

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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FEBRUARY 2021



Raising Immigrant Voices

Page 5



JOYFUL: Members of Eritrean Catholics of San Diego worshipped during their Christmas celebration at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish on Jan. 4, 2020. The diocese is presenting a virtual forum on Feb. 10 to share the experiences of migrants and refugees to promote understanding and healing.



Lent at Home

Auxiliary bishop shares ideas of how to live Lent intentionally during the pandemic. **Page 3**



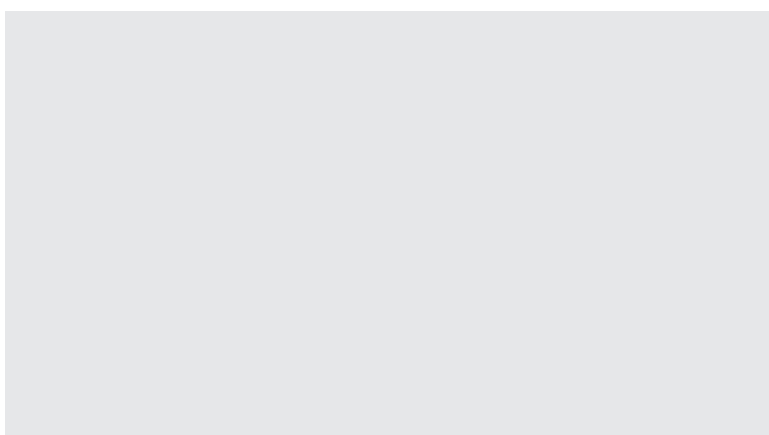
Honoring the Past

St. Rose of Lima Parish is celebrating 100 years of serving the heart of Chula Vista. **Page 10**



Looking for Love

Online group brings together young Catholic singles in the region. **Page 15**



Keeping the Faith

Diocese's programs and services are a click away.

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THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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

MORE FOR YOU

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

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'Nation is Hurting'

Deacon Robert Booth delivered the powerful homily at the diocese's second annual Mass to commemorate the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., on Jan. 17 at St. Rita's Parish in San Diego. "God shows us even in the smallest moments that hate does not win," he said at the Mass, celebrated by Bishop Robert McElroy. View a recording of the Mass at sdccatholic.org/racism, which also presents videos and information about the work to end racism in the Church.

Vaccine 'Is an Ethical Choice'

By Aida Bustos



Health authorities stepped up vaccinations

across the region as deaths soared from COVID-19. By mid-February, San Diego County had logged more than 2,000 deaths since the pandemic began, while nearly 500 had died in Imperial County.

Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan was one of those who got the vaccine. He participated in a clinical trial of the Pfizer vaccine and was informed on Jan. 14 that he had received a placebo. As a result, he was able to receive the first shot of the vaccine that day and is scheduled to receive the second shot in early February.

County authorities are expanding the categories of who can receive the vaccine as supplies become available. They expected to begin offering the vaccine to those ages 65 and older in late February, as well as expand the job sectors that qualify. They urged residents to stay up to date on the availability of the vaccine.

The diocese is helping priests age 65 and older to get the vaccine when it's available. Priest chaplains in local hospitals already have been receiving them, as have some priests associated with schools.

"These priests are in critical areas," said Bishop Dolan, and face the greatest risk.

Catholic Church leaders at all levels are urging the faithful to get vaccinated. Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict received



HIGHEST RISK: The Vaccination Super Station at Petco Park began vaccinating healthcare workers on Jan. 11. Its staff will administer the vaccine to other high-risk groups in the days to come.

the first dose of the vaccine on Jan. 14 at the Vatican.

"I believe that ethically everyone should take the vaccine. It is not an option, it is an ethical choice because you are gambling with your health, with your life, but you are also gambling with the lives of others," Pope Francis said in an interview on Italian television on Jan. 17.

In the United States, bishops at the national and state levels have issued statements encouraging vaccination. They maintain that the vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna:

- Are safe and effective;
- Are morally acceptable to take, after careful vetting of their clinical development;
- Advance the common good, as Catholic social teaching calls the faithful to do.

Imperial County, meanwhile, was the first to receive a refrigerated trailer on loan from the state to ease the coroner's capacity to store bodies, according to Sheila Kruger, the owner of Frye Chapel

& Mortuary in Brawley.

She told *The Desert Review* newspaper that about half of 187 cases her mortuary handled in December were COVID-related.

As of Jan. 7, some 1,780 people had received the first dose of a vaccine against COVID-19 at El Centro Regional Medical Center and other facilities countywide.

And a pilot program to treat high-risk patients with monoclonal antibody therapy is showing promising results. First administered at the medical center on Dec. 30, it's being used to treat seniors with pre-existing health conditions in an effort to stave off the progression to severe illness.

Roman Flores contributed to this story.

Diocesan information about COVID-19: sdccatholic.org/covid19. Latest information about the virus, including vaccine availability: sandiegocounty.gov/coronavirus/; in Imperial County, icphd.org/



Ways to Intentionally Live Lent at Home



Lent begins this year on Feb. 17, Ash Wednesday.

Last year at this time, the pandemic was gathering steam and restrictions to our daily life caught us by surprise. Sadly, this year, we know that road all too well. We're sharing ideas here to bring Lent to life at home. Of course, we encourage everyone to attend Mass, as always, either in person outdoors or virtually.

PRAYER

1. Create a place in your home for prayer. Use symbols of the season: a Bible, a wooden cross, a rosary, prayer books, sand, rocks, ashes, desert plants, signs that say, "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember, you are dust and to dust you will return." (Make sure this spot is out of reach of small children and don't leave lighted candles unattended.)
2. Share photos of this prayer space electronically with others.
3. Place a wooden cross in your garden that is visible. During Lent you can drape a purple cloth on it, during Holy Week a red one, and a white one at Easter.
4. Create a space in your home or garden that is your "desert," that is, a place that you can be alone with God.
5. Pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays.
6. Learn to pray daily the Liturgy of the Hours. Download free apps such as "ibreviary" or "Divine Office."
7. Pray the rosary individually or as a family.
8. Read a spiritual book. Among the classics for this season are "Confessions of St. August-



OPPORTUNITY: Families staying at home during the pandemic can create ways to observe the Lenten season together and grow in their faith.

- tine," "The Imitation of Christ," "Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux," among others.
9. Launch or participate in a virtual Bible study group. Read and reflect on the Gospel every Sunday.
 10. Register to receive a daily Lenten reflection from sites such as *dynamiccatholic.com*, *formed.com*, among others.

FASTING

1. Learn about the principles of fasting and abstinence, particularly on Fridays during Lent.
2. Even though during this season we eat many of our favorite dishes, only eat soup or bread once a week.
3. Decide what sacrifice you're going to make individually (for example, give up chocolate, soda, video games, etc.), and as a family (complaining, cursing, clutter, etc.).

PENITENCE-CHARITY

1. Find an online calendar for Lent and make the effort to practice each day's suggestion.
2. Participate in Operation Rice Bowl from Catholic Relief Services (CRS).
3. Find out how you can help to

distribute food to the poor (such as Catholic Charities' Emergency Food Distribution Network), support the homeless or help pregnant women in crisis.

4. Organize spring cleaning as a family activity, and donate unused items in good condition to a charitable organization, like Father Joe's Villages.
5. Protect the environment. Use less water or power, step up your recycling, plant a vegetable garden if you're able to, etc.
6. Develop the habit of doing an examination of conscience before going to sleep. Thank God for His mercy.
7. Go to confession (all parishes offer opportunities to do so).

HOLY WEEK: Add and take away items from your prayer space.

PALM SUNDAY: Add palms or other greenery, red cloth, an image of Jesus entering Jerusalem.

HOLY THURSDAY: Add thorns, grapes, bread, wine, water vessel, white cloth.

1. Read as a family about the rite of the washing of the feet.
2. Wash feet as a family. For example, the father washes the

Auxiliary Bishop
of San Diego

**Most Rev.
Ramón
Bejarano**



mother's feet, the oldest sibling washes the feet of his or her younger sibling, and so on, with the youngest sibling washing the dad's feet.

GOOD FRIDAY: Add a cross, thorns, nails, an image of Jesus of Nazareth, image of the Sorrowful Mother, red or black cloth.

1. Mark 14 spots in your house or garden and pray together the Stations of the Cross.
2. Read and reflect on the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin.
3. Read and reflect on the seven last words from Jesus on the cross.

HOLY SATURDAY: Do your day's activities in silence to the extent possible. Avoid watching television, listening to music or using other media.

EASTER SUNDAY: Drape white cloth on the cross, and add holy water and flowers.

1. As a family, decorate a large candle to represent your Paschal candle.
2. Celebrate as a family with a special meal, table games, a fun movie, or go for a walk together.

The Easter Season is a great opportunity to rejoice and be glad. Individually or as a family, continue to practice virtuous habits. Remember, a family that prays together stays together. May the hope of new life through the Resurrected Christ fill your homes with peace, joy and serenity knowing that all things are made new.

And may you receive blessings, particularly of good health, during this special season in our faith.

Ash to Be Applied in a Different Way



Pastors in the San Diego Diocese will

distribute ash in a different way on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, to protect all participants amid the pandemic.

Bishop Robert McElroy directed the pastors to administer the ash

after the general prayer using a cotton swab to make the cross on the person's forehead. Nothing will be said at that point and all will be wearing masks. A new swab will be used for each person.

Ash will be distributed after the homily or at the end of the Mass. The faithful may check their parish website for Mass times.



TRADITION: Families turn out for Ash Wednesday, as this one did on March 1, 2017, at Our Lady of Guadalupe in San Diego.

Saintly Partnership Lifts Two Schools

By Denis Grasska



Over the past three-quarters of a century, an

Augustinian presence has been one of the constants at St. Patrick School.

St. Patrick's, which opened in 1944, is the only elementary school in the Diocese of San Diego founded by the Order of St. Augustine. The Augustinians also founded and continue to run St. Augustine High School, popularly known as "Saints." Both schools are located in the North Park neighborhood.

The school's relationship with the Augustinians is poised to play a significant role in its future.

The school boasts a partnership with St. Augustine High School and has received financial assistance from the local Augustinian province and grants from the St. Augustine Foundation. The latter has pledged \$450,000 over a three-year period that ends next year. All of this has resulted in tangible benefits for St. Patrick's students.

The flagship initiative in this partnership is the Augustinian Promise, a guaranteed admissions program for eighth-grade boys from St. Patrick School who would like to attend Saints. To be eligible for the program, which started with the 2020-2021 academic year, students must have attended St. Patrick School for at least five years; have maintained at least a 2.5 GPA and have no failing grades in the sixth through eighth grades; have had exemplary Christian conduct and participated in a Christian service project; and taken the High School Placement Test at Saints.

"Saints has always been good to us and, if boys in general have met those criteria, generally they over-



PARTNER: All students from St. Patrick School in North Park are benefiting from the partnership with the nearby St. Augustine High School.

whelmingly have gotten accepted," said St. Patrick School Principal Hernán Valdivia, who graduated from Saints in 1993. "But to have something in place that formalizes that process is important, because it really reflects our partnership with them and their commitment to help us."

From Saints' perspective, Principal James Horne said, "We want students who have committed to a Catholic Augustinian elementary [school] to have an opportunity to continue that tradition of scholarship and community at the high school level."

Because Saints is an all-boys school, only St. Patrick's male students directly benefit from the Augustinian Promise. But the close ties between the two schools provide other benefits that are felt by the entire student body.

Jane Richardson, vice principal

and curriculum coordinator at St. Patrick School, has worked with Saints to ensure that her school's students are prepared for high school and has adjusted St. Patrick's curriculum accordingly.

"This has helped me to tailor a course of study for our junior high students that will prepare them for the academic challenges they will meet in a Catholic high school," she said.

Donations from the Augustinian Province partially funded St. Patrick School's new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) lab, which opened during the current academic year and serves as a computer lab for junior high students and as a place for K-5 students to learn basic engineering principles.

A portion of the St. Augustine Foundation's three-year grant funded St. Patrick's efforts to "get

"There's a real presence of the Augustinians on our campus, not just in name but in practice."

– Principal Hernán Valdivia

COVID-ready" and safely reopen last fall, said Valdivia.

The school's new music program, now in its second year, was made possible by a \$30,000 grant from the St. Augustine Foundation in the Spring of 2019. Those funds transformed the school's library into a music room and allowed the school to hire a full-time music teacher and purchase musical instruments. Beginning last fall, all students from kindergarten through eighth grade have attended a weekly music class.

Valdivia said it is "really awesome" that the school has been able to provide this level of musical education at a time when many schools, both private and public, have been forced to cut their arts programs.

"There's a real presence of the Augustinians on our campus," said Valdivia, "not just in name but in practice."



THE NEW GUYS: Members of St. Patrick School's graduating class of 2020 are seen at their freshmen orientation at St. Augustine High School.

More information about the Augustinian Promise at St. Patrick School is available at the page stpatrickssd.com/augustinian-promise/



How Do Migrants Experience Racism?

By Aida Bustos



The San Diego Diocese plans to hold a virtual forum on Feb. 10 exploring the experience of immigrants and refugees in the Church, particularly around the issue of racism. It will be the latest in a series called "My Church, My Story" that shares the perspectives of ethnic and racial communities.

In 1910, Europe was home to about two-thirds of all Catholics, according to the Pew Research Center. By 2010, only about a quarter of all Catholics lived there, with the greatest growth occurring in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. Over time, millions of these faithful have made their way to the U.S.

Catholics born outside of the U.S. made up 27 percent of the nation's Catholic population, according to a 2014 study.

One of the coordinators of the forum said it's vital to present the voices of immigrants and refugees.

"They reveal a unique perspective about a group of people with a rich global history, extremely hardworking, and deeply rooted in their faith," said Semret Hailemariam.



UNITY: The diocese's cultural communities and staff attended the Mass for Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., on Jan. 17 at St. Rita's Parish. Left to right, they were Jacqueline Morgan, Alejandra Diaz, Charlotte Fajardo, Bernadette Aloese, Gaii Do, Father Michael Pham, Selma Johnson, Jo Hart-Lloyd, Deacon Marvin Threath and Semret Hailemariam.

am. "By hearing these stories, we can provide a platform to correct stereotypes and prejudices and begin to build a community of healing, empathy and compassion."

The goal of the series is to work within the local Catholic community to root out racism in parishes and the diocese.

Hailemariam and her family came to the U.S. as refugees from Eritrea, located in Eastern Africa. Eritrean immigration to the U.S. began in the 1970s and 1980s, when war brought drought and famine to that nation. As a result, more than 700,000 Eritreans left their homeland and resettled in neighboring Sudan and across Europe and the U.S.

Catholic Charities organized sponsors for thousands of Eritrean refugees to start a new life in the U.S. In the early 1980s, the first wave of these immigrants arrived locally, settling in the City Heights and Southeastern San Diego neighborhoods, she said.

For the last 36 years, members of the Eritrean community have assembled at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church on the first Saturday of every month to worship in their Tigrinya language and Ge'ez Rite Liturgy.

The coordinator said it's important for the broader Catholic community to understand the immigrant/refugee experience. Racism to them looks different than it

does to other people of color in the U.S., she said. Many refugees have endured so much, like famine, war, torture, and death of loved ones, she added, that "when you ask them about racism, in comparison to what they have already endured, it doesn't compare. Thus, they dismiss it or excuse it or internalize it."

The forum exploring the experience of immigrants and refugees will be on Feb. 10, at 6:30 p.m., via Zoom. Registration is available on the page sdccatholic.org/racism, which has videos of previous forums and Catholic resources about racism.



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How Do You Build a Lasting Marriage?

By Denis Grasska



Joey Pontarelli, the speaker for the next installment

of the diocese's "Healing Pathways for Families" workshop series, hopes to provide attendees with "a practical roadmap for building love that lasts."

His talk, titled "How to Build a Thriving & Divorce-Proof Marriage," will be offered via Zoom at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 21. (A link will be provided after registration.) The presentation is part of the Office for Family Life and Spirituality's ongoing series that equips parish leaders and parishioners to better minister to today's families.

"There's so much wisdom out there when it comes to love and marriage ... but, sometimes, it's not very practical or it's not very accessible, and in this talk we're going to make it both," said Pontarelli, founder and president of Restored, a ministry that helps teens and young adults find healing and wholeness after their parents' divorce.

The Family Life and Spirituality Office has partnered with the diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry to present Pontarelli's talk.

His own parents separated when he was 11. (Despite a temporary reconciliation, the couple ultimately went through a "really messy" divorce about a decade later, he said.) In the wake of their separation, he struggled with anger, depression and feelings of abandonment, turning to pornog-



COURTESY OF JOEY PONTARELLI

JOURNEY: Joey Pontarelli will lead a virtual workshop, "How to Build a Thriving & Divorce-Proof Marriage," on Feb. 21. He's pictured here with his wife, Brigid.

raphy in an unsuccessful attempt to numb his pain.

Through the influence of Jason Evert, of the Chastity Project, and the friendship of a group of devout Catholics, he was able to turn his life around. But, even then, he was wounded by the dissolution of his parents' marriage. He had what he described as "a paralyzing fear of love and marriage" and was "deathly afraid" that what had happened to his parents would happen to him.

That fear was not entirely unfounded: Children of divorced parents are more likely to get divorced themselves.

"If we don't deal with our brokenness, then we're just going to end up passing it on," said Pontarelli, who married his wife, Brigid, about three years ago.

Children of divorced parents represent a large but "hugely ne-

glected" demographic, he said, and he was baffled to find that little practical support was available.

He started Restored about two years ago, describing his ministry as offering what he wishes he had access to when he was younger. It provides guidance and support through a podcast, a blog and speaking engagements.

In his upcoming presentation, Pontarelli said he will provide "actionable stuff" and "not just theory," drawing from Church teaching, marriage research, and the lived experience of "time-tested couples."

Pontarelli's ministry is geared toward teens and young adults, up to age 30, who are dealing with their parents' divorce. However, his talk for the Diocese of San Diego is intended for a broader audience: everyone, whether single or in a relationship, who wants to build a lasting marriage.

Janelle Peregoy, associate director of the Family Life and Spirituality Office, and Pamela Poe, associate director of the Young Adult Ministry Office, will set the stage for Pontarelli's presentation.

They will reflect on their own experience as children of divorced parents in a video that will be uploaded to the Facebook pages of both of their offices on Friday, Feb. 5. The video is intended to serve as a conversation-starter, encouraging viewers to delve deeper into this topic by attending Pontarelli's talk.

"I think there's been this expectation that children are so resilient and that they can get through divorce, but the loss of your parents' marriage is just as devastating as losing a parent," said Poe, who was 17 when her parents divorced. (She later went through counseling during her 20s to deal with the emotional pain.)

Both women are in their thirties and, within the past six years, have married and started families.

More information about the Office for Family Life and Spirituality is available at sdcatholic.org/family, by email at nmendez@sdcatholic.org or phone at (858) 490-8299.

Visit tinyurl.com/thrivingmarriage to register for the virtual workshop "How to Build a Thriving & Divorce-Proof Marriage." Janelle Peregoy and Pamela Poe will share their experiences in a video beginning on Feb. 5 at facebook.com/sdfamilylife or facebook.com/SDCatholicYA



Mass to Celebrate Married Couples



All married couples are invited to the diocese's inaugural

Marriage Anniversary Mass, to be celebrated on Saturday, Feb. 13, at Good Shepherd Parish.

They will be able to renew their commitment in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. A special invitation is extended to couples celebrating a major anniversary.

The Mass will be celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan, with Vicar General Father Michael Pham.

The Mass will be held at 2 p.m. outdoors at the parish, 8200 Gold Coast Drive, Mira Mesa. It also will

be livestreamed at sdcatholic.org/anniversarymass.

Couples who attend should bring chairs, wear masks and observe social distancing.

The Office for Family Life and Spirituality is organizing the Mass as part of its work to support and celebrate couples at all stages, from engaged to newly married to those together for many years. Its bilingual staff leads workshops and trainings across the diocese.

Please contact Nora Mendez for more information about this Mass at (858) 490-8299 and nmendez@sdcatholic.org.



AIDA BUSTOS

RENEWAL: The Marriage Anniversary Mass will build on the practice at some parishes, such as Our Lady of Mount Carmel in San Ysidro, to offer couples an opportunity to renew their commitment.

An Appeal to 'Renew Hope'

By Denis Grasska



The Annual Catholic Appeal kicks off during the weekend of Feb. 13 and 14.

Fittingly enough, as the world and the Church leave 2020 behind and begin a new year, the theme is "Renewing Hope."

"The work of the Diocese of San Diego in the coming months will indeed be to reawaken and strengthen hope as we move out of the pandemic and into a genuine renewal of the life of the Church in San Diego and Imperial counties," Bishop Robert McElroy wrote in a message to mark the launch of 2021's Appeal.

The Appeal provides essential funds for Catholic schools, faith formation, and Catholic Charities, as well as for seminary education and support for retired priests. The goal is to raise \$3.5 million by Dec. 31.

Manny Aguilar, director of the diocesan Office for Stewardship, acknowledged that this is a tough year for potential donors. With many Catholics facing their own financial struggles as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some are not in a position to donate.

"If you can give, we ask you to give. But if you can't, we ask you to



SEMINARIANS: Diocesan seminarians process into San Rafael Church last October for the ordination of Dan Holgren, right, to the transitional diaconate. Seminary formation is among the causes that receive funding through the Annual Catholic Appeal.

pray for us and for the rest of the diocese," Aguilar said.

The Appeal supports ministries that are beyond the scope of individual parishes, but whose tangible benefits can be felt at the parish level.

That return on investment might come in the form of a newly-ordained priest whose seminary education was made possible through donations to the Appeal. Or it might come through the full bellies of neighbors who received emergency food assistance from

Catholic Charities.

"In our Annual Catholic Appeal, you will be bringing hope to our young people and families, to our parish communities and to our world," Bishop McElroy said. "I ask you to prayerfully consider supporting this splendid work of the Lord."

Donations to the Annual Catholic Appeal can be made directly through your parish or at sdcatholic.org/aca



Agency Helps Migrants Apply for DACA



Catholic Charities San Diego is stepping up

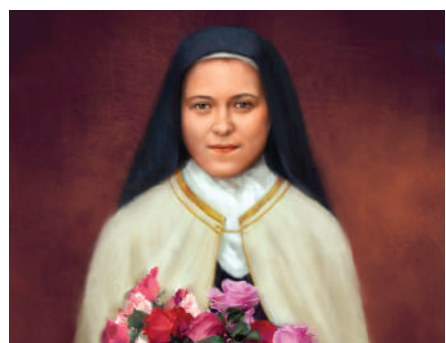
its assistance to young immigrants who want to apply to the DACA program for the first time, including offering grants to cover the application fee.

A federal judge ordered the Trump Administration to begin taking new applications for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which had been in legal limbo for four years.

Staff at Catholic Charities is offering virtual orientations in English and Spanish about the program. The agency's staff, which includes immigration attorneys, helps the migrants prepare their application. And, using donated funds, the organization is able to cover the \$495 application fee.

As it has done for 100 years, the agency helps everyone in need, not just Catholics. The agency also provides a variety of other services for immigrants and refugees.

More information is available on the website ccdsd.org/daca or by phone at (619) 498-0722



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Couple's Passion to Serve Has Deep Roots

By Roman Flores



BRAWLEY —
Catechist Teresa
Moya and her

husband, Deacon Alberto Moya, are known quantities in the Imperial Valley.

The couple, who serve together in Brawley, can be seen assisting at the Masses celebrated every Sunday on Sacred Heart School's soccer field. But their dedication to the Church goes back decades.

Serving in the Church has been like second nature to Teresa since her teens. Her commitment, in turn, inspired future husband Alberto to follow suit.

The couple grew up as neighbors in Mexicali, where they attended San Francisco y Santa Clara de Asís Parish. Teresa said that, when she received her First Communion at age 6, she "just fell in love with Jesus in the Eucharist."

It's "what has truly moved me to continue serving the Church in any way," said Teresa.

Teresa began teaching catechism at the parish around age 14, recalled Deacon Moya, who was 15 at the time. He said that observing Teresa as a role model in the faith made him want to be one as well.



PREPARATIONS: Teresa and Deacon Alberto Moya with one of their parish's ushers, left, prepare for an outdoor Mass at Sacred Heart School on Dec. 14, 2020.

After getting married in 1988, the Moyas moved to the United States and settled in Imperial. They continued to serve at their parish in Mexicali until the pastor nudged them to engage in ministry at their new parish, St. Anthony of Padua, in Imperial, instead.

"Catechism is my passion, I love sharing the faith," said Teresa, a mother of three, who with the encouragement of St. Anthony's staff, became a certified catechist.

"From there, it just started snowballing," said Teresa.

Within three years, she became a master catechist through the diocese. She has taught catechism to all age groups in the last 13 years. She served as assistant to the catechetical coordinator at El Centro Catholic from 2011 to 2013, and in a similar capacity at St. Richard Catholic Church in Borrego Springs from 2009 to 2010. Since 2017, she has served as director

of evangelization and catechetical ministry for the Catholic Community of Brawley & Westmorland (also known as Brawley Catholic).

Deacon Moya served at St. Anthony from 2017 to 2019 before being assigned to Brawley Catholic.

He said it was a long road to the diaconate – literally, having racked up some 45,000 miles while driving from the Valley to the diocesan Pastoral Center in San Diego for his four years of formation classes. But he considers all of that preparation, reflection and prayer time on the road a blessing.

He answered the call to the diaconate at a time when his family was struggling with both the death of his 3-year-old nephew from cancer and with the illness of his father-in-law. Rather than questioning God for these tragedies, Deacon Moya said he used the opportunity to better understand "the mystery of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection."

Now ministering together in the same parish community, the Moyas said they believe they are right where God wants them to be.

"I'm truly very blessed and very thankful to the Lord because... I'm doing what I love to do," Teresa said.

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Dear Friends and Family of Catholic Charities,

Housebound, Hungry, and Growing Hopeless, She Reached for the Last Food Left

There are stories you hear of survival, people defying the odds that they face, overcoming unimaginable obstacles. I'd like to share one of those stories, one of those amazing survivors who almost lost her life, inside her own home, the lights on, TV working, but an empty fridge, empty cabinets, no one to call and no way to get help.

An Imperial County woman with a life of misfortune describes her days alone at home, where she is barely able to move as she awaits charitable deliveries of food.

Billie had gone five days without eating. She had passed the point of hunger—laid stone-still on her couch, through the stages and emotions that gave way to starvation:

- Yearning.
- Craving.
- Fighting.
- Foregoing.
- Struggling.
- Fading.
- No longer wanting—but now, needing.
- Finally, she ate the only food on hand:
- Cat food.

The humiliation of sharing her lowest, most hopeless instance of hunger comes with a surprising flip of the script in words you would not expect to hear from someone whose journey has been so lonely and so painful:

"I am so fortunate," she says.

As I ask about her past and hear how she ended up alone and immobile in the tiny, desert city of Holtville, California, the word, "fortunate," is the furthest thing from my mind. Yet, she insists she is lucky, mainly for the food—and friendly hellos—she now receives from Catholic Charities and its senior nutrition program.

A Fracturing Sequence of Events

Billie is a California native from Oakland, seemingly a world away from Imperial County. She moved to this stark corner of the state nearly 30 years ago with her husband, whose work with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation brought them to the Valley. His promotion was an opportunity they couldn't pass up, even in lieu of her job as a certified teacher's aide and with her speaking little to no Spanish in a region that is mostly Hispanic. She would eventually get a job managing a video store.

In 2011, Billie's husband died from a freak infection following a routine exam. They had also lost their son at age 19. The family tragedies created emotional distance between Billie and her last remaining family member. They were both suffering from shock and sorrow, but separately rather than together.

Billie, living alone, in grief and a difficult place, continued managing the video store—until her car accident. Billie's car plunged over a 300-foot-cliff. She broke her back and neck, leaving her in chronic pain and with partial vocal cord paralysis as she tried to recover by herself at home.

A Shattering Setback

Billie was always somewhat of a homebody. Now, she was becoming, in her words, a loner. She laid in bed during the day and watched TV in her chair until late in the night.

One night, Billie went to get up after dozing off in her chair. Her leg had fallen asleep and gave out at the first step. Billie fell to the tile floor, shattering her femur and breaking her knee. It would be the beginning of an 18-month period in which Billie wasn't just bedbound, but couchbound. Her bed was too high up for her to crawl into. While beginning to learn to walk again in physical therapy, she would discover she had also broken the other femur and knee, likely from the same fall.

"For the better part of two years, I lived on the couch," she said. "All I had was the TV, the front door, and a lockbox for the therapists to come in."

Removed from Friends, Family—and Food

Through nine neck surgeries, three back surgeries, two knee surgeries, and outright, isolated despair within the walls of her home, Billie was all but forgotten to the outside world. Most of the neighbors she knew retired and moved on from the Valley. With the exception of a few friends who would check on her roughly once a month, she had no support system and no human connection. Soon, she would become food insecure, often starving for days at a time—not because she didn't have the means to afford food, but simply because she didn't have the ability or the help to obtain it.

Nourishment Knocks

Billie lost 40 pounds in 18 months from undernutrition. What they don't tell you about hunger is that when you can finally eat and have the option of food, it hurts. Eating a "normal" meal is difficult. Small portions are the only option until you can build up your stomach and the ability to start enjoying food again. Her hunger hamstrung her recovery, compounded her osteoporosis, and put her at risk for another serious fall. Recognizing Billie's frailty, her physical therapist referred her to a local agency that would eventually lead Billie to Catholic Charities.

"It was like someone came out of the woodwork and said, 'Hello, we're here to help,'" Billie said. "I didn't know anyone was out there. It was a miracle."

Billie's meal and grocery deliveries are by no means feasts. Sometimes, there is still not enough. But she is thankful for quality food staples—meat, vegetables, milk, oats, eggs—that, quite frankly, keep her from eating her cats' food. "They get it all to themselves now," she jokes.

Having been through a heart-wrenching interview, it's a much-needed opening for both of us to lighten the mood. I ask her what kinds of food she enjoys the most. Her eyes light up. *"Oh wow," she says. "Spaghetti, lasagna, tacos, burritos, Chinese—I love it all. Anything but cat food."*

Hunger Hits the Middle Class

There is something I need you to understand about Billie. Her food insecurity comes from a very different place compared to others. A situation in which many organizations will tell her she does not qualify for assistance.

Billie lives off of her late husband's pension, which bumps her just above the low-income threshold. Each month, she receives enough income to cover her rent, utilities, and some groceries. She makes a donation for her food deliveries. After that, there is nothing—money or food alike—left for the month.

Billie is an example of a quiet crisis in America that was growing before COVID and has since accelerated during the pandemic: middle-class hunger.

"People see that you have a decent home and a decent car, and assume you're doing fine," Billie says. "They don't know that everything you own is old and that any money you have coming in is going out."

Billie is susceptible to the coronavirus and scared of contracting it. She is not ready to go outside, nor should she. When she receives food, she eats. In the meantime, she waits. She suggests there is a looming possibility that she could one day lose her home.

Yet again, she says she is "lucky." "I have good people helping me out," she said. "Otherwise, I don't know what I'd do. I honestly don't."

Billie is one of many in Imperial County who are hanging on by a thread. Catholic Charities is working to feed the hungry, regardless of religion, income, politics, or qualifications. During the pandemic, our Imperial County home food deliveries have multiplied from 170 home deliveries a week to 670 home deliveries a week. That is the disheartening truth in one of the country's poorest counties and hardest hit by the pandemic.

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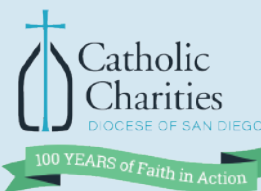
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100 Years of Serving Heart of Chula Vista

By Denis Grasska



In February 1921, Bishop John J. Cantwell of the Diocese of Monterey-Los Angeles met with a group of Catholics from the southernmost part of his diocese.

The delegation appealed to him for the creation of a Catholic parish in San Diego's South Bay. He granted their request by establishing St. Rose of Lima Parish, which would become the first Catholic church in Chula Vista.

This year, the parish will mark its 100th anniversary.

Its centennial celebration, themed "Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future," began with a drive-by event Aug. 28 and a livestreamed outdoor Mass the following evening.

At the drive-by, parish families pulled up to the church in their cars to receive a centennial gift bag that included a novena book, rosary, holy water, prayer cards and more. The Mass, held in honor of the feast day of St. Rose of Lima, was celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan, who had been the parish's pastor from 2002 to 2014.

The yearlong celebration is expected to conclude with a 100th anniversary Mass on Aug. 28, when the parish once again will celebrate its namesake's feast day.

Planning for the centennial began in November 2019, with the intention of hosting a year of commemorative events. But the pandemic and restrictions on public gatherings forced the parish to scale down its plans.

Father Miguel Campos, pastor of



HISTORIC: St. Rose of Lima School saw nearly 200 students register for the first school year 1948-49. Jacquelin Krail, seated left, was first to register on Aug. 28, 1948.

the parish, acknowledges feeling "like our hands are being tied" by the health crisis. But he sees the centennial as "a time of grace," during which present-day parishioners can reflect on their forebears' accomplishments, on the many sacraments that have been celebrated, and on how the parish has been a blessing to Chula Vista over the past century.

Narciso Guzmán, 62, first encountered the parish 35 years ago when he sang at a Spanish-language Mass there as part of a visiting choir. He has been a parishioner and director of the Spanish choir there ever since.

"When I came the first day, I fell in love with the community," he said.

Currently, one centennial-themed event is planned for every month from February

through August, except in February. However, those plans remain tentative in light of the pandemic. Highlights include a Mass honoring the Knights of Columbus in March, the release of a "Taste of St. Rose" recipe book in May, and a 5K/10K run in August.

Gretchen Peters Schaar, 59, grew up as a member of one of the parish's founding families. Her grandmother, who was among the group that petitioned Bishop Cantwell for a new parish, would take the trolley from Chula Vista to National City every Sunday – with three children in tow – to attend Mass at the nearest Catholic church.

"The early parishioners wanted something so badly that they did what they could to make it happen," she said.

An abandoned church building, relocated from Palm City to the corner of Third Avenue and Alvarado Street in Chula Vista, served as the first worship space for St. Rose of Lima Parish. Transported by horse-drawn carriage, the church arrived at its new location in May 1921.

That first church building, which had a seating capacity of 120, was dedicated on Sept. 18, 1921. In time, it would be replaced by a larger church (seating capacity of 450) constructed on the corner of Third Avenue and H Street and dedicated on Nov. 26, 1950. The current St. Rose of Lima Church, which seats 875, was dedicated on Dec. 20, 1965.

The first church was razed in August 1965, and the second became the parish hall. The parish opened St. Rose of Lima School on Sept. 13, 1948.

Owing perhaps to the vibrancy of the parish school, Bishop Dolan said, the parish has "a perfect blend" of age groups, from children through seniors. Over the past century, the parish has grown from around 20 to more than 5,000 families.

"The celebration of 100 years of St. Rose of Lima is really a celebration of a vibrant Catholic community," said Bishop Dolan. "I think that's pretty awesome."



KICK-OFF: St. Rose of Lima parishioners set up for the drive-by event on Aug. 28, 2020, that kicked off the parish's centennial celebration. Parish families pulled up to the church in their cars to receive a gift bag that included a novena book, rosary, holy water, prayer cards and more.

St. Rose of Lima Parish
is located at 293 H St.,
Chula Vista 91910.
More information is
available at strosecv.com.



New Look for Rite of Election This Year

By Denis Grasska



The Diocese of San Diego is making major changes to the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion to comply with COVID-19 safety protocols.

The annual diocesan liturgy, which is typically attended by more than 3,200 people, is where the bishop welcomes hundreds of catechumens and candidates from local parishes and affirms their readiness to receive the sacraments of initiation at the upcoming Easter Vigil.

“Even though we are in times of pandemic and things are difficult, we still are cherishing and celebrating this momentous occasion in the life of our Church,” said diocesan Chancellor Marioly Galván, whose responsibilities include oversight of evangelization and catechetical programs.

This year, instead of one massive gathering, the diocese will be hosting three smaller ones. The liturgies will be held Feb. 20 and 21 at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa.

All three liturgies will be celebrated outdoors, with attendees wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, and they also will be livestreamed. For health and safety reasons, there will be no posed group photos with the bishops either before or after the liturgies.

Collectively, some 256 catechumens (those who have never been baptized) and 401 candidates (those who have been baptized but are preparing to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church) from 51 of the diocese’s 97 parishes will be participating in the three celebrations. Accompanying them will be 566 sponsors and 208 parish team members.

Last year’s Rite of Election was held on March 1 at the Town and Country convention center in Mission Valley. Providentially, it took place about two weeks before the Diocese of San Diego announced the suspension of all public liturgies and California Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a stay-at-home order to stem the spread of COVID-19.

The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion represents a milestone for the diocese’s catechumens and candidates. It is preceded by almost a year of weekly Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) classes at individual parishes.



BY THE BOOK: This year’s Rite of Election will be divided into three smaller liturgies held over two days, in response to health guidelines. One activity will continue: Bishop Robert McElroy will sign each parish’s Book of the Elect, as he did at last year’s rite shown here.

2021 Rite of Election GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH

Feb. 20, 1:45-3 p.m. • Feb. 21, 12:45-2 p.m. & 3-4:15 p.m.

Liturgies will be livestreamed at sdcatholic.org/roe. A total of 256 catechumens and 401 candidates from 51 of the diocese’s 97 parishes will participate in this year’s rite. They will be accompanied by 566 sponsors and 208 parish team members.

Photos of this year’s liturgies will be published on the Facebook page @SDDisciples.

Galván said that “journeying together” as a class is an important aspect of the process, and she praised parishes for finding ways to ensure a fruitful period of study and spiritual preparation amidst the challenges of COVID-19.

“We’ve had to find creative ways of still continuing the mission and being able to continue to be those beacons of light in these moments of darkness,” said Galván, who noted that many parishes either transitioned exclusively to virtual meetings or adopted a hybrid model with virtual as well as in-person gatherings.

Christian Avila, a 24-year-old candidate at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Barrio Logan, has wanted to receive the Eucharist since his youth.

“But I always put it off,” he said about taking the required sacramental preparation.

Weekend soccer games and filming videos for his YouTube channel had been too tempting of a distraction for him. But, after committing to put God first, he enrolled in RCIA.

Though he had concerns about beginning the process during the pandemic, “There is something that told me, ‘Hey, just do it. Everything’s going to be good.’”

And it was – even if the pandemic meant that his weekly classes transitioned from in-person, to virtual, to a hybrid model that includes a Zoom session followed by in-person Mass attendance. There were even service projects in October and November, conducted with facial coverings and social distancing.

“It’s been a journey for sure, but I had to adapt,” he said.

Avila’s 21-year-old sister, Cinthia, is also a candidate this year. Cinthia, who received her first

Communion about six years ago but will be confirmed this Easter, didn’t see the pandemic as a reason to postpone her RCIA journey.

“Regardless of being a video chat or being in-person, the message is coming across,” she said.

The siblings grew up in a family divided between Catholics and Jehovah’s Witnesses, and they have had experience with both faith traditions.

Cinthia recalled attending Catholic Masses with one grandfather and Jehovah’s Witness services with the other. Her Catholic grandfather died in 2011.

“I will finally be able to accomplish a promise I made to myself after my grandpa died,” she said, as she looks ahead to completing her sacraments of initiation this Easter.

Galván takes inspiration from catechumens and candidates who, in their eagerness to enter into the Catholic Church, remained committed to the RCIA process during this challenging year.

“It just goes to prove [that] when God calls you ... no pandemic is going to stop you.”

Contact individual parishes for information about faith formation classes for adults, called RCIA classes. They are available in English and Spanish, and at some locations in Vietnamese and in other languages.





AIDA BUSTOS

GLORY TO GOD! Lupe Ríos provided the liturgical music for the diocese's Easter Sunday Mass last year. He serves as the music minister at Mary, Star of the Sea Parish in La Jolla.

Music Minister's 'Faith Shines Forth'

By Iliana De Lara



"I feel like the hand of God is working through me and I think, 'It's great to be here.'"

Lupe Ríos never imagined that instead of picking strawberries and apples, like he did with his father when he was small, he would be able to do what he likes most, praising God with his music.

At age 34, he leads the music ministry at Mary, Star of the Sea Parish in La Jolla and frequently provides the liturgical music for special Masses celebrated by Bishop Robert McElroy. In addition, he's a songwriter and musical arranger, and has recorded three albums.

His journey to this work is an unlikely one.

The eleventh of 12 children, he arrived in the United States with his family when he was a child. A native of the Mexican state of Jalisco, the Ríos family settled in the Yakima Valley, Wash., where they could work in agriculture.

Music was not a part of his family's life, except for singing at church in Mexico. It was his high school teachers that introduced him to the world of musicals. Soon, he was playing the lead in school plays, and being selected to represent the state of Washington in jazz tournaments.

"None of that filled me," he said. "What I liked was being at Mass. What's better than being with other people who want to come together to worship God?"

In time, Ríos joined the choir at



COURTESY OF LUPE RÍOS

VERSATILE: Lupe Ríos plays the guitar, piano and organ and sings in five languages.

a parish. And from there he taught himself how to play the guitar. His mother was so pleased that he was helping out at Mass that she bought him an electronic organ for \$5 at a garage sale, what he called the best investment in his life. The purchase of a piano followed.

He was accepted to the University of Washington in Seattle to study international relations with a full scholarship. It was at that point in his life, he said, that he drifted from the Church. He had many questions growing up and was not getting them answered.

One day he visited the Newman Center, which was led by Dominican priests, "who helped me sort it all out."

He was invited to sing the Liturgy

of the Hours with the Dominicans.

"I was fascinated the first time I listened to (Gregorian chants)," he recalled. "It's as if a dimension had opened up to the sky. It was a solemnity, a mystery, a calling so strong that I thought that I wanted to be a priest."

In time, Ríos became the Newman Center's choir director.

One day, a Dominican friend told him that Mission San Luis Rey Parish in Oceanside was looking for a music minister. And that's how in 2011, at the age of 24, Ríos arrived in California.

The job fit him like a glove. The parish serves a multicultural congregation, with Anglo, Latino, Filipino and Samoan faithful. He's fluent in English and Spanish and speaks a little Italian, Portuguese and Latin. And he has international sensibilities given his college studies.

He recalled his first Easter at the parish.

"I invited all of the parish's choirs," he said, noting that it was the first time more than 100 people had come together.

"Wow! That's what I wanted!" he recalled the pastor saying.

"That's when I knew that my way of doing things was working, because we were opening doors for everyone," Ríos recalled.

In 2016, in a quest to find an environment more suited to his young age, he decided to move to San Diego.

Soon he met Father James Rafferty, then the pastor of Mary, Star

of the Sea Parish. He was looking for a music minister for his parish, and he invited Ríos to the post.

Today, he also leads the parish's youth ministry, and more recently became the music teacher at its school, Stella Maris Academy.

"I joked that he is like the 'Pied Piper' as the kids follow him and joyfully learn about music and develop their own gifts," said Father Patrick Mulcahy, who became the parish's pastor after Father Rafferty retired.

"Several of our school kids have volunteered to be cantors because of the encouragement from Lupe and their trust in him," he said.

As the diocese's director of Liturgy and Spirituality, Noreen McInnes coordinates the special Masses celebrated by Bishop McElroy.

"His faith shines forth in his excellent music skills," she said. "Though Lupe's liturgical music is uplifting to listen to on its own, he always ministers in a welcoming manner, inviting the assembly to join him as one voice in the praise and worship of our God."

Ríos considers it an honor to contribute to these Masses, as well as to his home parish.

"I can now see the hand of God preparing me for these situations. He gave me a thirst for Him, to follow Him, to serve Him. And I do it with great love."

More information about Lupe Ríos, who has recorded three albums, is found on his website, lupedifranco.com.



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ST. MARTIN OF TOURS PARISH



Father Danilo Valdepenas is one of nine hospital chaplains in the diocese. He's been a priest for 32 years, and a chaplain for the last seven. He serves patients at the Kaiser Permanente San Diego Medical Center, in Clairemont Mesa, and at Sharp Grossmont Hospital. A native of the Philippines, the 60-year-old also serves as associate pastor at St. Martin of Tours Parish in La Mesa.

Question: Currently, what patients are you seeing?

Answer: About 60 percent are COVID-19 patients, almost all of them facing imminent death.

Q: How has your work changed during the pandemic?

A: The ministry that I do has changed a lot. Before, I used to do rounds, and visit patients in their rooms, especially those who were Catholic. Now, there are new protocols. As soon as I step into the hospital, someone meets me, then we go to the patient's room. If the patient does not have COVID-19, I talk to him, anoint him, receive his confession and give him the sacrament. If they have COVID, I stand outside of their room. If they can talk on the phone, maybe use Facetime, we pray together. If they cannot talk because they have so many tubes, I pray for him.

Interview with:

Father Danilo Valdepenas
Hospital Chaplain



Q: How do you feel about all of this?

A: This is not the way it's supposed to be. We need to be close to patients, especially when they are sick. The more discouraged and broken they are, the closer we need to be to them. This pandemic has not allowed us to do that. The first three months, I felt broken because all I could do was pray for them. Then I reflected how it's actually strengthened my faith.

Q: What else do you do?

A: If there are family members present, I talk to them. They are always so grateful that they are being remembered by the Church. We talk about how strong we are, how we have to struggle and face difficult situations in life. I tell them that, ultimately, it's about God, who does not abandon us, God who does not leave us orphaned. Whatever He promised, He is going to fulfill. And I tell them that they and their family member will be remembered in my prayers.

Q: What is your work day like?

A: I used to schedule my days at each hospital, doing rounds there, and have a day off. Now, I'm just on call. But when it rains, it pours. Often, when I'm at one hospital, the other one is calling. Sometimes, they call me in the middle of the night, or early in the morning, because the patient is imminently dying. Your inconvenience is the convenience of the patient. Your discomfort is the comfort of the patient. That's the way I see it. When you're being woken up in the early morning, or at night, you feel uncomfortable but your ministry is being awakened.

Q: What steps do you take to protect yourself?

A: The two hospitals have distinct health and safety protocols that I have to follow strictly. Once you leave the hospital, you have to go directly to your room and wash yourself, launder your clothes, and then you have to go to the other hospital. I take three to four showers a day. We have to be responsible for protecting ourselves and the people I talk to at the parish, when I celebrate Mass and inside the rectory.

Q: How have you been changed by your experience in this pandemic?

A: I have been able to reflect that I am lucky to witness this kind of situation. Somehow, this experience has strengthened my spirituality, my foundation as a priest. It's made me a better priest and a better person. It's given me a sense of awakening in my ministry.

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Online Group Connects Catholic Singles

By Denis Grasska



Lindsay Rossio is playing Cupid for local Catholics looking for lifelong love.

Rossio, a 35-year-old member of St. Michael Parish in Poway, is the creator of the Facebook group “Faithful San Diego Catholic Singles Seeking a Spouse.”

“I started this group perhaps through a moment of either the Holy Spirit’s divine intervention or perhaps a moment of spontaneous insanity – probably both,” quipped Rossio, who as a single Catholic herself recognized a need in the Church and decided to do something about it.

She launched the private Facebook group about five months ago. By the end of its first day, there were 14 members. It was on the cusp of 100 as of late January.

Potential members request to join and are admitted after answering a few questions. Rossio said the group is open to all Catholics (and those currently in the process of becoming Catholic) who accept the Church’s magisterial teaching, live within commuting distance of San Diego, feel called to marriage, and are currently free to marry in the Church. Upon approval, members are encouraged to post



FOUNDER: Lindsay Rossio created the Facebook group “Faithful San Diego Catholic Singles Seeking a Spouse” to meet a local need.

COURTESY LINDSAY ROSSIO

Rossio noted, it is also possible for members to see whether they share any mutual friends.

The diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry has no official involvement with the group, but its director, Patrick Rivera, supports what Rossio is trying to do and says her group is “very much a ministry.”

Rivera’s office is “really big about vocational discernment,” he said, but it has not directly facilitated Catholic dating.

The Faithful San Diego Catholic Singles group exists to fill that gap.

Rossio modeled the group after similar Facebook ones open to single Catholics from throughout the country and, in some cases, around the globe. She couldn’t find any that were limited to San Diego and its environs.

At first, she was reluctant to start her own Catholic singles group, preferring “to sit back and hope someone else would do it.” Prayer and the encouragement of Rivera and others changed her mind.

Rossio facilitates group interaction by posting ice-breakers and lighthearted memes. If she were to meet her own future husband via the group, she said that would be “icing on the cake.” If not, she said, it’s enough to help fellow Catholics find love.

Greg Schuman, a freelance full stack developer who attends St. Margaret Parish in Oceanside, joined the group about four months ago.

“I cannot begin to share how difficult it is to find someone with similar values,” the 31-year-old said. “There are a lot of hoops to jump through: Sometimes it’s distance, sometimes it’s personality, sometimes it’s physical.”

Because the group’s membership is limited to Catholics around the San Diego area, he explained, there aren’t concerns that the person you’re corresponding with has a value system incompatible with your own or lives too far away.

“I’m looking for my best friend, someone who’s strong in faith but also willing to be open to doing new things,” Schuman said. “By being part of this group, I hope I can find that. If not that, at least just have a good conversation with someone.”

a “member bio,” including a photo and a brief introduction.

Rossio said the COVID-19 pandemic inspired her to start the group, but she noted that the challenges that local Catholic singles face in meeting potential spouses predates social distancing and lockdowns.

She recounted one group member’s lament that there aren’t any events or programs in the San Diego Diocese that are geared specifically toward single Catholics who are looking to date fellow Catholics.

Rossio pointed out that, when attending an event like a Bible study, there may be many other singles in attendance, but it isn’t easy to determine which participants are there strictly for faith and fellowship and which are also seeking relationships.

The Faithful San Diego Catholic Singles group “eliminates the guesswork,” she said, because group membership is limited to those who are seeking spouses and are open to receiving messages from fellow group members to gauge their compatibility.

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“Faithful San Diego Catholic Singles Seeking a Spouse” is a private Facebook group. Individuals must request to join.



Obituaries

Jesuit Father Jaime Rasura



Jesuit Father Jaime Rasura, who ministered at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Barrio Logan for five decades, died Jan. 15 at the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center in Los Gatos. He was 96. Born in El Paso, Texas, he was ordained a priest of the Society of Jesus on June 15, 1956, in San Francisco. In the San Diego Diocese, he served as associate pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish from 1958-1988. He left the diocese in October 2010. A simple funeral Mass was to be celebrated at the Sacred Heart Jesuit Center. A memorial service will be livestreamed from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church at 7:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 29; it will be closed to the public.

Msgr. Jeremiah O’Sullivan



Msgr. Jeremiah O’Sullivan, a retired priest of the Diocese of San Diego, died Jan. 5. He was 95. Born in County Kerry, Ireland, he emigrated to the United States with one of his 14 siblings and was ordained a priest on March 19, 1958. Among other assignments, he served as pastor of The Immaculata, Holy Family, and St. James parishes. He was a hospital chaplain before returning as co-pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado in 1991. He retired in 1996. Father Michael F. Murphy, current pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, knew the late monsignor for 43 years and described him as “a gentle Irishman with a wonderful sense of humor.” His funeral Mass was celebrated Jan. 15 at Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado.

Msgr. Anthony Chylewski



Msgr. Anthony Chylewski, a retired priest of the Diocese of San Diego, died on Jan. 1. He was nine days shy of his 93rd birthday. Born in Chicago, he was ordained to the priesthood on Feb. 2, 1952, for the San Diego Diocese. He served as director of the Propagation of the Faith, also known as the Missions Office, from 1977 until retiring in 1997. Msgr. Lloyd Bourgeois said his late friend was “a genius” at raising funds for those in developing countries, noting that he brought in “a whopping \$75 million for the missions” during his 20 years heading the office. He was also “a deeply spiritual man,” Msgr. Bourgeois said. His funeral Mass was celebrated Jan. 7 at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Ramona.

Sister Ellen Marie Ryan



Sister Ellen Marie Ryan, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, died Dec. 19 at Scripps Mercy Hospital. She was 88. Born in San Diego, she attended the Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP), both its high school and its now defunct elementary school. OLP was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. She entered the congregation in 1950 and professed first vows in 1953. Her long career in elementary and high schools included assignments at her own alma mater, OLP, where she was an elementary school principal and high school teacher. She also worked as a grant writer for Father Joe’s Villages from 1986-2001.

Read extended versions of these obituaries at
thesoutherncross.org/obits



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We can go beyond the rage



In times of social and political polarization, there's a tendency for people to respond in one of two ways: those who aggressively judge and discredit the people they don't agree with, or those who react passively, to avoid conflict, and simply walk away. Managing differences between groups, organizations and even family members is not easy, but it's not impossible.

I was fortunate to have as a teacher Virginia Satir, the influential author and psychotherapist. She once taught me a simple phrase that changed the way I see, live and react to conflict: "The problem is not the problem, rather it's how we react to it."

She followed that phrase, with another one she often repeated: "We get together on the basis of our similarities; we grow on the basis of our differences."

Ever since then, I began to pay more attention to the way I react to problems and to the meaning I gave each situation. Satir invites us to consider the role we play in conflict. No one is capable of angering

**Associate Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality**

**Ricardo
Márquez**



or humiliating me if I don't allow it, she would tell us. This control lies within me, not with someone else.

One test of this approach occurred when I visited my son in Venezuela, who was a political prisoner under the dictatorship there. Before entering the prison, I had to undergo an inspection to see what I was bringing in. I had to take off all of my clothes and assume various positions to ensure that I was not smuggling drugs in.

The guards reacted with sarcasm and satisfaction in carrying out this process. After having endured this experience with shame, rage and a sense of powerlessness, one day I decided to live it with the conviction of my human dignity, of being sacred, of being a "son of God." I called to mind this saying from Jesus: "So when they hand you over, don't worry beforehand what you will say, but say whatever is given to you at that time, for it isn't you speaking, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:11). I prepared myself internally and prayed for serenity.

The process was the same as the other times. But this time I did not live it with humiliation, rather as an opportunity to express my dignity, "stripped" of privilege and titles. This time I did not look down in shame, rather I gazed at the guard with respect. He must have felt something different that made him look away from me, hurry up his inspection, even telling me, "Excuse me, you can get dressed now..."

What significance do we give to words or actions that bother us? What power do we give them to upset us, or even provoke our aggression? When these emotions invite us to look inward — to ask what it is that we need, what is hurting inside — they have helped us to grow and heal.

If we don't go beyond knee-jerk reactions, then we are caught in a cycle of rage and rejection. If we make the conscious decision to explore what's under these emotions, we will find the hidden treasure of what we really want and come in contact with God's grace: respect and love for ourselves. And it's from that place that we can equally recognize the dignity of the "other," even someone who is offensive, and be able to build a bridge to possible understanding and peace.

More Perspectives

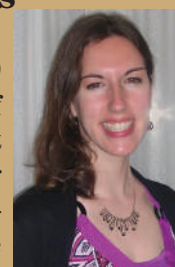
Why I speak out

"What moves me to speak out on the issues of race and justice is seeing so many people suffer needlessly. My thoughts and actions are aligned with Dr. King's, and to see people being treated less than human is unacceptable."



Little things add up

"COVID-19 has made a lot of people stuck at home together when they previously had more space and alone time. Tempers can run high under stressful circumstances. All couples can take practical steps to a happier marriage."

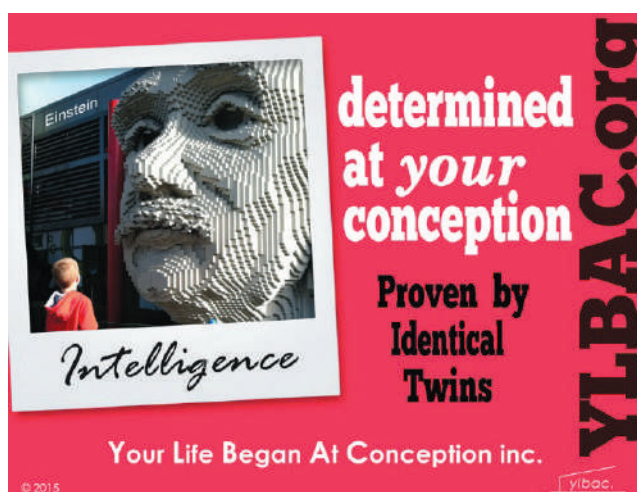


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News Briefs

AUXILIARY BISHOP TO JOIN IMMIGRATION CONVERSATION

The St. James-St. Leo Catholic Community's Faith in Action Committee is hosting a virtual conversation about immigration challenges. The event, which will take place from 1-2:15 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 6, will reflect on how Catholics should respond to DACA, border security, family separations, asylum requests and other issues. The conversation will propose solutions based on Scripture and Catholic social teaching. Guest speakers will include Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano and the executive director of Alliance San Diego, Andrea Guerrero. The conversation will be moderated by Deacon Peter Hodsdon of the St. James-St. Leo Catholic Community. Two parishioners will present their personal testimonies, and there also will be opportunities to ask questions. For more information, email christybohan@cox.net. Pre-register and obtain the Zoom link from azentella@ucsd.edu.

MISSION SAN LUIS REY TO HOST ONLINE AUCTION

Winning bidders in an upcoming online auction hosted by Mission San Luis Rey will have a rare opportunity to see parts of the mission grounds that are not open to the public. The auction will be open for bidding from Feb. 1-14. Auction items include a year of retreats, a docent-led tour of the artwork in the historic church, a tour of the mission bell tower, and a five-star personal retreat. For more information, visit www.sanluisrey.org.

WORKSHOP TO FOCUS ON TEEN DATING IN DIGITAL WORLD

"Dating in Today's Digital World: Pitfalls for Teens & Parents," a free workshop sponsored by Ascension Parish's Safe Place Faith Community Outreach Team, will address such topics as healthy relationships, digital dangers, teen dating violence, risk factors and how to access help and resources. The event will take place from 7-8:30 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 24, at Ascension Parish, 11292 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., San Diego 92124. Presenters will include Diane Doherty, supervising Deputy City Attorney in the Domestic Violence & Sex Crimes Unit, and Jani Sepanik, Domestic Violence Education & Prevention Manager at the Community Resource Center. Free palm cards and pins will be available for all attendees. The event will be held outside, weather permitting; masks and social distancing practices will be observed. A maximum of 200 attendees will be admitted. To reserve your place, RSVP to Angela Elfman at Angela.elfman@san.rr.com or (858) 775-4828.



NEW BISHOP: The San Bernardino Diocese has a new bishop. Coadjutor Bishop Alberto Rojas succeeded Bishop Gerald Barnes on Dec. 28, 2020. Bishop Barnes, who retired, had led the diocese since 1996. Bishop Rojas had previously served as an auxiliary bishop in the Chicago Archdiocese.

DIOCESAN INSTITUTE OFFERING COURSE ON 'LAUDATO SI'

An upcoming course offered through the Diocesan Institute will cover the spirituality of "Laudato Si," Pope Francis' encyclical on environmental stewardship; the reality of the current environmental and climate crisis; and how the Creation Care Action Plan (CCAP) for the Diocese of San Diego responds to this crisis. The classes will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m., Wednesdays, Feb. 24 and March 3, 10, 17 and 24. The course is free to audit, \$5 for professional enhancement, or \$10 for credit. It will be team-taught by the Creation Care Core Team of the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, which includes Father Emmet Farrell, director of Creation Care Ministry. For more information, email efarrell@sdccatholic.org. To register, email danderson@sdccatholic.org or call (858) 490-8212.

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Isolated deep in the rural mountains of Guatemala, a child cries for food — but there is nothing for her to eat. As her impoverished parents watch helplessly, the little girl's hunger pangs grow stronger, and within days, her physical condition deteriorates further. Her muscles begin to atrophy and patches of her hair fall out. Soon, her mother knows, she will even lose the strength to cry.

Many miles away, a similar situation unfolds, but this time, the home isn't a rustic mountain hut. It is a patchwork shack of wood, plastic and sheet metal built on the outskirts of the city. The location is very different, but the poverty and hunger are the same.

The children in both places are suffering and their parents are desperate to find answers — but they lack the money and influence to provide any relief.

"Thank God, Catholic missions in these developing countries are doing something to help. Those outreaches can make the difference between life and death," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a U.S. based ministry founded to support Church-run outreaches to the poor around the globe. Cavnar's team works with compassionate American donors to supply the food, medicines and other resources Catholic missions need to save lives and restore hope.

Among the many projects they assist are a program for malnourished infants and children in Mazatenango, Guatemala, and The Franciscan Social Center in Cochabamba, Bolivia, which operates a lunch program to feed the area's poorest individuals lunches several days a week.

Both outreaches, run by devout Catholics, demonstrate the power of the Church to save lives and restore hope in desperate communities.

In the case of the Guatemalan mission, the focus is on children, and the needs being addressed are severe.

In the department of Suchitepéquez, Guatemala, poor families typically rely on farming for survival. The villages are remote and isolated, so many families become very dependent on the success of their local harvest. This can become a dangerous gamble in years when nature does not cooperate.

The region is already extremely vulnerable to both flooding and drought, and in recent years, crops have been devastated several times by inadequate rainy seasons.

In cases like those, the poorest families resign themselves to eating one small



ABOVE: Families in rural Guatemala face terrible living conditions and extreme hunger. We can offer them help and hope. BELOW: Sister Julieta of The Franciscan Social Center takes a cart of prepared food out to the feeding program of the mission.



meal of tortillas each day, and some watch in anguish as their malnourished children languish on the brink of starvation.

The program Cross Catholic Outreach supports with donor contributions [see story at top of opposite page] is a godsend to these families because it helps feed those at greatest risk. Its staff also makes a special effort to provide the comfort only a loving, spiritual embrace can provide.

"This mission is working hard to transform lives with food and unconditional love," Cavnar said, "but,

like many Catholic ministries operating in developing countries, it operates on a shoestring budget. That's why the support of U.S. Catholics is so important to them. It fuels their great work, and in the case of their outreach to children, it provides food to stop malnutrition and ensures that recovering kids remain healthy."

Donations from U.S. Catholics are just as critical to the outreach in Bolivia — and to the many other worldwide missions Cross Catholic Outreach supports. In the case of The Franciscan Social Center in Cochabamba, the contributions are essential to cover the expenses of its special feeding program

serving destitute children, their families and the at-risk elderly.

"When Jesus Christ walked the earth, he addressed both material and spiritual hunger. Were he to travel to Guatemala or Bolivia today, he would certainly be heartbroken to see so many of its people suffering from extreme poverty and so many facing intense hunger on a daily basis," Cavnar said. "Hunger and poverty clearly remain a challenge for the poor, just as they were in Christ's time on Earth. As Jesus' followers, we can and should see ourselves as God's instruments of mercy to end suffering and restore lost hope."

How to Help

To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01586, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

If you identify an aid project, 100% of the donation will be restricted to be used for that specific project. However, if more is raised for the project than needed, funds will be redirected to other urgent needs in the ministry.



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