray.

“The Church is the living presence of Christ in the world,” the bishop said. “Through our parishes, through our families, through the work of Catholic Charities, we make His love visible, not in words alone, but in action. Matthew 25 reminds us that this is not optional. It is the measure of discipleship.

“When we respond to him with mercy, when we choose to see, to act, we live the Gospel,” Bishop Pham said. “And this is where unity is found. Not in sameness, not in agreement of everything, but in love, in mercy, in recognizing Christ in one another. ...”

“We live in a world where it is easy to become divided, but as followers of Christ, we are called to do something greater: We are called to be one human family. Let us pray together that God may give us eyes to see, hearts to love, and the courage to act so that our community, our Church, and our world may truly be united in Christ.”

Near the end of the service, the bishop thanked Father Hilario Flores, of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish; the priests, deacons and religious sisters in attendance; Catholic Charities, for its work helping immigrant detainees; and lay organizations (such as *Sagrado Corazón*).



## 2 MILLION MEALS EVENT

FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD  
MATTHEW 25:35

This event is unlike any other project. Volunteers of all ages come together joyously for one purpose: to pack 2 million meals for families living in poverty. 1 million meals will be distributed by Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego locally.



## JUNE 13TH & 14TH, 2026

Cathedral Catholic High School

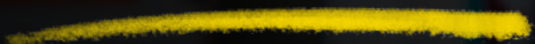
**VOLUNTEER OR DONATE**  
[www.MillionMealEvent.org](http://www.MillionMealEvent.org)





Father  
Joe's  
Villages

# Hope Grows Here



**Donate at  
Neighbor.org**

**For children experiencing homelessness, play is more than fun—it's healing.**

At Father Joe's Villages, our therapeutic childcare provides a safe, nurturing space to learn, play, grow and dream big. While little ones build confidence and connection, their parents gain the support and services needed to rebuild their lives and leave homelessness behind.

# Joyous Pentecost Mass Unites Faithful

By Aida Bustos



Deacon Luiz Bueno has one word to describe the diocese's annual Pentecost Mass for All Peoples: "Amazing."

A leader in the Brazilian Catholic community, he has participated in the Mass since it started in 2018 and plans to be on hand for the ninth edition, to be held May 23 at Cathedral Catholic High School. As a deacon, he will be assisting Bishop Michael Pham, who will preside at this year's Mass.

The Pentecost Mass brings together about 25 cultural communities present in the diocese for a joyous, colorful celebration. With roots in the Americas, Asia, Europe and Africa, they are united by their Catholic faith.

The Mass opens with a procession, starting with the Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver, followed by cultures representing faithful from Africa to Vietnam, all wearing their traditional attire. The liturgy highlights traditions of many cultures and prayers proclaimed in a variety of languages.

The Mass is not about showcasing the cultures, Bishop Pham told their leaders at a planning meeting on April 16 at the diocesan Pastoral Center.

It's about the experience of "com-



**STRANDS OF FAITH:** At last year's diocesan Pentecost Mass, Ying Qu and Kathy Chu, from the Chinese community; Chum Marasigan, from the Filipino community; and Bibiana Jones, from the African community, dressed the altar with a cloth representing their culture.

ing together to be united in Jesus, as a foretaste of the banquet in the Kingdom of Heaven."

"It does not matter what culture we belong to, or language we speak, Jesus is bringing us together through his life, death and resurrection," he continued.

Teresa Mora, vice president of the Hispanic Commission, was among the cultural leaders at the meeting.

What does she like about the event?

"Well, everything!" she responded.

During the Mass, each culture places a cloth that represents their community on the altar. At last year's Mass, she and her 17-year-old son carried their

community's cloth.

"He was so proud," she recalled, "Seeing all those cloths placed on the altar was so beautiful."

Claire Silke, representing the Irish Catholic community, said she had attended every Pentecost Mass.

She said she loves "the fire and the passion" of those who attend the Mass, numbering more than 1,800 last year.

After the Mass, the communities present a festival, complete with samples of their native foods, and musical entertainment. Participants can visit booth after booth, learning about the roots of each community's faith, as

well as getting a taste of their culture.

"I would invite people by telling them all the great food you can get there," Silke said. "People love that."

Bishop Pham organized the first Pentecost Mass when he served as Vicar for Ethnic and Intercultural Communities. He has a different role now, bishop of the diocese, but his message remains the same.

"It's not about dressing up in our attire," he said. "We are about Jesus ... and helping people to encounter Jesus in their lives."

## Pentecost Mass for All Peoples

Saturday, May 23, 2026  
Cathedral Catholic High School, 5555 Del Mar Heights Road, San Diego 92130

Everyone is invited to this family-friendly event, which has ample parking.

10 a.m.: Praise-and-worship

10:45 a.m.: Procession of cultures

11 a.m.: Mass celebrated by Bishop Pham and Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido

Noon- 2 p.m: Festival featuring food tastings, exhibits and live music

## FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS FINDING PURPOSE IN SERVICE



IVC helps adults 50+ live the call to a faith that does justice.

Corps Members make a long-term commitment to serve one or two days per week with a nonprofit partner agency, integrating their life experience, faith, and skills to bring hope, dignity, and compassion to those who need it most.

### Join the Corps

Serve with purpose and deepen your spiritual life.



### Partner with IVC

Strengthen your mission with skilled, compassionate support.



St. Madeleine Sophie's Center

Celebrating


# 60

years

California Dreamin'



Enjoy the sunset in our organic garden while celebrating our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of serving adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities!

Stmsc.org



Scan for ticket & event info

Saturday, May 16, 2026  
4:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
St. Madeleine Sophie's Center

Proceeds benefit our Aquatics and Organic Garden Programs.



# *The Class of 2026 is Lighting the Way Forward!*

The University of San Diego is dedicated to confronting humanity's challenges by fostering peace, working for justice and leading with love.

This year, USD celebrates the Class of 2026 and is confident that our graduates will find new, different and extraordinary ways to make this world a better place.



**START YOUR TORERO JOURNEY TODAY: [SANDIEGO.EDU](http://SANDIEGO.EDU)**



Around 1,000 eighth-graders will graduate

from San Diego Catholic elementary schools starting in May. A few shared the lasting lessons from their Catholic education.

### ELIA AGUINIGA

St. Rose of Lima School

The most important Catholic lesson I learned in Catholic school is forgiveness. My faith will help me make important choices. I plan to keep growing my faith by trying to be more involved in my church.

### BART BRIGIDA

School of the Madeleine

The most important Catholic lessons I have learned are to always have faith in God at all times, especially during hard moments, and to treat all people with kindness and respect, even if they are an annoyance to you.

In high school, I think my faith will guide me to always strive to show the best version of myself to others and to serve God in the best way possible. My plan to continue growing in my faith is to panic less about petty matters and to offer all anxiety up to God, and to put God in front of all other things in my life, always.

### NATALIE ESPINOZA

St. Rose of Lima School

I learned about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and how we came to be and all of the miracles he performed. I appreciate how much he has sacrificed for us to be free. I learned about how to be a great Catholic by going to Mass and treating others with kindness and respect no matter how they may look. My faith will help me navigate the difficulties and hardships I may come across during my years in high school. I will lean on the Lord and pray when things are difficult.

### GIULIANNA FAVELA

Sacred Heart Parish School

My time in Catholic school has taught me very important lessons that I will carry with me into high school and beyond. One of the most meaningful lessons is to treat others with kindness and respect because everyone is created in God's image. I have also learned the importance of forgiveness, helping those in need, and standing up for what is right. These values remind me to try to live with compassion and to follow the example of Jesus in my daily life.

High school can bring new challenges and pressures, but my faith will help me to remember to make good decisions and stay true to my values.

### JADON GANIH

Holy Trinity School

I've learned to love all, even your enemy. If you have hatred in your heart, you will never be able to find happiness.

My faith serves as a moral compass. When I face difficult decisions or peer pressure, I look to the values I've

learned — like honesty and integrity — to ensure I am making choices that reflect who I want to be. I plan to grow in my faith by going to Mass, reading the Bible, and praying to God.

### SOFIA GENNA

Santa Sophia Academy

Having the opportunity to engage in service-based learning has allowed me to open my eyes to the world around me and to help others on a more compassionate and complex level. Trusting my conscience will help me to make the right decision, even when it is difficult. Knowing what the best decision is will help me to listen to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to guide my thoughts and actions.

I plan to continue growing in my faith by continuing to go to Mass and to learn more about the catechism. I plan to go to a Catholic high school and engage in various service projects that will help me to develop my faith. I also plan to take confirmation classes and receive the sacrament while in high school.

### MICHAEL GUIDI

St. Columba Catholic School

Some of the most important Catholic lessons I've learned are to always help others, respect everyone and have faith in God. I am going to a Catholic high school, which will help me continue my faith.

### ISABELLE HANDY

St. Mary School, Escondido

The most important Catholic lesson I've learned is to continue growing in my faith, even if I am not going to a Catholic high school. There may be others who do not believe in God, but I will either inspire them or keep practicing my faith no matter what. My faith will guide me by providing me with people who will be able to help me grow in my faith. I have learned that God always provides. I plan to pray every night and never stop.

### KAI HOLDEN

School of the Madeleine

I definitely am going to remember how everyone has a little bit of Jesus inside of them and, therefore, we should treat them as if they were also Jesus by not being envious or holding a grudge but treating them with respect and mercy.

I think my faith will lead me to a humble life with God as I mature from boy to man through this journey. I would like to keep growing in my faith after high school by leaning on God to help me out in hard situations during college and my adult life, as well as teach my children about God's love and Jesus' teachings.

### STELLA LAMERATO

School of the Madeleine

I think the most important lesson I've learned is how helping others unites communities. I think faith will guide me to always do the right thing and be less selfish when it comes to my time. I plan to keep going to Mass every Sunday, and I also plan to be confirmed into the Catholic Church.



### RYAN LEWIS

St. Kieran Catholic School

The most important lessons that I have learned during my time at Catholic school are our learning expectations. These consist of being a life-long learner, a Catholic learner, and a responsible citizen. These expectations have helped shape me into the person I am today and affect all my decisions. Additionally, I learned that everyone was born equal and should be treated equally.

I believe my faith will guide me throughout my high school experience by helping me to make decisions based on my Catholic values. Furthermore, I think my faith will help me to surround myself with like-minded people who will help me to make good decisions and succeed academically and spiritually. Lastly, I have made it a habit to ask God to help me be the best version of myself.

### MIKAYLA MANSOUR

Holy Trinity School

The most important lesson I have learned is that, no matter how hard life gets, to keep your head up, knowing that God is always by your side. My faith is very strong, and I think it will guide me to make all the right intelligent choices. I plan to continue growing my faith by staying humble, strong and classy during all of my ups and downs in life.

### NICO MARTINEZ

School of the Madeleine

The most important lesson I have learned is that as Catholics, everything we do should be an act of love for

others. I think my faith will guide me through high school by helping me to follow as close to God as I can. I plan to grow my faith by reading the Bible and implementing the lessons I learn into my life.

### SAMANTHA MASNICA

St. Joseph Academy

The most important Catholic lesson I learned is that God will always love you, even if you aren't close in the faith or you are slowly drifting away from him. He will always be there, waiting for you because you are his child. My faith will guide me in high school and beyond by focusing on the good actions I make, my values, and overall personality. I plan to continue growing in my faith by praying every day to be in the presence of God and always have him with me. Also, just be a better person.

### GRACE O'NEAL

School of the Madeleine

From learning about Jesus' life on earth to the Ten Commandments and Scripture passages to morals, the School of the Madeleine has taught me all I know about my faith. Everything I have been taught and taken in to improve myself as a Catholic is important, but if I had to pick one lesson I learned at Madeleine that I will take with me throughout the rest of my life, it would definitely be Jesus' second greatest commandment, which is "Love your neighbor as yourself." Anytime I am feeling lost in life, I look to this commandment and pray to

**Graduation** *Continued on Page 11*



The Class of 2026 at Santa Sophia Academy in Spring Valley

### Graduation *Continued from Page 10*

God, asking him to help me be a better friend, daughter, sister, student, etc., and it makes me feel a lot better.

#### JAZLYNE PEREZ

Nativity Prep Academy

The most important Catholic lesson I'm taking is that we must be kind to everyone. I think my faith will guide me in high school by understanding that God will always be with me and has a plan for me. I will continue to pray over everything and put all of my trust in God.

#### AUTUMN PHIFER

Nativity Prep Academy

The most important Catholic lesson I will take to high school and beyond is perseverance. I plan to use my faith in high school by helping me to not give up on my schoolwork. I plan to grow in my faith by living the values that I've learned.

#### RYAN LA RAIA

School of the Madeleine

There are so many lessons I learned from attending a Catholic school for 10 years. One is that you can always trust in God in any situation. ...

When we love our neighbor, we are really loving Jesus, and loving God is the key to Heaven and living forever.

Being immersed in a God-filled environment has developed my conscience and made me a more mature and focused person. This will lead me in my

academic, athletic and social life. I hope I can continue to grow with God and become the best version of myself.

#### KADEN REID

School of the Madeleine

The most important Catholic lesson I learned is that faith isn't only something you learn, but something you live by. Faith teaches us to treat people with respect, compassion and loyalty. Faith helps build relationships by bringing people closer together, while growing closer with God on the way.

Faith will guide me in high school by giving me a foundation for when things get difficult or confusing. I plan to continue growing my faith by staying connected with the Church community through Mass, prayer and receiving the Holy Communion.

#### LAUREN RUIZ

Our Lady of Grace Catholic School

The most important Catholic lessons that I learned in Catholic school are to lean on God during difficult times and to trust in his plan for me.

I plan to continue growing my faith by lecturing, ushering and going to weekly Masses at my high school. In addition, I plan to continue sharing in prayer with my family and praying on my own to God.

More eighth-grade voices at [thesoutherncross.org/2026class](https://thesoutherncross.org/2026class).



SHE LEADS WITH FAITH & PURPOSE • SHE PLAYS TO HER STRENGTHS • SHE FINDS HER JOY • SHE PLAYS TO HER STRENGTHS • SHE SUCCEEDS

SHE PLAYS TO HER STRENGTHS • SHE FINDS HER JOY • SHE WILL CHANGE THE WORLD!

SHE ENGAGES & ACHIEVES • SHE WILL CHANGE THE WORLD! • SHE IS SAFE • SHE LEARNS

ACADEMY OF  
**OUR LADY OF  
PEACE**  
FOUNDED 1882

143 YEARS  
OF TRADITION,  
**EMPOWERING  
YOUNG  
WOMEN TO  
LEAD**

BOLD FUTURES  
BEGIN HERE



LEARN MORE

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace empowers young women in an innovative learning environment that honors the individual while fostering community, and develops faith-filled leaders.

SHE PLAYS TO HER STRENGTHS • SHE FINDS HER JOY • SHE WILL CHANGE THE WORLD! • SHE IS SAFE • SHE LEARNS

# More Than 2,200 Graduating From Local Catholic Schools

By Denis Grasska



Catholic school students across the diocese are

yearning for the freedom of summer vacation.

But for eighth- and 12th-graders, a major milestone comes first: graduation.

Elijah Bonde, associate superintendent of the Diocese of San Diego's Catholic schools, said that 1,059 eighth-graders and 1,202 high school seniors are expected to graduate from local Catholic schools this year.

At the elementary school level, the first graduation ceremony of the year will be held on May 22 at Mater Dei Catholic Elementary School in Chula Vista. The last will be on June 13 at St. Patrick School in Carlsbad. Especially popular graduation dates seem to be June 5, when at least nine schools are slated to hold ceremonies, and May 29, when at least eight will be held.

High school seniors will graduate on May 21 at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace, May 22 at both St. Augustine and Mater Dei Catholic high schools,

May 29 at both Cristo Rey San Diego and Vincent Memorial Catholic high schools, and May 30 at Cathedral Catholic High School.

After an approximately two-month summer break, Catholic elementary school students will return for the 2026-2027 academic year sometime between Aug. 17 and Aug. 26, with the diocesan Office for Schools recommending Monday, Aug. 17, as the first day of school.

If students are tempted to complain that their vacation is too short, they might consider that their principals and teachers will be heading back to work even earlier. The Office for Schools is continuing its practice of holding various workshops and professional learning opportunities during the summer.

All Catholic elementary school principals will be taking part in a two-day Leadership Summit, Aug. 3 to 4; pre-school directors will attend a meeting Aug. 5; middle and high school religion teachers will attend a Faith & Science Conference on Aug. 6; and first-year Catholic school teachers will begin the Institute for Novice Catholic Teachers program on Aug. 12.



## Congratulations Class of 2026!

*100% of our Grads were Accepted to 3 or more 4-Year Universities*



Transforming Heart and Mind. Changing the World.



Congratulations

# CLASS OF 2026

We celebrate you as you carry out the vision of St. Francis of Assisi in this special Jubilee Year!



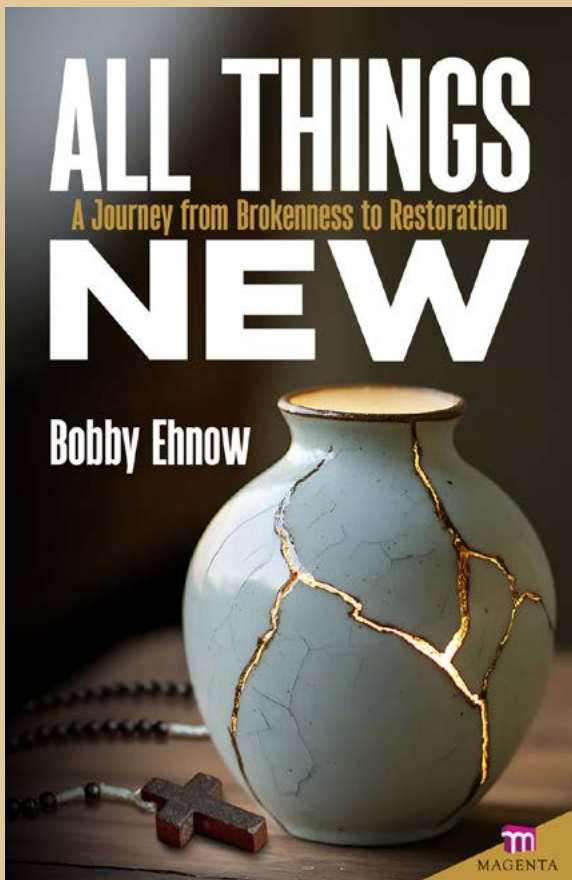
START YOUR JOURNEY TODAY: [FST.EDU](http://FST.EDU)

# All Things New: From Brokenness to Restoration

**NCP**  
**NEW CITY PRESS**  
*Enkindling the Spirit of Unity*



Magenta is a new book series that will take you on a journey to heal divisiveness and polarization. At a time when the culture seems hopelessly fractured across several polarized categories (left/right, life/choice, secular/religious, etc.), the idea of finding a way to cultivate dialogue across those boundaries is more important than ever.



All Things New: From Brokenness to Restoration tells the powerful true story of Deacon Bobby Ehnou's journey through failure, imprisonment, and spiritual transformation. Once a Marine officer and successful businessman, Ehnou confronts the realities of the criminal justice system from the inside and discovers the healing power of faith, mercy, and restorative justice. Blending personal memoir with spiritual reflection, the book explores suffering, redemption, and the call to rebuild lives and communities. A compelling witness to second chances, All Things New shows how God can bring hope, healing, and renewal even from life's deepest brokenness.

**\$24.95 202 pages Print: 978-1-56548-742-0 ebook: 978-1-56548-743-7**



**Bobby Ehnou** is an ordained deacon in the Catholic Church, currently serving in his parish, Sacred Heart Coronado. Bobby is the Director for the Office for Life, Peace and Justice for the Diocese of San Diego. He is a retired U.S. Marine Corps Officer and holds a PhD in Leadership Studies and Non-profit Management from the University of San Diego, a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma, and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Villanova University. He is married to his best friend, Colette, and together they have four children.

**Order Today! Scan the QR Code or visit**  
**[focolaremedia.com/bookstore/all-things-new](http://focolaremedia.com/bookstore/all-things-new)**



**[www.newcitypress.com](http://www.newcitypress.com) | [info@newcitypress.com](mailto:info@newcitypress.com) | 845-229-0335**

# Unpacking Faith: Our Mother's Month

By Denis Grasska



The month of May has been dedicated to Mary.

## Who is Mary? Why is she special?

Mary is the mother of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Son of God. A virgin, she conceived her Son miraculously through the power of the Holy Spirit.

To prepare her to become Jesus' mother, Mary herself was conceived without Original Sin — this is the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, infallibly defined in 1854 by Pope Pius IX — and was completely sinless throughout her life.

When her life on earth was over, she was taken — body and soul — into Heaven, so that her body would never experience decay. This is the dogma of the Assumption, which was infallibly defined in 1950 by Pope Pius XII.

## How long has May been Mary's month?

The origins of this practice are believed to go back at least to the 13th century.

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says that the present-day devotion can be traced back to the late 18th century, when a Jesuit priest at the Roman College of the Society of Jesus, seeking "to counteract infidelity and immorality among the students," made a vow to devote the month of May to Mary.

The encyclopedia says, "From



**MATERNAL:** A statue of the Blessed Mother welcomes visitors to St. Therese Parish in Del Cerro.

Rome, the practice spread to the other Jesuit colleges and thence to nearly every Catholic church of the Latin rite," becoming "the oldest instance of a devotion extending over an entire month."

## What Marian devotions are unique to May?

Many parishes and schools hold "May Crowning" ceremonies, where

Marian hymns are sung and a statue of the Blessed Mother is crowned with flowers. This is a recognition of Mary's position as Queen of Heaven.

The Feast of the Queenship of Mary, when it was instituted by Pope Pius XII in 1954, was originally observed on May 31. However, Pope St. Paul VI transferred the feast to Aug. 22.

## Does Mary have feast days in May?

May 13 is the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, which commemorates a Vatican-approved Marian apparition to three shepherd children — Lucia dos Santos and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto — in Fatima, Portugal, in 1917.

May 31 is the Feast of the Visitation, which commemorates an incident recorded in Luke 1:39-56, in which Mary "set out and traveled to the hill country in haste" to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who was already 6 months pregnant with St. John the Baptist at the time Jesus was conceived.

## Do local Catholics have special reasons to honor Mary?

In the Cantic of Mary, also known as the Magnificat, Mary said, "(God) has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed" (Luke 1:47-48). That prediction has proven true. But, if San

Diegans in particular, need additional reasons to honor Mary, other than her being the Mother of God, here are a few more.

In 1999, Pope St. John Paul II named Mary, under her title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as the patroness of the Americas.

In 1846, the U.S. bishops chose her, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, as patroness of the United States.

As Our Lady of Refuge, she serves with St. Didacus (San Diego) as co-patron of the Diocese of San Diego.

## What has Mary done since the first century?

There have been many reported apparitions of the Blessed Mother over the centuries. To date, 16 have been officially recognized by the Vatican as worthy of belief, while others have received similar approvals at the diocesan level by the local bishop.

Some of the most famous Marian apparitions include: Our Lady of Guadalupe (Mexico, 1531); Our Lady of Lourdes (France, 1858); and Our Lady of Fatima (Portugal, 1917). Others include the apparitions of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

**Mother** *Continued on Page 15*

**Newly Remodeled!**

**NAZARETH HOUSE**

ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY

- Daily Mass
- Delicious Meals
- Quality Care with 24 hrs. Licensed Nurses
- Private Living Spaces with Scenic Patio Views
- Engaging Activities in a Welcoming Social Environment
- Beauty Salon
- Library

For information and to schedule a tour contact:

**Amber Zendejas**  
DIRECTOR OF ADMISSION

Amber@NazarethHouseSD.org  
619-563-0480

**NazarethHouseSD.org**  
6333 Rancho Mission Rd, San Diego, CA 92108  
Lic # 372000400

Scan for a Virtual Tour

Now is the time to send a card with a special message to those in

# Hospice

At this time I hope you remember the friendship we shared with joy and love. Take the joy and love with you as you journey on. Fill your heart with love.

**EIGHT MESSAGES AVAILABLE**

Cards available at:

**O'Connor's Church Goods**  
619.283.2306  
4780 Mission Gorge Place  
San Diego, CA 92120  
OConnorsChurchSupply.com

**Our Lady's Gifts**  
619.234.0162  
1669 Columbia Street  
San Diego, CA 92101  
*Parking lot is at 1629 Columbia Street*

**Mother** *Continued from Page 14*

(France, 1830), who appeared to St. Catherine Labouré and requested the creation of what is known today as the Miraculous Medal, and Our Lady of Kibeho (Rwanda, 1981-1989), who is believed to have warned of the horrors of the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

**Has Mary appeared in the U.S.?**

The purported “Bayside Apparitions” that Veronica Lueken, a housewife from Bayside, New York, claimed to receive from 1970 until her death in 1995, were condemned by the Church.

But the United States is home to the site of an approved Marian apparition — Our Lady of Champion — in Champion, Wisconsin, where the Blessed Mother appeared in 1859 to Adele Brice. Those apparitions were approved as worthy of belief in 2010 by Bishop David L. Ricken of the Diocese of Green Bay.

You can learn more about this apparition at the website of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, [championshrine.org](http://championshrine.org).

**How many diocesan parishes are named after Mary?**

Twenty-three parishes in the Diocese of San Diego are named after her, including The Immaculata, Immaculate Conception, Mater Dei, Queen of Angels, and three named after Our Lady of Guadalupe. There’s even one named after her mother, St. Anne.

**What are some ways to honor Mary beyond May?**

In various apparitions, the Blessed Mother has asked the faithful to pray a daily rosary. Have you considered taking up this practice, even if it means starting slowly with a weekly rosary or even a single decade each day? With the rosary available on CD and as a digital download, it’s easier than ever to pray it on a 20-minute commute.

Another way to honor Mary is by practicing the Five First Saturdays Devotion. About eight years after the apparitions at Fatima, Mary appeared again to one of the three visionaries, asking her to promote this devotion. (Catholic Answers lays out the requirements here: [catholic.com/qa/first-saturday-devotion-requirements](http://catholic.com/qa/first-saturday-devotion-requirements).) To those who perform this devotion, Mary promises “to assist them at the hour of death with all the graces necessary for the salvation of their souls.”

The Church has attached indulgences to the recitation of many Marian prayers, including the rosary, Magnificat, Memorare, and Hail Holy Queen. This means that, in addition to honoring Mary, these prayers can reduce the time that you (or a deceased loved one) will have to spend in Purgatory. A listing of prayers with indulgences attached to them can be found in the “Manual of Indulgences,” viewable online at [holysjoe.org/indulgences/Indulgences\\_1999.pdf](http://holysjoe.org/indulgences/Indulgences_1999.pdf).

**Faithful Serve as Witnesses Of Jesus’ Resurrection****Vatican News**

VATICAN CITY

— Pope Leo XIV

recently reflected

on the central role of the Eucharist in sustaining faith.



He invited the faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square for the Regina Caeli on April 12, the Second Sunday of Easter, to ask themselves

“Where can we find the risen Jesus? How can we recognize him? How can we believe?”

He explained that faith is not always immediate or easy. “It was not easy for Thomas, and it is not easy for us either,” he said, adding that “faith needs to be nourished and sustained.”

For this reason, he continued, the Church invites the faithful to gather every Sunday, the “eighth day,” to celebrate the Eucharist.

“During Mass, we listen to the words of Jesus, we pray, we profess our faith ... His Body and Blood nourish us, so that we too may become witnesses of his resurrection.”

The pope then went on to emphasize that participation in Sunday Mass is essential, as “the Sunday Eucharist is indispensable to the Christian life.”

Turning then to the witness of the early Church, Pope Leo pointed to the Martyrs of Abitene, who chose death rather than abandon the celebration of the Eucharist. “They replied that they could not live without celebrating the Lord’s Day.”

The pope explained that it is in the Eucharist that faith grows and is strengthened, and where believers are united as members of one body.

“It is there that our efforts, though limited, are united by God’s grace ... for the accomplishment of a single great plan of salvation that embraces all humanity.”

He also stressed the missionary dimension of Mass, noting that the term itself signifies “sending forth.” Christians, he said, are called to bring what they receive into their daily lives, becoming “witnesses of charity and messengers of reconciliation.”

Bringing his address to a close, Pope Leo stressed that, “In a world that is in such great need of peace, this calls on us more than ever to be steadfast and faithful in our Eucharistic encounter with the risen Lord.”



**ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY**  
CAMARILLO, CALIFORNIA

## ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY NOW OFFERS AN ONLINE M.A. IN PASTORAL MINISTRY PROGRAM FOR THE LAITY

This program will help lay ministers increase their knowledge of the Catholic intellectual tradition and improve their ministerial skills for the life of the Church. Students will be prepared to work in different areas of ministry and make professional and personal connections with others of the same mind and spirit.

For more information  
Email: [mapm@stjohnsem.edu](mailto:mapm@stjohnsem.edu)  
or visit [www.stjohnsem.edu](http://www.stjohnsem.edu)

A studio with professional video, audio, and lighting equipment has been built to produce visually stunning content by our world-class faculty. This studio allows our students to have an enjoyable technological experience.



Watch a brief video about the program



# Sharing Creation Care On the Road

COURTESY CARE FOR CREATION MINISTRY

**ADVOCATES:** A San Diego delegation participated in the “Laudato Si” Youth Advocacy Summit on April 20 at the State Capitol in Sacramento. The group included Bishop Michael Pham, Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido and Father Scott Santarosa, SJ, and youth from Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Barrio Logan and from Mater Dei and Cathedral Catholic high schools.

By Christina Bagaglio Slentz, Ph.D.



Though Earth Day is a secular celebration, it offered us yet another reminder to care for creation.

It also gave us an opportunity to share with the wider world the Catholic teachings on caring for our common home. Did you attend an Earth Day celebration this year? Our Creation Care Ministry was at the South Bay Earth Day celebration and the La Mesa Earth Day Festival, both on April 18. Maybe you saw us there?

## Launching ‘Laudato Si’

Christ the King Parish took advantage of this special day to launch their “Laudato Si” effort with their catechetical program. After a welcome and opening prayer by pastor Father T.J. Jennings, Creation Care leader Rey Estrada led a day of learning about this principle of Catholic Social Teaching with Jorge Soto and the CTK Fidelis Scholars.

“Nature is like God’s art,” Estrada began. Then, he asked the students if they knew Pope Francis had written them a letter, and he then showed them a cartoon on the letter Pope Francis wrote to everyone on caring for our common home — “Laudato Si.”

CTK students interacted with the presenters as they discussed what happens to our waterways when plastics and pollution intrude. Estrada demonstrated this effect by combining the things that often corrupt our waterways in a blender.

The students agreed this polluted water was not what the fish and sea life wanted to experience. Moreover, only humans are responsible for this pollution, and only humans can fix this problem.

Following the classroom experience, the whole group went outside to do a clean-up of the parish grounds. When they finished, they celebrated with a St. Francis of Assisi cake.



## Earth Day on the Road

Again, this year, students from the Diocese of San Diego traveled in April during “Earth Day month” to the statewide “Laudato Si” Youth Advocacy Summit in Sacramento on April 20. Over 350 students gathered, attended Mass, ate together, held a public witness and prayer service at the Capitol, and visited their state representatives to advocate for proposed bills that align with Catholic Social Teaching

related to the environment and human dignity. Our contingent came from Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish (San Diego) and Mater Dei and Cathedral Catholic High Schools. Our prayers went with them.

## Beyond Earth Day

If you are interested in finding creative ways to present Caring for Creation to your parish or school, please reach out to the Creation Care Ministry and Christina Slentz at [cslentz@sdcatholic.org](mailto:cslentz@sdcatholic.org). We are excited to work with you. September is the Season of Creation, focusing on Sister Water this year, and, of course, we continue to celebrate the extraordinary Jubilee Year of St. Francis of Assisi. There’s no time like the present to begin responding to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor and vulnerable.



INTO THY HANDS, O Lord, we commend the spirits of these beloved ones who are gone before us into the realm of thy eternal happiness and peace. AMEN



**Goodbody**  
MORTUARY  
Since 1920

**(619) 582-1700**  
[goodbodymortuary.com](http://goodbodymortuary.com)

5027 El Cajon Blvd.  
San Diego's Leading  
Catholic Funeral Directors  
FD LIC #790

Every Detail Remembered | Dignity | Receive Free Information with No Obligation by Contacting Us.



Send pictures of your family or parish illustrating Care for Creation to [cslentz@sdcatholic.org](mailto:cslentz@sdcatholic.org). We will post them on our Facebook and Instagram accounts.

[sdcatholic.org/creation](http://sdcatholic.org/creation)



## Big Celebration for 'Little Missionaries'

DAVID MAUNG

**PEACE BEWITHYOU:** Students offer the sign of peace at the Missionary Childhood Association Mass on March 25 at Our Mother of Confidence Parish.

By Denis Grasska



**Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido had heavenly assistance with his homily at the annual Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) Mass.**

It was held March 25 at Our Mother of Confidence Church in University City. Almost 420 people attended, including nearly 285 Catholic school students.

At the bishop's invitation, five canonized "saints" shared their personal stories, including St. Rose of Lima, St. Francis Xavier, St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Lorenzo Ruiz and St. Francis of Assisi.

The saints — in reality, elementary school students in costume — weren't a loquacious bunch.

When Bishop Pulido concluded a brief chat with St. Rose by asking if there was anything else she'd like to say, she replied, "Well, I think I said everything."

St. Francis Xavier disclosed that he learned foreign languages to preach the Gospel in Asia as a missionary. But he declined with a smile when Bishop Pulido asked if he'd like to say a few words in any of those languages.

St. Therese of Lisieux, asked by the bishop if she had any advice, kept it short and sweet: "Believe in God."

Earlier in his homily, Bishop Pulido noted the Catholic Church's long history as "a missionary Church."

"From the moment that Jesus went up to Heaven, he commissioned us to go around the world to teach, to catechize, to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and we continue to do it throughout



**OFFERTORY:** Children, some dressed in the cultural attire of other countries, presented a variety of offertory gifts at the MCA Mass, including a large World Mission Rosary.

the last 2,000 years."

"I'm so glad you participate as missionaries, as little missionaries, helping other children, with your prayers, your sacrifices, and even your money," he told the children.

Founded in 1843, the Missionary Childhood Association is one of the four Pontifical Mission Societies, which operate under the jurisdiction of the pope. In the Diocese of San Diego, the MCA is overseen by the Office for the Missions. Through the MCA, children in kindergarten through eighth grade are encouraged to support their peers in mission countries.

Some children attended the Mass in the cultural attire of another country, and the Prayers of the Faithful were read by children in various languages.

Just before the conclusion of Mass, representatives from 28 schools and one parish religious education

program received a certificate of recognition for MCA participation. A pizza lunch was held in the parish hall after Mass.

Trevor Nochta, an eighth-grader at St. Martin of Tours Academy in La Mesa, was still dressed in a black cassock after the Mass. During the liturgy, he had portrayed St. Francis Xavier.

Reflecting on the value of starting early in supporting the missions, he said, "It's important for everyone around the world to know about God, especially at a young age, so that we can spread the word of God just as saints like St. Francis Xavier did."

Nochta said that his favorite part of the Mass was seeing people "dressed in different outfits, representing their culture," but all of them "unified through God."

Seated together at the luncheon, Trinnell Lewis and his son, Ryan, shared

their thoughts.

"For me and our family," the elder Lewis said, "(this event is) special because we get to see all these different families and communities, kids from all over the city, all come together" to worship God and "to show support for other kids throughout the world."

Ryan, an eighth-grader at St. Kieran School in El Cajon, was wearing cultural attire that reflected his African heritage. He said that, when you support the missions, you "can contribute to (solving) problems in other areas and grow closer as a community of Catholics."

Molly Schroeder, the eighth-grade homeroom teacher at St. Charles School in Imperial Beach, found it "wonderful" to witness so many schools come together for the Mass.

"Seeing all the students in their cultural attire," she added, "was super beautiful and ... a reminder of the Universal Church that's present everywhere but also present here in San Diego."

Schroeder brought six students with her to the Mass, including eighth-grader Elijah Daub.

"When we support the missions, we can help people from across the globe, people who are in poverty," Daub said, sharing that the subject hits close to home because he has "very poor" cousins living in the Philippines.

"We can improve the quality of life for others," he said, "and I feel like it's important to establish those connections from a young age because it becomes a lifelong habit."

More information:  
[sd catholic.org/missions/missionary-childhood-association](https://sd catholic.org/missions/missionary-childhood-association)



# News Briefs

## Young Adults Invited To Happy Hour

The San Diego chapter of Young Catholic Professionals (YCP) hosts regular events for young Catholics in their 20s and 30s. Next up will be a “Holy Happy Hour” from 6:30 to 9 p.m., Tuesday, May 12, at AleSmith Brewing Company (9990 AleSmith Court, San Diego 92126).

Entry is free for members and \$5 for non-members. Attendees can enjoy craft beer, networking, and conversations about faith and life with priests, religious sisters and fellow young adults. For information and to register, visit [ycpsandiego.org](http://ycpsandiego.org).

## Women’s Retreat to Be Held in Julian

JULIAN — The Whispering Winds Women’s Auxiliary Spring Retreat will be held from May 15 to 17 at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center in Julian.

The theme will be “When Jesus Sees You: Encounter, Healing and Mission.” The guest speaker will be Anne Truant. Participants will arrive at 4 p.m. on Friday and depart after lunch on Sunday.

The cost is \$240 for Women’s Auxiliary members and \$260 for non-members. Register by Friday, May 8, at [whisperingwinds.org/womens-retreat](http://whisperingwinds.org/womens-retreat).

## Magnificat Meal Set for May 16

ESCONDIDO — All are invited to the next quarterly Magnificat Meal, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Saturday, May 16, at St. Mary Parish in Escondido.

Magnificat is a “woman-to-woman ministry” that encourages faith through a meal, music, personal testimony, and prayer. Mass will be at 8 a.m. in the church, followed by breakfast in the parish hall.

The cost to attend is \$30 by May 9 and \$33 afterward. Registration is required. More information is available at (760) 271-7743 or [magnificat.northcounty@yahoo.com](mailto:magnificat.northcounty@yahoo.com).

## Retreat to Offer Healing From Abortion

ESCONDIDO — The Rachel’s Hope ministry is hosting a professionally led healing retreat for women who have had an abortion. It will be held from Friday, May 29, to Sunday, May 31, at St. Mary Parish (102 East 13th Ave.) in Escondido.

The cost to attend is \$130 per person; partial scholarships are available. For information or registration, call or text (619) 244-5021. Learn more at [RachelsHope.org](http://RachelsHope.org).

## St. Charles Parish Celebrating 80th Anniversary

St. Charles Parish in Imperial Beach will celebrate a milestone at its Annual Spring Bazaar, June 6 to 7. The parish is turning 80 years old.

The bazaar will be held from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

According to the parish website, plans for St. Charles Parish began in the summer of 1946. The community’s first Mass was celebrated Oct. 6, 1946, by San Diego’s founding Bishop Charles F. Buddy. It was held in a

house that was converted into a chapel; the property was donated by the Egger Family, which later donated land for the development and construction of a new church.

The first Mass in that new church was held on the morning of Christmas Eve in 1946. Parish growth led to further construction in subsequent decades. The present church was dedicated by then Bishop Francis J. Furey on Jan. 23, 1966.

The church’s bell tower, containing

**Briefs** *Continued on Page 19*

## Mary Elizabeth Accardi, LMFT

**MARRIAGE, FAMILY & CHILD COUNSELOR**  
MFT LIC. #20751



2067 W. Vista Way, Suite 130  
Vista, CA 92083

**The Shops**  
1030 La Bonita Dr., Suite 130  
Lake San Marcos, CA 92078  
**(760) 304-4522**



## Spiritual Ministry Center

Religious of the Sacred Heart offer year-round directed and private retreats, including the 30-day Spiritual Exercises and Self-Directed Sabbaticals. We are one and a half blocks from the ocean in comfortable townhouses with large private rooms with baths.

Our silent retreat center in naturally beautiful environs invites relaxation and prayer.

Visit our website for retreats and spiritual direction.

4822 Del Mar Avenue, San Diego, CA 92107 • (619) 224-9444 • [spiritmin@rscj.org](mailto:spiritmin@rscj.org)  
**spiritmin.org**





**KATE ROMOSOD**  
REALTOR®  
(858) 518-2344  
[Kate.Romosod@gmail.com](mailto:Kate.Romosod@gmail.com)  
Cal BRE#01957292

*Upon closing, \$500 will be donated on your behalf to the church you are registered at, and \$100 will be donated to “The Southern Cross,” or any charitable organization of your choice.*

*Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated*

# Am I Called?

**Do I think about being a Brother, Sister or Priest?**

**Does the idea come to me often?**


**Does the idea scare me?**

**I SHOULD CONTACT**

**Fr. Marc Gandolfo**  
858.490.8382  
[mgandolfo@sdccatholic.org](mailto:mgandolfo@sdccatholic.org)

**Sr. Kathy Warren**  
858.490.8289  
[kwarren@sdccatholic.org](mailto:kwarren@sdccatholic.org)

SPONSORED BY:  
San Diego Serra Club – North Coast  
[northcoast.serrasandiego.org](http://northcoast.serrasandiego.org)



# O’CONNOR’S

CHURCH SUPPLY & GIFTS

## Shop with Us Today

**CHURCH GOODS & RELIGIOUS ARTICLES**  
Rosaries • Jewelry • Books • First Communion Gifts  
Baptism Gifts • Statues • Art • Holy Cards • Icons  
Vestments • Chalices • Ciboria • Mass Kits • Candles  
And much more.

---

Shop online at [www.OConnorsChurchSupply.com](http://www.OConnorsChurchSupply.com)  
4780 Mission Gorge Place San Diego, CA 92120 | 619-283-2306

**Briefs** *Continued from Page 18*

four Mission-style bells, is a landmark in South Bay.

**Eucharistic Pilgrimage To Visit Diocese**

The second annual California Eucharistic Pilgrimage, hosted by the pilgrimage nonprofit organization Camino de California, will include a 10-day driving pilgrimage from Friday, May 29, to Sunday, June 7.

It will visit all 21 historic California Missions, in honor of the Jubilee Year of St. Francis of Assisi, which commemorates the 800th anniversary of the saint's death. It will be in

the Diocese of San Diego on June 6 and 7 and provide local Catholics with opportunities to participate in Mass, Eucharistic processions and Eucharistic adoration.

The Blessed Sacrament is being transported from Sonoma to San Diego in a special Eucharistic van. More than 100 Eucharistic pilgrims will accompany the Eucharist for the entire pilgrimage.

Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido, who is among several Catholic leaders who have endorsed the pilgrimage, described it as "an important spiritual initiative" that provides "a profound opportunity for the faithful to journey

together in prayer, reflection and fellowship."

For more information, visit [camino.decalifornia.org](http://camino.decalifornia.org).

**University Holding Grand Opening of Creative Arts Complex**

ESCONDIDO — John Paul the Great Catholic University invites the public to the dedication of its 30,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Creative Arts Complex, which will support students in film, acting, design and more.

On Saturday, June 13, San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone — a former auxiliary bishop of San Diego — will bless JPCatholic's new facility in Escondido. The event will begin at 1:30 p.m. with the blessing and remarks from Archbishop Cordileone, followed by speeches by the university's president, Dr. Derry Connolly, and key faculty. There will be guided tours, refreshments and games, beginning at 2:30 p.m.; Mass at 4 p.m.; and a 6:30 p.m. jazz concert by the student

band The Rhapsodics.

RSVP for free at [jpcatholic.edu/go/grandopening](http://jpcatholic.edu/go/grandopening).

**'Million Meal Event' Returning**

Since 2021, the Million Meal Event has packed more than 5 million meals for hungry families across the border and around the world.

The event, a charitable project of the permanent deacons of the Diocese of San Diego, returns on June 13 and 14 at Cathedral Catholic High School in San Diego. For the first time, participants will pack 2 million meals in one event. Half will be distributed across the border and internationally, while the remaining 1 million meals will remain local, distributed by Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego to help feed families in need throughout our own community.

More than 5,100 volunteers and \$600,000 are required to make this possible.

Learn more or register at [ccdsd.org/million-meals-event](http://ccdsd.org/million-meals-event).



**San Diego Catholic Worker  
50 YEAR LUNCHEON CELEBRATION**

Father Gil Meatballs and Spaghetti; 2 Auctions; 50-50 Chance; Sing-a-Long Reminiscing Old Times and Our Future; Former Volunteers Please Come!  
Easy Parking Available

**SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2026, 12:00-3 PM**

**ST. MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH HALL**  
1945 Illion Street, San Diego, CA 92110 | Donation: \$30  
Advance Payment via Paypal, at [SanDiegoCatholicWorker.org](http://SanDiegoCatholicWorker.org), or  
Send Donations to San Diego Catholic Worker Dinner  
P.O. Box 127244, San Diego, CA 92112


**Every Dollar You Contribute Helps Us Provide Meals for Hundreds of Hungry and Homeless People.**

Catholic Workers Are Never Paid For Their Service.

**ATTENTION ADVERTISERS** — We appreciate your business. However, errors sometimes occur. Please read your ad the first day it runs. If you should find a mistake in your ad, please let us know right away, by calling (858) 490-8266. We'll be happy to make the necessary changes. Tearsheets are provided upon request.

**LIMITS OF LIABILITY** — The Southern Cross assumes no financial responsibility for errors or omissions of copy. It is the advertiser's responsibility to read ad proofs before publication and notify us of any errors. We reserve the right to adjust in full any error for which we are responsible by publishing a corrected insertion. Requests for adjustments must be made within 30 days of ad publication. All copy must be approved by the newspaper, which reserves the right to request changes or reject an ad. Publisher reserves the right to cancel any ad at any time. All advertising is subject to credit approval.

**BILINGUAL PSYCHOTHERAPY**  
Based in the Catholic Faith  
*Sliding fee scale, and various insurances accepted.*



**SPECIALIZING IN:**

- Anxiety and Depression
- Parenting
- Bereavement and Loss
- Marriage & Family Relationships

**Mary L Hill**  
MA LMFT (Lic. # 83383)  
**760-687-9883**  
[marylehillmft@gmail.com](mailto:marylehillmft@gmail.com)  
[www.marylehillmft.com](http://www.marylehillmft.com)  
1650 Linda Vista Dr. Ste. 210,  
San Marcos, CA 92078

**DONATE YOUR CAR**



**CarsForBabies.org**

- **FREE Vehicle Pickup**
- **All Vehicles - Running or Not**
- **100% Tax Deductible**

**BENEFITTING**

*Light and Life*  
70x7  
**ULTRASOUND**  
*Instrument of Light & Life*



Knights of Columbus

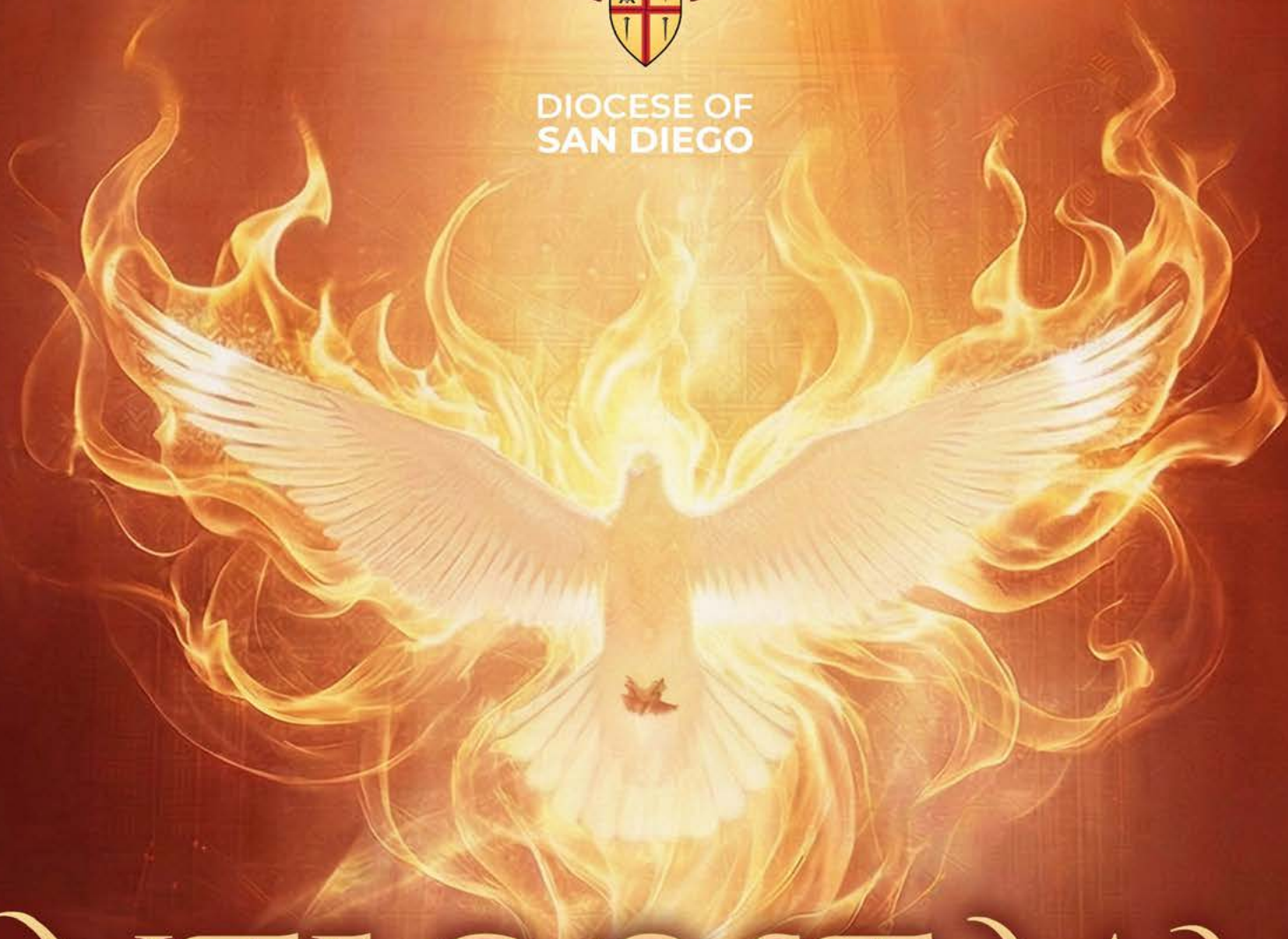
Call: **858-333-8751**

**MOBILE ULTRASOUND**  
**CHANGING LIVES**  
**SAVING LIVES**





DIOCESE OF  
SAN DIEGO



# PENTECOST MASS

*for all Peoples*

Saturday, May 23, 2026

*Call to Worship: 10 am*

*Mass: 11 am*

*Festival of Cultures: 12 pm*

*Traditional attire is encouraged*  
*Free family event*

*Cathedral Catholic High School*  
5555 Del Mar Heights,  
San Diego, CA 92130



Mass presider  
*Bishop Michael Pham*

For more information contact: [adiaz@sdccatholic.org](mailto:adiaz@sdccatholic.org) or call (858) 490-8306