



Class of 2021

Tested by
the virus, lifted
by their faith

Pages 12-14



ALEXA GONZALEZ



AL BLAKE, JR.



LOLA DIAZ



'Open Arms'

Catholic Charities in the Imperial Valley helping families seeking asylum. **Page 3**



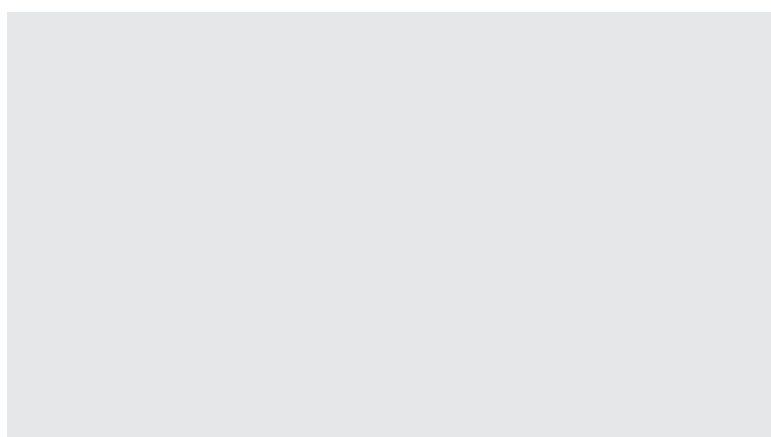
Young Blood

Meet the new leader of the oldest Knights of Columbus council in the region. **Page 4**



Mothers' Love

A son pays tribute to his two mothers — and a third one who is in heaven. **Page 18**



Saturday,
May 22, 2021
10:00am - 12:00pm

Good Shepherd Parish
8200 Gold Coast Drive, San Diego

Live Stream at:
sdcatholic.org/pentecost2021

**Pentecost Mass
For All People**

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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.



Bishop Promotes Racial Healing

Catholic News Service



Christ's crucifixion
"encapsulates
the magnitude of

evil in our world," San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy said in his homily during a special Mass he celebrated to promote racial healing.

"But it is the Crucifixion that also conveys even more piercingly the hope we hold, the faith we share, and the love that unites us in Jesus Christ who suffered all to show there are no limits to His love," the bishop said.

The April 15 evening Mass at Good Shepherd Parish was held for and with the Asian and Pacific Islander community in light of hate crimes against those communities across the country.

The Mass was the latest effort in the San Diego Diocese to raise awareness of the devastating effects of racism on individuals and communities, to engage the faithful in meaningful dialogue and to inspire action.

Just before Bishop McElroy's homily, the parish's pastor, Father Michael Pham, cited passages from Matthew 27:32-37 about how the Romans compelled a man from Cyrene named Simon to carry the cross of Jesus of Nazareth as He was taken to His crucifixion at Golgotha.

"We gather here tonight because there is hatred in our world," Bishop McElroy said.

He recounted some examples from U.S. history fueled by such hatred, including the Chinese Exclusion Act and the forced internment of the Japanese community into relocation



AIDA BUSTOS

REUNION: At the Mass April 15 at Good Shepherd Parish, many reacted joyfully to seeing friends in person after a year of isolation. Selma Johnson, Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics, greets Nida Tolentino, Corpus Christi Parish.

camp during World War II.

"The very reality and meaning of the Crucifixion calls us to see this exclusion and violence, recognizing in the racist patterns of our society the false condemnation of Pilate, the insults of the crowd, the sense of desolation that Jesus experienced as He hung on the cross," the bishop said.

"And we, as individuals, must in shame recognize those moments when we have contributed to the terrible legacy of racism in our world by joining the crowd shouting insults, by remaining silent in the face of racial injustice, and by nailing Christ to the cross in the form of His sisters and brothers," the bishop said.

"But more importantly we gather here tonight because Jesus' sacrifice on the cross shows us a pathway of radical love and sacrifice that is the only lasting antidote to the racism that lurks within the human heart," he continued.

"It is the love of the good Samaritan, who confronting evil and danger on the road, breaks every racist cultural boundary that calls him to limit his love to his own Samaritan community," the Bishop said. "The love of the good Samaritan destroys racism by casting aside that mysterious cancer of the human soul that leads us to label God's children as 'other,' as inferior, as unworthy, as threat, as competitor," he said.

"In casting aside that terrible impulse of the human spirit," the bishop concluded, "God opens up the truth that we are all equal in the sight of God. We must begin to rebuild our state and our nation to foster genuine unity and peace."

See videos and other
resources on this issue
at sdcatholic.org/racism.



Vatican to Release Action Plan

The Southern Cross



The Vatican plans
to mark the sixth
anniversary of

the release of Pope Francis' landmark encyclical "Laudato Si" in May with an announcement of an action plan to help bring its vision to life.

On May 24, 2015, Pope Francis presented the sweeping document directed at "every living person on this planet." He used scientific research, supported by the language of faith, to argue for immediate and decisive action to protect the environment and the people most hurt when it's degraded, the poor.

At the San Diego Diocese, a ministry subsequently formed to help parishes to develop "Creation Care Teams" to tackle environmental problems. The ministry, headed by Father Emmet Farrell, held the 2021 Earth Week



JOHN GASTALDO

CELEBRATION: Bishop Robert McElroy led the Earth Week Mass April 17 at St. James Parish.

Mass on April 17 at St. James-St. Leo Catholic Community in Solana Beach.

"Pope Francis talks about the stunning beauty of creation," said Bishop Robert McElroy, who celebrated the Mass. "It's our responsibility, as a society and as individuals, to safeguard that awesome creation."

The bishop noted that Pope Francis called for an "ecological conversion," changing the way a person acts to protect all of creation.

"Science tells us that we have the capacity to reverse the destructive trends in our world. And our faith tells us that we must be converted. We will find a way to bring God's plan into our hearts."

Contact Father Emmet Farrell,
efarrell@sdcatholic.org,
for information about
Creation Care Teams.



Agency's 'Open Arms' Helps Asylum-Seekers

By Roman Flores



EL CENTRO – Two vans pulled up to the Travelodge

Hotel filled with passengers on a recent Thursday afternoon. The noticeably exhausted families, mostly from Central and South America, piled out of the vehicles, clutching a few belongings.

Individuals greeted them and directed them to large rooms, where the mothers and fathers began the process to reunite with loved ones across the nation.

The families were legally in the country after being admitted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. They were transported to the hotel, where Catholic Charities staff were ready to receive them with “Open Arms.”

That’s the name of the organization’s program that, starting on Easter Sunday, is assisting these families that are seeking asylum. A total of 11 staff members receive them seven days a week at the El Centro hotel. They tend to the migrants’ immediate needs — providing them with food, temporary shelter, and other necessities — and coordinate their travel to other U.S. cities, where they will be reunited with friends and family.

In the first three weeks of operation in El Centro, the organization had received and facilitated the travel of 350 men and women and children, ranging from infants to teenagers.

“That number is expected to keep going up,” said Appaswamy “Vino” Pajanor, Chief Executive Officer for Catholic Charities, part of the Diocese of San Diego.

In March, the organization sprang into action when the California Department of Social Services asked it to help the immigrants being released by authorities as they seek safety and protection in the United States, and prepare to apply for asylum in federal



SHARON BURNS

WELCOMING: The president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, Sister Donna Markham, visited an El Centro hotel on April 8 to see how its San Diego affiliate was helping families while their asylum case was resolved. The local organization meets the basic needs of the families and coordinates their travel.

immigration courts.

The organization is taking the lead providing this service in the Imperial Valley. In San Diego County, meanwhile, it’s supporting another social service organization, Jewish Family Service, which is managing that program. Catholic Charities ramped up its staffing to provide that support, beginning on March 22. A total of 16 people have been hired temporarily to help process the migrant families in San Diego.

The national president and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, Sister Donna Markham, visited in early April to observe firsthand the situation in this corner of the border. She visited El Centro on April 8. In an interview there, she said this work “comes right out of the Gospel.”

“Jesus tells us that we should care for the least among us – the widows, orphans, and strangers; people who are poor and suffering,” she said. “We should always extend ourselves in hospitality and mercy to those who need us most, and that’s what Catholic

Charities does.”

She praised the local effort to help the migrants.

“I’m very impressed with the quality of care that’s being provided to people when they come out of detention,” she said.

The first stop the migrants being released make is at the Imperial Valley College, where they are tested for COVID-19. Only those who test negative are allowed to proceed to the hotel. There, the organization gives them a room, where they can shower and rest; food; clean clothes; and children’s items, including diapers.

The migrants are hungry for information.

“You see that they have a lot of questions,” Pajanor said.

Catholic Charities staff gives them a crash course on living in the U.S. while they wait to leave for their final destination.

Pajanor said about 99 percent of the immigrants are looking to reunite with their family members or friends elsewhere in the U.S. He said that if

the receiving families do not have the means to pay for that travel, Catholic Charities finds a way to cover the cost. And the agency tries to give the migrants pocket money to pay for meals if they travel by bus across the country.

The agency is asking for cash donations or for individuals to donate their air travel miles through a partner, Miles4Migrants.org.

Pajanor said the immigration program is one of the largest such efforts in the organization’s history.

“Catholic Charities is standing up to its mission in Matthew 25 — feeding the hungry, clothing the naked — that is why we are doing this,” he said. “Yes, it is tough right now with COVID-19 but we are the country of hope, freedom, and liberty ... If we don’t give hope to others, who else will?”

Visit ccdsd.org to make a donation, and the site miles4migrants.org to donate air miles to help asylum-seekers.



Father Flees Homeland: ‘We Didn’t Have Any Other Choice’



SHARON BURNS

The agency helped the family of Alexandre Ferrerira.

By Roman Flores

EL CENTRO — “We were taking a big risk.”

That is how Alexandre Ferrerira described the decision to flee Brazil with his wife and two children, ages 8 and 12.

“We didn’t have any other choice,” he said. “The danger that surrounded us is not something I wanted my children to face or to lose one of them.”

He briefly shared his story while his family waited to board a van that would transport them from a hotel in El Centro to Yuma. There, they would take a flight to Boston, where he would reunite with his sister.

He is one of the dozens of men, women and children Catholic Charities has helped since May 5 after they were released by U.S. immigration authorities

to await the outcome of their petition for asylum.

Ferrerira spoke in Portuguese, his words translated by Nadine Toppoza-da, who directs Refugee and Immigrant Services for Catholic Charities San Diego.

The father said his children faced a future “that would have been filled with violence, lack of education, danger and disease ... We just decided to take the first step on the journey, rely on God, and just move forward.”

He said the family was detained for eight to ten days by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. At one point, he and his wife and children were separated for six days.

“When you reach a place that is so

dark and there is nothing worse that is possible, the only thing I could do is ask Jesus to hold my hand and guide me through.”

His words brought tears to those hearing them.

He said he did not know what to expect when he was released from detention.

“I got off the bus and the lady (from Catholic Charities) greeted me with a smile. That was the first time I saw someone smile.”

He thanked the organization for everything they did for his family, especially considering the services were free. The father was sure of one thing.

“Without my faith, there was no way I would have made it.”

The Knight Is Young: 29-Year-Old Leads Council

By Denis Grasska

At age 29, Mick Hammock is the young face of San Diego's oldest Knights of Columbus council.

Hammock, who serves as Grand Knight of Council 1349, has brought the passion and perspective of a young adult to his leadership role.

His proud association with the Knights of Columbus and its values serves as a convincing rebuttal to anyone who might be tempted to write off the Catholic fraternal organization as some sort of old-timers' club. And the number of younger men who have joined the council at his invitation testifies to the fact that they too see a place for themselves in the Knights of Columbus.

"I know for a fact it's helped strengthen my faith," Hammock said of his involvement with the Knights, and he has found it "unbelievably rewarding" to help fellow Knights deepen their own faith.

Council 1349, which was established in 1908 as the first in the region, represents six Central San Diego parishes — St. Didacus, St. John the Evangelist, St. Columba, The Immaculata, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Joseph Cathedral.

Tom Davis, president of the San Diego Diocese Chapter of the Knights of Columbus and a two-time past Grand Knight of Council 1349, recognized Hammock's potential. He telephoned him one evening last year, asking him to consider becoming the next Grand Knight.

"I liked how Mick wears his Catholicism on his sleeve, how he's a leader in our faith first," said Davis, 53, who has been a Knight for 27 years.

Hammock accepted the offer and began a one-year term last June. He is open to the idea of staying on for a second term.



FRESH-FACED: Mick Hammock, the 29-year-old Grand Knight of Council 1349, stands in the prayer garden at St. Didacus Parish.

Davis said, "It was wonderful for us to have a younger man in charge, one with new perspectives, with new ideas, and with friends who might do charity differently than we have in the past."

Hammock feels that his main contribution has been providing more opportunities for spiritual growth.

"I was really focused on the faith component," he said, because the council already had a demonstrated commitment to service projects.

Hammock has been leading the Knights' weekly rosary before the Tuesday evening Mass at St. Didacus for about two years. Under his watch, Council 1349 also has hosted evenings of Eucharistic adoration; prayer vigils outside of abortion facilities; a year-long men's spirituality series, which

began last October; and an opportunity for members to consecrate themselves to St. Joseph.

Thirty-eight-year-old James Palen, who was tapped by Hammock last July to serve as Council 1349's program director, said there are plans to go even further. Discussions are under way to organize weekly rosaries at each of the council's six parishes.

Hammock's involvement with the Knights of Columbus dates back to 2009 when, as an 18-year-old freshman at the University of Notre Dame, he joined the council on campus. He wasn't particularly active during college.

But, about three or four years ago, he officially transferred to Council 1349. At the time, Hammock was transitioning out of Catholic young adult groups and "looking for the next step

in my faith and service journey."

He joined the Knights, seeking "a group of likeminded men" with whom he could grow in his faith and give back to the community, he said, "and that's what I've found."

Palen can attest to Hammock's ability to bring fellow young adults into the fold, even before becoming Grand Knight.

Despite having been invited to join the Knights on several previous occasions by older men, Palen said, "It was really the twentysomething-year-old that ended up winning me over."

For more about the Knights of Columbus in our diocese, visit sandiegoknightsofcolumbus.com.



Forum on How to Become Foster Parent

The Southern Cross

At any given time, there are approximately 4,000 children in foster care in San Diego County. Most of them have entered foster care after experiencing neglect.

"Many of us hear those kinds of statistics and immediately feel overwhelmed," said Janelle Peregoy, associate director of the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality. "(We tell ourselves) I couldn't possibly become a foster parent."

But while fostering is a challenging ministry, especially for first-time

foster families, there are ways that Catholic parishes can support them.

To explain how, the Family Life and Spirituality Office will host a panel discussion titled "Embracing Our Vulnerable Children: Supporting Foster Families in Our Parishes." It will be conducted via Zoom from 7-8:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 12.

The event is the latest installment in the Family Life and Spirituality Office's "Healing Pathways for Families" workshop series. The series is designed to provide parish leaders and interested parishioners with the information and tools to better minister to today's families.

During the panel presentation, cur-

rent foster parents will reflect on the joys and challenges of their ministry. Host families associated with the organization Safe Families for Children, who take in at-risk children for temporary periods of time, will also share their experiences.

Virtual attendees will also hear from representatives of nonprofit organizations that can help parishes accompany the foster families within their own communities. These include Restoration 225, represented by Executive Director Lisa Christy, and Olive Crest, represented by Church & Community Engagement Associate Missy Bell.

"The reality is that there are many

ways that our parishes and people of faith can respond to the needs of vulnerable children and foster families," Peregoy said.

She added, "We especially welcome current foster families and anyone interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent to use this presentation as an opportunity to connect and network with each other."

For more information, visit sdcatholic.org/family. To register, email jperegoy@sdcatholic.org or call (858) 490-8292.



Series to Focus on Mental and Spiritual Health

By Denis Grasska



In May, the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality will

host a workshop series on the connection between mental and spiritual health, as well as a special Mass for Mental Health Awareness celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan.

May is observed annually as Mental Health Awareness Month in the United States.

Both upcoming events are part of an ongoing diocesan effort to create a compassionate community within the Church for those affected by mental illness, to provide accompaniment and resources to them and their families, and to reduce the stigma around mental illness that can be an obstacle to seeking help.

The workshop series, "Catholic Prayer Practices for Mental & Spiritual Wellness," will be presented via Zoom on five consecutive Thursday evenings, beginning on May 6, which is also the National Day of Prayer. Participants are welcome to attend any or all of the sessions, which will address such topics as Spirituality & Mental Health (May 6), The Body & Prayer (May 13), Praying with the Saints (May 20), Ignatian Spirituality (May 27) and Centering Prayer (June 3).

As a whole, the workshop series aims to show how spirituality can contribute to mental wellbeing.

John Prust, director of the Office for



RAISING AWARENESS: Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan, seen speaking to seminarians about suicide, will celebrate an upcoming Mass for Mental Health Awareness.

Family Life and Spirituality, said the workshops are open to "pretty much anyone and everyone, from those involved in mental health ministry to those who'd like to learn more about particular prayer styles." There is no cost to attend.

Laurie Dusa, one of the facilitators of the mental health ministry team at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Rancho Peñasquitos, plans to attend the workshop and encourages others to do so.

Dusa, who believes that mental health ministry requires "lifelong learning," said the series "offers tools and practices for better coping during our faith journey."

The Family Life and Spirituality

Office is also hosting a special Mental Health Awareness Mass. Bishop Dolan will preside over the liturgy, which is scheduled for 5:30 p.m., Saturday, May 15, at St. Michael's Parish in Poway. May 15 is the feast day of St. Dymphna, patron saint of those with mental illness, anxiety and depression.

Prust noted that Bishop Dolan "has a real heart for this topic." For the past two years, the bishop also has celebrated a Mass for Survivors of Suicide Loss. And he compiled and co-edited *Responding to Suicide*, a pastoral handbook for Catholic leaders, released in January.

The Mass will be celebrated at St. Michael Parish's Saturday vigil Mass time. Deacon Bill Adsit, director of

the diocesan Mental Health Ministry Network, ministers at St. Michael's and will be assisting at the altar for that Mass. Parish-based mental health ministry team members, local mental health professionals and clergy are invited to attend.

Though Mental Health Awareness Month provides an additional opportunity to spotlight an important topic, the local Church's involvement with that issue is "year-round, round-the-clock," Deacon Adsit said.

The Mental Health Ministry Network, which operates under the aegis of the Family Life and Spirituality Office, includes active mental health ministry teams at 20 parishes; another six parishes have expressed interest in starting one, with training to begin soon. While some parishes' teams already include Spanish-speaking members, the ministry network would like to expand that number.

Deacon Adsit describes the local Church's response to those with mental illness and their loved ones as "compassionate companionship."

"We understand that their life may not be easy," he said, "but we do want to make a commitment to them that ... we will walk with them."

Resources available at sdcatholic.org/mentalhealth. For information about the upcoming workshop series and Mass, visit sdcatholic.org/family.



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Indoor Masses Now with Fewer Restrictions

By Denis Grasska



The pandemic continues, but parish life in the Diocese of San Diego is now one step closer to normal.

Bishop Robert McElroy has issued updated guidelines for the safe celebration of public Masses, inaugurating a period of greater re-opening at diocesan parishes. The new policies, announced on April 15, are effective immediately.

The most significant change deals with capacity. While the previous guidelines had limited churches to 25-percent capacity, the only requirement now is that 6 feet of social distance be maintained between everyone except members of the same family.

"I believe that pastors and many parishioners throughout the diocese will appreciate the increased options for celebrating Mass indoors," said Rod Valdivia, vice-moderator of the diocesan curia. "On the other hand, pastors are also very aware that a large number of people still feel more comfortable with outdoor liturgies, and even viewing them remotely on TV or online, and are committed to maintaining these options, too."

Other ongoing COVID safety measures, including the requirement that face masks be worn at all times and current rules pertaining to the distribution of the Eucharist, remain in effect. Holy Communion is distributed



THE 'IN' CROWD: Deacon Bill Kazmierowicz distributes Holy Communion during an April 17 Mass held indoors at St. James Parish in Solana Beach.

in the hand only, and the faithful are not offered the chalice with the Precious Blood.

The bishop also announced a tentative date for when Catholics in San Diego and Imperial counties will no longer be dispensed from attending Mass on Sundays and other holy days of obligation. The dispensation, which has been in effect since March 2020,

is expected to expire on the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 28, 2021. At each parish, the lifting of the dispensation will be preceded by a multi-week catechesis on the Eucharist.

Bishop McElroy also highlighted the importance of expanding parishes' Eucharistic outreach to the sick and homebound. However, he said, that ministry should be carried out only

by fully vaccinated priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. The homebound parishioners visited by them also should be vaccinated.

Another notable change under the new guidelines affects music ministry. While congregational singing indoors continues to be discouraged, the bishop said parishes need no longer limit themselves to a single cantor accompanied by a musician. He approved the use of choirs and multiple instrumentalists, as long as 12 feet of social distancing from one another and from the congregation is observed.

Matt Dolan, choir director for the Saturday vigil Mass at The Immaculata Parish, acknowledged that his parish has "a bit of a space issue" in its choir loft. To maintain the required 12 feet of distance, the choir will be limited to a quartet and few musical instruments.

But he welcomed the new policy.

"Being able to bring in nice four-part harmonies, even though we still can't ask the congregation to sing yet, is still a lot better," said Dolan, who has been part of The Immaculata's music ministry since 1997 and previously served as music director.

"With these new guidelines," Valdivia said, "the faithful will have a wider array of options to participate in Masses as we look toward the end of the pandemic restriction later in the year."

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Parishes Begin to Host Vaccination Clinics

By Aida Bustos



Parishes in areas hit hard by COVID-19 have begun hosting vaccination clinics across the San Diego Diocese. The idea is to make it as easy as possible to get immunized at a time when appointments are hard to get as eligibility has expanded.

As of April 15, everyone 16 years and older became eligible to get the free vaccine, regardless of immigration status. The organizers of the parish-based events are committed to doing all they can to vaccinate as many people as supplies allow, said “Vino” Pajanor, chief executive officer of Catholic Charities San Diego.

The organization is working closely with the Governor’s Office, which launched an initiative in April to expand outreach to areas pummeled by the virus, in partnership with faith-based organizations.

The first vaccination event at the diocese was held on Saturday, April 10, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Chula Vista. That parish, along with neighboring ones in South Bay, promoted the event to their communities. Catholic Charities developed and managed a simple process to register people.

Pajanor said that the plan was to vaccinate 1,100 people that day. But UCSD Health personnel, who administered the vaccine, were able to obtain about 200 more doses, bringing to



READY: Personnel from UCSD Health and volunteers prepare for a vaccination clinic at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Chula Vista on April 10.

1,354 the number of people who were vaccinated.

The one-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine was administered that day. The federal government paused its use three days later while it investigated six cases of women who had developed rare blood clots among the 6.8 million people who had received that vaccine in the U.S. up to that point.

On Saturday, April 17, the El Centro Catholic Community held a drive-through and walk-up vaccination clinic in the parking lot of St. Mary’s

Parish, also in coordination with the Governor’s Office. Personnel from the Vo Neighborhood Medical Clinic, the Imperial County Health Department, Salud Sin Fronteras, members of the National Guard, and volunteers from the Catholic community facilitated the vaccinations. They immunized 670 people with the Moderna vaccine.

In San Diego County, meanwhile, a vaccination clinic was planned for Saturday, April 24, at the La Quinta de Guadalupe Retreat Center, using the Moderna vaccine. The second dose

of that vaccine is to be administered on May 22 across the street, at St. Charles Parish.

Pajanor said the Governor’s Office plans to coordinate more vaccination clinics at parishes as supplies are available.

A variety of information about the COVID-19 vaccines is available at sdccatholic.org/vaccine.



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Dear Friends and Family of Catholic Charities,
The Urban Farm Workers Among Us

Somewhere between glitz, glamour and coastal charm, North County San Diego farm workers are walking along highways, camping in fields, and clinging to dwindling jobs.

Francisco's morning routine starts at 4:30 a.m. He showers, eats breakfast, grabs a sack lunch, and leaves by 5:45 to make the two-mile commute by foot. Work starts at 7, but he insists on getting there by 6:30. He is 76 years old.

Winding trails and rolling hills take Francisco through Carlsbad, California to the Pacific Coast, where he works off of Interstate 5 growing tomatoes. He has been employed by the same farm, same boss, for 20 years. When the work is done—usually around 4 p.m.—he'll walk back to where his day began: La Posada de Guadalupe, a homeless shelter for men and farm workers in North County San Diego operated by Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego.

Homeless in Plain Sight

Many migrant farm workers in California are quietly homeless. Before La Posada opened in 1991 and made its permanent home in 2013, Francisco was one of them. He slept in a tent near the tomato fields. He was one of the first to be accepted into the shelter, which is one of just three in all of California where farm workers are able to stay. Catholic Charities also operates Our Lady of Guadalupe Men's Shelter in Calexico, on the Mexico-U.S. border near Mexicali.

While other California agricultural regions are nestled in valleys and deserts far from cities, North County farms are smack in the urban sprawl. They're much more visible to the 3.3 million people in San Diego County, 3.2 million in Orange County and 10.1 million in Los Angeles County driving by on any given day for business, pleasure, or routine. Yet, most will not notice the farm workers—because those who are homeless are hidden.

"Some farm workers sleep in cars, motels, garages, converted school buses and, reportedly, even chicken coops," one article states. "Many more share apartments with strangers, sometimes dozens of them, leading to public health concerns."

Farm worker homelessness happens more and in larger numbers elsewhere—but it also happens here, amid the upscale enclaves, luxury homes, boutique shops, and ocean sunsets.

Shelter for the Season

Francisco spends 10-11 months in Carlsbad, and 1-2 months during the holidays back home in Mexico with his wife and six kids. He lives this way for the higher (despite minimum) wages, sending or bringing the money he earns to his family. So does Victor, a quiet, middle-aged man working in the fields around Carlsbad and Encinitas for the past 30 years. And Martin, who only gets about 6 months of work each year picking strawberries.

Renting or purchasing a home in San Diego County simply is not an option for farm workers due to the housing shortage, which has been described as dire. Voice of San Diego wrote:

"There's no shortage of ways to describe the effects of the housing shortage. More than any time in history, Californians say housing affordability is a big problem – and the 71 percent of San Diegans who say so is higher than in the rest of the state. Just 27 percent of households can afford the county's median home, at \$655,000. Low-income San Diegans spend nearly their entire paycheck on rent. And so on."

For Francisco, Victor, and Martin, La Posada is home away from home. It is difficult doing manual labor for 10 hours a day, 6-7 days a week. It is tiring walking miles to and from work. There is little downtime and no entertainment. But La Posada provides three meals a day and shelter at night. For that, the farm workers are thankful and even content.

"I stay here because I get treated with dignity,"

Victor tells Joaquin Blas, Operations Supervisor at La Posada.

"What would you want people to know or change?" I ask Victor. Joaquin translates the question. Victor pauses and becomes flustered. Crossing his arms and shaking his head, he tells Joaquin,

"I don't complain. I'm happy with what I have."

Opportunity Endangered

Over a third of America's vegetables and two-thirds of the country's fruits and nuts are grown in California, according to the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). The Golden State's rich agriculture industry produced more than 400 commodities for nearly \$50 billion in cash receipts in 2018, accounting for over 13% of the nation's total agricultural value.

Farming is unique to the fabric of San Diego in particular. The county has more than 250,000 acres of farmland and is a top producer of nursery crops and avocados in the U.S. Also, lemons, limes, strawberries, oranges, guavas, pomegranates, macadamias, marjoram, basil, and tomatoes. The abundance is quite impressive for such a confined growing region. But the foothold overshadows a contrary fact: North County's agriculture has declined over the years by virtually every measure—acreage, revenues, number of farms, and number of day laborers. It is being consumed by commercial and (not affordable) housing developments.

Martin remembers the 1980s, when there were 1,000 workers in the strawberry fields. Today, there are 20. Dozens of lunch trucks used to line the roads along the farms. Now, there is one.

The lack of work is compounded by the lack of housing, leaving farm workers stranded. When the strawberry harvest is over, Martin will return to Mexico and hope to make ends meet from a small lot of farmland that he was able to save up and purchase while staying at La Posada.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me. And the king will say to them in reply, "Amen I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me."

Sincerely,

Appaswamy V.P.

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Chief Executive Officer



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100 YEARS of Faith in Action



Come Ready to Share in the Universal Church

By Aida Bustos



The pandemic forced everyone to live for a year virtually shut off from the people and activities they loved. An opportunity is coming up in May to join in person the world's Catholic family in a joyous celebration of culture and faith.

The San Diego Diocese is hosting the fourth annual Pentecost Mass for All People on Saturday morning, May 22. The celebration will be held outdoors at Good Shepherd Parish and will include exhibits and live music, as COVID-19 restrictions have eased. The event also will be livestreamed.

This is the diocese's largest Mass that brings together its cultural communities, which have roots in the native lands of the U.S., Asia, the Pacific region, Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

"We say we're part of a universal Church," said Father Michael Pham, who leads Good Shepherd Parish and the diocesan office that organizes the Mass. "In this Pentecost celebration, you can see and feel what that really means. It's beautiful."

Due to the pandemic, the communities participated via Zoom in last year's Pentecost Mass, which was celebrated by Bishop Robert McElroy.

The bishop will celebrate this year's Mass as well, and many of the beauti-



FABRIC OF FAITH: Cloths representing the cultures in the diocese dressed the altar at the Pentecost Mass held in 2019.

ful aspects of the first two editions will return. At the beginning, there will be a colorful procession of communities, with their representatives wearing traditional attire.

The Scriptural readings will be in two languages: Filipino, whose community is commemorating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines, and Luiseño, spoken by one of the native peoples in the region.

The Universal Prayer will be delivered in multiple languages, as well.

Everyone is encouraged to arrive by 10 a.m. to have time for joyful reunions, since it will be one of the first opportunities to meet friends not seen in person for a year. The Mass will start at 11 a.m. Afterward, all are invited to walk through the heritage exhibits that will share each community's faith history and traditions.

Participants should be prepared to protect themselves from the sun at this outdoor event. And come ready to be immersed in the peace, unity and beauty of the universal Church.

More information about the Pentecost Mass for All People is available at sdccatholic.org/pentecost2021.



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What are the Types of Planned Gifts?

- Outright Gifts that are made while you are living. These include appreciated assets. These gifts often provide a significant income tax deduction and capital gains tax savings to the donor. Gifts of IRAs and annual gifts of IRA Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) provide income tax advantages. Donors typically receive a charitable deduction for the full market value of the asset.
- Charitable Bequests are gifts made upon death.
- Gifts providing Income or Financial Benefits to the donor in return for the donation, e.g., Charitable Remainder Unitrusts.

The Importance of our Catholic Faith

The purpose of our Catholic faith is to provide us with all the knowledge and role models we need to reach the Kingdom of Heaven. It is our responsibility to receive the sacraments and to live by the values Jesus taught us to achieve eternal salvation. What other institution has been with us from our birth until our eventual passing?



Catholics are Good Stewards

As Catholics, we are called to be good stewards of the many gifts and blessings given to us by God. We recognize that everything we have is a gift from God and that we are merely stewards of God's gifts. We have the responsibility to gratefully give back to God in proportion to the gifts we have received.

What is Estate Planning?

Simply put, Estate Planning is what you want done with what you own. It can be fairly easy to accomplish. The first step is making an inventory of what you own and then meeting with an Estate Planning attorney. The 4 key elements of an Estate Plan are (1) a Will, (2) a Trust, (3) a Financial Power of Attorney and (4) a Catholic Healthcare Directive.

Catholic Estate and Legacy Planning Seminars and Webinars

Your Catholic Community Foundation offers quarterly Catholic Estate and Planning Seminars. Because of the Covid pandemic, these seminars have been offered in an interactive Zoom webinar format. In these seminars, you will learn about creating or updating the 4 key parts of an Estate Plan. At the conclusion of each seminar, attendees are provided with an opportunity to meet (in person or virtually) with a vetted and practicing Catholic Estate attorney to discuss your Estate Plan needs. These consultations are complimentary. As a good Catholic steward, who fully recognizes the importance of their Catholic faith, prayerfully consider adding your favorite Catholic charities, including your parish, to your Estate Plan. Please see ad below for details.



CATHOLIC ESTATE AND LEGACY PLANNING WILLS AND TRUSTS

The Catholic Community Foundation of San Diego provides information sessions led by local Catholic estate planning attorneys to help you protect and provide for your loved ones, update or create your estate plan, and learn more about wills, trusts, advanced Catholic healthcare directives, financial power of Attorney, probate expenses, guardianship of minor children, selection of personal representatives, and more.

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- Monday May 24th 10am-12pm
- Tuesday-SPANISH May 25th 10am-12pm

- Wednesday May 26th 10am-12pm & 6pm-8pm
- Thursday-SPANISH May 27th 6pm-8pm
- Friday May 28th 10am-12pm



Wills and Trusts Week sessions are for informational purposes only and not intended to replace legal advice.

GRANT GLASGOW*Cathedral Catholic High School*

Hope can sometimes be very difficult to find, and all too easy to lose. What started out as an extended spring break bled into a junior year that fizzled away and a lacrosse season being canceled. Thankfully, I've been able to look beyond the masks and regulations and have hope and faith that a better future awaits us. During this strange, disconnected time, I have rested soundly by placing my trust in others and in God. I tried my hardest not to lose sight of the future while still living in the present, readying myself for the chains to be lifted and life to resume. Now, sports have begun, gyms are beginning to open indoors, and traffic has steadily increased. I've never been more happy to see an ocean of brake lights.

RACHEL TRUS*Mater Dei Catholic High School*

The world is a hot mess. Every time you turn on the news, you could weep at the grief of COVID-19, mass shootings and racism. I have endured this confusing year because of my faith. "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her" (Luke 1:45). Our God is a loving God. I am blessed beyond measure because of my very existence as a daughter of Christ, created in dignity. I am here today because God carries me when I am not strong enough to stand on my own. I have two options when I

feel so overwhelmed by the weight of the world: complain or do something. Doing something resembles a cross, something that is rough and heavy. God sees us and will help us carry our crosses if we let Him.

EMMA HERNANDEZ*Academy of Our Lady of Peace*

During this time of a global pandemic, I never would have thought my faith would grow so much as it has over the past year. I have learned that, not only have I grown as a person, but I have also learned that God will always be there in times of need. Without realizing it, prayer has become an essential part of my life. As I work to keep my faith strong, I have found that, spiritually, one of the most meaningful things to pray for is the virtue of hope. God has taken care of us and loved us all of our life. This gives hope that God will take care of us in the future. This is something that I will keep with me throughout my life.

BRIA SOSA*Mater Dei Catholic High School*

Because I attend a Catholic school, I can talk about my faith with my friends. So many of us have realized God does not put us through things that we cannot handle, and although it may not make sense right now, later in life we will look back and understand how these challenges reveal what God wanted us to see; we must turn to Him. I am sad for those who have been adversely impacted by COVID-19 but am grateful for the spiritual growth. God has helped us open our eyes and our hearts. I believe that this will help me in my future when facing challenges. I am ready to face life's challenges as a gift from God. I now know, through God all things are possible.

NICK LI*Cathedral Catholic High School*

Countless times through the pandemic, it was easy to lose hope and motivation to work or academically strive. Looking back, it was truly a character-developing phase of our lives. We focused a lot on Catholic Social Themes in class, and one that particularly stands out to me is solidarity. Quite literally, the world had to band together to fight this global pandemic. Even if we are still in different stages of alleviation, it was the first time that I had seen everyone united under one cause. This should be the ideal mindset even after this issue is solved. There are tons of sources of conflict in our lives, ranging from social to economic to personal. Although there may not always be an issue that affects everyone, it is important to remember that banding together will produce fruitful results, and now there's strong evidence of that.

DOMINIC RAMIREZ*Mater Dei Catholic High School*

I would say that the teachings about God's plan for our future have provided the most comfort. Going through the process of college applications, especially during COVID times, has led to absolutely crushing levels of stress about where I'm going to end up next year. However, like we learned, life is going to be a long and bumpy road and sometimes we get rejections and things get chaotic, but we

always end up in a better place if we just trust in His process. It sounds hard or even ridiculous at times, but I think that it was the thing that helped me most during the months I spent waiting for colleges to reply. I put my best God-given effort into it, so all that was left was for me to wait for God to do His thing.

MOLLY ABROM*Cathedral Catholic High School*

Before the pandemic, I had an extensive list of things that would make me happy: being among many friends, going on adventures until late at night, and traveling to new places. When all of these privileges were taken away during quarantine, I struggled to find fulfillment with a minimal amount of excitement in my life. In time, I discovered how to find contentment within myself through the process of prayerful meditation. I learned that through trust in God, I find peace, and through that peace, I can find true happiness.

STEVEN SARABIA*Mater Dei Catholic High School*

The main lessons of faith that prepared me for the challenges of last year were two specific phrases: "Keep having faith" and "Follow His path." Once COVID arose last year, I was not worried. The first month just seemed simple and something that would pass quickly. However, it got progressively worse for me. Once it was late May, life got more challenging. I began to feel the effect of not seeing all my friends

**On the cusp of graduating in May,
we asked seniors at San Diego Catholic
schools a question:**

**What lesson
you for the
challenges**

'At the
bus



AL BLAKE, JR.

LOLA DIAZ

RACHEL TRUS

and classmates every day in school. It made me feel isolated, but I always knew God was there with me. So, this helped me to know that I must have faith in what is happening and keep pushing forward towards His path. I see these lessons guiding me in the future, especially if I ever reach another crisis.

LOLA DIAZ

Academy of Our Lady of Peace

The loss of loved ones, physical separation from others, loss of education, moments requiring significant forgiveness, college rejections, and the constant changes in 2020-2021 have left me dejected and hopeless. Filled with pain this past year, I turned to my newest blessing: a baby sister. Her presence is everlasting smiles and giggles, and her life encouraged me to be courageous. Although only 10 months old, she seems to genuinely love Creation. She loves playing in the grass, splashing water, listening to birds chirping, playing with dogs, and even sitting quietly in the sun. She has taught me the virtue of fortitude by finding God in all the small places.

AL BLAKE, JR.

Mater Dei Catholic High School

Faith has taught me life lessons during the pandemic I would not have expected. When it began, I was not too bothered. However, it did impact me and my baseball career, and I did not know when I would be able to play again. After my 2020 school year ended and I began to prepare for my senior year, I had little hope to be able to travel, see my friends, or play sports. I was stuck. As word of a vaccine and a possible reopening began, I started to develop faith that I would have a chance to be noticed by colleges and able to go out again. With that faith, I built patience and courage. Sure enough, I was able to play again and I was able to see my friends.

GRACE HOGAN

Cathedral Catholic High School

I had numerous lessons of faith that this year forced me to learn, and 99 percent of the time they were insanely challenging and made me question my faith and life path in general. From COVID restrictions taking friendships and relationships from my life suddenly — to the tragic loss of many important people in my life — this year has really put me and a lot of others through ups and downs. I had to pull strength from faith and community to become the best version of myself, and trust that everything truly does happen for a reason. These experiences have changed how I see my future. Before, my view of the world was superficial and it was easy for me to focus on myself and small, insignificant things. Because of how challenging this last year has been, I see what truly matters in the world: my faith, my family, and how my outlook on life shapes what is really happening.

FREDERICO RUBIO

Mater Dei Catholic High School

A lesson of faith that was discussed in class was about the overuse of social media. Social media was used as a form of entertainment but later began to be my excuse to not be anywhere near faith. Anytime there would be an opportunity to go to Mass, a faith talk or a retreat, I ended up choosing to stay home and be on my phone. I now see the lesson as important: to learn how to disconnect from the digital world and enjoy the real world in front of you. One person could walk from school to their house the whole way on their phone, missing out on everything happening around them. Or they can walk without looking at their phone and notice all the beautiful things God has given us. I know now that I shouldn't let my phone guide what I do, I should seize the wheel and take a hold of my life before something goes wrong.

CHRISTIAN HALL

Cathedral Catholic High School

An important lesson I learned through the hardships brought by COVID-19 was to lean on the Lord's understanding and not on my own. I remember the hardest days and longest nights, sitting with nothing but uncertainty in front of me, something I still face today. Through this adversity, I learned that God's plans are always better than what I have and are put in place to teach me certain lessons. As I prepare for college, I know walking with faith will help me more than ever and to lean on Jesus and His own understanding. I may have plans that I want to see come to fruition in a certain pattern, but by leaning on God's understanding, I will trust that everything will happen just the way it's supposed to!

LARA VIZON

Mater Dei Catholic High School

God has ways to test everyone's faith: with hardships and obstacles. With these challenges, my faith has been a guide by reminding me that this is all a learning lesson. It is a chance to build my faith even stronger. Faith is a journey, not just a straight path, and that helped me realize that these challenges are part of that journey. Through this unpredictable time, my faith has become a way to find light and hope through God. This will carry into my future. I will now know how to rely on my faith when I face obstacles. There might be times my faith will be tested, but after what I have learned, it will only serve as a beacon of hope when I encounter hardships.

NATASHA PREECE

Cathedral Catholic High School

God has a plan set out for us, and all we need to do is rely on Him for guidance. This knowledge has proved especially helpful when having to navigate a world full of uncertainties and challenges we never saw coming. As a senior, I would have never thought that a majority of my last year in high school would be spent behind a screen. In the end, it's become a blessing. I've been able to rekindle friendships, grow in my faith, and rediscover old hobbies. By trusting God that these unprecedented times would eventually come to an end, I was able to look at the world and these experiences through a more positive mindset. Now that I'm off to college, I know that trusting in Him will lead me exactly where I need to go.

tholic

Lessons of faith prepared for the unprecedented times of the last year?

Their answers reveal young men and women tested by the pandemic, who have emerged stronger, ready for tomorrow's trials. Here is a sampling of their voices.

*'Times I lost hope
but never my faith.'*



ALEXA GONZALEZ

EMMA HERNANDEZ

NATALIA SHAMOON*Academy of Our Lady of Peace*

Our community has grown stronger through its ability to overcome this horrible time in unity. Personally, I relearned the lesson that God's love is unwavering. No matter what trials we face, whether that be a global pandemic or the evils of racism or the harmful effects of social media, God will be there. His truth in Scripture lives through any time. His words will inspire me each time I read them. Most of all, I learned to lean on God. I learned to put my crosses on Him and ask Him to guide me through the difficult journey that is life. He is the only one who can truly understand me.

BENJAMIN RAMIREZ*Mater Dei Catholic High School*

The most important or relevant lesson given to us this past year is to trust His plan. Throughout this year, everything has been fairly uncertain. School, college, finances; everything has been a concern. It is so easy to be drowned in worry and anxiety, especially for seniors this year. So, what is most important is to count the blessings that we do have and be especially grateful for them in this uncertain year. I hope that I can carry on that lesson of trust for my years in college because I know it can be another hard time for students. I hope it can take some anxiety and worries off my back.

LUKAS FUSTER*Cathedral Catholic High School*

As I reflect upon the past year, I realize just how much of my life I have spent focusing on the negatives of daily life. In the last 12 months, I have learned to find the good that God has put into my life. I have learned to cherish watching a movie with family, going out with friends, and most importantly, I have learned to find God's presence in these unprecedented times. When we surround ourselves with positivity, or actively find the sanctity in a place that is not so positive, we will appreciate every good thing that is to come. I ask God this

one thing every morning: Show me how it gets better. By doing so, I find that I appreciate every single positive thing the day has to offer, and I can fully appreciate God's presence in my life.

VICTORIA WILLIAMS*Cathedral Catholic High School*

Last year was full of unpredictable challenges that at times made me lose hope, but never did I lose faith. God always has a plan. I've lived by this lesson my entire life, but it wasn't until this last year that I needed it the most. With each day bringing a new piece of information that more times than not was detrimental to the state of society, I found myself needing my faith more than ever. I believe that God is walking with me, holding my hand. Whenever something bad would happen, I reminded myself that it was purposeful and God is with us, no matter what. I want this lesson to be with me my entire life. It truly lets happiness remain.

ALEXA GONZALEZ*Mater Dei Catholic High School*

The lesson of faith that has sustained me is that God knows what is best for me. For example, I have to decide between two colleges; I am leaving it to God for Him to show me which one will be best for me. Another lesson is to always communicate with Him. I learned to always be thankful for every single thing that He has permitted me to have because easy He gave my life, easy He can take it away from me. This past year, I grew a stronger relationship with God. I know that I can trust Him with everything in my life, therefore I leave everything to Him.

BRYNN GORNEY*Mater Dei Catholic High School*

I believe that the lessons of patience and believing in the plan God has for you, even when you can't understand it, are two things that helped me through any challenges brought about by the virus. This is not to say that I am very skilled at either thing. What really got me through, however, was this knowledge that my continual efforts to keep everyone safe in combination with my own (wavering) patience would eventually help me to work through His plans for me. I know that this virtue and trying to accept God's plan will be extremely helpful as I move on to college and will be left on my own to make choices.

DILLON WILHITE*Cathedral Catholic High School*

This past year has been very difficult for me and for all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic brought up many challenges that came our way. From millions of deaths, to lockdowns, feelings of isolation, fear, no school, no sports, and no sense of community, it was a struggle. How did I get through it? I have gone to Catholic school my whole life, and have developed a strong faith foundation over the years. Throughout this time, I have learned many important lessons to help me lead my life and guide my future. I have learned that everything happens for a reason and to always turn to God for help. Despite all the craziness of this past year, I have turned to my faith and trusted in God.

TRANG WOOLRIDGE*Cathedral Catholic High School*

Experiencing a new life of isolation and uncertainty throughout the last year led me towards doubt and fear of what was to come next. Every day, I worried for the health and safety of my friends, family and self. Surrounded by the same walls, I grew sick of the mundane gloom that became my new reality. These feelings allowed me to have more faith in the things that I could control. I began to pray more for my loved ones and community, help those who struggled to get their basic necessities during the pandemic, as well as find ways to better myself. Being able to help others led me to be less apprehensive about the unpredictable future.

MAXIMO GUTIERREZ*Mater Dei Catholic High School*

The lessons of faith that prepared me for the challenges I faced in the last year include the following: accepting my suffering and offering it up to God, growing closer to my family and their individual struggles, sticking more to a morally good value system that can guide me through canceled opportunities that bring down my hope, and exploring my creative outlets to find purpose and meaning in my life. I can see them guiding my future: I can see myself avoiding attitudes of depression by offering my suffering to God; I can rely on the support of my family to get me through troubling times as I grow into young adulthood.

See more students' comments online
at thesoutherncross.org/052114

What lessons of faith prepared you for the unprecedented challenges of the last year?

A sampling of voices from graduating seniors shows how they were tested.



NOE SAENZ

BENJAMIN GARZA

SEBASTIAN RAMIREZ

FEDERICO DUARTE

Student Test Results Improve Despite Hurdles

By Denis Grasska



Three times a year, Catholic elementary school students

take a national assessment that measures their competency at reading and math. The results help teachers to tailor their instruction to meet the needs of every student.

Matthew Cordes, associate director of the diocesan Office for Schools, said the most recent STAR Reading and STAR Math assessment results for the diocese's Catholic schools are "just phenomenal."

Those results, from January, reveal that the majority of students in the second through eighth grades are meeting or exceeding the expectations of their grade level in both reading and math. They also show that students have improved since the previous assessment taken at the start of the current school year.

Overall, the results of the previous STAR assessment in September showed "a little bit of (a) dip" after months of distance-learning, said Cordes, but that lost ground has been retaken. Between the assessments in September and those in January, local Catholic school students went from the 58th to 61st percentile in reading and from the 62nd to 64th percentile in math.

These numbers might seem modest, but the percentiles reflect stu-



BRAIN POWER: Students at St. John of the Cross Catholic School recently participated in the 2021 Academic Decathlon.

dent academic growth rather than student achievement, said Cordes. These scores mean that the diocesan students' growth rate is more than 10 percent higher than the average student nationwide.

The STAR results reflect the individual scores of a diverse population of about 10,000 Catholic school students in the diocese who took part in the assessment, he said. That shows that Catholic education has tangible benefits for both top students as well as those who might be struggling.

Cordes praises the diocese's teachers and principals for that increase.

"It's a huge credit to our teachers that they have had the bravery of being back in the classroom and making

that difference," he said.

The STAR assessments were created by Renaissance Learning, Inc., and have been used by San Diego diocesan schools since the fall of 2015. Students take them in the fall, winter and spring of each academic year.

"What's great about the STAR assessments is that you can do individual plans," said Ladonna Lambert, principal of Good Shepherd School in Mira Mesa, who explained that teachers use the scores to determine how best to group students in the classroom and which students might require additional help with certain concepts.

"In our STAR results, we're still seeing the students are progressing," she said,

despite the ongoing challenge of teaching on-campus and distance-learning students simultaneously.

Elijah Bonde, principal of Nativity Prep Academy in the College Area, said the STAR assessment is "an important tool for the diocese and for us."

"We know that Catholic schools are effective and that they make a positive impact in kids' lives. ... Now, all of a sudden, we can put data behind that intuition that really proves that Catholic schools are making a huge difference," he said.

STAR assessments are considered computer-adaptive, which means that the questions asked during the assessment are determined by whether the individual student correctly or incorrectly answered the preceding question.

Some standardized tests might determine whether particular students will meet the educational standards set for their current grade level, said Cordes. But STAR assessments go one step further by revealing "exactly where they are, so we can help them improve at a greater rate."

"Our stopping point isn't those standards," he said. "It's as high as we can get students to grow."

More information about local Catholic schools is available at sdcatholicsschools.org.



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Children Marched into Teeth of Segregation

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized the Children's March in Birmingham, Ala., on May 2, 1963.

More than 1,000 students skipped school to participate in the non-violent march to end segregation. One of them was Marvin Threatt, who was in high school. Today, he's a retired deacon in the Diocese of San Diego. A founding member of the Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics, he remains active at Holy Spirit Catholic Church. On a recent day, he recalled his experience in the march, whose echoes still reverberate today.

Question: Why did you want to be a part of the Children's March?

Answer: We knew we had to do something. The ads came on the radio, they wanted young Black people to come to march. They could not ask adults because they could lose their jobs, or face other reprisals. My friends and I decided to go.

How did the organizers prepare you for it?

They showed us how to march, how to link arms. If you were the linchpin person, you had to hold on to your belt, so the others could hold on to you. And they showed us how to protect ourselves. If you were beaten, how to fold up into a ball, to cover your face. Most of all, to be non-violent; not to strike back, even if you were spit on or beaten.

What happened at the march?

We were going to march at 11 a.m. Dr. King was

Interview with:

Deacon Marvin Threatt



there but I could not see him. I remember what he said, though:

"Walk together children. And don't you get weary. One day, there's going to be a great 'camp meet' (victory party) in the promised land."

I was in the first line. I was a tall, skinny kid. I was a linchpin. We started marching. We were all fired up. And we were singing, "Ain't going to let nobody turn us around."

And when we got a block away from the entrance of the park, we were met by the police commissioner. There were German shepherd dogs. For the first time, I saw weapons of mass destruction. State troopers cradling double-barreled shotguns. Fire engines, the motors running. I heard that voice, "This is an illegal march. Return to your homes."

When I saw the dogs, and the weapons, I can tell you that I was terrified. And I stopped. But the kids behind me kept pushing. They did not see what I saw. We kept getting closer. When we got to a certain point, the commissioner gave the order, "Let the dogs loose!"

And that was the worst thing I remember. When the kids started running, screaming, the dogs would knock you down, begin to tear the flesh from your body. Then they would turn the fire hoses on you. The water would give you third-degree burns, and spin you around like a top.

What happened if you were captured?

They rounded us up. And when they got you, they beat the daylights out of you. They took us to jail. There, we kept singing.

They kept us four or five hours, and let us out. And the next day, another group of kids, and the next day, another group of kids. I went twice, and the same thing happened both times. I didn't recognize how important it was then, but I am glad now that I did my part.

What did the march accomplish?

Dr. King's work was successful. The children got to the point that when they encountered the state troopers again, they somehow gave way, and the kids just walked into the park. And that ended the stalemate.

The march energized the national debate about segregation. The next year, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and, the following year, the Voting Rights Act, which said that all Americans were legally entitled to equal protection and equal accommodation in all aspects of life. That fundamentally changed life in America for everyone, not just Blacks.



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Auxiliary Bishops Dolan and Bejarano

Live Stream at: sdccatholic.org/pentecost2021

Blessed by Unconditional Love of Two Moms



I am a "cradle Catholic." A loving family adopted me

more than 50 years ago. My parents raised my brother and me in the Catholic faith, and they set a wonderful example for us of active participation and devotion in our Church. I was also fortunate to attend Catholic schools for the entirety of my education, including undergraduate and graduate Catholic universities.

I often say that I am a "cradle Catholic" because it was the Church's response through Catholic Charities of Wilmington, Del., that offered a choice for my birth mother to provide me with an opportunity for a flourishing life that she could not give me because of her young age.

Two years ago, my wife gave me the DNA kit 23andMe for my birthday. That simple test led to the most extraordinary gift I could ever have imagined — the reunion with my birth mother!

In May we celebrate motherhood, and in our Catholic tradition, we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary throughout the month.

My birth mom, Lucy, was a young Catholic woman when I was conceived. She made a courageous decision to keep me alive and well in her womb,

Director,
Life, Peace & Justice

**Robert
Ehnow**



and then put me up for adoption.

My mom, Elizabeth, received the gift of "me" from Lucy, although they never knew anything about each other at the time. Adoptions in the 1960's were closed affairs with little information provided to either the birth parents or the adoptive parents about each other. I learned that I spent less than one hour with my birth mother before I was placed in an orphanage and a few months later adopted by my family.

Elizabeth remains my hero, and she continues to provide me with unconditional love, patience, and understanding that only a mom can give. Elizabeth and my dad, Richard, live with my wife and me, and my mom remains the light in our household.

When I connected with my birth mom there was not a hint of jealousy or concern from my mom. She simply said she wanted to speak with Lucy to thank her for the gift that she provided her — that would be me. Wow, that's my mom!

Lucy and Elizabeth have talked on the phone, and both have thanked each other for what they both did for me. Lucy gave me life, and she con-

tinued to pray for me. On my 20th birthday, she wrote me a letter that was included in my adoption files and gave permission to contact her if I chose to do so.

When I requested my adoption files 33 years after Lucy wrote that letter to me, I discovered that I had a birth mother who never stopped loving and praying for me. She wondered if I had a good life — and thanks to her decision and the love from my parents, I did!

I have been given the most important gifts from two beautiful women — the gift of life from Lucy and the gift of unconditional love from Elizabeth. I have two moms whom I love very much.

Jesus' mother, Mary, through the Holy Spirit, conceived and bore Him into our world. Mary remains the epitome of unconditional love and sacrifice for her Son and for all of us. Mary, pregnant with Jesus as a young woman, chose to trust God and we all received the gift of Jesus.

We, as Catholics, often call on our Mother Mary through prayer and intercession to assist us and guide us. We know that a mom knows a son like no other person. We all have Mary as another mom — the Mother of Jesus.

I am so lucky to have two earthly women who love me and provide so much for me. And we all have at least two moms — our earthly mom who bore us, and our heavenly mom, Mary the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, who bore the Savior of our world!



*Hail Mary, full of
grace, the Lord is
with thee. Blessed
art thou among
women, and blessed
is the fruit of thy
womb, Jesus. Holy
Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners
now, and at the hour
of our death. Amen.*

As Asians, Being Quiet Is No Longer an Option



Asian immigrants have come to the United States as

farmworkers, nannies, laborers, nurses and professionals, and as servants in the military. They are thankful for opportunity and freedom.

My father left the Philippines, enlisting in the U.S. Navy in 1930 essentially to be a steward, a servant for Naval officers. He learned a trade, served during the Great Depression, WWII and the Korean War. Stationed on both U.S. coasts, he eventually came to San Diego, where he proudly built a new life for his family, as did thousands of Filipinos.

Traditionally, our people have accepted being disrespected, excluded, invisible. Our cultures — Filipinos, Vietnamese, Chinese, Koreans, Indonesians, among others — don't like to make waves, preferring to be silent about mistreatment and keeping a low profile in the community. Maybe to get along? Maybe to promote peace and harmony?

This is not so easy today, especially

Office for Ethnic
and Intercultural
Communities

**Charlotte
Fajardo**



for the second and third generations, who see this treatment from a different perspective, and with greater urgency for resolution.

The last year has certainly been a wake-up call, as racial injustice and violence against African Americans, in particular, sparked international outrage. Many in our community expressed concern, and tried to be compassionate and stand with this community.

The recent attacks against Asians are not unprecedented. They have opened old wounds, shaking us up again. In the mid-20th century, there were violent attacks on Filipinos where they lived. Like most immigrants, laws restricted where we could live, what jobs we could hold, and what schools we could attend. And no one should ever forget the relocation and internment of second- and third-generation Japanese Amer-

icans stripped of property and homes during WWII.

Today, we are afraid when we hear about Asians being attacked on buses and streets, about racial slurs being hurled at Asian students with shouts to "Go home!" Friends have told me of the suspicious looks they get shopping in the local markets. Yes, we're fearful!

The video of the Asian woman walking in New York struck a painful chord in me. She was an elderly Filipino woman (maybe like me) who was on her way to church to pray during Holy Week (like we do). A man viciously attacked her in front of a high-rise residential building. People inside the lobby at first just watched the beating, and then as the assailant walked away, closed the doors.

They didn't step out to console or help her! They didn't bring her in! They didn't even call 9-1-1!

As Christians, we can no longer close our eyes and shut our doors.

The teachings of the Gospels tell us we must be instruments of peace and mercy for all. We must pray and act for the victims and even for the perpetrators. These people may be

ignorant, mentally and emotionally disturbed, but the pain and the fear they sow are real.

What can we do?

First, we must pray and look to the teachings of Christ to guide us. We must reflect on our beliefs and our own behaviors.

Then, we must act. We have to speak up and make ourselves visible, in word and deed. We must influence the decisionmakers. We can become the decisionmakers — in our Church, in education, in social service agencies, and within our communities.

We must set aside our comfortable practice of keeping to ourselves. We must step up and join other peoples, opening our doors, standing up to racist acts, comforting victims.

Our God-given mission is to be one family, united as brothers and sisters. Fulfilling that mission means we can no longer accept being assaulted, being excluded, being invisible.

Charlotte Fajardo is Assistant to Vicar General Father Michael Pham, who directs the diocese's Office for Ethnic and Intercultural Communities.

News Briefs

World Day of the Sick Mass to Be June 12

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will be the celebrant and homilist for the Diocese of San Diego's third annual World Day of the Sick Mass.

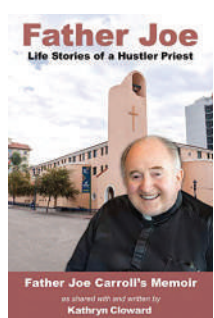
Hosted by the Order of Malta, the special liturgy will be celebrated at 10 a.m., Saturday, June 12, at Good Shepherd Church in Mira Mesa. It will include the sacrament of the anointing of the sick and a blessing of caregivers.

Usually celebrated on or near the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes in February, the World Day of the Sick Mass was delayed until June this year because of COVID-19 restrictions. It is open to all who are ill or disabled and who are physically able to attend along with their caregivers.

In his message for the 39th World Day of the Sick, Pope Francis said, "Jesus asks us to stop and listen, to establish a direct and personal relationship with others, to feel empathy and compassion, and to let their suffering become our own as we seek to serve them."

The Mass will also be livestreamed at goodshepherdparish.net/mass-streaming.

Memoir Recounts Father Joe's Colorful Life



Msgr. Joseph "Father Joe" Carroll, president emeritus of Father Joe's Villages, has led a colorful life. Now 80 years old, Father Joe has teamed up with writer Kathryn Cloward on his memoir.

Father Joe: Life Stories of a Hustler Priest, published May 12, recounts how a crippled kid from the Bronx became a beloved San Diego icon.

Ordained in 1974, Father Joe became a house-

hold name in 1984, after agreeing to participate in a television commercial touting an unconventional car donation program that helped fund homeless services. The commercial aired immediately after a San Diego Padres victory in the National League Championship. His opening line was, "Hi, I'm Father Joe. I'm a hustler."

Father Joe cultivated that hustler image as he continued to find ways to raise money for his beloved homeless, whom he called "neighbors in need," during his almost three decades as president of Father Joe's Villages.

Purchase a copy of *Father Joe: Life Stories of a Hustler Priest* for \$19.99, plus shipping, at www.fatherjoe-hustlerpriest.com.

Women's Retreat to Focus on Trusting God

"Trusting God When the Stakes Are High" will be the theme of the Whispering Winds Women's Auxiliary's Spring 2021 retreat.

The event will take place May 21 to 23 at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center in Julian.

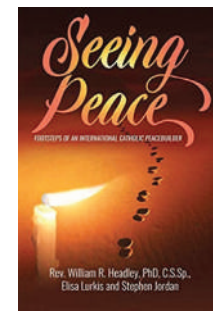
Mary Lenaburg, international speaker and author of *Be Brave in the Scared* and *Be Bold in the Broken*, will lead the retreat. She will give four talks and participate in a Q&A session.

The retreat also will include a Friday night social, a Saturday night prayer service, and Sunday Mass celebrated by Msgr. Mark Campbell.

Whispering Winds is committed to COVID safety protocols, including the requirement of face masks, social distancing and enhanced cleaning for the protection of retreat participants.

Registration is \$195; scholarships are available. To apply for a scholarship, contact Chris Villalobos at (619) 977-7403 or chrisvillalobos5@gmail.com. For more information, email wwindswa@gmail.com.

Book Features Lessons from Peacemaker



The title of Holy Ghost Father William R. Headley's recently published memoir, *Seeing Peace: Footsteps of an International Catholic Peacebuilder*, has a double meaning.

It refers both to the priest's failing eyesight, as a result of macular degeneration, as well as to the unique perspective he has

on peacebuilding, thanks to his service in more than 80 countries and as founding dean of the University of San Diego's Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies.

"As I approached the end of my 10-year stint at the School (of Peace Studies), I was urged by fellow faculty and the dean to tell my story," said Father Headley, explaining the memoir's origins. "While I resisted this in part because of sight problems, a former Peace School staff person offered to lend me a writer's hand."

Father Headley said the book was written for a diverse audience, including people with different faith traditions (or those questioning their traditions), young people in the process of discerning their path, and those with an interest in peacebuilding.

Each chapter reflects on lessons learned while building peace around the world. Father Headley hopes his retrospective will help others see the possibility of peace in a new light.

Seeing Peace is available from Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble. It retails for \$19.99 in hardcover and \$11.95 in paperback.

Read updated news from the San Diego Catholic Diocese.



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Obituaries

Father Urbano Salada



Father Urbano Salada, a retired priest of the Diocese of San Diego, died March 26 in the Philippines. He was 91.

Born in Guindulman, Bohol, Philippines, he was ordained for the priesthood on March 15, 1959, at St. Joseph Cathedral in Tagbilaran City, Philippines.

His ministry in the Diocese of San Diego began in late 1979, when he was assigned to work with the local Filipino Catholic community, while serving as a priest in residence at St. Charles Borromeo Parish. By the following year, he would be named associate pastor of the parish and placed in charge of all Filipino Catholic organizations of the diocese.

Throughout the 1980s, Father Salada served at a succession of parishes, including St. Charles Parish, Imperial Beach, 1980-1986; St. Mary Parish, El Centro, 1986-1988; Holy Trinity Parish, El Cajon, 1988-1993; and St. Patrick Parish, Carlsbad, 1993-1995.

He retired in late November 1995 and returned to the Philippines.

Msgr. Patrick Mullarkey



Msgr. Patrick J. Mullarkey, a retired priest of the Diocese of San Diego, died March 31. He was two days shy of his 81st birthday.

Born in County Galway, Ireland, he was ordained on June 21, 1964, for the Diocese of San Diego.

He served in several parishes in the diocese, beginning in 1964. He was an assistant or associate pastor at St. Charles Borromeo, Blessed Sacrament, St. Rita, St. Charles and St. Vincent de Paul parishes. As a pastor, he served at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Brawley, 1977-1979; St. Charles, Imperial Beach, 1979-1990; St. Columba, 1990-2008; and St. Catherine Laboure, 2008-2015.

He was made a monsignor in December 1988.

Msgr. Mullarkey retired in early July 2015 and moved into Nazareth House San Diego about a month later.

The funeral Mass was celebrated May 9 at St. Catherine Laboure Parish, with Bishop Robert McElroy as the principal celebrant and Msgr. Donal Sheahan as the homilist.



Sign of the Times

Singing has been banned indoors to slow the spread of COVID-19. No problem for the music teacher at St. James Academy, Anne Marie Oldham. She has been teaching her K-8 students to "sing" using American Sign Language. Two of them, Joshua Nawoj and Therese Niguidula, performed "God of Wonders" at the Earth Week Mass Celebrating Creation on April 17 at St. James Parish.

Priest Assignments

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

Bishop Robert McElroy has accepted the request for retirement of **Father Peter Bosque** and **Father Raymond O'Donnell**, effective June 30, and **Father Ronald Cochran**, effective July 25.

Father Joseph Masar has been appointed pastor of All Hallows Parish, San Diego, effective July 1.

With the permission of his prior provincial, **Father Carlos Alberto Flores, OSA**, has been appointed pastor of St. Patrick Parish, San Diego, effective June 1.

With the permission of his provincial superior, **Father Charles Moat, SVD**, has been appointed pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish, San Diego, effective July 1.

With the permission of his provincial, **Father Matthew R. Holland, SJ**, has been appointed associate pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, San Diego, effective July 1.

With the permission of his provincial, **Father Christopher Nguyen, SJ**, has been appointed director of the Newman Center Catholic Community at UCSD, effective July 1.

With the permission of his provincial, **Father Chinh Nguyen, SJ**, has been appointed pastoral associate of the Newman Center Catholic Community at UCSD, effective Aug. 15.

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CNS PHOTO/SEAN MOLLOY, COURTESY IRISH CATHOLIC



Father Gerard Quirke raises the chalice at Mass Rock overlooking Keem Bay on Ireland’s Achill Island April 4, 2021. Father Quirke, a priest of the Archdiocese of Tuam, said celebrating Easter Mass there had a “particular resonance” given the current legal ban on Masses in Ireland.

Mass rocks in the Irish countryside were used as altars during the mid-17th century, when public celebration of the Catholic Mass was suppressed. The head of the Irish bishops’ conference said the current present-day government’s move to criminalize attendance at Mass as part of COVID-19 regulations was a “potential infringement of religious freedom and of constitutional rights.” “The precise provisions are unclear and at first reading appear to be draconian, going further than the restrictions we have been cooperating with throughout the pandemic to date,” said Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, Northern Ireland. Churches in the Irish Republic have been closed for public worship since Dec. 26, but the government has claimed that this was just a matter of regulation rather than law. However, on April 16, Health Minister Stephen Donnelly signed a new law — known as a statutory instrument — making it a criminal offense. Catholic News Service

Pope: Prayer Made St. Teresa of Avila ‘Exceptional’

By Junno Arocho Esteves



VATICAN CITY – While St. Teresa of Avila was outstanding in many ways, her union with Christ through prayer made her an “exceptional woman,” Pope Francis said.

In a video message April 15 marking the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of St. Teresa of Avila as a doctor of the Church, the pope said the Spanish saint’s “audacity, creativity and excellence as a reformer are the fruit of the interior presence of the Lord.”

“We are dealing with a person who was outstanding in many ways,” he said. “However, it should not be forgotten that her recognized relevance in these dimensions is nothing more than the consequence of what was important to her: her encounter with the Lord, her ‘determined determination,’ as she says, to persevere in union with Him through prayer.”

The pope’s video message was played during a conference titled “Exceptional Woman,” held at the Catholic University of St. Teresa of Avila in Spain.

In his message, the pope said holiness is not a virtue reserved to “specialists of the divine” but is the “vocation of all believers.”

Saints, like St. Teresa, “stimulate and motivate us, but they are not for us to literally try to copy them,” he said. “Holiness cannot be copied because even that could lead us away from the unique and different path that the Lord has for each one of us.”

“What is important,” he said, “is that each believer discerns his or her own path, each one of us has his or her own path of holiness, of an encounter with the Lord.”

The path St. Teresa followed, which “made her an exceptional woman and a person of reference throughout the centuries,” was that of prayer, which is a path “open to all those who humbly open themselves to the action of the Spirit in their lives.”

However, he added, “such a path is not open to those who consider themselves pure and perfect, the Cathars of all centuries,” referring to the 12th century gnostic movement.

Instead, the path of prayer is open “to those who, aware of their sins, discover the beauty of the mercy of God, who welcomes all, redeems all and calls all to His friendship,” he said.

Pope Francis asked Christians to look to the example of St. Teresa of Avila and her union with God through prayer because it is “only His company that our heart desires and that gives us the fullness and joy for which we have been created.”

“Like the doctor of the Church, we live in hard times, not easy times, that need God’s faithful friends, strong friends,” he said. “The great temptation is to give in to disillusionment, to resignation, to the fatal and unfounded premonition that everything will go wrong. That infertile pessimism, that pessimism of people incapable of giving life.”

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Church Influenced Filmmaking from Early Days

By Chaz Muth



NEW YORK – As the film industry grew in the early 20th century, Catholic Church leaders became concerned about some of the content that had become so readily available to their flock.

The U.S. bishops established the National Legion of Decency in 1933 to directly address the morality of films being produced by the motion picture industry.

“The hope was that if the legion were present and were able to say, ‘You’re going to lose a significant portion of your patronage, that is the Catholic population are going to obey their bishops and stay away from not only bad movies but perhaps boycott theaters that show movies that violate the (Motion Picture Production Code), then you’re going to take a hit at the box office,’” said John Mulderig, assistant director for media reviews for *Catholic News Service*.

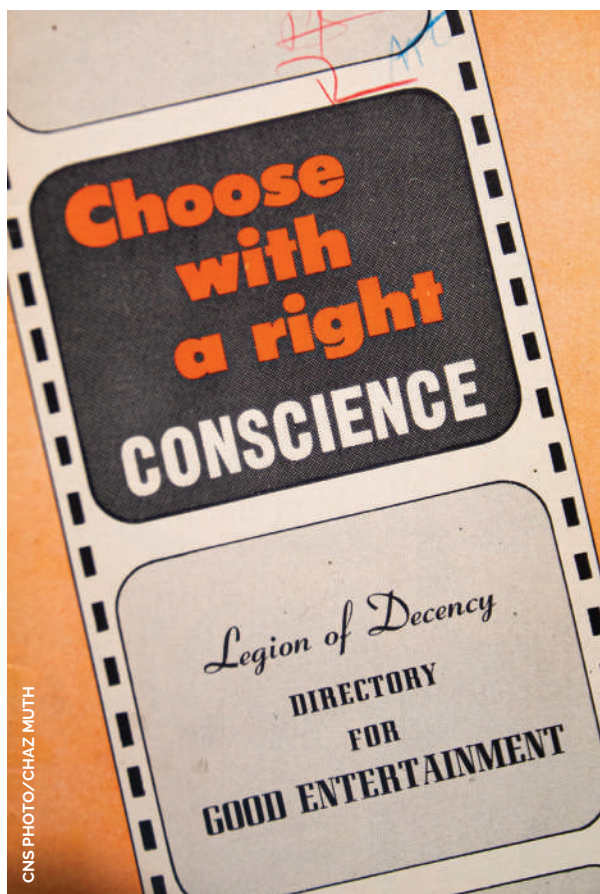
“That indeed is exactly what happened,” he said.

In 1934 – under the direction of prominent public relations professional and pious Catholic Joseph I. Breen – the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) established the Production Code Administration, requiring all movies to receive a certificate of approval before release.

Hollywood studios adopted the code to avoid governmental censorship and that code actually led to the disbanding of many local censorship boards.

It gave Breen the power to change scripts before shooting actually began and he’d frequently tell producers what they needed to alter in their films to avoid a “C (Condemned) Rating” by the Legion of Decency, said Bernard F. Dick, a renowned film scholar, author and movie reviewer for the National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, or NCOMP, as the legion was renamed in December 1965.

“No exhibitor would want to release a C-rated movie,” Dick told *Catholic News Service*.



DECENT PROPOSAL: This is the cover of a directory of film ratings offered by the National Legion of Decency.

The Legion of Decency wasn’t just concerned about the depiction of sexually explicit content.

It was also troubled by profanity, violence, criminal activity and how religion was sometimes depicted, said Frank Frost, a movie critic for NCOMP from 1964 to 1971.

Gritty subject matters were not always condemned, as long as the storyline had a redemptive quality or

provided a price paid for sinful lifestyles.

A synopsis of the movie and its classification would be distributed in a newsletter to subscribers and to the National Catholic Welfare Council news service (the precursor to *Catholic News Service*), which would distribute it to its subscribing Catholic newspapers worldwide.

“I grew up really with the Legion of Decency, because on the first Sunday after the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the priest would ask us all to stand and take the Legion of Decency Pledge,” Dick said.

The following is a version of the pledge, which was voluntary and didn’t carry penalties from the Church to violators.

“I condemn all indecent and immoral motion pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals. I promise to do all that I can to strengthen public opinion against the production of indecent and immoral films, and to unite with all who protest against them. I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life. I pledge myself to remain away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy.”

Over the decades of its existence, what began as the Legion of Decency has changed its name and its understanding of its mission. Since 2010, it has been the Media Review Office of *Catholic News Service*.

By the 1980s, the Catholic film office had lost negotiating power with movie producers and eventually discontinued producing its newsletter. But its classifications and movie reviews continue to run in Catholic publications and websites.

“I certainly believe our reviews are relevant today,” Mulderig said.

“I think it’s helpful that we’re engaging with the film in the overall assessment of ‘is this film one that upholds Gospel values or contradicts Gospel values?’” *Catholic News Service*

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

A “Neighbor in Need” Appeals to American Catholics for Help During Serious Food Crisis

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

“When harvests are poor, work opportunities and crop yields literally dry up, leading to low household incomes and a critical shortage of food,” explained James Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a respected Catholic charity working in the region. “That’s the

With their limited access to employment and educational opportunities, many of the country’s remote indigenous people have begun feeling hopeless. Some have resigned themselves to eating one small meal of tortillas each day, and they are in anguish, seeing their children languishing on the brink of starvation as a result.

Thankfully, Bishop Pablo Vizcaino and Caritas of the Diocese of Suchitepéquez-Retalhuleu have developed a strategic plan to rescue these children and set their families on the path to long-term health through improved nutrition. In partnership with Cross Catholic Outreach,



The men and women in Guatemala work very hard to provide for their children, but bad weather can destroy their crops and strip away their earnings. At those times, the Church must step in and help.

kind of situation the people are facing now. Their access to food has become very limited and families are suffering as a result.”

When Cavnar encountered this crisis on a visit to Guatemala, it immediately reminded him of a passage in Chapter 16 of the Gospel of Luke, he said.

“There in Luke, Jesus tells a parable about a poor man living on the doorstep of a man with plenty. The poor man’s needs are ignored, though he longs for something simple — just the scraps from the rich man’s table. When both die, the affluent man is rebuked for turning away from a situation he could easily have helped solve. Simply put, he ignores a neighbor in need. I believe we are faced with a modern-day example of that parable today in Guatemala, a country so close to our own.”

Statistics certainly back up Cavnar’s view. Guatemala — less than a three-hour flight from Houston or Miami — has the highest levels of extreme hunger in Latin America or the Caribbean, and the fourth-highest level in the world.

major food shipments will be secured and distributed to those who need help most.

“The story of Lazarus and the rich man taught us an important lesson about helping a neighbor in need, and we should take it to heart as we consider the suffering going on at our doorstep, there in Guatemala,” Cavnar said. “My team is committed to providing the food these desperate families need, and I’m confident Catholics throughout the U.S. will join our cause by helping to sponsor those shipments. This suffering must end.”

To combat Guatemala’s hunger crisis, Cross Catholic Outreach has a simple but effective plan to deliver scientifically formulated food packets they call Vitafood. This fortified rice product, specifically designed to reverse the effects of child malnutrition, can be packed in large shipping containers and cost-effectively sent to Catholic programs capable of bringing them through customs and effectively delivering them to the families with the greatest need. A single container of Vitafood can make a big impact, according to Cavnar.

“Vitafood is extremely flexible. It is rice or lentil based, and it comes in several different varieties. It can be prepared straight from the package or flavored with additional ingredients to suit local tastes,” he explained. “No matter how it is prepared, its nutritional value remains the same, providing the optimal balance of vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, fat and carbohydrates that a child’s hungry body needs. What’s more, because these Vitafood meals are donated to us, we only need to cover

shipping costs to deliver the food to our diocese partner in Guatemala. That means every \$0.15 cents donated can help put 6 nutritious meals in the hands of a family in need.”

Cavnar’s current goal, he said, is to secure the support of American Catholics to fund the effort.

“The diocese is eager for the help, and we have the logistics settled. What we need now is the support of compassionate Catholics willing to help a neighbor in need.”

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. AC01692, 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.





Congratulations, Graduates!

Academy of Our Lady of Peace



We're so proud of the Class of 2021! Soar High, Pilots!

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Irais Acatecatl Morales	Isabella Chavez	Maya Giammarinaro	Ingrid Lovberg	Kera Reinig
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Nancy Aguilar-Lopez	Isabella Cisneros	Sarah Glick	Chelsea Anne Macavinta	Anapaula Rios Miranda
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**The Academy of Our Lady of Peace admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.*