

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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'Christ's Hands on Earth'

Priest, Deacons to Be Ordained

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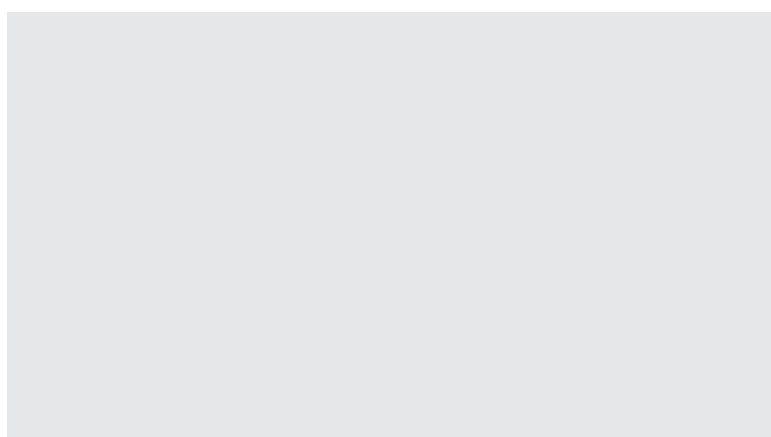
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The Diocese of San Diego runs the length of California's border with Mexico and serves more than 1.3 million Catholics in San Diego and Imperial Counties. It includes 98 parishes, 49 elementary and secondary schools, Catholic Charities and various 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.



Statue Embraces Region's Cultures

By Aida Bustos



She began to take form in Rome in March 2020, as the deadly grip of the coronavirus was beginning to tighten in Italy. Once finished, she waited weeks for a flight to the U.S. She arrived in San Diego just days before the event where she was to be unveiled, but it was canceled as the region locked down to slow the virus.

Her year-long, 6,300-mile journey finally ended on May 22. That's when the diocese presented "Mary, Mother of the Church" at its Pentecost Mass for All People, a radiant statue that depicts the rich diversity of local cultures, unified hand-in-hand under the protective mantle of the Blessed Mother.

The diocese's Office for Ethnic and Intercultural Communities commissioned the 4-foot image after Pope Francis decreed that "the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church" be celebrated on the Monday after Pentecost in churches worldwide.

A donation from a local Vietnamese family funded its creation, which was carved in wood by an artist named Alexander Kostner.

The statue depicts the Blessed Mother carrying young Jesus, who is holding St. Peter's Basilica, a symbol of the earthly Church. Under her mantle at the front are children representing the local cultural families, as designated by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: Asian-Pacific Islander, Euro American, African American, Hispanic and Native American.

Under her mantle, below her right arm, are pictured St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and patron of the Universal Church; Venerable Augustus Tolton, a former slave and the first African American priest in the United States; St. Teresa of Calcutta, a universal symbol of God's preferential love for the poor; and St. Pio of Pietrelcina ("Padre Pio"), the Italian Franciscan priest known for his suffering, humility and miracles.

Below her left arm are pictured St. John Vianney, patron of parish priests; St. Pope John Paul II, remembered for his love for young people and for building bridges with peoples of other faiths; St. Faustina Kowalska, the "Apostle of Divine Mercy," whose apparitions of Jesus inspired the devotion; and St. José María Robles, a Mexican priest and Knight of Columbus martyred during the Cristero War.

The statue will rest at the Pastoral Center, waiting to accompany the faithful at diocesan Pentecost celebrations, as Mary was present with the apostles at the first one.



Restrictions Continue to Ease at Mass

The Southern Cross



It's fitting that the Church's birthday this year was seen as the occasion of "rebirth" for the Church in San Diego. Pentecost, after all, is considered the Church's birthday.

And, appropriate for the moment, faithful have cause to celebrate: fewer restrictions in indoor worshipping as the pandemic ebbs, and the vaccination rate grows.

Just before Pentecost, Bishop Robert McElroy acknowledged the symbolic importance of the day.

"As we approach the great feast of Pentecost, the new rebirth in our Church and society, I want to thank you for all that you have done in the past 15 months to serve your people through sacrifice, creativity and faith," he wrote in a letter sent on May 20 to all the priests in the diocese.

In it, he further loosened the di-

ocese's COVID protocols for parishes in San Diego and Imperial counties.

Most of the guidelines are effective immediately, while others will not take effect until at least June 15, when California is scheduled to end its mask mandate and allow businesses to fully re-open.

Under the loosened guidelines:

- Face coverings are still required at Mass, but social distance between individuals and households can be reduced from 6 feet to 3 feet. An outdoor Mass option is encouraged.

- Congregational singing is permitted indoors, led by a maximum of two cantors and one accompanist. Larger choirs will be allowed after June 15.

- Communion is limited to the Body of Christ, received only in the hand. The Precious Blood will not be distributed until the First Sunday of Advent in late November.

- Holy water fonts should not be filled until September.

- The Offertory collection and the presentation of the gifts can be done as they were before the pandemic.

- The Sign of Peace will continue to be contact-free and socially distanced.

- Only those who are vaccinated can take Communion to the sick and homebound.

- Meetings and events at parishes can resume on June 15 without size limitations.

As with previous diocesan guidelines, the bishop has left much to pastors' discretion. This includes whether to begin using hymnals and worship aids again, whether to re-open "cry rooms," and how to safely celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation.

Parishes and Catholic schools respond as the Imperial Valley moves to Orange Tier. See thesoutherncross.org/valleyupdate621.



Partnerships at USD Tackle Climate Change

By Denis Grasska



The University of San Diego was quick to heed Pope Francis' call to action on environmental stewardship.

The pope issued his encyclical "Laudato Si", on Care for Our Common Home in May 2015. The following year, when USD released a strategic plan in preparation for its 75th anniversary in 2024, the encyclical's influence could already be felt.

"Care for Our Common Home" is one of USD's six strategic "pathways" toward its goal of being the standard-bearer for a contemporary Catholic university. The pathway calls for the message of "Laudato Si" to be embodied in teaching, scholarship, campus culture and community partnerships.

USD's efforts represent one of the ways that the local Church is providing leadership on this issue.

With "Laudato Si" marking its sixth anniversary, members of the USD community recently reflected on the university's accomplishments and the lessons learned.

Dr. Michel Boudrias, associate professor of Environmental and Ocean Sciences, is director of USD's Care for Our Common Home Pathway.

He said that one of "the most powerful" attributes of "Laudato Si" is that, unlike the typical encyclical, it was written as "a letter to the world." Catholics and non-Catholics alike were encouraged to do something for the planet.

"We have to work together to solve this issue," said Boudrias, expressing what he believes to be one of the main messages of the papal document.

USD has embraced that spirit of collaboration.

On campus, climate change is an issue that is not restricted to science classrooms, but which has been introduced into a variety of academic fields. Boudrias explained that the university has created an interdisciplinary space where students can take courses that are team-taught by professors from different departments.

For about a decade, he has lectured to students in Sustainable Supply Chain classes about the science of climate change and its impact on businesses. Through a similar but more recent partnership with the Theatre Department, its students are honing their storytelling skills by writing and performing short plays with environmental themes; Environmental and Ocean Sciences students serve as scientific consultants on the plays.

Boudrias is also one of 12 members of the university's Environmental Integration Lab, which facili-



GREEN POWER: Solar panels have been installed on campus buildings at the University of San Diego. The university has taken several concrete actions to address climate change.



Michel Boudrias



Darbi Berry



Trey McDonald

tates coordination among all environmentally related courses and projects on campus.

"This has got to be a partnership, it's got to be an effort where we're all involved, and I think that's where things at USD look really good," said Trey McDonald, director of USD's Office of Sustainability.

McDonald is a key player in USD's "Campus as a Living Lab" concept, which allows students to contribute to campus-wide sustainability efforts through research projects undertaken as part of their coursework. His office approves the projects and connects the students with subject matter experts on campus.

He said such projects have resulted in significant savings in both money and resources for the university.

As the result of an analysis performed by a group of students in a Supply Chain Management class, McDonald said, USD stopped receiving deliveries of 5-gallon water bottles in favor of installing on-site water filtration and dispensing units. He said this

project alone reduced greenhouse gases, because the delivery trucks no longer needed to drive to campus, and has saved more than \$50,000 in estimated annual costs.

However, USD's partnerships on climate change are not limited to campus.

The San Diego Regional Climate Collaborative, an initiative of The Nonprofit Institute housed at USD's School of Leadership and Education Sciences, is a network of cities and regional agencies that facilitates opportunities to advance climate change solutions.

"Staff from 28 cities and agencies actively participate in Climate Collaborative dialogues, and having access to this community of best practices also helps to support USD in its own campus efforts toward climate action," said Darbi Berry, program manager.

USD is not content with its accomplishments.

In October 2019, its president, Dr. James T. Harris, pledged that the university would go carbon-neutral by 2035.

Through 2019, USD has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than 17 percent, McDonald said, but meeting the carbon-neutrality goal means "we're going to have to be more aggressive and, hopefully, do some more daring, exciting things."

An extended version of this story is found at thesouthern.org/062103



THE SOUTHERN CROSS.ORG

Vatican Gears Up for Next Decade of Caring for 'Common Home'



POINT MAN: Tebaldo Vinciguerra works for the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

By Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican plans to launch a new wave of initiatives for the next decade in an ongoing response to Pope Francis' call for the care of creation.

The message of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato Si", on Care for Our Common Home continues to be prophetic for a world reeling from the coronavirus pandemic, said the website for the Vatican's Dicastery (Office) for Promoting Integral Human Development, which addresses environmental problems worldwide, among other issues. The pope recently appointed San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy to the influential body. (See story on Page 14.)

The encyclical provides a "moral and spiritual compass" for a "new way

of living together, bonded together in love, compassion and solidarity" and in a more "harmonious relationship with the natural world, our common home," the site says.

Some of the best things to emerge from people acting on the encyclical are their responses to a call for dialogue among experts in diverse fields, creating new and needed combinations and partnerships, said Tebaldo Vinciguerra, the official leading the Ecology and Creation desk at the Dicastery.

The office planned to unveil a preview of a "Laudato Si" Action Platform in the coming days ahead of its full launch Oct. 4 — as part of a "road map" of action for the next decade, he said. The platform is meant to help those

who want to increase their commitment to bringing "Laudato Si" to life by promising a set of actions over a period of seven years.

Parishes, dioceses, families, businesses and NGOs will register to assess what they are doing now and to see how they can further contribute to the seven "Laudato Si" goals, he said.

How people choose to live day-to-day with an eye to creation is important, he said, as are the policies and practices at all levels, in agriculture, trade, economics, finance and supply chains.

Contact Father Emmet Farrell, efarrell@sdccatholic.org, for San Diego diocese's Creation Care Teams.



Young Adult Catholics Invited to Moving Event

By Denis Grasska

Young adult Catholics in San Diego will have the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage — and they won't even have to leave their home diocese to do so.

The diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry, in collaboration with the nonprofit organization Modern Catholic Pilgrim, is sponsoring a one-day "Pilgrim Walk" on Saturday, June 12, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Participants, ages 18 to 39, will walk an almost 7-mile route that will take them from The Immaculata Parish, located on the campus of the University of San Diego in Linda Vista, to St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach.

After an opening prayer and a spiritual talk, the pilgrims will begin walking at 9:30 a.m. They will take a half-hour break at Mission Bay for a second spiritual talk. The young adults are expected to arrive at St. Brigid's between 12:30 and 1 p.m. for quiet prayer outside the church, before heading to nearby Law Street Beach for fellowship.

Registration is \$20 per person. A continental breakfast will be provided by the Office for Young Adult Ministry. Lunch will be provided by St. Brigid's young adult ministry, led by coordinators Scott and Jacqueline Weeman.

Despite the walking involved, the upcoming pilgrimage should not be mistaken for a hike, said Will Peterson, founder and president of Modern Catholic Pilgrim.

Peterson, 28, will be leading the upcoming pilgrimage. He explained that pilgrims, unlike hikers, have a prayer intention that they carry with them as they walk and, upon reaching their destination, it is left in the hands of God, Mary or one of the saints.

"It's pretty simple, but there's a great richness to it," Peterson said of the concept of pilgrimage, which he describes as "a rich form of prayer."

Modern Catholic Pilgrim's chaplain, Capuchin Franciscan Father Christopher Iwancio, expounded on that idea.

"With any pilgrimage, I can't help but reflect on the African proverb,



PILGRIMS: Will Peterson, founder of Modern Catholic Pilgrim, and Michael Jezewak walk along Mission Bay during a young adult pilgrimage in 2018.

'When you pray, move your feet.' Our faith tradition reminds us that our faith needs to be embodied. ... God is not an abstract phantom floating out there as a philosophical idea. We believe as Catholics that God became flesh, which means that God can be encountered in the physical world," said Father Iwancio.

Michael Jezewak, 29, participated in a multi-day pilgrimage offered by

Modern Catholic Pilgrim in August 2018, walking from Mission San Diego de Alcalá to Mission San Luis Rey de Francia in Oceanside. He came expecting nothing more than "a fun, three-day hike with some spiritual elements." But once the pilgrimage concept was explained, he set off toward Mission San Luis Rey with a prayer intention that he and his wife, Alyssa, would be prepared for parenthood.

"It was ... more powerful than I was expecting, which I think is always a hallmark of a meaningful spiritual experience," said Jezewak, who discovered about a month after the pilgrimage that Alyssa was pregnant with their first child. He is planning to participate in the June 12 pilgrimage — this time, with his now 2-year-old son. (The Jezewaks are also the parents of a 3-month-old son.)

The theme of the upcoming pilgrimage is the "Road to Emmaus," the Gospel story in which the resurrected Jesus journeyed alongside two crestfallen disciples traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus in the aftermath of Jesus' crucifixion. The disciples failed to recognize the risen Christ until He broke bread with them at journey's end.

"Most people are familiar with it," Patrick Rivera, director of the Office for Young Adult Ministry, said of the Emmaus story. "But very few people have really lived something like that in a tactile way like a walk."

He expressed hope that the pilgrims will gain "lived experience" of walking with Jesus and of having Him reveal Himself to them.

Register for the one-day
"Pilgrim Walk" at
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Schools Celebrate Educators' Spirited Service

By Denis Grasska



Taking place amidst a global pandemic, the 2020-2021

academic year was extraordinary.

And that was reflected at the seventh annual Catholic Educators' Awards Ceremony, where one of the evening's major awards was given not to one school, but to all 47 Catholic elementary and high schools in the diocese.

The ceremony, held May 20 via Zoom, is hosted each year by the diocesan Office for Schools to recognize local Catholic educators for their service.

The event has traditionally been a well-attended, in-person gathering that includes dinner. This was the second consecutive year that the event took place virtually.

All of the diocese's schools shared equally in this year's "Re-Imagine Catholic Schools" Award, which is "given to a school that recognizes the needs and interests of the 21st-century student."

John Galvan, the office's director, said all of the schools "had to re-imagine themselves" to re-open safely after the suspension of in-person instruction and the shift to distance learning last year.

"We thought, this year, it would be really important to memorialize for all of our schools what they've been through and the hard work that they've put in," Galvan said.



DISTINGUISHED: Elijah Bonde, principal of Nativity Prep Academy, joins sixth-graders during a break from their math class. Bonde recently received the diocese's Distinguished Principal Award.

During the ceremony, the Schools Office also recognized teachers and principals marking significant milestones. These included educators celebrating 10, 20, 30 or 40 years, as well as those who are retiring.

Several other awards were presented at the ceremony. The recipients are nominated by fellow members of the Catholic school community.

The Good Shepherd Award, which recognizes a member of the clergy or a consecrated religious who has modeled discipleship, truth and courage, was awarded to Father Devdas Masilamony, pastor of Santa Sophia Parish in Spring Valley.

Elijah Bonde, of Nativity Prep Academy in the College Area, received this year's Distinguished Principal Award, which honors a principal whose impact on Catholic education extends beyond his or her own school.

Kristina Alger, a fourth-grade teacher at St. Mary Star of the Sea School in Oceanside, was named Catholic Teacher of the Year.

"In my encounters with Kristina, I find her to be everything a Catholic school teacher should be. Kind, faithful, compassionate, collaborative, and dedicated," one of her nominations read.

The recipient of this year's "All Are

Welcome" Inclusive Education Award, presented annually to a school that is striving to make education accessible to students with disabilities, was St. Martin of Tours Academy in La Mesa for its work with dyslexic students.

Oralia Puga, preschool director at St. Charles School in Imperial Beach, received the Sister Breege Boyle Award, which honors a preschool program or director "for making a difference in the lives of our youngest students."

Kate Aeono, a second-grade teacher at St. James Academy in Solana Beach, received the ACT Fellow Award for demonstrating service through teaching, community involvement, and spiritual development at the University of San Diego's Academy of Catholic Teaching (ACT).

Steve Laaperi, who is retiring after nine years as president of Cathedral Catholic High School, was feted with the Sister Claire Patrice Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes major contributions over many years to educational leadership in the San Diego Diocese.

The director praised the schools' staffs for an extraordinary year.

"I pray in gratitude every day for our school leadership and our teachers because they've really met the challenge with incredible grace, fortitude, creativity, and certainly with care for the wellbeing of their members, their employees and kids."



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Mom-Daughter Duo's Service Lifts Valley

By Roman Flores

EL CENTRO — Whether behind the microphone at a City Council meeting or at the ambo as a lector during Mass at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in El Centro, Sylvia Marroquin credits her mother as her inspiration.

Her mother, Aurora Marroquin, had always had a strong Catholic faith but had long found herself too busy to be an active parish volunteer. After her husband's death in 2008, she discovered a renewed sense of purpose by attending daily Mass and serving the Church.

It was the mother's example of selfless service that led Sylvia to run for the El Centro City Council in 2018 and again two years later, winning a seat in the Nov. 3, 2020 election.

She said her work experience prepared her to serve as a councilmember. She worked at the nonprofit Calexico Neighborhood House in 2010, as interim director of the Imperial Valley Small Business Development Center in 2011, has served as the business manager of St. Mary's School since 2016 and runs Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish's gift shop as a volunteer since 2012.

Yet, she said that she "can't take credit for this alone."

"It really was my mom," she said.

Aurora, her 81-year-old mother, has five children, four grandchildren and



FAMILY BUSINESS: Sylvia Marroquin, right, makes a sale at an outdoor iteration of St. Mary Church's gift shop while her mother, Aurora, second from right, chats with a customer.

three great-grandchildren. She noted that as she became more involved with the Church, even her children who had fallen away from the faith started attending Mass again.

The daughter said her mother led by example.

"She really was the one that inspired me to become more active," she said. "She was evangelizing in her own way and we didn't even realize it."

Because of her experience in retail, the mother accepted then-pastor Father Ruben Valenzuela's invitation to volunteer at Our Lady of Guadalupe's now defunct parish thrift store. Father Mark Edney, who succeeded Father

Valenzuela, asked her to run Our Lady of Guadalupe's new gift shop and to be trained to run the St. Mary Church gift shop across town.

Then Father Edney asked her daughter to help her run St. Mary's gift shop. A mother-daughter sales team was born.

"I like to do it, it keeps me busy and gives me motivation to keep living," the mother said. "My faith is very solid."

The mother also has cooked for priests during the holidays, prepared 30 meals a week during a summer "Meals on Wheels" program that fed COVID-positive locals, and has continued the outdoor version of the gift

shop at St. Mary Church, bringing the Catholic items outside and setting them up on tables every week with her daughter.

"Anything a pastor asks Sylvia and Aurora to do, they do," said Father Edney. "They volunteer for everything ... and they're happy doing so."

While the mother said she sees volunteering for the Church as separate from her faith, Father Edney said it is apparent the duo lives out their Catholicism in the way they serve others.

"All of this service to the Church community led to service on a wider scale," the daughter said. "She's not just my mother, she's my friend too."



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New Foundation CEO Sees Opportunity to Grow

By Denis Grasska



Manny Rubio considers himself "truly blessed" to be the new CEO of the Catholic Community Foundation of San Diego.

Rubio, 47, was born in El Centro and grew up in San Diego's South Bay. The native San Diegan brings to his new role a long history as an active parishioner as well as about a quarter-century of experience in the nonprofit sector.

"I saw this as essentially a marriage of my two worlds," Rubio said of his new position, which allows him to use his professional experience for the benefit of the Church he loves.

The foundation, which was established in December of 2015, is intended to be a one-stop resource for Catholic philanthropy.

Independent of the Diocese of San Diego and with its own board of trustees, the foundation had \$83 million under management as of mid-May and supports more than 175 funds established by individuals and organizations to provide financial stability to local parishes, schools, religious vocations, and social service charities.

Donors' money is invested according to the socially responsible investment guidelines issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Over the past five years, the foundation has distributed more than \$14 million in grants.

Its leadership is in transition. Ru-



LET'S SHAKE ON IT: New CEO Manny Rubio, left, is succeeding the retiring Gary Rectenwald, right, at the Catholic Community Foundation of San Diego.

bio, who came on board in mid-April, is shadowing Gary Rectenwald, who has led the foundation as executive director since February of 2016. Rubio is expected to take the reins in early June, with Rectenwald remaining in the office in a supporting capacity through the end of the month.

Rectenwald, 71, recalled that he had been "happily retired" for about five years after a 30-year career as an executive with information

technology companies when he was encouraged to apply for the position of executive director. (The board of trustees recently changed the job title from executive director to CEO.)

"This is the only position that I would've ever come out of retirement to do," said Rectenwald, who at the time pledged to "give it my best shot every day for five years."

That five years has come to an end, and he couldn't be happier with the

choice of his successor or more confident about the foundation's future.

Describing Rubio as "an ideal candidate" for the position, he praised him as "a very strong Catholic." He noted that, unlike himself, Rubio is fluent in Spanish. And, because of Rubio's familial ties to the Imperial Valley, Rectenwald said the new CEO is well-positioned to strengthen the foundation's relationship with Valley parishes and schools.

Though always a practicing Catholic, Rubio credits his years at the University of San Diego with deepening his faith. After graduating in 1994 with a bachelor's degree in International Relations, he served for one year with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. That year of service inspired him to dedicate his life to nonprofit work.

In 1997, he graduated from Georgetown University with a master's degree in Public Policy. He has worked in the nonprofit sector in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and, since 1999, in the San Diego area. From 2008 until accepting his current position, he was director of grants and communications for the Sweetwater Union High School District in Chula Vista.

Praising Rectenwald and the board of trustees for the accomplishments of the past five years, Rubio said of the foundation, "We have a lot of opportunity here to grow."

Visit the Catholic Community Foundation of San Diego at www.ccfdsd.org.



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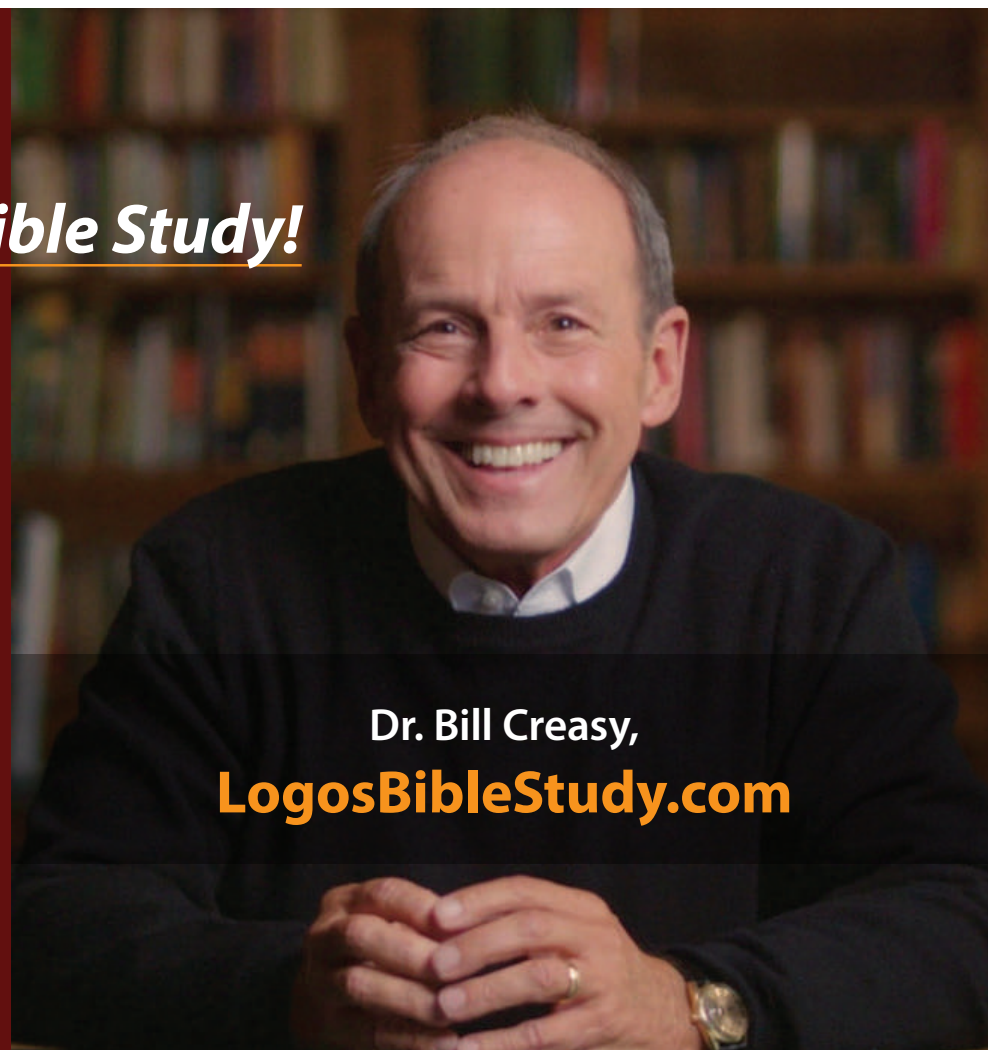
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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Dear Friends and Family of Catholic Charities, Sisters at the Border

Meet Catholic Charities' national network of religious sisters bringing boots-on-the-ground relief to asylum seekers facing dire circumstances in San Diego and Imperial counties.

Almost instantly after the memo from Sister Donna Markham (CEO of CCUSA) went out, the responses poured in. Sisters across the U.S. packed their bags for the border, where a crisis is spiraling.

They took planes from Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois, and elsewhere. They drove hours from Northern California. Some of them connected in El Paso. Others carpooled from Los Angeles. One recently returned from administration in Rome.

Meanwhile, asylum seekers come to California from regions in deep conflict—Central America, Mexico, South America, Haiti, Africa, and the Middle East...

They are all converging at the U.S.-Mexico border in Imperial County, a remote desert backdrop for migrants who are met with dangerous and devastating conditions as U.S. border agents struggle to manage a record influx under restrictive policies and pandemic protocols.

Epicenter, El Centro

The border crisis has been ongoing—and worsening—since 2014. In 2021, it is reaching inexplicable levels. March 2021 saw more than 172,000 border encounters, including nearly 19,000 children traveling alone, according to The Associated Press.

Welcome to El Centro, California, where many of the migrants cross into the U.S., only to be detained and often separated from family members for days or weeks in overcrowded facilities with no personal supplies. These aren't "illegals," drug smugglers, or criminals; they are fearful people and families fleeing persecution, violence, poverty, and other threats in their home countries. They are asylum seekers who must be documented and routed to a final destination.

"The people I saw had been in detention for eight to 10 days, sleeping on concrete with no access to showers and no way to change their clothes," said Sister Donna Markham, OP, President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, after a recent visit. "There's no way you can look at that degree of human suffering and not be affected by it."

In El Centro, Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego is assuaging both the crisis and the trauma it inflicts on asylum seekers. We gave the Daily Mail an inside look into two hotels where we are temporarily housing migrants. It is a major operation with many moving parts and high humanitarian stakes, leading Sister Donna to call on all Sisters nationally to assist in person if at all possible, whether in El Centro or two hours west in San Diego. Nearly 200 Sisters responded to the call.

"It's what I feel called to do," said Sister Deborah Lockwood of Redwood City, California. "We are sisters to everybody, especially the asylum seekers at the border who are vulnerable and voiceless."

Sister Deborah spent 25 years at a parish in Las Vegas, followed by 15 years in Rome. The situation in the border reminds her of when the Pope called on Sisters to help asylum seekers from Africa arriving at the Italian island of Lampedusa.

Sister Jane Rudolph, from East Los Angeles, had long been wanting to travel to the border, but was unable to do so during the height of the COVID outbreak in the U.S. As soon as she was fully vaccinated, she put her faith into action. She got a ride from Sister Mary Teresa Parker of Oakland, over eight hours north of the border, and the two headed to San Diego to assist Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego in its response to asylum-seekers in San Diego.

These are just a few of the many Sisters at the border as we speak.

Serving Selflessly

The purpose of Catholic Charities' aid at the border is to provide asylum seekers with a warm, welcoming, trauma-informed care shelter and meet their basic needs while helping them reunite with family members living elsewhere in the U.S. Our goal with each asylum seeker is to see them to a safe destination and reunite with their families.

The Sisters volunteer as airport guides, food packers, donation center attendants, delivery associates, and in other critical roles. The pandemic makes it difficult to interact with the migrants beyond small snippets.

"We love serving the people," Sister Jane said. "We just wish we could see them more, but it's not so easy due to COVID."

Still, the Sisters find a way to create simple moments of human connection and understanding. Sister Kathy of Philadelphia recalled a newly arrived woman with her family who, after a long journey, made it safely across the border and were being led to their hotel room. "We see people that come from the border, so many times they haven't had a shower or brushed their teeth for 5, 6 or 7 days," Sister Kathy said. "When we opened the door and she saw the bed and the room she let out the deepest sigh of relief."

Sister Patrice Coolick, from San Jose, said she likes to knock on the door when delivering meals, in hopes of being able to hand food and supplies to recipients. "I brought cookies for your little girl," she said to one. Before she could finish the sentence, a five-year-old girl dashed to the door and said, "I'll take all the cookies!"

These interactions make the giving feel all the more meaningful, but for the Sisters, the inspiration is much bigger than that. "It's not about us," Sister Patrice said. "It's about them. It's about being good, kind, and compassionate."

Sister Mary Elaine of Scranton, Pennsylvania added, "We don't need to be the face of it. We can sort clothes, bag food, drive people to the airport... It doesn't matter the task. Any tiny piece is good enough for me." Sister Mary Elaine is stationed for three months in El Centro as the lead Sister on site.

Mobilized, Organized, Humanized

The Sisters bring a world of love and genuine care where it is needed most. They share stories of previous service from around the world and throughout the country—Ecuador, Peru, Thailand, Arizona, Texas, and in each of their respective congregations, organizations, and communities. The Community Engagement Specialist in Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego Immigrant Services Department, the single point of contact for the Sisters gives them the information and resources they need daily to make a difference.

"We feel like a family here," Sister Mary Teresa said. "Everything is so organized and welcoming." Amid chaos and controversy at the border, that's the same feeling the Sisters are giving to asylum seekers.

Sincerely,



Appaswamy "Vino" Pajanor
Chief Executive Officer



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Joyful Service: Becoming a Deacon Is a P

DOMINIC GUZZARDO | *St. Gregory the Great Parish*

Dominic Guzzardo grew up thinking of the Church as his “second family.”

He attended Blessed Sacrament School and St. Augustine High School in San Diego. He was an altar server and held a leadership role in his parish youth group.

As a young adult, he even considered the priesthood before ultimately discerning a call to marriage.

Guzzardo first experienced the “spark” of a calling to the permanent diaconate in the 1990s, while he was serving as a parish youth minister, and again while attending a Marriage Encounter Weekend in late 2015. That second time, the call was persistent.

“God pestered me relentlessly almost every single day until I said yes,” said Guzzardo, who has worked as a sales representative for the past 18 years. “It was intense, almost unbearable at times.”

During his second year of formation, God brought him to an important realization: “I am happiest when I am in the service of others.”

“I never really knew what I wanted to be when I grew up,” said Guzzardo, who, as a deacon, most looks forward to walking alongside those in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process. “I hadn’t figured it out until that moment. It was the first time in my life that I knew what I was called to be: a servant.”

Guzzardo and his wife, Suzanne, have been married for 28 years and have two sons. They have been members of St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch for almost 15 years.



ANDY C. JAZMIN | *St. Charles Parish*

Before entering diaconal formation, Andy C. Jazmin had already served his parish in a variety of ways, including in the choir, through music ministry, as a lector and as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.

But that still wasn’t enough.

“I felt that I needed to take the next step,” said Jazmin, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Navy who has been a defense contractor for the past 21 years.

He took that step in a spirit of prayerful discernment and after seeking the counsel of priests and deacons.

The actual moment when he recognized his call to the diaconate has stuck with him.

“It happened years ago, but I vividly remember, during one morning in prayer, I felt a sense of God’s presence and peace,” he said. “God has always been good to me. He has never let me down. I knew then I had to act on His call.”

Within a few months, he met with his then pastor, who recommended that he contact the diocese.

“That was the beginning of it all,” Jazmin said of a formation period that would be marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdowns, which shifted classes and days of recollection online.

For Jazmin, it is the deacon’s responsibility “to serve with humility, compassion and love, as our Savior did.”

Jazmin and his wife, Grayce, have been married for 39 years and have three daughters. He has been a member of St. Charles Parish in Imperial Beach for 52 years.



DAVID HALL | *All Hallows Parish*

Two different wives played pivotal roles in David Hall’s path to diaconal ordination.

Hall wasn’t even baptized when he met his first wife, Cindy, in 1980 and married her in 1986. He would make his sacraments of initiation in 1990.

Widowed in 2013, Hall met his second wife, Jo Ann, while attending classes offered through the Diocesan Institute. He was taking courses as part of his studies for the diaconate, while she was earning a catechetical certificate. He doubts that he could have completed the formation program had it not been for Jo Ann’s support.

Reflecting on the diaconal ministry for which he will soon be ordained, Hall said, “The life of the deacon is ... all about service.”

But it wasn’t until after he had already entered the diaconal formation program, after feeling “more or less recruited” by the previous director of the diocesan Office for the Permanent Diaconate, that he truly felt a calling.

“I am not one who is given to experiencing an epiphany,” he said, contrasting his vocational journey with that of others, “and therefore, for me, it was more of ... a gradual realization.”

Hall, who retired in 2016 after three decades as a patent attorney, said he has yet to meet with his pastor to discuss the specifics of ministry. But, he said, “I look forward to whatever service my parish priest wants of me.”

David and Jo Ann Hall were married in February of last year. He has been a member of All Hallows Parish in La Jolla since 1994.



TIM KEANE | *St. Thomas More Parish*

Tim Keane’s vocation story gives new meaning to the phrase “A walk to remember.”

Taking a walk to calm his nerves from “work-related drama and life issues,” Keane prayed that God would give him direction.

God’s response was a call to the diaconate, although Keane didn’t realize it at the time. Instead, he and his wife simply became more active parishioners and gave the Church pride of place in their lives.

“It took me four years to understand my initial call and to start my diaconate journey,” said Keane, who has served as the administrator of a home care agency for about five years.

Keane said deacons are called to be “Christ’s hands and feet here on earth” through preaching and being present to those in need.

“It’s an honor to serve the Church,” he said. “It’s a blessing that the Church has allowed me to fulfill my call and to be Christ’s servant here on earth.”

He credited his parents’ example and the Church’s support as “a compass leading me to the diaconate.” Like his fellow deacon candidates, he also noted his wife’s role in the formation process.

“All of this would not be possible without my wife,” he said. “She has been my rock and my partner throughout this entire journey.”

Keane and his wife, Lia, have been married for 27 years and have three children. They have been members of St. Thomas More Parish in Oceanside for 18 years.



ON JUNE 12, BISHOP ROBERT MCELROY WILL ORDAIN EIGHT LOCAL MEN TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE.



Family Celebration

PATRICK MCCAY | *St. Brigid Parish*

Patrick McCay says his faith walk has had “its ups and downs.”

“During my formative years, I think I would have been voted least likely to become a deacon out of everybody in my extended family,” he said.

But McCay always felt love for God and respect for His Church and, whenever he strayed away from regular Mass attendance, he always felt called to come back.

His first encounter with a deacon came during his freshman year of high school when he was the only youth to respond to his parish’s request for volunteers for a food distribution. That deacon, who “wasn’t afraid to go out and get his hands dirty,” made an impression. Years later, McCay would meet many more deacons and even members of his Cursillo small group who answered the call to the diaconate.

Even so, McCay had never considered becoming a deacon himself until his pastor called him into his office and asked him.

“I feel that I am being entrusted to a special ministry,” said McCay, who has worked for the U.S. Navy for 30 years in the roles of facility planner or environmental planner. “Deacons have done so much for me in my faith walk. Now, I have an opportunity to pay it forward.”

McCay and his wife, Danielle, have been married for 26 years and have two children. They have been members of St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach for about 29 years.



JOSE OSCAR PAREDES | *Corpus Christi Parish*

“I cannot say that becoming a deacon was ever part of my plan. But, apparently, it was God’s plan,” said Jose Oscar Paredes.

He said that, while the call to a vocation might be clear and undeniable to some people, that was not his experience.

Even after entering formation, Paredes was still seeking proof of God’s call. Eventually, he called off the search.

“I felt I was forcing the issue,” he said. “So, I decided to focus on my classes and ... my spiritual growth. It became clear that, if there was to be a call, it was going to be when I least expected it.”

His certainty about his call didn’t come until almost five years into the five-year formation program.

He was on retreat with his fellow deacon candidates last March and, somehow, every Scripture reading, every prayer and every experience during Eucharistic adoration seemed to confirm that he was on the right path.

“The foundation of our vocation is the sacramental and intimate relationship with Christ,” said Paredes, the owner and president of an architectural design firm for the past 21 years. “Therefore, we as deacons are the living icon of Christ the Servant. So, we serve the Church as Christ served His people.”

Paredes and his wife, Patricia Ann, have been married for 39 years and have four children. They have been members of Corpus Christi Parish in Bonita for eight years.



JAVIER MOZO | *Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish*

Javier Mozo has always been Catholic, but he wasn’t always a very active one.

“The Lord led me to my wife and she led me to Christ, so now ... I can serve the Church as a deacon,” he said.

Years ago, Mozo and his wife had assisted a community of religious sisters. On the last day of the couples’ work, the mother superior asked about his openness to becoming a deacon.

For Mozo, it felt like he had just received a “clear call” from God. But he responded with what he described as an “immature and confused” answer: No. At the time, he was reluctant to “enslave” himself to Church life.

Three years later, when he was actually inclined to say yes, he wasn’t admitted to the program. He spent eight years as coordinator of a parish ministry before re-applying and being accepted.

Mozo praises God for the delay, explaining that God needed him to work on aspects of himself first to be “free to respond to His mystery and call.”

Mozo, who has worked in the environmental health and safety field since 1997, also saw a silver lining to the COVID-related disruptions to his formation.

He said, “This challenging time has prepared me to depend on God’s mercy and to always ask for His grace.”

Mozo and his wife, Beatriz, have been married for 29 years and have three children. They have been members of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in San Diego for about 18 years.



JAVIER RODRÍGUEZ | *Mater Dei Parish*

It all started at Panera Bread.

Javier Rodríguez and his wife, Laura, were enjoying a nice cup of coffee at the restaurant after Sunday Mass.

When the conversation shifted to what their life would be like after he retired, Rodríguez joked, “Hey, could you imagine me as a deacon?”

Rather than bursting into laughter, his wife said she actually had a dream about it once.

About three weeks later, the couple was back at Panera. At one point, they were joined by their pastor, who asked Rodríguez a series of questions.

A week later, his pastor told him to pray about whether he was called to the diaconate.

Providentially, Rodríguez was admitted to the formation program in the final week before that year’s application period closed.

During his first year, he thought he might have to drop out after discovering that he had a serious condition that required open heart surgery. The then director of the Office for the Permanent Diaconate encouraged him to put everything in the Lord’s hands and to continue with the program.

“So, I did and here I am now, ready to receive the grace of God one more time,” he said, as he anticipates his ordination day.

Rodríguez retired in June 2019 after 30 years in information technology with the Sweetwater Union High School District.

Javier and Laura Rodríguez have been married for 26 years and have two children. They have been members of Mater Dei Parish in Chula Vista for 16 years.



**The liturgy will be livestreamed at 10 a.m. at
sdcatholic.org/newdeacons2021.**

Deacon Is Ready for Joyous Priestly Ordination

By Denis Grasska



Daniel Holgren, who will be ordained to the priesthood on June 11, knows that ordinations during pandemics are not without their challenges.

This will be his second ordination since the emergence of the novel coronavirus. He was ordained to the transitional diaconate, a major step on the path to priesthood, last October. By that time, the pandemic was already in full swing.

After five years of discernment and study, the 35-year-old deacon would have preferred if his long-awaited priestly ordination had arrived free of COVID-related restrictions. But having to make due with such safety measures has been a teachable moment.

"Being ordained to the priesthood in this time of pandemic really shows me that everything is in God's timing and for His purpose," said Deacon Holgren, who has been ministering at Our Lady of Grace Parish in El Cajon while completing his theological studies online.

"The need for a priest — and, really, every person — to be ready for the unexpected is a key component of the pandemic," he continued. "But the unexpected difficulties of life are never faced alone, because God is always with us and waiting to help us."

Deacon Holgren noted that loosened restrictions mean that the number of



PATH TO PRIESTHOOD: Bishop Robert McElroy ordained Daniel Holgren to the transitional diaconate on Oct. 2, 2020. Holgren will be ordained to the priesthood on June 11.

people physically present for his priestly ordination can exceed the 100-person limit that had been imposed at his diaconal ordination Mass. There are also plans to livestream the liturgy.

While a packed church and a singing congregation might have better reflected the local Church's joy at receiving a new priest, Deacon Holgren said, such restrictions will not stifle the moment.

"The joy of an ordination really is about the priest giving hope to the peo-

ple and living out his vocation well," he said. "Despite the restrictions and difficulties, all of the things that matter will still take place. In the end, it is less about this singular day and more about how I live out my ordination and do my part in God's plan of saving souls."

St. Michael's Parish in Poway, where the ordination will take place, is Deacon Holgren's home parish.

In an interview last year after his ordination to the transitional diaconate,

he shared his vocation story with *The Southern Cross*.

Deacon Holgren, whose father has served the diocese as a permanent deacon since 2009, was drawn to the priesthood because he saw it as a vehicle "to give of myself and help others in a tangible way." He had already been doing that to some extent for four years as a paramedic. But, after turning 30, he recognized that he wasn't "totally fulfilled" in his work and opened himself up to the possibility of a priestly vocation. He quit his job in December 2015 and entered the seminary the following month.

He said the past seven months as a transitional deacon have provided him with invaluable parish-based experience that will help him to be a better priest. But between now and then, there's still the small matter of his ordination day.

"As I get closer to the event, I get more excited," he said, "but my nerves also are increasing. Ordination is a culmination of a lot of work, a lot of prayers, and a lot of time invested, not just for me but for all the people in my life. ... I am looking forward to finally living out the call to the priesthood."

The priestly ordination of Daniel Holgren will be livestreamed on June 11, at 4 p.m., at sdcatholic.org/ordination2021.



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-John Coughlin, 95 years old

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The **Perpetual Light Society** honors our legacy donors who have named the **Catholic Community Foundation of San Diego** and Catholic organizations as beneficiaries in their Estate Plan, retirement account, charitable gift annuity or life insurance policy.

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Bishop Named to Leading Vatican Agency

By Christopher White



NEW YORK — As U.S. President Joe Biden prepares to name his new ambassador to the Holy See, policy experts have encouraged the next Vatican ambassador to work closely with the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

San Diego's Bishop Robert McElroy, who was recently appointed by Pope Francis as one of five American board members to that Vatican office, says he "absolutely" agrees with that advice and believes one initial and significant area of potential collaboration would be vaccine distribution.

Equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine has been a "tremendous concern" on the part of the dicastery, he noted, which is working with the scientific and medical communities to ensure that vaccine access is not limited to wealthy nations.

Vaccine distribution is just one of many concerns that fall to the dicastery, whose competencies include areas of migration, combating human trafficking, promoting peace and economic security, and the fight against climate change.

In his 2015 letter "Laudato Si, on Care for Our Common Home," Pope Francis writes of these concerns and



NEW APPOINTMENT: Bishop Robert McElroy greets worshippers after the Earth Week Mass April 17 at St. James Church. The bishop was appointed to the Vatican office that addresses climate change.

concludes, "Everything is interconnected." That encyclical now serves as the blueprint for the Vatican's dicastery tasked with promoting integral development.

"The dicastery has a very rich and widespread tapestry of initiatives and outreach," said Bishop McElroy, noting that he has been involved in a number of its initiatives in recent years, specifically on issues related to migration and questions of war and peace.

In 2016, Pope Francis announced the formation of the new dicastery, which combined four different offices: the Pontifical Councils for Justice

and Peace, for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, for the Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers, and for human and Christian development, known as Cor Unum. The new office is led by Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson.

McElroy points to the October 2020 Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon region where he was a participant as an example of how seeing the interconnectedness of issues offers a model for the Church to move forward in addressing the multifaceted challenges confronting both it and the world.

As one of only three U.S. bishops

who took part in the Amazon synod, McElroy told *The National Catholic Reporter* that it was heartening to see how Catholic leaders from around the world see combating climate change as an urgent priority.

Yet at home, the U.S. Church's overall response to climate change has been criticized for lacking the necessary zeal to combat its major threats, and Bishop McElroy says he would like to see the U.S. Church be more willing to "speak to the truth on climate change."

"It'd be very important for the Church at all levels in the United States to begin making clear where the truth of science points us," he said, noting that it's time to push back against climate deniers.

Bishop McElroy, however, says that tackling climate change also means standing with young people, many of them who already recognize the existential threats climate change poses to the planet.

The Church, he said, must "help parents see it through the eyes of their children."

"Not only because that's the prism that can touch a parent's heart but also, that's the prism which reveals that this is really for the next generations, and an incredibly powerful element of what their world will be like that we can help shape now."

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50 Years of Seeking Solutions to Poverty

By Denis Grasska



At a recent presentation to diocesan

seminarians, Dr. Robert Ehn timer asked for a show of hands of how many were familiar with the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD).

Not one of the 17 seminarians raised his hand, recalled Ehn timer, who serves as the diocese's CCHD director.

That response shows that Ehn timer has his work cut out for him when it comes to acquainting local Catholics with CCHD, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' domestic anti-poverty program, celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

But Ehn timer, who is also the director of the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, can take solace in the fact that he wasn't always such a strong advocate for the program, either.

"When I was asked to be the campaign director for the diocese (in August 2018), I had no idea what it was," said Ehn timer.

The program exists to address the root causes of poverty, particularly in ways that encourage low-income people to participate in that process. It accomplishes this goal primarily by awarding grants to Catholic and non-Catholic organizations whose work alleviates poverty and promotes the empowerment of disadvantaged communities.



YOUTHFUL VOICES: "Stand Up for Equality," an artwork by local Catholic school student Jazmine Haslage, was among the submissions received for the "Creating on the Margins" youth art contest.

Its funding comes mainly through an annual national collection. This year, that special collection will be held during the Nov. 20-21 weekend in the diocese.

Ehn timer said the money raised makes an impact in San Diego and Imperial counties. He noted that the diocese retains a percentage of the collected funds. Additionally, the grant monies provided by CCHD to organizations and parishes address systemic poverty in the region.

"It's really an investment in our communities," Ehn timer said.

The Restorative Justice Mediation Program, which facilitates dialogue

between crime victims and offenders, is among the local grant recipients. The program has received funding for about seven years. It was awarded \$60,000 last year and \$45,000 this year.

"I'm just really grateful for a (program) like CCHD that recognizes the drivers or the causes of systemic poverty and is really looking for real solutions," said Ian Ragsdale, executive director of the Restorative Justice Mediation Program.

With the grant money, Ragsdale said, the nonprofit has been able to create more diversity on its board of directors, so that board members bet-

ter reflect the populations the organization serves.

Last October, the Office for Life, Peace and Justice received a \$5,000 grant to help raise awareness of CCHD in honor of its 50th anniversary.

A portion of those funds were used to host the informational presentation for seminarians, which included dinner, in late April.

Funds were also used to provide cash prizes — \$500 for first place, \$375 for second place, and \$250 for third place — for the diocesan winners of a recent CCHD youth art/essay contest called "Creating on the Margins." The contest was co-sponsored by the Office for Life, Peace and Justice and the Office for Schools. In March, from among more than 35 entries, three winners each were selected at the middle-school and high-school levels.

Madelyn Bass, a senior at the University of San Diego who was serving as a CCHD intern for the Diocese of San Diego, spearheaded the contest.

Bass said the contest was "a really great way" to help the young participants "to understand CCHD and how it is working actively in the Church and in our community."

Learn more about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development at povertyusa.org.



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FILM FAMILY: Mel Gibson, Mark Wahlberg, Owen Wilder Vaccaro and Will Ferrell star in a scene from "Daddy's Home 2." Wahlberg and Gibson will re-team for "Stu," an upcoming film about Father Stuart Long, a onetime boxer who became a priest and died in 2014.

Wahlberg, Gibson Begin New Film on Priest's Life

By Mark Pattison

WASHINGTON — Filming has begun on "Stu," which tells the story of Father Stuart Long, a onetime boxer who became a priest and died in 2014.

Catholic actors Mark Wahlberg and Mel Gibson star in the project, Wahlberg as the priest and Gibson as his father. *Variety*, a show business magazine, reported Wahlberg has added a lot of weight to play the role.

Gibson's girlfriend, Rosalind Ross, wrote the script — she's written two other films in the past decade — and is directing her first feature film. Wahlberg is listed as one of the producers of the movie, which has no release date set.

"Stu" also features Mexican actress Teresa Ruiz, best known for her work as Isabella in "Narcos: Mexico," and veteran Australian actress Jacki Weaver, known for her role as Bradley Cooper's mother and Robert De Niro's wife in the 2012 film "Silver Linings Playbook."

It's not the first time Wahlberg and Gibson have appeared together on screen. In the 2017 comedy "Daddy's Home 2," Wahlberg reprised his role as Dusty from the original, and Gibson played his father — the same relationship to be depicted in "Stu."

Father Long attended Catholic schools but alienated teachers and students alike as he turned away from the faith. While attending a Catholic college, he found a release in boxing. When that proved unsuccessful, he went to Hollywood to try his hand in the movie industry. That, too, wasn't panning out when one day, his motorcycle was hit by one car and he was run over by a second vehicle.

While he was in the hospital, he rediscovered his faith and set out to pursue the priesthood, going to Benedictine-run Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon. He was soon diagnosed with a rare degenerative muscle disease. At the time of his ordination, Father Long was using crutches. Eventually, he ministered in Montana using a motorized wheelchair.

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Franciscan Friar Offers 'Habits for Holiness'

By Catholic News Service

BRONX, N.Y. — Founded in 1987 in the South

Bronx, the Community of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal emphasizes material poverty, contemplative prayer, evangelical preaching and care of the very poor.

In addition to a daily hour of personal prayer, the gray-frosted friars come together five times a day for communal prayer. The friars say the strength and spiritual courage they need to carry out their charitable work stems directly from those quiet moments with the Lord, especially in the Eucharist.

A desire to share the rhythm of the friars' life — the cadence of prayer and work, work and prayer — led the community's director of communications, Father Mark-Mary Ames, to write a book distilling the pillars of their religious life into principles that others could integrate into their daily routines.

In *Habits for Holiness: Small Steps for Making Big Spiritual Progress*, Father Mark-Mary explains these pillars: prayer, fraternal life, evangelization and service to the poor.

He takes 800 years of Franciscan spiritual wisdom and extracts "small steps" that he said can lead anyone — especially laypeople — to holiness.

The priest is well known as the host of his religious community's videos on Ascension Presents, which is the second-largest Catholic YouTube Channel in English.

In *Habits for Holiness*, his first book with Ascension, Father Mark-Mary encourages readers to establish a dedicated prayer time and advises, "The more you have to do, the more important it is to pray."

"Prayer is efficient because holiness is efficient," he emphasizes. "Sin, on the other hand, is radically inefficient."

"Think about how much work and stress we have to put into anxiety, whether it's from confusion or tension within our relationships or from wounds caused by our personal sins or the sins of another," he says.

"Sin costs us a lot of time. Holiness, however, leads to peace, tranquility, clarity, truth and unity. And if we persevere in prayer and grow in holiness, that time in prayer will actually bear fruit in the long run."

Few are called to live in the South Bronx serving the area's neediest residents. But with *Habits for Holiness*, the spiritual pillars on which the friars' lifestyle is based can become part of any individual or family routine — gray habits optional.

More about the Community of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal can be found at www.franciscanfriars.com. *Habits for Holiness* is available at www.AscensionPress.com/Habits.



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The Perez family has a loving legacy with the Mission Cemetery. With six family members interred at the cemetery, they have used all different levels of services from casket burial to cremation interments.

"I've had a full church Mass in the historic church, a gathering in the cemetery chapel and a blessing of cremains at the niche. The caring and knowledgeable staff guided me through every detail, and having made these arrangements ahead of time made the grieving process less stressful.

I love how peaceful it is there, hearing the Mission bells ring, as I visit my family members." - Denise Perez

Our experienced, sensitive Cemetery Staff is here to support you. If you need guidance to begin pre-planning, or have immediate burial questions, call (760) 231-8445 to speak with an associate. (Hablamos Español)

Tours of the grounds are available upon request.

News Briefs

'Buddies' Needed for Special Needs Camp

Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center is recruiting "Special Needs Buddies" for its annual Special Needs Family Camp.

The weekend camp experience is designed for families who have children of any age with special needs. It will be held on the Whispering Winds campgrounds in the Julian mountains, beginning at 1 p.m., Friday, July 30, and ending at 5 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 1.

Each camper with special needs is paired one-on-one with a Special Needs Buddy, an adult volunteer who accompanies that camper throughout all of the planned weekend activities.

Buddies need no prior experience with children or adults with special needs. There will be a mandatory training meeting at a date and location yet to be determined.

The Special Needs Buddy experience includes single-sex lodging for three days and two nights, six meals plus snacks, and a Buddy T-shirt. Buddies must provide their own transportation to and from the camp site and are invited to make a tax-deductible donation of \$50 to Whispering Winds or to collect that amount through sponsors to help offset the cost of food.

For more information, contact Katie Gange at katieg@whisperingwinds.org. Additional details and an application form are available at www.whisperingwinds.org/camps-retreats/special-needs-family-camp/special-needs-family-camp-volunteer-opportunities.

Informational Sessions Offered on Prison Ministry

In the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus exhorts His followers to welcome the stranger, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the prisoner.

For those who feel called to visit the imprisoned, the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice will be hosting an informational session about prison/jail ministry on Tuesday, June 15, at the diocesan Pastoral Center.

Two identical sessions will be offered — one from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and another from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Dr. Bobby Ehn timer at (858) 490-8375 or rehnow@sdcatholic.org.

YCP Set to Re-Launch

After a hiatus amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the San Diego chapter of Young Catholic Professionals (YCP) is planning a "re-launch."

The free event will be held from 7 to 9 p.m., Tuesday, June 8, at St. Therese of Carmel Parish in Carmel Valley. Eucharistic adoration will be available in the church from 5 to 8 p.m., and a priest will be available in the parish hall to hear confessions starting at 6:30 p.m.

All young adult professionals in their 20s and 30s are welcome to attend. There will be time for socializing and networking, beginning at 7 p.m. Father Corey Tufford, YCP San



Honoring Our Lady

Catholic Action for Faith and Family, a locally based apostolate, joined forces with Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Rancho Peñasquitos to organize a Marian Holy Hour and May Crowning on May 13.

The event commemorated the 104th anniversary of the Blessed Virgin Mary's first appearance to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, on May 13, 1917.

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano presided over the event, which began with a procession with a replica of the International Pilgrim Virgin statue. Later, a crown of flowers was placed atop the statue's head.

Participants prayed the rosary and recited Our Lady's Litany, and Marian hymns were sung throughout. Bishop Bejarano blessed the congregation with a reliquary containing first-class relics of Sts. Jacinta and Francisco Marto, two of the visionaries to whom Our Lady appeared at Fatima.

A recording of the event can be viewed at https://www.catholicaction.org/_may_crowning_ceremony_2021_live.

Diego's chaplain, will provide a prayer and short reflection. YCP San Diego Board Chair Cort Peters will share a vision for the chapter's future and extend an invitation to be part of its leadership team.

Before the COVID era, YCP San Diego had hosted a monthly Executive Speaker Series, at which a Catholic speaker would reflect on his or her faith and career, as well as bi-annual half-day retreats and quarterly networking happy hours.

For more information, visit www.ycpsandiego.org or email info@ycpsandiego.org.

Priest Assignments

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

Father Gerardo Gómez-Zapien, formerly from the Diocese of Morelia, Mexico, was incardinated into the Diocese of San Diego on April 23.

The following priest assignments are effective July 1:

Father Don Coleman as sacramental and spiritual leader at The Church of St. Luke, El Cajon

Father Timothy Deutsch as pastor of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Julian, and Santa Ysabel Indian Mission, Santa Ysabel

Father Minh Do in residence at Our Lady of Grace Parish, El Cajon

Father David Exner as pastor of Queen of Angels Parish, Alpine

Father Ricardo Frausto as pastor of Our Lady of Angels, San Diego

Father William Kernan as pastor of St. Margaret Parish, Oceanside

Father Andrew Kunambi as associate pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Vista

Father Michael O'Connor as associate pastor of St. John of the Cross Parish, Lemon Grove

Father Samuel Offurum as associate pastor of Corpus Christi Parish, Bonita

Father Agustin Opalalic as pastor of Church of the Nativity Parish, Rancho Santa Fe

Father Claro Ortiz as associate pastor of Sacred Heart and St. Margaret Mary parishes, Brawley

Father Rogelio Pingol as associate pastor of St. Mary, National City

Father Romeo Velos, CS, as pastor of St. Agnes Parish, San Diego

Father Cavana Wallace as pastor of St. Therese Parish, San Diego



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Dip Into This Well to Finally Quench Your Thirst

When everything is working fine, we don't feel our "needs." When the desert heat intensifies, we become aware of the need for water, we feel what thirst is.

The theme of "thirst" is a recurring one on the road to human and spiritual growth:

"For You, my body yearns; for You, my soul thirsts, in a land parched, lifeless, and without water" (Psalms 63:2).

We share the universal thirst for meaning and transcendence with all human beings who, consciously or unconsciously, seek to satiate it. The distinct religions search and offer paths to quell that universal thirst, each one in their own way and in their own cultural traditions. Thirst for happiness, thirst for meaning, thirst for peace and harmony ... The Spirit propels us, keeps us restless, and calls everyone to satiate the thirst for the absolute mystery that marks our existence.

Distances, barriers and the isolation of these times have given us a greater thirst for hugs, for gatherings, a thirst to see and touch one another. These are intense times for thirst.

In the well of our Christian tradition, we find clues to how to quell it.

When Jesus, tired of walking, sits

Associate Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality

Ricardo
Márquez



next to a well with a Samaritan woman, He gives us a new significance of water and thirst (John 4:5-26). The material and divine planes combine in this dialogue, the water from the well and the water of life. The Samaritan represents all of us in search for the water of life, for happiness and for relief from suffering.

Jesus identifies with the water of life, the one that quells our thirst if imbibed. Jesus offered her this water, and in doing so broke down the barriers of discrimination, understanding her suffering and treating her with respect and compassion. That is the universal yearning that we all carry within us, to be loved and respected.

It's significant that at the end of the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse (Rev 22:17), the theme of thirst emerges once more: "Let the one who thirsts come forward, and the one who wants it receive the gift of life-giving water." It's an invitation to drink freely from Jesus' message and life.

We spend years looking to quell the thirst in our soul with "material" waters from different wells, with the



hope that the more we collect and store, the less thirsty we will be. But the soul remains parched and thirsty because we have not approached to receive the water being offered to us that flows freely ... water that is fresh, simple:

"Love one another, as I love you" (John 15:12).

Lord, give me Your water to drink!

Ricardo Márquez, PhD, is associate director of the Office for Family Life & Spirituality at the Diocese of San Diego. He may be reached at rmarquez@sdccatholic.org.

Read more columns at
thesoutherncross.org/
perspectives.



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IN LOVING
Memory

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

Albertina Rivera-Franco	02/01/2021	Goodbody Mortuary
Joseph Duong Nguyen	02/02/2021	Good Shepherd Church
Lupe M. Garcia	02/06/2021	St. Rita
Robert Alfred Londo	02/09/2021	St. Patrick
Louis Joseph Canedo	02/08/2021	Goodbody Mortuary
Guadalupe Guerrero Jr.	02/15/2021	Goodbody Mortuary
An Thai Nguyen	02/17/2021	Good Shepherd Church
Ann V. Emerson King	02/22/2021	St. Patrick
Bac Tran	02/25/2021	Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
Elisa Margarita Jarmer	03/16/2021	St. Didacus
Aurora Pili Escano	03/11/2021	Goodbody Mortuary
Yuvath Yin	03/24/2021	Blessed Sacrament Church

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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,



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.



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.

“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. AC01693, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

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



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