

# THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

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KATIE VENTURA

**SOLIDARITY:** Imam Taha Hassane addresses an Interfaith Community Vigil on May 19 at Lindbergh Neighborhood Park to support the Muslim community. He leads the Islamic Center of San Diego, the target of an attack that killed three community members the previous day. Father Bradley Easterbrooks, left, of the Diocese of San Diego, was among the faith leaders who attended the event.



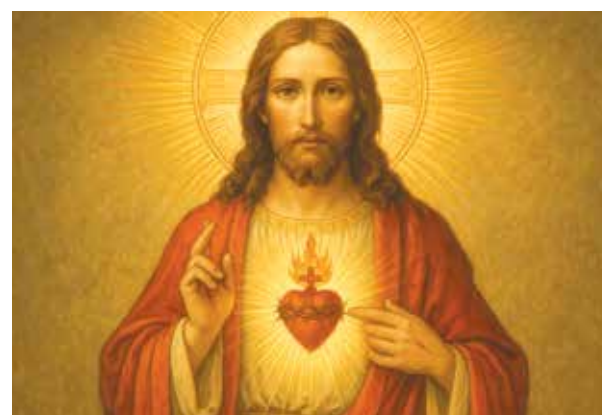
## Attention, Shoppers!

Twelve parishes open a thrift store to raise funds to help prevent homelessness. **Page 4**



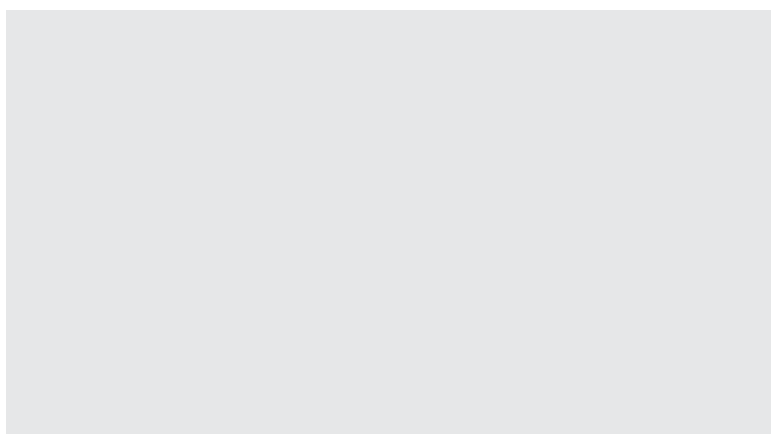
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P.O. Box 81869  
San Diego, CA 92138-1869

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

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**WEB:** thesoutherncross.org

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**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.

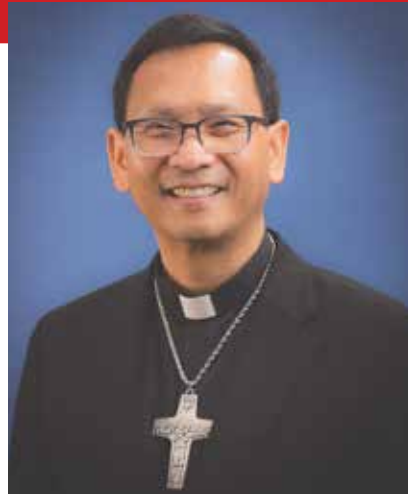
## MORE FOR YOU

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



# Diocese to Study All Aspects of Vocations

Message from Bishop Michael Pham



As we continue our shared commitment to strengthening the life of the Church of San Diego and fostering a culture of vocations, I write to inform you that a diocesan task force has been established to oversee a comprehensive study of our diocesan vocations efforts and priestly formation. I established the task force last December and, now, we have recently engaged Avanti Advisors, a Philadelphia-based consulting firm, to collaborate with us as we listen, discern and plan for the future. The names of those I have appointed to the task force are included here.

In partnership with Avanti Advisors, the task force will focus its work on several key areas vital to the future of priestly life and ministry in our diocese in the next 12 months.

## Vocations

Efforts will be made to better understand the motivations of those discerning a vocation and to identify them earlier. The task force will also evaluate current admission practices and consider alternative models, such as preparatory programs or other best practices from around the country. Strengthening engagement with high school discerners and deepening pre-evangelization efforts will be essential components of this work.

## Task Force Members

Father Ronald Bagley, CJM

Msgr. Steven Callahan, Chair

Pilar Cárdenas-Gimber

Sister Katia Chavez, SJS

Stephen J. Conroy, Ph.D.

Msgr. Daniel Dillabough

Charlotte Fajardo

Father Marc Gandolfo

Father Anthony Jimenez

Father Peter McGuine, Vice Chair

Father Lauro Minimo

Deacon Manuel Rivas

Father Anthony Saroki, Secretary

Father Edmundo Zárate-Suárez

## Avanti Advisors Team

Christopher Mominey

Founder and Principal Consultant

Father Ronald Nuzzi

University of Notre Dame and

Diocese of Youngstown

Katie Clinton

Syracuse University and

Diocese of Syracuse

Hector Ramirez

Diocese of Phoenix

Gabriel Gambert

Archdiocese of Miami

## Selection and Retention

The task force will examine diocesan selection processes and the experiences of candidates in formation. Attention will be given to identifying common factors among those who discontinue formation, as well as assessing how the unity and witness of our clergy may influence vocational interest.

## Seminary Formation

A thorough evaluation of our partnership with the Franciscan School

of Theology will be undertaken. The structure and effectiveness of pastoral year and semester placements will be reviewed to ensure a proper balance of academic, pastoral and spiritual formation. Additionally, attention will be given to fostering a culture of charity, unity and collaboration within seminary life.

## Post-Ordination Formation

Recognizing the importance of ongoing formation, we will also explore the development of a leadership and management certificate program for priests in their first five years of ordination. The task force will also review current mentor-mentee structures and continuing formation practices.

## Additional Considerations

The study will also address the effective use of digital media in promoting vocations, review current admission criteria and explore ways to alleviate administrative burdens on priests, including the development of emerging lay leadership models.

This effort represents an important step forward as we seek to strengthen our diocesan Church at this challenging time and ensure that we are faithfully and effectively forming the priests our people need — now and in the future.

I ask for your prayers for the members of the task force, Avanti Advisors and for all those who will contribute to this important work. May the Holy Spirit guide us in wisdom, unity and zeal for the Gospel.

Wishing you blessings during this Easter Season!

Mary, Mother of the Church,  
Pray for Us!

# Diocese Warns About Fake Priests



The Diocese of San Diego issued the following statement on May 14:

“The faithful of the Diocese of San Diego are asked to exercise caution with a group of men fraudulently posing as Catholic priests and a bishop.

“They claim to be Guadalupan Missionaries of the Most Holy Sac-

rament MGSS (*Misioneros Guadalupanos del Santísimo Sacramento*) and are offering sacraments to Catholic families in exchange for money. The public is advised that any sacraments conferred by these men are invalid and illicit.

“This group of men — some of them ordained priests but now laicized — have formed their own sect and reside in Rosarito Beach, but are not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. We have received

reports that these fraudulent priests have been sighted in our diocese and the faithful are asked to contact their pastor if they become aware of any incidents.

“Some of the fraudulent priests are using these names: Bishop Lauro, Octavio Aguilar Oliveros, Gabriel Figueroa, and Raymundo Figueroa Pérez.

“If anyone is a victim of fraud relating to these fraudulent priests, please contact the authorities.”



**PRAYER:** Faith organizations held an Interfaith Community Vigil on May 19 at Lindbergh Neighborhood Park to pray with and for the Muslim community. The vigil was held blocks away from the Islamic Center of San Diego, where three people were shot to death the previous day, an attack believed to be a hate crime. The event was convened by the San Diego Organizing Project.

## Church Stands with Muslim Community

By Aida Bustos



**SAN DIEGO**  
— “An attack on one faith community is an attack on the sacred dignity of all human life.”

That is what Bishop Michael Pham stated in response to the shooting on May 18 at the Islamic Center of San Diego that left five people dead. Three were killed at the center, including a security guard, a manager and a community member who are credited with helping to save lives.

The suspects, two teenaged boys, were found dead nearby of self-inflicted wounds. Authorities are investigating the shooting at the center — the largest mosque in San Diego County — as a hate crime. The teens met online, where they were radicalized, said the agent in charge of San Diego’s FBI office, Mark Remily. He said authorities recovered a manifesto left by the teens that expressed hate against a wide range of races and religions, more than Muslims in the mosque.

“We stand united in solidarity and prayer with the Muslim community, which was subjected to a senseless act of violence,” Bishop Pham said in a statement.

“The Islamic Center has been a longtime partner in our collaborative work for justice, especially in accompanying immigrants. Houses of worship must always be sanctuaries of peace, safety and prayer.

“On behalf of the entire Roman Catholic community of San Diego, I



offer my deepest condolences, solidarity and fervent prayers to the families of the victims and the entire Muslim community,” his statement concluded.

At the national level, Catholic bishops also assured the Muslim community of prayerful solidarity.

“We stand with Imam Taha Hassane, the entire Muslim community, and all who mourn in the wake of this senseless violence, affirming our shared commitment to the dignity of every human life and the rejection of hatred in all its forms,” said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, in a statement.

An estimated 65,000 to 100,000 Muslims live in San Diego County, many with roots in the Middle East and North Africa.

The shooting was the latest attack on religious institutions across the nation. On Aug. 27, 2025, a man opened

fire during a school Mass at Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis, killing two students and injuring 28 others, including 24 children. The gunman died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound at the scene.

Seven years ago in San Diego County, a man set fire to a mosque in Escondido. A month later, on April 27, 2019, he opened fire at Chabad of Poway synagogue, fatally shooting one woman and injuring three people, including the rabbi. The man was later tried and sentenced to life in prison.

The Islamic Center’s director, Imam Hassane, has long joined other faith leaders in the region in advocating for the most vulnerable. He stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, when he led the San Diego Diocese, and, most recently, with Bishop Pham, calling for the fair treatment of immigrants.

Last Jan. 25, he joined dozens of

faith leaders who walked through Barrio Logan streets, in an event billed as “Standing for All That Is Sacred.”

The leaders stopped at several places where ICE agents had detained community members to share a reflection and to pray. Imam Hassane was one of them, sharing a bit about his faith tradition, emphasizing the shared responsibility everyone has to protect the dignity of all human beings.

On the afternoon of the shooting outside of the Islamic Center, he spoke once more publicly.

“All that I can say at this moment is that my community is mourning,” he began. “This is something that we never expected to take place, but at the same time, the religious intolerance and the hate, unfortunately, that exist in our nation is unprecedented.

“All of us, we are responsible for spreading the culture of tolerance, the culture of love. All of us, from whatever position we have as parents, as media people, as elected officials, as law enforcement, as religious leaders, all of us, can do something to protect our nation, to protect our society.”

He described the mosque he leads.

“People come to the mosque to pray, to socialize, to celebrate, to enjoy their time together. Muslims and non-Muslims alike, everyone has been always welcomed.

“So, let’s do our best to spread this culture of love, and tolerance, and sympathy for the sake of this nation, for the sake of the future generation.”



## Parishes Open Thrift Store to Support Poor

DENIS GRASSKA

**SHOPPING SPREE:** Shoppers looked over the secondhand treasures on sale during the grand opening of the St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store on May 13.

By Denis Grasska



**SPRING VALLEY**  
— A new thrift store in Spring Valley is blessed and open for business.

The St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store, located at 9742 Campo Road, had its grand opening on May 13. Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido, joined by other Catholic clergy, was on hand to bless the 5,000-square-foot store and participate in the traditional ribbon-cutting.

The thrift store, which is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., represents a collaborative project among the Society of St. Vincent de Paul conferences based at 12 local Catholic parishes.

These include nearby Santa Sophia Parish, which is visible from the store's parking lot, as well as Christ the King, Holy Family, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Most Precious Blood, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (San Ysidro), St. Francis of Assisi, St. John the Evangelist (Encinitas), St. Pius X (Jamul), St. Stephen, and San Rafael parishes.

The conferences' presidents voted last October to support the project by providing volunteers to staff the store and hosting "fill-the-truck" events at their parishes, where parishioners can drop off donated items before or after Mass.

In exchange, the net proceeds from the store will be shared among those conferences to fund their charitable work, which includes helping people to pay their rent or utility bills, buy food, make car repairs so that they will have reliable transportation to work, and more to prevent them from falling into homelessness.

One of the store's volunteer staffers expressed her pride in the new establishment.

"It looks more like a boutique than a thrift store, but the prices are thrift store prices," said Jeanne Obenchain, who described it as "clean, bright (and) welcoming," with "lovely displays."

The store's Catholic identity is also apparent inside. Various religious arti-

**St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store**

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m.- 6 p.m., at 9742 Campo Road, Spring Valley

(619) 505-3900  
svdpthriftsd.com

cles, including statues of the Blessed Mother, could be seen for sale in the display case near checkout. Meanwhile, adorning the walls, a series of posters shares quotes from such Catholic luminaries as St. Vincent de Paul, Mother Teresa, St. Francis of Assisi and Pope Benedict XVI.

Obenchain, a member of Christ the King Parish, said that the store's inventory includes "a conglomeration" of items, ranging from clothing and housewares to books, children's toys and furniture.

Customers were lined up outside the store prior to the blessing ceremony, awaiting their opportunity to peruse the merchandise.

The thrift store already has "a huge backlog" of donations, said Obenchain, but isn't yet as well-staffed.

"What we need are a lot of volunteers to keep this place running smoothly," she said. "We are looking for 80 volunteers a week, and right now we have maybe 10."

Jeffrey Beamguard, a Phoenix resident who serves as store support director for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's national council, provided expert guidance to the new store's volunteer staff over the past six to seven months. He was also there at the grand opening.

Beamguard, who runs one of the Society's two "model stores" and assists others to reach their potential, said that the Society operates about 400 thrift stores across the country.

"This store is going to provide funds for neighbors in need," he explained to the assembled crowd outside. "That's the goal with all of the profits that are left over at the end of the month. For people that are in need of services, they're going to contact their local

parish, and we're going to try to help out as many of those folks as we can."

Later, in an interview with *The Southern Cross*, Beamguard reflected on why the Society chooses to focus on homelessness prevention rather than services to those who are already on the streets. He explained that it costs "about 10 times" more to accomplish the latter than it does to pay some bills to "keep them afloat" and "just to get them over the hump."

"We just want to give them that ... extra time to go find another job, get their car fixed if that's what it needs," said Beamguard. "Sometimes, it's just

their car broke down, they can't get to work anymore, and they get fired. So, it's just those little things that St. Vincent de Paul helps with that makes all the difference in the world in keeping somebody from being homeless."

In addition to raising funds to help the poor, Obenchain said, the thrift store is prepared to provide direct assistance, if necessary.

"If some homeless person comes to the door of the store," she said, "we'll invite them in and say, 'Go choose a shirt, a pair of pants, and a pair of shoes, and help yourself.'"

# Deacon's 'Searing Account' of Restoration

By Denis Grasska



In June of 2013, Deacon Bobby Ehnou found himself shackled to Ramzi Yousef, the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

Deacon Ehnou, still about 12 years away from being ordained to the diaconate, had been convicted of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and for bribery. The notorious terrorist was his seatmate on the U.S. Marshals Service's airline, nicknamed "Con Air," en route to federal prison in Florence, Colorado.

Deacon Ehnou said that, after "a little bit of bravado back and forth," the odd couple actually opened up to one another during their seven-hour journey.

"We had a fruitful conversation about faith, of all things," said Deacon Ehnou, who uses the story of that flight as the opening scene in his new book, "All Things New: A Journey from Brokenness to Restoration," which was published April 15 through New City Press.

Deacon Ehnou spent 27 and a half months in prison and, in May of 2015, was released to another four months of home confinement. From September 2015 to May 2018, he earned a doctorate in Leadership Studies and Nonprofit Management from the



**SUPPORTERS:** Deacon Bobby Ehnou, right, was a speaker on restorative justice at a conference at Georgetown University on April 28, 2022. He was accompanied by Nadine Goddard and Eddie Blajos, co-founder of Restoring Citizens, a provider of reentry services for the formerly incarcerated.

University of San Diego. He joined the staff of the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice in July 2018 as associate director for restorative justice, became the office's director in October 2019, and was ordained a permanent deacon on May 24, 2025.

The title "All Things New" comes from the Book of Revelation (Rev 21:4-5).

"The purpose of the book is to change hearts and recognize that, through love — most notably, God's love — all things are possible," Deacon Ehnou said.

He explained that the book is about "God's justice." He cites the story of

the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) as an illustration of what he calls "biblical justice" and which is more widely known as "restorative justice."

"It would have been wholly justified to stone her under Jewish law, right?" he said. But Jesus "infused mercy and forgiveness into that particular scene in our Gospel, and that's what perfects justice."

Deacon Ehnou said that his book explores this concept of restorative justice through "personal storytelling" and a critical reflection on the current state of the criminal justice system. He shares his firsthand experience, as well as what he has encountered working

alongside others in detention ministry.

Writing the book was "very therapeutic and healing," Deacon Ehnou said. He thinks "the most rewarding thing" was that, when his wife read it, she could see that he understood how much pain she and their children went through "as a result of what happened to me."

Paul Callan, who wrote the book's foreword and has a "30-year bond" with Deacon Ehnou that goes back to their service in the U.S. Marine Corps, said, "The book is exactly what we most need today in our modern society, namely an honest witness telling an honest story. Bobby's book is not a 'self-help' book; it is a searing account of a personal fall, of deep loss, and of ultimate reconciliation and restoration."

David R. Karp, Ph.D., director of the University of San Diego's Center for Restorative Justice and program director for its Master of Arts in Restorative Justice, has already read his friend's book.

He said, "Bobby is courageous for telling his story and an inspiration to those who care about improving our criminal justice system."

*"All Things New" is available through Amazon.com and FocolareMedia.com. A portion of the proceeds will support prison re-entry programming in San Diego and Los Angeles.*



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July 22 - Chris O'Brien, PhD

Pope Francis, Ecology, and the Eucharist: A Franciscan Liturgical Vision of Caring for Our Common Home

August 5 - Sr. Juliet Mousseau, RSCJ, PhD

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# New Leadership at Imperial Valley Parishes

By Roman T. Flores

**EL CENTRO** — The pastoral landscape will change significantly as of July 1, as several priests begin new assignments at parishes across the Imperial Valley.



Father Antonio Morales

## Our Lady of the Valley

Our Lady of the Valley (OLOV) is the largest parish community in the Imperial Valley, serving over 4,000 families, according to church staff. It's located in El Centro, the largest city in Imperial County, with slightly more than 44,000 people.

Msgr. Francisco Cinco III — currently serving at St. Michael Church in the Paradise Hills area of San Diego — will become the administrator of OLOV as of July 1. The parish combined the campuses of St. Mary and Our Lady of Guadalupe in May of 2022.

The current pastor of OLOV, Father Mark Edney, will be on sabbatical from church administration for one year. Father Allan White, who has served as principal and teacher at St. Mary's School, will not serve in those capacities during the upcoming school year.

Current OLOV associate pastor Father Ed Horning will become pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Lakeside.

Father Kizito Uzoma Ndugbu, associate pastor, will be leaving the country to renew his visa; the date of his return is uncertain. Father Pedro Lucia, of the Escolapios religious order, who was previously assigned in Calexico, has been appointed associate pastor.

St. Mary Church, which was founded in 1907, sits on the west side of El Centro. Its campus includes the Msgr. Thomas Vidra Parish Center, where many Catholic functions in the Valley are held. The center doubles as the gymnasium for St. Mary's School.

St. Mary's sister parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, sits on the east side of the city. Its campus holds special church celebrations at its Cristo Rey Chapel.

## Borrego Springs

Father Emilio Magaña, currently at St. Mark's Parish in San Marcos, will

become pastor of St. Richard Parish in Borrego Springs. Father Magaña will also serve Christ the King Mission in the Desert Shores area of the diocese.

The "shores" in Desert Shores refers to the Salton Sea, which cascades a mere few blocks from Christ the King Mission.

Borrego Springs lies 38 miles west of Desert Shores, on the east side of the mountains of the Eagles Nest/Julian areas.

## Brawley and Westmorland

In the north end of the Imperial Valley, Father Antonio Morales — currently the pastor of St. Patrick Catholic Church in Calipatria — will become the pastor of the Catholic Communities of Brawley and Westmorland. He also serves as the dean of the El Centro deanery.

The CCBW, as it's known, is a combined parish of Sacred Heart Church and St. Margaret Mary Church in Brawley, and St. Joseph Church in Westmorland. The parish serves 1,100 families combined, according to its current pastor, Father Bernardo Lara.

Father Lara will become pastor of Our Lady of the Angels, on the eastern edge of downtown San Diego.

For context, the CCBW is the third-largest Catholic parish community in the Imperial Valley. Its flagship church, Sacred Heart Church (not to be confused with Sacred Heart Mis-

sion in Heber), was founded in 1908. While Sacred Heart Church sits near the central city square of Brawley, its surviving sister church, St. Margaret Mary, sits about nine blocks to the east. St. Margaret Mary Church was founded in 1934.

The city of Brawley is the third-largest city in Imperial County, with just over 29,000 residents.

Father Manuel Del Rio, currently at St. John of the Cross Parish in Lemon Grove, will serve as pastor at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Calipatria. This city lies about 10 miles north of Brawley and has less than 7,000 residents.

## Calexico

In the Valley's southern border, Father Hilario Flores became pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in June 2023 and will continue in that capacity.

The church, founded in 1907, is the second largest Catholic parish in the Imperial Valley, serving 1,950 families.

The nearby Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy serves students in grades TK-8th grade, with students living in the U.S. and across the border in the neighboring metropolis of Mexicali, Baja California.

The city of Calexico is the second largest populated city in Imperial County, with about 38,000 residents, whereas Mexicali's total municipal population is more than 1 million.



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



# Eucharistic Pilgrimage Returns

The Southern Cross



The second annual Camino de California

Eucharistic Pilgrimage is a 10-day driving pilgrimage from Friday, May 29, to Sunday, June 7.

Beginning in Sonoma, at Mission San Francisco Solano, the pilgrimage will visit all 21 historic California Missions. It will be in the Diocese of San Diego on June 6 and 7, bringing an estimated 200 pilgrims, including clergy and religious, for a dynamic weekend of faith-filled events across the region.

The pilgrimage's San Diego portion will begin with visits to historic mission sites, including Mission San Luis Rey, where pilgrims will process through the grounds with the Blessed Sacrament and reflect on Franciscan spirituality.

The journey will then continue to Barrio Logan for a public Eucharistic procession from Port Park to Father Joe's Villages, where participants will engage in service by distributing care packages to those in need and hear testimonies from the community.

Later in the day, pilgrims will process to Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish for a bilingual prayer experience,



**PRAYERFUL:** The Camino de California Eucharistic Pilgrimage is returning for a second year. Pictured, a participant in last year's inaugural pilgrimage holds a cross at Mass June 16, 2025, in Mission San Diego de Alcalá's St. Francis Chapel.

Eucharistic adoration, and a special message from Bishop Felipe Pulido, followed by a communal dinner. The evening will conclude at Mission San Diego de Alcalá with a solemn Holy Hour inside the historic church.

On June 7, the pilgrimage will culminate at the University of San Diego with a 9 a.m. Mass at Founders Chapel, celebrated by Bishop Pulido, followed by a Eucharistic procession across campus and a closing community brunch.

Supported by diocesan leadership, parish communities and local volun-

teers, the San Diego events highlight devotion to the Eucharist, cultural diversity and a commitment to service. All are invited to join part or all of this unique spiritual journey.

Bishop Pulido said, "I warmly invite all the faithful of our Local Church to participate, whether by walking in the pilgrimage, praying for its success, welcoming pilgrims along the way, or joining the Corpus Christi procession here in San Diego."

For a full list of events and itinerary, visit [caminodecalifornia.org](http://caminodecalifornia.org).

# \$1.6 Million Raised for Homeless Kids

The Southern Cross



Father Joe's Villages announced in May that it had raised a record-breaking \$1.6 million.

"We thank everyone who generously gave their time and gifts in support of children and their families," said Deacon Jim Vargas, president and CEO of the organization. "Their support will ensure that hundreds more children and their families are given what they need to transition away from life on the streets to a home of their own."

Over the course of the Children's Champions gala on May 2 at the U.S. Grant Hotel, guests and sponsors supported life-changing services and programs through gifts, auctions and sponsorships.

Funds raised will ensure that families and children experiencing homelessness will have access to lifesaving health care, food, therapeutic child-care and other supportive programs, a news release said.

According to this year's Point in Time count, at least 23% of the 9,803 people experiencing homelessness in the San Diego region are children under the age of 18.

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# Kids Home for Summer Break? No Sweat!

By Benjamin and Melissa Fugitt



Summer is nearly here! The children are excited.

Parents might be a bit apprehensive, wanting to plan activities that are fun, educational and spiritually uplifting. As Catholic school teachers, parents and life-long residents of San Diego, we would like to share some of our ideas, suggestions and considerations for a summer plan that the entire family can enjoy.

## Out and About

In our house, it's a constant struggle to keep eyes off of screens. The best way to do this is to get the kids out of the house, leaving the phones and tablets behind. There may be a little grumbling at first, but our area has so many destinations that you should be able to find something to help take your kids' minds off-line.

Our kids love visiting Tecolote South Shore Park with its inclusive playground, San Dieguito County Park with its suspension bridges and playground, and Old Poway Park with its working railroad.

One of our favorite activities is walking around La Jolla Village. We get coffee or treats at a local café, visit the bookstore and toy shop, and then walk



**HISTORIC:** Parents can take their children on fun day trips that build on their knowledge of faith, like visiting Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

down to the cove to look at the seals and watch the waves. North Park is another great neighborhood for walking with kids, and Liberty Station has great playgrounds along with shops, snacks and bay views.

## Building Our Faith

Finding opportunities to strengthen the faith of our students is something we think about throughout the school year. When summer comes, it presents a great opportunity to develop our faith as a family. Six years ago, we stumbled upon the "Saint Stories for Kids" podcast. It quickly became one of our favorite ways to learn about the saints and our faith while driving.

Mission San Diego de Alcalá and Mission San Luis Rey are certainly worth visiting, especially if you are able to attend Mass there. Prince of Peace Abbey has a beautiful church, gift shop and Stations of the Cross. Attending Mass with the brothers there is a great way for kids to learn about the consecrated life. Walking the quiet grounds of a mission or abbey is a perfect time to practice prayers, both formal and informal, with your children. Introduce them to new Marian prayers, Pope Francis' "Five Finger Prayer," or *Lectio Divina* during a visit to a sacred space, and they will

**Break** Continued on Page 9

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**Break** *Continued from Page 8*

remember it all the more.

As teachers, the Corporal Works of Mercy form a significant part of our classroom religion curriculum. There are concrete ways you can help your kiddos live out these Works of Mercy all around San Diego.

The Million Meal Event, Feeding San Diego, and The Surfrider Foundation are organizations that welcome kids and families to participate in genuine and meaningful service around the county. If your kids are littler, it may be easier to make homeless helper kits for our local neighbors, or encouragement cards for retirement home residents. These can be taken to the San Diego Rescue Mission, Nazareth House, or to a retirement home or shelter near you.

**Connecting at Home**

Sometimes everyone (or maybe it's just the adults) wants to spend a quiet day at home curled up with a book and some cocoa. Chances are that your kids won't want to do the same, at least not for as long as you do. Read-alouds are a great way to engage the whole family in literacy. "The Adventures of Frog and Toad" was a favorite when the kids were small, and "The Wind in the Willows" is a classic for older kids. Both books focus on friendship and building relationships, and are filled with the humor that kids love.



**SERVICE:** Many organizations welcome families with children willing to provide a helping hand, like the Million Meal Event, which packs meals for the poor. It's coming up on June 13 and 14.

Board games and card games are another way to bring the kids together when staying at home. Peaceable Kingdom has a line of cooperative games, where kids are encouraged to work together rather than compete against each other. Most young kids

are not emotionally ready to deal with "losing graciously," and tears during game-night means it won't be fun for anyone.

One of our favorite card games is "Taco Cat Goat Cheese Pizza." This simple game helps kids develop their

focus and attention, even when it's not their turn. It's fun and silly and simple enough to be enjoyed by the whole family. For older kids, or when the little ones have gone to sleep, we love "Carcassonne" and "Settlers of Catan." These take longer and have a bit of a learning curve, but they're great fun.

Cooking with your kids is another way to encourage independence and critical thinking, and explore math and science in a fun, interactive way. Getting picky eaters to engage in preparing meals makes it much more likely that they will try something new, since they've had a hand in making it. If your kiddos are too young for knives and stoves, there are lots of no-bake recipes out there. And there's always recipes for slime and salt-dough!

As teachers, San Diego summers always seem far too short. Running around and having fun with kids makes the time go even faster, and the memories made with the family are sure to stick around long after they go back to school. Summers, like childhood, fly by faster than we would like; so, make the most of both of them!

We have compiled a list of our favorite parks, books, recipes, games and religious activities here: [bfugitt.github.io/summer2026](https://github.com/bfugitt/summer2026). Enjoy!

*Benjamin and Melissa Fugitt have taught at Catholic schools for more than 20 years. They have been married for 16 years and have two children who attend Catholic school — a freshman in high school and a sixth-grader.*



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CHARLIE NEUMAN

**ADAPTATION:** Javier Durán, who has muscular dystrophy, leads the Prayers of the Faithful on April 25, during a “sensory-friendly Mass” at Holy Trinity Parish in El Cajon. Because he cannot ascend the steps to the ambo, a music stand and microphone were set up just outside the sanctuary.

By Denis Grasska



“The church is open to everyone.”

That is the simple premise behind the diocese’s approach to serving families who have loved ones with special needs.

One of them is the Durán family. On a recent Saturday at Holy Trinity Church, Javier Durán read the Prayers of the Faithful from the area just outside the sanctuary, where a music stand and microphone had been placed during a “sensory-friendly Mass.” He has muscular dystrophy and gets around in a wheelchair and uses a ventilator.

“I always wanted to be a lector, but I can’t go up the steps (to get to the altar),” he said. “Today, they gave me the opportunity to do it.”

Over the past two years, a growing number of catechists have reached out to the diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry, seeking the tools to create those opportunities.

The office has responded by hosting workshops that provide practical tips for adapting faith-formation programs and Masses. That’s in addition to its ongoing Special Needs Certification Program, offered in English and Spanish, which offers lesson planning, activities and resources to create an environment that better serves children and youth with disabilities.

The first of these workshops, presented in English, was held last July at St. Mary Magdalene Parish in San Diego. The second, in Spanish, was held April 25 at Holy Trinity Parish in El Cajon. After each workshop, participants were invited to attend what was dubbed a “sensory-friendly Mass” because it included accommodations for worshippers with a variety of special needs.

Leticia Trent, the office’s director, said that about 40 people attended the workshop and Mass in July, while the more recent event drew about 60 to the workshop and about 100 to the Mass.

“The whole point was to be creative,” said Trent, who noted that catechists have the option to include students with special needs in class, adjusting lesson plans where necessary, or take them aside for one-on-one instruction.

Ana Barraza, who leads the “Ministry for Catholics with disabilities” in the Diocese of Sacramento, presented the April 25 workshop. She provided participants with general guidelines for sensory-friendly Masses, such as dimmer lights, no bells or incense, softer music, short homilies, a Quiet Room and the availability of low-gluten hosts.

Trent said that the goal for such a Mass is to be about 40 minutes. Optional elements that could be sources of distraction or discomfort for those with heightened sensitivities are removed.

Parents of children with special needs may feel rejected when other parishioners tell them that their children are noisy or distracting at Mass, Trent said. At a sensory-friendly Mass, it’s made clear that there’s no judgment if children make noise or even if they feel restless and need to walk around inside the church.

Trent noted that the Mass readings used at the most recent sensory-friendly Mass were taken from the “Lectionary for Masses with Children,” which meant that they were shorter. For the Responsorial Psalm, only the response was sung, while the verses were spoken. Father Reynaldo Manahan, pastor of Holy Trinity Parish, used a prop in his homily — a box of crayons, which symbolized diversity — to engage children with special needs.

However, Trent said, the “most impactful” element was having parishioners with special needs fulfill liturgical roles during the Mass.

Angel Jacobo, a 13-year-old member of Holy Trinity Parish who has autism, served as a lector for the first reading.

Angel’s mother, Irene Jacobo, said her family has attended the parish for four years.

“This Mass is important for my

son,” she told *The Southern Cross*. “Given his limitations, this Mass is an opportunity for him to learn about it, then practice what he learns. It’s also a way for him to feel a part of this community.”

Trent recalled being approached after the Mass by the parent of another child with special needs, who told her that seeing Angel serve as a lector had given her hope that her 7-year-old son might do the same one day.

Javier Durán, who will turn 46 in June, and his parents have been members of Holy Trinity Parish since 2011. They attend Sunday Mass regularly.

He was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy at age 10 and has battled many health problems, including kidney disease, most recently.

In 2012, he received his First Communion. Shortly thereafter, he began helping Spanish-speaking families in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) process. He teaches some of the sessions, sometimes joined by his mother, who described herself as Javier’s hands and voice when needed.

“I like to help people learn about Jesus and become his disciples,” he said.



## How to S With Sp

**ATTENTIVE:** Angel Jacobo, a member of Holy Trinity

Barraza, who has more than 30 years in ministry and has focused for the last 17 years on ministering to those with special needs, said that Catholic adaptive curricula have been “developed and growing at a steady pace” over the last decade.

“Efforts are more noticeable as we look to welcome families with disabilities in the here and now,” she said.

Barraza said that the most common barrier seems to be the mistaken be-

**Families** *Continued on Page 11*



CHARLIE NEUMAN

**EXPERT:** Ana Barraza, an adaptive catechesis and evangelization consultant, leads a workshop for catechists prior to the “sensory-friendly Mass.”



## Serve Families with Special Needs?

CHARLIE NEUMAN

Parish who has autism, participates on April 25 in the “sensory-friendly Mass,” where he also served as lector for the first reading. His mother, Irene, said that the Mass made him “feel a part of this community.”

### Families *Continued from Page 10*

belief that a child with disabilities “does not need or cannot receive the sacraments.”

“This closes the door to the family,” she said.

Barraza said that catechetical leaders often feel “overwhelmed” when they receive a family with special needs. But she expressed hope that they might come to understand that working with such families is both “possible and easier than it seems.”

“We become Church when we love

one another” — both those with and without disabilities, she said.

Trent acknowledged that “there’s work to be done” to improve access for those with special needs. For example, she said that she would like to have American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at future sensory-friendly Masses.

Though the offerings are currently sparse, Trent tells directors of catechetical ministry that “every single parish” should be a place where families with special needs can find

adapted faith-formation programs and sensory-friendly liturgies.

Even if a parish doesn’t have any staff members who have credentials for working with these families, she said, “You still have a Body of Christ willing to welcome them.”

Of the catechists at her own parish, she said, “They are willing to walk with the families and with the kids, because they know that they can adapt their classes.”

Trent said that planning for the diocese’s second sensory-friendly Mass was easier than the first, because it was celebrated at her own parish, where she serves as coordinator of Spanish-language religious education and already knows parish families with special needs.

She said that the challenge of making adaptations for those with special needs is that a cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach won’t work. For example, she said, not every parishioner with special needs is going to require dimmer lights for Mass or softer music.

“That’s the challenge. That’s why we are called to be pastoral,” she said.

Trent said that being intentional about sensory-friendly Masses means that parishes can’t simply declare that their regular 5 p.m. or 7 p.m. Mass is going to be one from now on. Many children with special needs are already finding their focus waning by late afternoon, she noted.

Similarly, she said, weekend Masses with high attendance aren’t going to be

the best fit either for these families.

“It’s mainly walking with them, knowing the families,” Trent said.

She tells the catechists, “Open your doors and start building that relationship.”

What advice would Irene Jacobo give to other parents of children with special needs?

“First,” she said, “set aside your fears, because sometimes you can be afraid that they will behave poorly, that they will make noise, things like that.”

Additionally, she said, “I invite them to think that Jesus is here and that he sees their child, that he sees all the effort we’re making to transmit the Gospel.”

Durán’s parents, Julia and Javier, had their own insights to share.

“I tell people who want to come to Mass to look for a comfortable spot, beginning in the back of the church,” said Julia. “That’s how we began, in the back, looking for a space for (her son). In some spots, he was in the way, in others he was not comfortable because he wanted to be closer to the altar. Now, we try to get this spot (at the end of the front row). It feels like we’re at home there.”

The elder Javier Durán said, “This (sensory-friendly) Mass is an opportunity for more people to come to church, because a family with a member with a certain condition can’t go many places. Here, they are welcomed. The church is open to everyone.”

*Aida Bustos contributed to this story.*



CHARLIE NEUMAN

**POSITIVE ATTITUDE:** Catechists enthusiastically learn practical ways to make their programs more welcoming and accessible to parishioners with special needs.



The 800th anniversary of the passing or “transitus” of St. Francis will be this October, inspiring Pope Leo XIV to proclaim 2026 the Jubilee Year of St. Francis.

## Extraordinary Jubilee Year of St. Francis

By Christina Bagaglio Slentz, Ph.D.



Commemorating  
the eighth  
centenary of the

passage of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Leo XIV has established an extraordinary Jubilee Year from Jan. 10, 2026, to Jan. 10, 2027.

Though this Jubilee year is addressed especially to members of the Franciscan Families and those that observe the Rule of St. Francis, as described by the Order of Friars Minor, “The grace of this special year is also extended to all the faithful without distinction who, with their spirits removed from sin, visit in the form of a pilgrimage any Franciscan conventual church or place of worship dedicated to St. Francis in any part of the world.” This means anyone may participate in making a pilgrimage this Jubilee year, right here in our very own diocese.

### Pilgrimage in the Diocese of San Diego

Our diocese itself is connected to St. Francis of Assisi, as our namesake, San Diego (a.k.a. St. Didacus), was a lay brother in the Franciscan Order of Airizafa. Arriving in our region in November of 1602, Spanish Captain Sebastián Viscaíno named the bay and surrounding land for San Diego because his feast day was close on the calendar. As a result, the first mission in California was established bearing the name of this humble Franciscan brother, known for his work as an evangelist and miraculous healer.

Within our diocese, several parishes also share a relationship with St. Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Family. Bishop Michael Pham has therefore decreed these churches as designated pilgrimage destinations:

- Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá and its St. Francis Chapel
- Immaculate Conception in Old Town, shepherded by Franciscan priests (OFM)

- Old Mission San Luis Rey and the San Luis Rey Parish in Oceanside, also led by Franciscans (OFM)
- St. Anthony of Padua in Imperial, as St. Anthony of Padua was a Franciscan
- St. Didacus, a Franciscan
- St. Francis of Assisi, Vista, naturally!

You can find more local Jubilee news as it becomes available to include links to these pilgrimage parishes on the diocesan website at [sdcatholic.org/diocesan-decree-for-the-year-of-st-francis-of-assisi](http://sdcatholic.org/diocesan-decree-for-the-year-of-st-francis-of-assisi).



The Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá

### Beyond the Garden Statue

Many of us encounter “birdbath” presentations of St. Francis each day, walking past yards where the saint is poised among the creatures he is known to have lovingly recognized as brothers and sisters. While it is true that St. Francis of Assisi was named the Patron Saint of Ecology in 1979 by St. Pope John Paul II, he was canonized in 1228 by Pope Gregory IX because of his holiness, rooted above

all in a love of Jesus, the Church and the poor.

With this in mind, this Jubilee year offers an opportunity to journey deeper into the richness of Franciscan spirituality and to strive to live like this holy man.

Helpfully, Mission San Luis Rey has assembled many Jubilee resources on their website, which can be found at the orange QR code or at [bit.ly/MSL-RJubileeFrancis](http://bit.ly/MSL-RJubileeFrancis). (Note, the link is case sensitive.) The Franciscan School of Theology, housed at the University of San Diego also has a YouTube channel with videos providing an extensive education on Francis at [youtube.com/@franciscanschooloftheology](http://youtube.com/@franciscanschooloftheology).



QR to  
Mission  
San Luis  
Rey Jubilee  
Resources

In the spirit of pilgrimage, in addition to making the physical journey to one of these designated churches, a plenary indulgence will be granted to those who:

- Partake in sacramental confession to be in God’s grace in the eight days before or after visiting
- Participate in Mass and receive Eucharistic Communion
- Renew his/her profession of faith, through the recitation of the Creed, to reaffirm one’s Christian identity
- Recite the Lord’s Prayer, reaffirming the dignity of children of God
- Pray for the intentions of the Holy Father

The Third Order Regular of St. Francis (TOR) explains that Jubilee pilgrims should spend a reasonable period of time in pious meditation upon arriving at a designated church. They should strive to follow the example of St. Francis, raising prayers to God for Christian charity towards one’s neighbors in the hope that harmony and peace may spring forth in

the hearts of all people. In addition to reciting the Our Father and the Creed, they suggest offering invocations to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Clare and all the saints of the Franciscan Family. Saints to include:

- St. Hildegard, pray for us!
- St. Clare, pray for us!
- St. Bonaventure, pray for us!
- St. Anthony of Padua, pray for us!
- St. Diego, pray for us!
- St. Kateri Tekakwitha, pray for us!

These practices should accompany a sincere turning toward God as well as a deeper participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

### Pray with Pope Leo!

Pope Leo wrote the following prayer for this Special Jubilee Year:

St. Francis, our brother,  
you who 800 years ago  
went to meet Sister Death  
as a man at peace,  
intercede for us with  
the Lord.

In the Crucifix of  
San Damiano, you  
recognized true peace;  
teach us to seek in  
him the source of all  
reconciliation  
that breaks down  
every wall.

You who, unarmed,  
crossed the lines of war  
and misunderstanding,  
give us the courage to  
build bridges  
where the world erects  
borders.

In this time plagued by  
conflict and division,  
intercede so that we may  
become peacemakers,  
unarmed and disarming  
witnesses of the peace that  
comes from Christ.

Amen.



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# Bishops to Consecrate U.S. to Sacred Heart

The Southern Cross



The United States is about to celebrate its 250th birthday, and the nation's Catholic bishops have the perfect gift.

On Thursday, June 11, the eve of the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the U.S. bishops will consecrate our country to the Sacred Heart.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has a dedicated section of its website at [usccb.org/weholdthesetruths](http://usccb.org/weholdthesetruths). It includes a Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to begin on June 3; a Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, written especially for this consecration; and a resource that dioceses and parishes can use on the day of the consecration either within a Mass or a Liturgy of the Word.

In the Diocese of San Diego, the faithful are encouraged to watch the livestream of the consecration, which can be viewed on June 11 at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org), and to unite themselves in prayer with the bishops, either as individuals or in their own parish communities. Suggestions include making use of the USCCB's novena and prayer to the Sacred Heart and by attending Mass on Friday, June 12, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In a video posted May 3 on Facebook, Archbishop Alexander K. Sample, chairman of the USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty, explained the reason for the consecration.



**OPPORTUNITIES:** The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, the only approved Marian apparition site in the United States, will mark the nation's 250th birthday with an on-site exhibit and with a special "Novena for Our Nation," with prayer cards available online.

"Why consecrate the nation to the Sacred Heart?" the archbishop of Portland asked rhetorically.

"Devotion to the Sacred Heart has developed over the centuries, following the experiences of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and the apparitions she witnessed in the 17th century," he said. "Popes have lauded the practice of consecration of the self, home and even whole nations to the Sacred Heart.

"This anniversary and consecration," he added, "gives us a special opportunity to promote the beautiful devotion to the Sacred Heart and to encourage the laity to offer their lives in service to God and their country."

In addition to the consecration, as

part of the wider Catholic contribution to the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. bishops are inviting parishes and individuals to contribute to a collective 250 Hours of Adoration ([usccb.org/250-hours-adoration](http://usccb.org/250-hours-adoration)) and 250 Works of Mercy ([usccb.org/250-works-mercy](http://usccb.org/250-works-mercy)).

The Diocese of San Diego will be taking part in the 250 Hours of Adoration. Special Holy Hours will be scheduled in each of the diocese's seven deaneries, or geographical clusters of parishes. Dates, times and locations are expected to be announced soon on the diocesan website.

As the United States prepares to mark its semiquincentennial, the U.S.

bishops aren't the only ones offering a Catholic response.

The National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, the only approved Marian apparition site in the United States, will host the "Catholic Saints of America" exhibit, from July 1 to 9, on its grounds in Champion, Wisconsin. The exhibit will honor the holy men and women of America at various stages of the canonization process.

The shrine has contacted each of the over 70 shrines or guilds for the saints, blessed, venerables and servants of God in the United States to invite them to participate. Some shrines are entrusting relics of their saints to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Champion, allowing pilgrims a unique opportunity to venerate these holy men and women.

The Shrine of Our Lady of Champion is also encouraging the faithful to pray a special "Novena for Our Nation," written by its rector, Father Anthony Stephens, CPM. Printable prayer cards and a sign-up for the novena, along with information about the "Catholic Saints of America" exhibit, can be found at [championshrine.org/AmericanSaints](http://championshrine.org/AmericanSaints).

"This spiritual initiative," said Father Stephens, "invites all pilgrims to join in prayer for our country, to draw inspiration from those who have gone before us, and to renew our commitment to living lives of holiness — igniting a new generation of saints for America."



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# Unpacking Faith: Behold This Heart

By Denis Grasska



The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus will be observed on Friday, June 12.

### What is the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart?

The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is a liturgical celebration that invites us to reflect on the depth of Christ's love for us, as symbolized by his heart.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, "Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us" (Paragraph 478).

Going on to reference Pope Pius XII's 1956 encyclical "Haurietis Aquas" (On Devotion to the Sacred Heart), the *Catechism* says, "He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation, is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that ... love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings without exception."

### When is the solemnity celebrated?

It is held each year on the Friday following the second Sunday after Pentecost (also known as the Solemnity



**PRESENT:** The Sacred Heart of Jesus as seen inside Sacred Heart Church in Ocean Beach.

of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, or Corpus Christi).

The World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests is also observed on the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The liturgical memorial of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is typically celebrated the day after the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

### How long has this feast existed?

The first observance of a liturgical celebration in honor of the Sacred Heart took place in 1672 in Rennes, France, according to "Haurietis Aquas." In 1765, wider permission to celebrate the feast was given by Pope Clement XIII. In 1856, Pope Pius IX made it an obligatory feast throughout the Universal Church.

In his encyclical, Pope Pius XII said that St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a 17th-century French Visitation nun, holds "the most distinguished place among those who have fostered" devotion to the Sacred Heart over the centuries. She reported experiencing apparitions of Jesus, who spoke to her about his Sacred Heart, between 1673 and 1675 in Paray-le-Monial, France.

However, the pope said, the feast day is not dependent on her private revelations. He said that devotion to the Sacred Heart "flows from the very foundations of Christian teaching," something demonstrated by the fact that the Holy See's approval of a liturgical Feast of the Sacred Heart preceded its approval of St. Margaret Mary's writings.

### What messages did Jesus share during his appearances to St. Margaret Mary?

During an apparition in June of 1675, Jesus showed her his Sacred Heart and said, "Behold this heart, which has so loved men that it spared nothing, even going so far as to exhaust and consume itself, to prove to them its love. And in return, I receive from the greater part of men nothing but ingratitude, by the contempt, irreverence, sacrileges and coldness with

**Sacred** *Continued on Page 15*

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**Sacred** *Continued from Page 14*

which they treat Me in this Sacrament of Love.”

He requested that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi be dedicated as a feast in honor of the Sacred Heart, when reparation can be made to it in atonement for “the outrages it has received.”

**What does the Sacred Heart look like? What do its various elements represent?**

The Sacred Heart is depicted as a heart encircled by a crown of thorns, topped by a cross and a flame, and with a bleeding wound on its left side from the lance thrust into Jesus’ side after his death on the cross. The elements which recall his Passion serve as a reminder that his suffering was caused by our sins and was willingly endured out of love for us; the flame represents the “fire” of that love.

**Once June 12 passes, I guess that’s it for the Sacred Heart until next year ...**

Not so fast! Traditionally, the entire month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart and, for many Catholics with a devotion to the Sacred Heart, it’s

a part of their spiritual lives year-round.

**So, the Sacred Heart devotion must be pretty important ...?**

The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy, published by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, says, “Of all devotions, devotion to the Sacred Heart was, and remains, one of the most widespread and popular in the Church.”

Pope Pius XII, one of the many popes who have extolled this devotion, wrote in “Haurietis Aquas”: “Can a form of devotion surpassing that to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus be found, which corresponds better to the essential character of the Catholic faith, which is more capable of assisting the present-day needs of the Church and the human race?”

According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, “The devotion is based entirely upon the symbolism of the heart. It is this symbolism that imparts to its meaning and its unity, and this symbolism is admirably completed by the representation of the Heart as wounded. Since the Heart of Jesus appears to us as the sensible sign of his love, the visible wound in the Heart will naturally

recall the invisible wound of this love.”

The encyclopedia says, “Devotion to the love of Jesus for us should be pre-eminently a devotion of love for Jesus. It is characterized by a reciprocation of love; its aim is to love Jesus who has so loved us, to return love for love. Since, moreover, the love of Jesus manifests itself to the devout soul as a love despised and outraged, especially in the Eucharist, the love expressed in the devotion naturally assumes a character of reparation, and hence the importance of acts of atonement, the Communion of reparation, and compassion for Jesus’ suffering.”

**What should we know about the devotion and the apparitions associated with it?**

Jesus made 12 promises to St. Margaret Mary regarding the graces that he will give to those who practice the devotion, including promises to give them “all the graces necessary for their state of life” and “bless the homes where an image of my heart shall be exposed and honored.”

Those who receive Communion on the First Friday of nine consecutive months are promised “the grace of final repentance.” Jesus said, “They

shall not die under my displeasure, nor without receiving their sacraments. My heart shall be their assured refuge at that last hour.”

Additionally, there are various prayers to the Sacred Heart. These include the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to which a partial indulgence is attached.

**What is the most recent papal document focused on the Sacred Heart?**

Pope Francis’ fourth and final encyclical, “Dilexit Nos” (On the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ), reflected on the Sacred Heart devotion. It was published on Oct. 24, 2024.

**How many parishes in the Diocese of San Diego are dedicated to the Sacred Heart?**

There are three parishes named Sacred Heart in the diocese — in Brawley, Coronado and the Ocean Beach community of San Diego — as well as an Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish in the City Heights neighborhood of San Diego and a St. Margaret Mary Parish in Brawley.



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# Documentary Explores Popular Devotion

By Denis Grasska

 Jesus told St. Margaret Mary Alacoque that those who promote the Sacred Heart devotion “shall have their names written in my heart.”

That must be a reassuring thought for the makers of the new documentary “Sacred Heart: His Reign Has No End.”

The film, which has a run time of one hour and 37 minutes, will have a limited engagement in U.S. theaters in June, courtesy of Fathom Entertainment.

Moviegoers will have an opportunity to see the film in theaters from June 9 through 11, as well as on June 14. All screenings of the French film will be dubbed in English, except those on June 10, which will be dubbed in Spanish with English subtitles.

Attendees are invited to stay after the film for a bonus film presentation, featuring U.S. clergy and faith leaders, who will reflect on the popular devotion and discuss the upcoming consecration of the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which will take place on June 11 in honor of the 250th anniversary of the nation’s founding.

“Sacred Heart: His Reign Has No End” features historical reenactments, including of Jesus’ apparitions to St. Margaret Mary at her convent in Paray-le-Monial, France, supple-



**HOLY IMAGE:** St. Margaret Mary Alacoque holds a devotional image of the Sacred Heart in a screenshot from the new documentary “Sacred Heart: His Reign Has No End.”

mented by interviews with clergy and other experts, including Father Etienne Kern, rector of the Sanctuary of Paray-le-Monial, and Clementine Beauvais, a writer and descendant of St. Margaret Mary.

The documentary explains how the Sacred Heart devotion, Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross, and the Eucharist are connected. Viewers learn about a Eucharistic Miracle that occurred in 1996 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where scientific examination revealed

that a consecrated host had partially transformed into human myocardial tissue.

The film also shares the stories of several contemporary French Catholics whose lives were transformed by the Sacred Heart and by life-changing experiences at the Sanctuary of Paray-le-Monial, where St. Margaret Mary received her private revelations between 1673 and 1675.

Among them is Louis, a young writer and law student with a progressive


degenerative disorder, who lost the use of his legs at age 10, has been unable to move his arms since age 13, and requires a respirator to breathe every night. He tells viewers that his “fragility” has made it necessary to depend on Jesus and “to rest on his heart.”

Zoe achieved her dream of playing professional soccer, only to find that “something was missing” in her life. Years later, she reluctantly accepted a friend’s invitation to Mass, where she experienced peace, and, later, to attend a youth conference at Paray-le-Monial, where she was overwhelmed by the feeling that Jesus loved her.

Then, there’s Rodrigue, a special education teacher. As a teenager, he drifted away from the Church, dropped out of school and started dealing drugs. Religious sisters in his neighborhood offered to take him to Paray-le-Monial; he accepted their invitation, mostly so that they would stop pestering him. But, during Eucharistic adoration, completely ignorant of what the Host and monstrance were, he felt a power that brought him to his knees and to repentance.

Several local AMC and Regal theaters will be showing “Sacred Heart: His Reign Has No End,” including AMC Mission Valley 20, Regal Edwards Mira Mesa, AMC Otay Ranch 12 and Regal Oceanside, among others. The location of theaters and showtimes can be found at [fathomentertainment.com](http://fathomentertainment.com).

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# Silence Can Save Us

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More than ever, we need silence.

We live in times when silence appears to have become strange. We have normalized a lifestyle that profoundly affects our mental, emotional and social health. It's an addictive dynamic we often struggle to control.

You don't have to be a researcher to recognize what is happening before our very eyes. Many couples' relationships suffer from the imbalance of time dedicated to social media. Emotional crises arise from hidden messages, secret affairs, or virtual connections.

Problems of anxiety and depression are growing, fed by approval or rejection delivered by digital platforms. Isolation, disconnection and interior confusion are on the rise amid the avalanche of information, opinions and contradictory values that polarize and fragment human coexistence.

The exterior world imposes itself like an incessant force that invades our

Columnist

**Ricardo Márquez**



attention.

In homes, this reality stokes permanent tensions between parents and children over the adequate use of screens. Some parents, to avoid conflicts, give up on setting limits. Others react from authoritarian models that suppress and punish, generating resentment and emotional distance.

There are, however, some families that manage to build a different path: homes where agreements and limits are established amid an environment of empathy and respect; where quality time and presence are cultivated, games are shared, meals enjoyed without screens and prayers are proclaimed together. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions. There are processes, decisions and daily learning.

From external controls frequently arise submission and fear; from internal controls arise conscious decisions that cherish and value life.

A fundamental question emerges: Where do we cultivate that which we want to radiate to the world? Where do we nourish peace, compassion and the capacity to discern and love?

Paradoxically, it's not outside, rather inside of ourselves.

It's in that interior space where we find ourselves without masks nor filters, where we are able to listen to the voice of our conscience. There, St. Augustine, after many years of searching, discovered the presence of God and wrote one of the most beautiful passages in "Confessions": "You were more inward to me than my most inward part, and higher than my highest reach."

It's in silence where we learn to truly see and listen to one another. There, we allow ourselves to be seen by the one who created us; by the loving gaze of Jesus, who reminds us that we have always been loved and always will be.

"Silence is not the absence of something, rather the presence of someone," wrote the acclaimed Spanish priest and author, Pablo d'Ors in "Biography of Silence."

In silence, we open ourselves up to the gift of grace; we experience an unconditional love that heals and liberates because it allows us to accept our lights and shadows.

From those interior spaces of silence, we find the strength, peace and compassion necessary to live in the world without being dragged completely away by it. From there, we cultivate the patience and serenity to accompany one another amid daily demands that easily exhaust and disconnect us from the essential.

Perhaps, more than ever, our time needs to rediscover the value of silence. Not to escape the world, rather as the path to return to live in it with greater conscience, humanity and love.

Ricardo Márquez can be reached at [marquez\\_muskus@yahoo.com](mailto:marquez_muskus@yahoo.com).

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11:00am Eucharistic Procession and Pilgrim Lunch at **Mission San Luis Rey**

1:45pm Gather at Port Park (1449 Cesar E Chavez Parkway, San Diego)

2:00pm Arrival at Father Joe's Village for music, fellowship and distribution of care packages

3:30pm Procession continues to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church

4:00pm Devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Adoration and Pilgrim Dinner

7:00pm Eucharistic Procession and Holy Hour at **Mission San Diego de Alcalá**

*Bold denotes Jubilee Site.*

**SUNDAY, JUNE 7**

9:00am Mass in Founder's Chapel with Bishop Felipe Pulido

10:00am Corpus Christi Eucharistic Procession

11:00am Closing Ceremony

12:00pm Optional Lunch in USD Dining Hall



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## News Briefs

### Two Religious Mark 75 Years of Consecrated Life



Sister M. Timothea (Kingston), CSC



Sister M. Martha Ann (Norwood), CSC

**N O T R E D A M E**, Ind. — Sister M. Timothea (Kingston), CSC, and Sister M. Martha Ann (Norwood) CSC, are celebrating 75 years of consecrated life as Sisters of the Holy Cross.

Along with their fellow jubilarians, they will be honored July 19, during a celebration in the Church of Our Lady of Loretto at St. Mary's, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Sister Kingston made her initial profession of vows on Feb. 2, 1951, and her perpetual profession on Aug. 15, 1954. She shared her gifts in the field of education for 60 years.

In the Diocese of San Diego, she was principal of Stella Maris Academy for four years. And, between 1988 and 1999, she served in the diocesan Office for Schools as director of personnel.

Sister Norwood made her initial profession of vows on Aug. 15, 1951, and her perpetual profession on Aug. 15, 1954. She served as a junior high teacher for 26 years. Her ministry included a teaching assignment at Stella Maris Academy in La Jolla.

### St. Carlo Acutis Visits OLP

The Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP) recently hosted an exhibit on May 7 of poster boards from the website made by St. Carlo Acutis about Eucharistic miracles around the world.

Deacon Lane Litke, a member of OLP's Board of Trustees, helped facilitate the exhibit through a collaboration between a Southern California ministry dedicated to promoting Eucharistic adoration and the St. Joseph Evangelizing Network out of Missouri.

In addition to almost 200 poster boards about Eucharistic miracles, the exhibit included first-class relics of St. Carlo Acutis, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Dominic Savio and St. Maria Goretti.

Throughout the day, students, faculty, staff and parents toured the exhibit in OLP's Chapel Garden and learned about and prayed before the relics in the chapel. After school, guests from local Catholic elementary schools and parishes visited the exhibit and prayed in the chapel.

### University Holding Grand Opening of Arts Complex

**ESCONDIDO** — John Paul the Great Catholic University invites the public to a special event with Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone.

On Saturday, June 13, Archbishop Cordileone of San Francisco — a former auxiliary bishop of San Diego — will bless JPCatholic's new Creative Arts Complex in Escondido. The 30,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility will support students in film, acting, design and more, forming artists to impact culture for Christ.

All are welcome to tour the campus and celebrate what God is doing

## Priest Assignments

*The Office of the Bishop has announced the following priest assignments, effective July 1:*

**Father Brian Frulla** as associate pastor of St. Brigid Parish

**Father Daniel Holgren** as spiritual director of the formation program at St. Francis Center and director of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality

**Father Brent Kruger** as Vicar for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

*Due to unforeseen circumstances, the following changes to priest assignments have been made:*

**Father Edward Horning** will be pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, instead of St. Richard Parish.

**Father Emilio Magaña** will be pastor of St. Richard Parish, instead of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

*And, with the permission of their provincials:*

**Father Vinh Daniel Nguyen, SVD**, will be pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish

**Father Miguel Romero Mozo, MSP**, will be associate pastor of Mission San Diego de Alcalá

**Father Pedro Saveia, SVD**, will be associate pastor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish

through Catholic education in the arts.

The event will begin at 1:30 p.m. with the blessing and remarks from Archbishop Cordileone, followed by speeches by the university's founding president, Dr. Derry Connolly, and key faculty. There will be guided tours, refreshments and games, beginning at 2:30 p.m.; a Saturday vigil Mass at 4 p.m.; a break for dinner, with many options available on Grand Avenue; 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).

### Volunteers Sought for 'Million Meal Event'

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

In 2026, this extraordinary event returns on June 13 and 14 at Cathedral Catholic High School in San Diego.

The event is a charitable project of the deacons of the Diocese of 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.

Parish communities, service organizations, schools and families are encouraged to participate as groups and help raise funds for the event. More than 5,100 volunteers will be needed over the two days.

Organizers are also accepting donations to cover the \$600,000 cost of packing 2 million meals.

For more information or to register or donate, visit [ccdsd.org/million-meals-event](http://ccdsd.org/million-meals-event).

**Briefs** *Continued on Page 19*

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**Ft. Mike Ortiz**

**Father Mike Ortiz** is now retired from both the army chaplaincy, and the active priesthood.

After several attempts to become a military chaplain he was finally accepted and volunteered for the Green Berets.

After retirement from the military, he returned to "active duty" as a diocesan priest in San Diego.

Father Mike is now a full-time consultant to others in his retirement home, whether they want his advice or not. He is still enjoying life there at 97.



## All Invited to Juneteenth Mass with Bishop

ANDY HAYT

Juneteenth commemorates the day the last enslaved people were freed in the United States in 1865, more than two years after the nation officially ended slavery.

The diocese will again mark that historic day with a Juneteenth Mass, which Bishop Michael Pham will celebrate on June 21 at 10 a.m. at St. Rita's Church in San Diego.

The struggles for freedom, justice and opportunity from that era are still relevant today, said Rick Stewart, the chair of the diocese's African American Catholic community, which organizes the annual Mass. He cited recent changes in government policies and laws affecting immigration, voting and educational access, among other areas.

Beyond celebrating a historic

moment, the Mass recognizes the unifying power of faith, he said. Indeed, all members of the Catholic community are invited to attend, he stressed, not just African Americans.

The Mass is occurring as the Catholic Church is encouraging dioceses worldwide to implement synodal practices in their operations at all levels, he noted. These include actively listening to one another and discerning together a path forward.

Stewart said that the Mass is an opportunity for the faithful from all cultures to come together to listen about a milestone in U.S. history and to recognize that African Americans are an integral part of the Church.

"We focus on what brings all of us together," he said, "the Eucharist."



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### Briefs *Continued from Page 18*

#### Young Adults Invited To 'Virtue Panel'

RANCHO SANTA FE — 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 Virtue Panel on Humility from 6:30 to 9 p.m., Thursday, June 25, at the Church of the Nativity in Rancho Santa Fe. There will be a Mass, followed by networking, dinner and a panel of Catholic professionals sharing how humility shapes true leadership and discipleship. There is no cost to attend.

For more information and to register, visit [ycpsandiego.org](http://ycpsandiego.org).

#### Diocese Hosting Grandparents' Day Retreat

The second annual Grandparents' Day Retreat, sponsored by the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality, will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wednesday, July 22, at Ascension Parish.

Pope Leo XIV has chosen "I will never forget you" as the theme for 2026 World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, which aligns with the Feast of Sts. Anne and Joachim, the grandparents of Jesus.

In that spirit, the retreat's grandparent speakers will reflect on the spiritual influence that grandparents share with their adult children and grandchildren. There will be ample opportunity together for prayer, reflection and fellowship. The retreat will conclude with daily Mass.

The cost is \$25 per person and includes a delicious lunch. Register online at [sdcatholic.org/event/grandparents-day-retreat](http://sdcatholic.org/event/grandparents-day-retreat). For more information, email [jperegoy@sdcatholic.org](mailto:jperegoy@sdcatholic.org) or call (858) 490-8292.

#### Retreat Offers Healing For Adult Children of Divorce

OCEANSIDE — Life-Giving Wounds is a unique retreat experience for those who have been impacted by parental divorce, separation or family brokenness.

Participants can expect to meet a supportive community that will help them explore these wounds in a prayerful environment.

The next retreat will be held from Friday, July 31, to Sunday, Aug. 2, at Mission San Luis Rey Retreat Center in Oceanside.

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#### Online Men's Group Helps Fight Lust

All Catholics are called to live the virtue of chastity, according to their state in life.

Are you a man struggling to see and treat your body or those of others as a temple of the Holy Spirit?

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A Men's Purity Support Group meets online every Monday from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

For more information, visit sites. [google.com/view/dragonslayers-sd](http://google.com/view/dragonslayers-sd). Your name and contact information will be kept confidential.

#### Young Women Invited To Discern Vocation

Women ages 18 to 35 are invited to a discernment session to explore religious life.

The weekly meetings are held at 6:30 p.m., Mondays, at Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá.

Women are invited to come and share their experience and walk with other women in discernment.

For more information, contact Sister Katia Chavez, SJS, at (760) 562-2727

#### Retreats Aid Recovery from Homelessness, Addiction

The Ignatian Spirituality Project (ISP) invites those recovering from homelessness and addiction to experience God's unconditional love.

The organization's programs are designed for men and women in substance-abuse recovery who desire to deepen their spirituality and are open to sharing their story and listening to others.

Though founded in the Jesuit tradition, ISP does not proselytize, and people of all (or no) faith traditions are welcome.

Guided by the wisdom of Ignatian spirituality and interwoven with traditional 12-Step approaches, ISP retreat programs offer individuals recovering from homelessness and addiction a chance to take time away to reflect on and deepen their relationship with God, to identify the places inside that need healing, and to bond with others on the journey.

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

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