

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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WELCOME BACK! A volunteer at Corpus Christi Church in Bonita, Don Beckman, greeted a parishioner before the 9 a.m. Sunday Mass on June 20. The faithful at parishes across the diocese embraced the lifting of physical distance, capacity and mask-wearing restrictions implemented during the pandemic.



Dream Job

Marlena Conroy dreamt of being Cathedral Catholic's principal someday – and now she is. **Page 4**



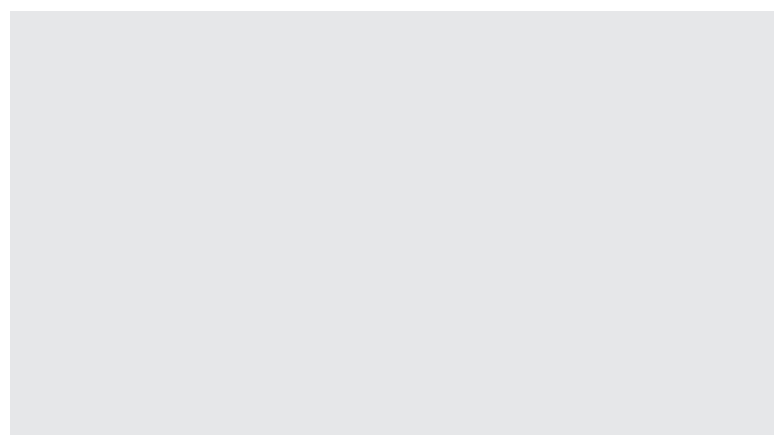
First Fridays

Culture of Life Family Services invites young adults to "First Fridays for Life." **Page 7**



Part of the Plan

Couple shares how Natural Family Planning strengthens marriage. **Page 10**



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THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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

MORE FOR YOU

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



To Bless and Serve

Eight men were ordained as permanent deacons for the Diocese of San Diego during a Mass celebrated June 12 at St. Therese of Carmel Parish in Carmel Valley.

The diocese's new deacons are: Dominic Guzzardo (St. Gregory the Great Parish, Scripps Ranch), David Hall (All Hallows Parish, La Jolla), Andy C. Jazmin (St. Charles Parish, Imperial Beach), Tim Keane (St. Thomas More Parish, Oceanside), Patrick McCay (St. Brigid Parish, Pacific Beach), Javier Mozo (Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Barrio Logan), José Oscar Paredes (Corpus Christi Parish, Bonita) and Javier Rodríguez (Mater Dei Parish, Chula Vista). Pictured, clockwise from left, are Deacon Hall, Deacon Keane, Deacon Guzzardo, Deacon McCay, Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan, Bishop Robert McElroy, Deacon Paredes, Jesuit Father Eddie Samaniego (director of the diocesan Office for the Permanent Diaconate), Deacon Rodríguez, Deacon Jazmin and Deacon Mozo.

Court Victory for Religious Liberty

By Matthew Gambino



PHILADELPHIA — As a consequence of the U.S. Supreme

Court's recent unanimous ruling, faith-based and other agencies across the country may not be forced by a government agency to violate their deeply held beliefs against placing children in households led by same-sex or cohabitating adults.

In a decision seen as a victory for religious freedom in the United States, the court ruled in *Fulton v. Philadelphia* that the city acted improperly and violated the Church's First Amendment rights when it ceased referring foster children to Catholic Social Services (CSS) of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia three years ago because of the agency's practice of not placing children in same-sex households.

Philadelphia Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez said the ruling was a victory for at-risk children and he noted the contributions of "foster parents who give of themselves freely."

Because of the court's ruling, the archdiocese can continue serving those in need, and it protects "our enshrined right to religious freedom and celebrates the rich diversity of religious beliefs in the United States," he said.

"Religious ministries," he concluded,



PICTURE PERFECT: On June 17, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that a Catholic social service agency should not have been excluded from a foster care program.

ed, "cannot be forced to abandon their beliefs as the price for ministering to those in need. We can all live and work peacefully, side-by-side, to create a better and brighter future for all of our children."

CSS traditionally had chosen not to refer at-risk foster children identified by the city of Philadelphia to same-sex households, and instead passed the referrals to another approved agency, which could place children in such homes.

The practice of deferring the city's placements if the households were deemed contrary to Catholic teaching on marriage had been standard practice between CSS and Philadelphia's Department of Human Services for decades.

But in 2018, that department, after calling on the public to open more homes to meet an acute need for loving homes for children, ceased all

referrals to CSS, effectively shutting it out of foster care.

CSS and three women caregivers, supported by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, sued the city over that decision. They lost in a U.S. District Court ruling that year, as well as a federal appeals court ruling one year later.

The agency then appealed to the high court, resulting in the decision the morning of June 17.

Soon after the 9-0 ruling was announced, Archbishop Pérez in a conference call with media called the court's decision "a profound one that rings loudly in Philadelphia and reverberates throughout the country."

At the time the city excluded CSS, it was serving on average 127 foster children a day in more than 100 homes in Philadelphia.

Catholic News Service



ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY PARISH

RON CLEMENTE

Catholic Community with Anglican Heritage Takes Root

TRADITION: Masses at St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish are celebrated, like the pre-Vatican II Latin Mass, with the priest and the people facing the same direction.

By Denis Grasska



Father Sam Keyes is parochial administrator of St. Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Church. The parish is part of, not the Diocese of San Diego, but the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

The ordinariate was established in 2012 as essentially a diocese for former Anglicans in North America who desired full communion with the Catholic Church while retaining aspects of their rich Anglican traditions. One of three such ordinariates worldwide, it is headed by Bishop Steven Lopes and based in Houston.

Father Keyes, 40, was formerly an Anglican priest. He was ordained to the Catholic priesthood on June 29 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Walsingham in Houston. He has taught theology at John Paul the Great Catholic University (also known as JP Catholic) since July 2019. With his wife, Gretchen, he has four children and another due in August.

As a newly ordained Catholic priest, Father Keyes will celebrate his first public Mass in the San Diego area at 1 p.m., July 10, at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Rancho Peñasquitos.

St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish currently holds its Sunday Masses at 10 a.m. at an outdoor venue behind JP Catholic's Student Life Center in Escondido. More information is available at staugustineofcanterbury.org.

Question: What distinguishes ordinariate parishes from other Catholic parishes?

Answer: The first thing that you're going to notice in an ordinariate parish is that we have our own distinct liturgy. Sometimes, people look at us and think it looks a lot like the Extraordinary Form (the pre-Vatican II Latin Mass), and we tend to celebrate it ceremonially very much like the Latin Mass, with the priest and people facing the same direction. But then, there are other elements that are straight out

Interview with:

Father Sam Keyes



of the newer, post-Vatican II Missal. It is in a very beautiful English, with the "thees" and "thous" and the more formal language.

Among the parishioners, you're also going to find a core membership which was originally Anglican. There's a real deep orthodoxy there. They've actively sought communion with the Catholic Church and, in many cases, made hard sacrifices to get to that place.

Our communities also tend to be smaller. Your average Anglican church is very small, and so there is an emphasis on that kind of closer community.

What is your flock like at St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish?

The original parishioners came out of St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Carlsbad and were received into the Catholic Church at a big liturgy in San Juan Capistrano.

We have about 15 registered families. The bulk of them are from North County, but we do have people who come from farther south. We have one family who comes all the way from El Cajon every week, which is a long drive.

All in all, the attendance at Sunday Mass has hovered around 60 in the last few months. We have a lot of visitors. One of the things I've always noticed is we're small, but every week, there's some new person who's just popping in to see what it's all about.

What have you found most challenging — and most exciting — about leading a fledgling parish community?

We don't have a staff. We don't have a building; we are working on an agreement with JP Catholic to inhabit their chapel building. Until recently, we didn't

even have a budget.

Those are some of the challenges. Many of those, in a way, are also exciting opportunities in that we have this chance to build something.

Most Catholic parishes are pretty large, and they have very well-established ministries. It's much easier to be anonymous at the back of the church when there are a thousand people there, and then just kind of slip out. Whereas for us, every person matters. We're building something from scratch and people have the opportunity to be involved in building that future, which I think is really exciting.

Can you share the story of your own spiritual and vocational journey?

I grew up a Southern Baptist. After going to England and stumbling into Canterbury Cathedral in the middle of Evensong (Evening Prayer service), I was just completely blown away by it. From that moment, I was drawn in that direction.

In 2006, I entered the master's program at Duke Divinity School. That was when I more formally became an Episcopalian. In the process of that study, I realized I was drawn to the priesthood.

I was ordained an Anglican priest in 2012. Even at the time, I was very much drawn to the Catholic Church. I had studied the Catechism. I didn't really find anything objectionable. Doctrinally, I was really already there. It's just that I didn't feel like I could make that leap because (as a "high church" Episcopalian) I felt like I was already Catholic.

By 2015, Gretchen and I were very well aware of the ordinariate. We found it very attractive. We had friends who were part of it, many of my priest-mentors from the Episcopal Church had already become Catholic, so it was starting to feel inevitable.

When we came into the Church in June of 2019, I had no certainty that I would be able to pursue the priesthood. I was willing to give that up, both for the sake of the unity of the Church and for the salvation of my own soul.

For those first-timers who will attend your first public Mass in San Diego on July 10, what do you hope they take away from their first ordinariate liturgy?

Pope Benedict XVI in "Anglicanorum Coetibus" (the papal document from late 2009 that established the ordinariates) spoke about our patrimony as "a treasure to be shared" with the whole of the Catholic Church.

The English tradition is really big on this combination of musical, and liturgical, and visual aesthetics. I hope people just come away thinking, "Wow! That was really beautiful."

Maybe for some, it will inspire them to come visit the ordinariate or invite their Protestant friends to it. But maybe, it's simply something that they take back to their own parish, that kind of memory of something beautiful that can expand the imagination of what the worship of God can look like.



SACRED SPACE: The altar at St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish's outdoor worship space is prepared for Mass. A statue of Our Lady of Walsingham, a title by which Mary is venerated by Catholics of English extraction, stands to the side in a place of honor.

RON CLEMENTE

High School's New Principal Is Coming 'Home'

By Denis Grasska



Marlena Conroy's new job as principal of Cathedral Catholic High School shows that dreams do come true.

When she left Cathedral Catholic in 2015, after 11 years as a teacher and administrator there, it was always with the intention of coming back. Seeking to broaden her experience in administration, she hoped to be ready when the principal position opened up at Cathedral Catholic.

And so she was.

Conroy, 46, will be the school's first female principal. Her official start date is July 1, although she began the process of meeting with faculty and staff in late May. As principal, she succeeds Dr. Kevin Calkins, who has become the school's new president.

Conroy's new job has come after perhaps the most challenging year in the history of Cathedral Catholic, a year that not only included a global pandemic and all that entailed, but also two deaths: The school's facilities assistant lost her battle to stomach cancer in late January, and a beloved teacher and coach was murdered about a week later.

In April, Cathedral Catholic faced criticism in response to social media posts by members of the varsity football team. These included a photo of the school's quarterback wearing a T-shirt with racist overtones that mocked rivals at Lincoln High School. The organization that regulates high school sports imposed a two-year probation on the team and suspended the head coach for the first two games of next season.

Conroy is confident that faculty, staff and students will overcome these challenges.

"It's a strong community of faith, and I see how that's come to play with how they have navigated and cared for one another in the loss of life that they have experienced," she said. "And, with everything that they've been navigating with Lincoln (High), they have risen above (their transgression), to say that we are better than this, that this is not who we are, this is not who we strive to be."

Conroy plans to lead the school's healing.

"I call on my faith to give me strength to lead this school well ... into a post-pandemic and post-tragic year," said Conroy, whose Catholic faith has carried her through challenges and difficulties of her own. She is a breast cancer survivor, having been diagnosed in February 2020.

As principal, she sees her role as being "the faith leader of this school."

But Conroy, a member of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Encinitas since 2007, didn't always have such a strong faith. She attended Catholic school from kindergarten through



HOMEcoming: Marlena Conroy, a teacher and administrator formerly at Cathedral Catholic High School, has returned to the school as its first female principal.

sixth grade, but had a distorted perception of God as angry and punitive, she said. She walked away from the faith during her teenage and college years.

While in college, a drunk driver crashed into her car. After surviving that ordeal, she visited a Catholic church, where she felt God's presence, His love and a sense of belonging, she said. She returned to practicing her Catholic faith.

She was born in San Diego to a Nicaraguan mother and a Canadian father. After her graduation in 1997 from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Conroy worked for the nonprofit Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). In her work, she interacted with middle school and high school students, sparking an interest in teaching.

She was a middle school teacher at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, since closed, from 2002 to 2004.

"What drew me to education in the first place was the love of walking with students on their educational journey, seeing them learn, seeing them grow, being a support system for them, being a cheerleader for them," she said.

What kept her within the Catholic school system was the realization that she "could be a part of their faith journey," too.

In 2004, she accepted a teaching position at the University of San Diego High School, which in 2005 relocated to Carmel Valley, where it was rechristened Cathedral Catholic High School.

While there, Conroy made the transi-

tion from teaching to administration. In 2007, she became the assistant dean of students and, five years later, was promoted to dean of students.

In 2015, seeking to further develop as an educational administrator, Conroy accepted a position as assistant principal of curriculum and instruction at Notre Dame Academy, a neighboring Catholic elementary school in Carmel Valley.

From August 2016 until her appointment as Cathedral Catholic's principal, she served as assistant principal at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace.

"While I absolutely enjoyed my time at Notre Dame Academy and OLP, it's always almost felt like I went away to college and now I'm graduated" and "get to come home," she said of her return to Cathedral Catholic.

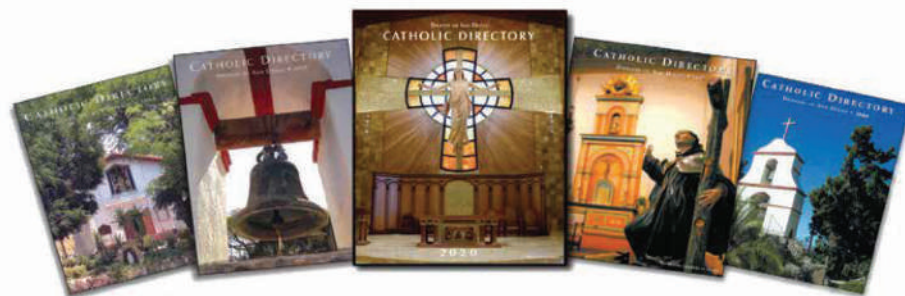
Dr. Lauren Lek, head of school at OLP, said, "Marlena Conroy has proven herself a true leader through her commitment to the mission and the growth of our students and faculty.

"We are thrilled that she will continue to support Catholic education and our diocese as she takes the helm at a fellow high school," she said. "We wish her all the best."

An extended version of this article is found at thesoutherncross.org/072104.



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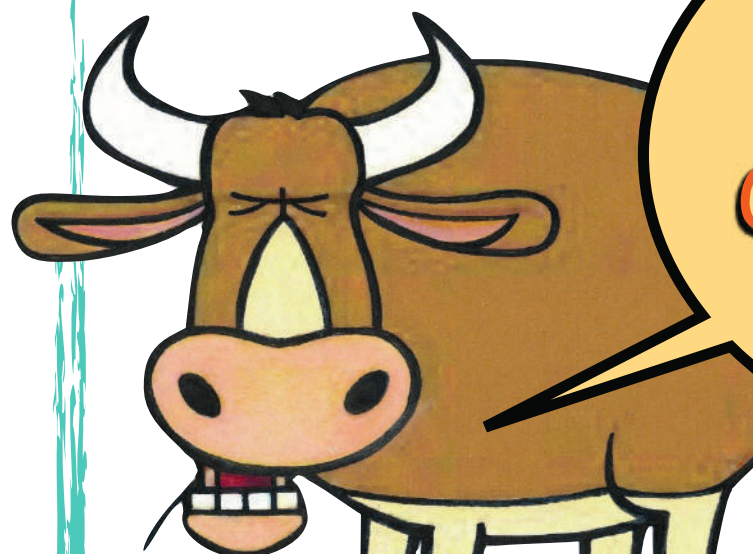


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Moving Tribute to Christianity

By The Southern Cross



Filipino Catholics are commemorating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines. Locally, they are incorporating this celebration, with its theme of "gifted to give," into their events this year and next.

In May, they collaborated on an event called "Flores de Mayo," one of their most important traditions, which includes the faithful offering flowers to the Blessed Mother.

St. Mary's Church in National City organized the May 29 event, in collaboration with the Diocesan Commission for Filipino Catholics.

The celebration began with more than 200 faithful walking in a procession through neighborhood streets. They included a diminutive king and queen, priests, and a platform on wheels bearing the image of the Blessed Mother.

Afterward, Father Michael Pham (at right) celebrated a Mass, accompanied by Father Nemesio Sungcad, St. Mary's pastor, and Father Romeo Gel Supnet, who delivered the homily.



PHOTOS BY HOWARD LIPIN

Future events to celebrate the 500th anniversary include the San Lorenzo Ruiz Fiesta on Sept. 11 at Santa Sophia Church and the Simbang Gabi Vigil Mass on Dec. 14 in a location to be announced.

More information is available at sdcatholic.org/culturaldiversity.



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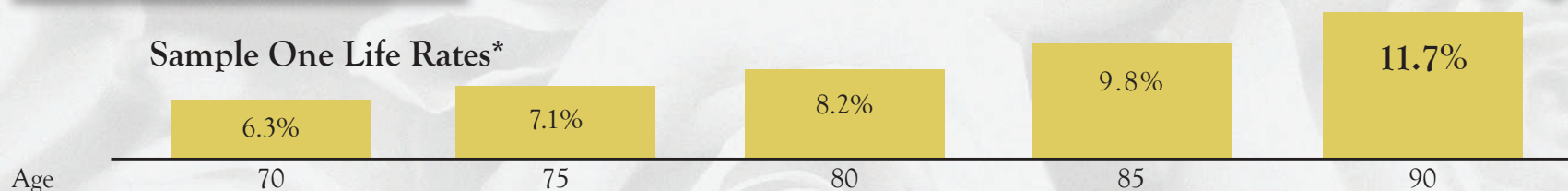
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Young Adults Share 'First Fridays for Life'

By Denis Grasska

 Culture of Life Family Services (COLFS) is engaging young adults in its pro-life mission.

The Escondido-based nonprofit, which assists women in crisis pregnancies and operates a family medicine practice guided by Catholic values, recently began hosting "First Fridays for Life."

The event is a monthly gathering for pro-life college students and twentysomethings.

"A lot of young adults are really passionate about the pro-life issue," explained Kylie Armstrong, 26, who serves as COLFS' ministry operations manager.

She expressed hope that, by cultivating a sense of community, First Fridays for Life will "empower (attendees) and embolden them to be more vocal about pro-life issues."

Armstrong also noted that crisis pregnancy patients who seek out COLFS' services are often young adults themselves. This means that First Fridays for Life attendees may find themselves in a situation to recommend COLFS as a resource to pregnant peers.

The organization launched First Fridays for Life in April. Armstrong didn't know what the turnout would be like for that first meeting. But she was gratified when about 15 young adults attended. The event included



TOGETHER FOR LIFE: Participants in Culture of Life Family Services' inaugural "First Fridays for Life" in April pose for a group photo. The monthly gathering brings together pro-life college students and twentysomethings.

pizza and snacks, an introduction to COLFS and its services, and discussion on an array of pro-life issues.

Armstrong said of the participants, "They just had this hunger. They want to know more and they want to share truth with the people that they know."

First Fridays for Life is held at 1 p.m. at COLFS' offices in Escondido, located at 362 W. Mission Ave., Ste. 105. The event runs for about 90 minutes. The early afternoon meeting time has proven convenient for attendees, most of whom are John Paul the Great Catholic University and San Diego State University students.

The lunch-hour timeslot was chosen partly out of a desire to hold the event during COLFS' hours of operation, Armstrong explained, "to bring people into the hustle and bustle of

what's going on in our clinic."

Lili North, the 20-year-old coordinator of a local chapter of Students for Life of America, was drawn to the initial First Friday for Life for that very reason: She wanted her group to have the opportunity to tour a crisis pregnancy center.

"A lot of them have never been to one," said North, an incoming senior at SDSU, who next year will serve as one of five national student spokespersons for Students for Life.

North recalled that the afternoon's discussion also proved to be wide-ranging.

"We were talking about culture, we were talking chastity, we were talking about bringing the pro-life movement into our communities and sharing it with other youth," she said.

For Jonathan Ramirez, a 24-year-old Business Administration major at John Paul the Great Catholic University, the abortion issue hits close to home.

"I was a sophomore in high school when I learned that (a younger sibling had died by abortion), and it broke me," he said.

Reflecting on First Fridays for Life, he said it was "great to see a lot of other young people there — people my age — and essentially there for the common goal, which was to just grow in virtue, grow in knowledge of what we can do as young Catholics" to advance the pro-life cause.

COLFS will hold its 12th Annual Gala on Sept. 4. Details: Visit friendsofcolfs.org.



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WELCOME: San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy lifted virtually all COVID-19 restrictions on June 17. Two days later, he celebrated the Juneteenth Freedom Mass at St. Rita's Church on June 19 with, left to right, Deacons Robert Booth and Marvin Threalt and Father Dominic Obour.

By The Southern Cross



After 15 months of the COVID-19 pandemic, a return to normalcy has come to the Diocese of San Diego.

Bishop Robert McElroy announced “with a profound sense of joy, hope and gratitude” on June 17 that, effective immediately, all restrictions on worship and all limitations on meetings and social activities had been lifted at San Diego and Imperial county parishes.

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation, which has been in effect since March 2020, will end on July 1.

The majority of Mass-goers continued to wear their masks during Mass on the first weekend after the restrictions were dropped, many just learning about the change from their pastor. Many greeted the news with joy.

Lissa Hutcheson, a member of Our Lady of Grace Parish in El Cajon, reflected on what it means to see fellow parishioners’ unmasked faces at Mass.

“It feels different, lighter, more joyful,” she said after the Saturday vigil Mass on June 19.

For Hutcheson’s husband, Todd, it was especially poignant to see the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion without facial coverings.

“You can see the joy in their face when they’re administering Christ,” he said, “and then we get to smile back at them.”

Masks are now optional, though the bishop noted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommendation that masks still be worn by those who are not fully vaccinated.

Parishioners once again have the option of receiving Communion on the tongue, as well as in the hand. The reception of Communion in the form of the Precious Blood will be reintro-

duced at a yet-to-be-determined date.

Bishop McElroy said students at Catholic schools, as well as children under age 14 who are enrolled in religious education and sacramental preparation programs at parishes, should continue to wear masks. He also recommended that non-family members who bring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound be vaccinated.

Other COVID safety measures, including the removal of holy water from fonts, can now be reversed at the discretion of individual pastors.

Jesús and Leticia López have been parishioners at St. Joseph Cathedral for 26 years. On June 20, they attended the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass and heard that the bishop had lifted the restrictions.

How did they feel about it?

“Liberated,” answered Jesús López. “We understand why the rules were put in place. Life always presents us with challenges. The question is how we respond to them.”

The couple did not hesitate to answer what they had missed the most during the COVID-19 restrictions.

“Something fundamental to us is being able to receive Communion (on the tongue),” Leticia said. “Today, I asked the minister about it, and he said that it was permitted once more. It was exciting.”

For Bonnie Sardo, a member of Santa Sophia Parish in Spring Valley, the most meaningful change was the lifting of the social distancing requirements — originally 6 feet and, more recently, 3 feet between parishioners who are not of the same household.

“That distancing was uncomfortable,” she said. “We’re hugging people now. It’s wonderful. We need that human contact, that closeness.”

The Gospel Choir sang at the Juneteenth Freedom Mass on June 19 at St. Rita’s Parish in San Diego. It was the first time the 11-member

ONLINE

• The restrictions

Bishop McElroy lifted:
[sdcatholic.org/masses](https://www.sdcatholic.org/masses)

• The dispensation from Sunday Mass ends

July 1: [sdcatholic.org/dispensation](https://www.sdcatholic.org/dispensation)

• Information about where to get the COVID vaccines:

[sdcatholic.org/vaccine](https://www.sdcatholic.org/vaccine)

choir had sung at the church since March 2020.

The choirmaster, Randy Glover, described what it was like to be performing again: “Exhilarating.”

He said the choir members told him singing at the Mass was special.

“Man, it’s good to be back,” they told him.

After the Saturday evening Mass on June 19, Santa Sophia parishioner Chris Cross expressed his appreciation for “the added freedom” of being able to worship without masks, describing it as “a blessing.”

“I think most people that wanted to get vaccinated have now had the opportunity to get vaccinated,” he said, “and we’re looking forward to life returning to normal, and that includes church.”

Cross’ wife, Bunty, said she was “very comfortable” at Mass.

“I’m very happy that I’m not sitting

Continued on Page 9



PERSONAL TOUCH: Faithful greeted Father Claro Ortiz, associate pastor, after Sunday Mass on June 20 at Corpus Christi Church.

Continued from Page 8

in a hot parking lot in 90-degree heat with a mask over my face, and I can see everybody's beautiful smiles," she said.

The lifting of the restrictions couldn't have come at a better time for the couple, whose oldest daughter will be getting married at Mary Star of the Sea Parish in La Jolla in early July, inside the church and without a requirement to wear masks.

Also attending the Saturday vigil Mass at Santa Sophia Parish were Raymond and Gloria Fiedler. Gloria was wearing her mask, while Raymond's was tucked away in his shirt pocket.

Gloria explained her reason for wearing a mask, saying that she felt "paranoid" about the vaccination status of fellow parishioners.

"It's something that I have to get over," she said, "and I did pretty good today."

But, despite having taken off his own mask, Raymond said he is still exercising caution and "staying not too close to other people."

That Saturday evening liturgy marked the Fiedlers' third week back at their parish church after having spent much of the pandemic watching televised Masses. The difference was striking.

"I feel it more in my heart," Raymond said of in-person attendance. "I feel more related to God than I did on the television, and it really feels good in my heart that I'm back in church and serving God the way I should



HOME COMING: The St. Rita Gospel Choir, led by Randy Glover, sang for the first time inside their church in 15 months at the Juneteenth Mass.

serve Him."

He would like to see more people coming back.

At Our Lady of Grace, the Hutchersons have similar hopes.

"My hope is that the community will come back in force and that everyone will feel comfortable, feel at peace here with the Lord," said Lissa, "that they would not have any anxiety, but just let all of that go and just know that this is a place where they belong."

Imperial County health authorities lifted most restrictions in public settings starting on June 15 to align with the state's reopening plan.

As in San Diego, many faithful at-

tending the next weekend's Masses began to learn that Bishop McElroy had ended virtually all restrictions.

There's no doubt how Mass-goers at the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass on June 20 at St. Anthony of Padua in Imperial felt when Father Alex Aquino announced the news, adding the following detail: "Mass will resume in the church next week."

Congregants broke into applause, and some exclaimed, "Amen!"

They had been attending Sunday Mass at the parish hall for about six weeks given that temperatures were too hot outside for outdoor services.

A sampling of voices from across the Valley revealed mixed feelings about the lifting of restrictions, with most saying they looked forward to returning to some semblance of normal.

"With the videos and stuff, you didn't feel like (you were) really going to Mass; it felt like some sort of limitation to your spiritual (well) being," said Francesca Mallillin, a 20-year-old parishioner of St. Anthony of Padua.

She said reading the Bible on her own and praying daily rosaries with her family kept her connected to her faith throughout the pandemic shutdowns of 2020, but it wasn't the same as being able to attend Mass in person.

"I think just seeing people outside interacting with Father on Sundays (and) just hearing music during Mass, because we haven't had that for a whole year, that's what I missed the most," she said.

These things "bring life to the Church, so yeah that's what I'm most excited about" returning, she said.

Isidro Cuen, a parishioner of Sacred Heart Mission in Heber, returned to in-person Mass about two months ago.

"I think people are starting to get more confident now even though some people are still a little bit afraid of coming to Mass," he said. "But if you're fully vaccinated I think you're safe to come back to Mass. That's one of the things that made me come back."

He said that the thing he missed the most was the Body and Blood of Christ. "For me, that's the peak of my faith. And I really hope to see more people coming back. We need the spiritual food.

"Don't be afraid," he advised his fellow faithful. "Like in the words of St. John Paul II echoing Christ, 'Don't be afraid. Come back.'"

Southern Cross writers
Denis Grasska, Aida Bustos and
Roman Flores contributed
to this report.



FACE TIME: Two faithful who attended the Juneteenth Mass took different approaches to the current state of the pandemic.



RITE MOMENT: Deacon Marvin Threatt distributed Holy Communion at the Juneteenth Mass.

Couple Says NFP Strengthens Marriage

By Denis Grasska



While they were preparing for marriage, Erica and Chris Rossio dutifully attended Natural Family Planning (NFP) classes.

As practicing Catholics, they knew the Church considers artificial contraception to be gravely sinful. So, that was off the table. But they were also aware that the Church didn't require them to leave future pregnancies entirely to chance.

NFP is a Church-approved approach to family planning that involves tracking the fertile and infertile phases in a woman's menstrual cycle. It can be used either to achieve pregnancy or, if the couple has serious reasons for doing so, to avoid pregnancy.

Despite their commitment to practicing NFP, some methods of which purport to be around 99-percent effective, Erica and Chris were initially skeptical that it worked. But firsthand experience soon made believers out of them.

The couple successfully used NFP in the first few months of their marriage to avoid pregnancy. Then, changing tack and using it to conceive a child, they quickly found themselves expecting. They now have two daughters, 4-year-old Cece-lia and 4-month-old Kolbe.

"Somebody needs to be talking about (NFP), shouting it from the rooftops," said Erica, 32.

It was that conviction that inspired her and Chris, also 32, to become NFP instructors for the Diocese of San Diego about four years ago.

"I don't think that we went through the (diocesan marriage preparation program) thinking, 'Yeah, one day, we're going to be those guys up there preaching this stuff,'" added Chris, who feels as if God "opened the door."

The couple attends the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality's monthly "Celebrating Your Love" days, one-day retreats for engaged couples, which are offered as part of the diocesan marriage preparation program. There, the Rossios deliver a witness talk about NFP and lead a breakout session that serves as a basic introduction. Those couples interested in



PRACTICING WHAT THEY PREACH: Erica and Chris Rossio are Natural Family Planning instructors. They are seen with proof of NFP's effectiveness: their two daughters.

learning more are able to sign up with the Rossios for a series of classes that take place over the course of a year.

The bishops of the United States focus on this issue during Natural Family Planning Awareness Week, July 19 to 25, with an educational campaign organized to promote Catholic beliefs about human sexuality and conjugal love.

Since 2018, Erica also has served as director of Orchid Fertility & Wellness, a San Diego-based fertility care center, where her clients include many women hoping to overcome subfertility or infertility.

John Prust, director of the Office for Family Life and Spirituality, said the diocese is "so blessed" to have NFP presenters like the Rossios.

"Engaged couples are excited to learn about anything and everything that might strengthen and support their marriage, and that is the lens through which we present the topic of NFP, or fertility awareness," said Prust. "Chris and Erica do a wonderful job of presenting, from the perspective of their own personal journey, how NFP can be used both to achieve and abstain from pregnancy, how it can help a couple learn to be intimate with each other outside sexual intercourse, and how it can promote healthy dialogue in the area of sexuality."

In other methods, basal body temperature and hormone levels serve as additional biomarkers.

Chris acknowledged that it might feel "a little uncomfortable" in the beginning. But once a couple succeeds in talking about such an awkward topic, it makes other difficult topics — from finances, to in-laws, to pet peeves about one another, to deeper discussions about how they can grow as a couple — easier, too.

Erica agreed, adding, "Nothing's really off limits" conversationally after NFP.

When a couple is seeking to avoid pregnancy, that means abstaining from sex during periods of fertility. Spouses will have to exercise self-control, sacrifice instant gratification, and find alternative ways of demonstrating their love to one another. And hand in hand with the monitoring of biomarkers comes ongoing reflection on God's will for their marriage.

"What makes it great is that it gives couples an opportunity to discern every single month what God is calling them to, as far as their family size, but then also it requires ... this ongoing conversation," Chris said.

"It's really more than how to conceive a child," he said. "It's more how to conceive a virtuous and holy marriage."

Visit sdcatholic.org/fabm for a list of Natural Family Planning "ambassadors" at the diocese.



IN LOVING
Memory



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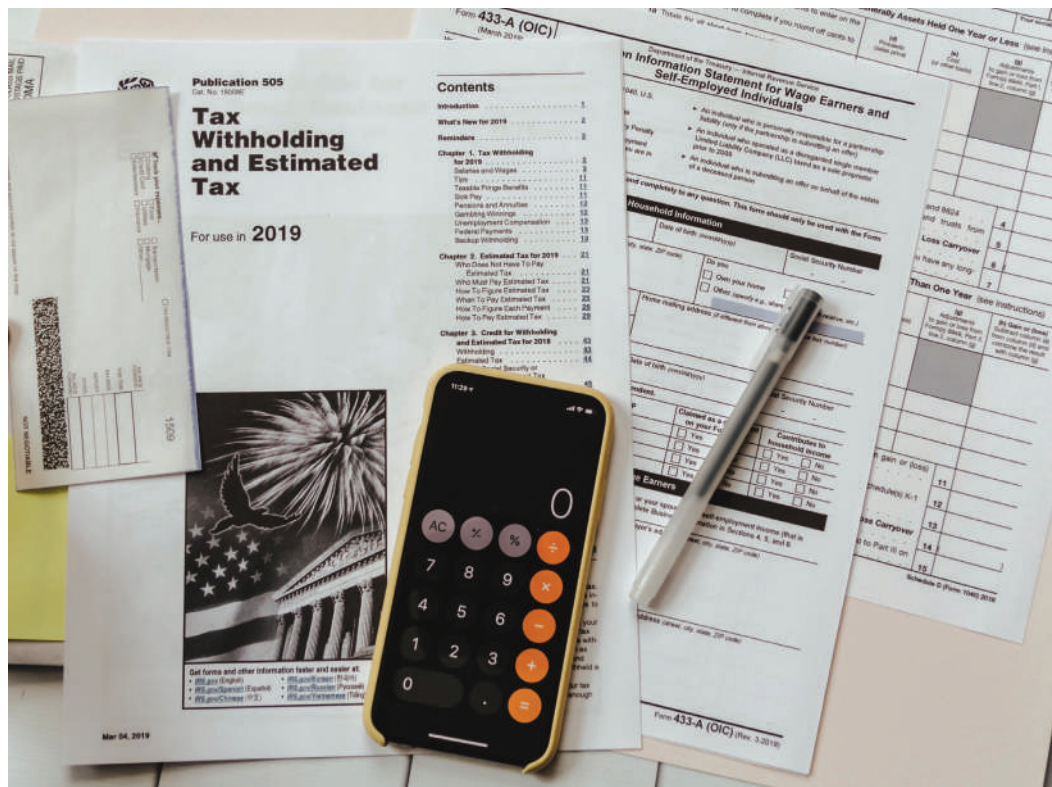
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Joining the Avengers?

Pope Francis greets Mattia Villardita, 27, from northern Italy, dressed as Spider-Man, during his general audience in the San Damaso Courtyard of the Apostolic Palace at the Vatican June 23.

Sainthood Causes Get Big OK

By Mark Pattison



WASHINGTON — The U.S. bishops gave their go-ahead to two dioceses to continue their efforts to make their case for a priest and a brother to be considered for sainthood.

The men are Father Joseph Verbis Lafleur of the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, an Army chaplain who died in World War II, and Leonard LaRue, a Merchant Marine captain who served during the Korean War and later became a Benedictine monk named Brother Marinus.

Their causes were heard June 17, during the bishops' spring meeting. The votes were not to endorse the causes, but rather to support advancing them on the local level.

Father Lafleur was ordained a priest in 1938 and joined the Army Air Corps in 1941. His unit was assigned to Clark Air Field in the Philippines. The day after the Japanese attacked at Pearl

Harbor, they bombed Clark, where the priest tended to the wounded and dying. Ordered to evacuate, Father Lafleur and other attack survivors were bombed again by the Japanese.

Now a prisoner of war, he served as his fellow prisoners' chaplain.

He died aboard an unmarked Japanese ship headed for Japan that had been torpedoed by an American submarine. Father Lafleur refused to go up the ladder for a chance at survival, instead helping other men up the ladder.

LaRue was at the helm of the Merchant Marine ship Meredith Victory in 1950 when it rescued 14,005 Korean refugees who were fleeing a Chinese military onslaught. It is estimated there are now 1 million Korean descendants of those refugees.

He later joined the Benedictine Monks of Newton, New Jersey, and took the name Brother Marinus in 1954.

Catholic News Service

Catholic Church Strengthens Laws to Protect Minors, Adults

By Catholic News Service



VATICAN CITY — The new series of laws and provisions set out in the revised section on crimes and penalties in the Code of Canon Law will help the Catholic Church in its efforts at safeguarding children and adults, said two canon lawyers.

And yet, like with every new norm, its success will depend on following through on enforcement, being mindful in interpreting still unclear aspects and working on remaining gaps, they said.

Pope Francis promulgated the new changes in "Book VI: Penal Sanctions in the Church," and they will go into effect Dec. 8 — the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The revisions reflect almost two decades of work in updating, adding, clarifying and strengthening what the Church considers to be crimes and what provisions for sanctioning are available.

Much damage has come from not understanding how applying sanctions is part of exercising charity and establishing justice, the pope said, as "charity and mercy require a father to commit himself also to straightening what at times becomes crooked."

Claudia Giampietro, a canon lawyer and project officer at the office for care and safeguarding for the International Union of Superiors General, said that this mindset of respect and protection is a significant change.

The ultimate principle of safeguarding "is recognizing that a wounded humanity needs respect, and this must inform every single act performed within and outside of the Catholic Church," she said in an email response to questions June 3.

It shows how the revisions have been informed by and reflect "the voice of victims and survivors of

abuse, which is making the Church aware and, therefore, responsible" in turning their requests "into canonical provisions which can support the healing process involving the entire ecclesial community," she added.

Also, by putting abuse, indecent exposure, pornography and grooming in a new chapter that adds the term "dignity," it shows an understanding that such crimes "harm the inalienable dignity of human beings acknowledged in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," and are not just a violation of the Sixth Commandment, she said.

Msgr. Robert Oliver, with the Archdiocese of Boston, served formerly of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. He said that "the one thing that stands out for safeguarding is that the Holy Father has introduced legal requirements that suspected offenses be reported and that bishops respond to these reports by making use of the Church's penal procedures" for the restoration of justice, the reform of the offender and the repair of scandal.

In other words, where previous canons suggested what "can" be done when an offense has been committed, now the rules are what "must" be done and making sure the law is applied.

Another significant change is expanding the application of canons dealing with abuse to religious and laypeople who have a role, office or function in the Church — not just to clergy, she said.

"It was a very much needed change as religious always felt that there was a gap in the legislation concerning them in relation to abuse cases," she said.

The San Diego Diocese has a rigorous program to prevent abuse and help victims. Details: safeinourdiocese.org



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News Briefs

Bishop Dolan's Books on Suicide Receive Awards

BALTIMORE — Two books that San Diego Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan co-edited are among the winners in the Association of Catholic Publishers' 2021 Excellence in Publishing Awards.

In the "Resources for Ministry" category, his book *Responding to Suicide: A Pastoral Handbook for Catholic Leaders* was a first-place winner. In the "General Interest" category, his workbook titled *When a Loved One Dies by Suicide* took second place. Both books were co-edited with Deacon Ed Shoener of the Diocese of Scranton, Penn., and published in late 2020 by Ave Maria Press.

At the Excellence in Publishing Awards, honors were awarded to publishers and authors of the best Catholic content in 14 categories — Biography; Young Readers; Children's Picture Books; General Interest; Inspirational; Music: Distinguished Mass Setting; Music: Song of the Year; Prayer; Resources for Liturgy; Resources for Ministry; Scripture; Spanish; Spirituality; and Theology.

Catholics Invited to 'Encounter' Jesus

Sponsored by the parish's Hearts of Fire Ministry, Encounter is a monthly, Spirit-filled night of inspiring music, powerful prayer and Eucharistic adoration held at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church in Rancho Peñasquitos.

Encounter is held on the second Friday of each month. The next installment will take place at 7 p.m., Friday, July 9.

For more information, call (858) 484-1070.

Diocese Hosting Minister Recruitment Workshop

The diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry will host a minister recruitment workshop, "Discerning Gifts: Do I Have What It Takes?" The event will take place from 6:30 to 9 p.m., Tuesday, July 20. Register at sdccatholicdisciples.net. For more information, call (858) 490-8232 or email Lperez@sdccatholic.org.

Teachers, Catechists to Receive Faith & Science Training

All those who teach middle school students in parishes and Catholic schools are invited to a training session to implement the Credible Catholic Faith & Science curriculum in the coming school year.

Led by Jesuit Father Robert Spitzer and his team from Credible Catholic, the training will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, July 31, at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa. Attendees will explore the complimentary relationship between faith and science and be prepared to implement the "Evidence of God's Existence from Science" module in the diocese's Catholic schools and catechetical ministries.

There is no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required. Lunch is included. For more information, call (858) 490-8234 or visit sdccatholicdisciples.net.

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The Knights of Columbus San Diego Chapter on June 19 presented its 2021 Exemplary Service Award to Appaswamy "Vino" Pajanor, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of San Diego.

The award recognized Pajanor's service to the diocese during the COVID pandemic, which included the creation of Catholic Charities' Emergency Food Distribution Network. The network provided millions of meals to people in need throughout San Diego and Imperial counties. Pajanor is pictured behind the wheel of one of the Catholic Charities vans that were used for food deliveries.

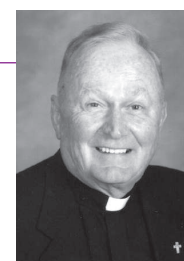
Obituary

Father Edward Gallagher, Jr.

Father Edward Gallagher, Jr., a retired priest of the Archdiocese of Boston, died June 17.

After his retirement as a U.S. Navy chaplain, Father Gallagher offered regular service at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch and San Rafael Parish in Rancho Bernardo, before his final residence at the Nazareth House assisted-living facility in San Diego.

The funeral Mass was celebrated June 25 at St. Gregory the Great Parish.



Priest Assignments

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

With the permission of his provincial, **Father Paul Dass Selvaraj, OMI**, has been appointed as administrator of Most Precious Blood Parish, Chula Vista, effective July 15.

With the permission of his provincial, **Father Kevin Casey, SJ**, has been appointed as senior associate pastor of St. Mark Parish, San Marcos, effective July 1.

With the permission of his provincial, **Father William Thomas Davis, OSA**, has been appointed as administrator of St. Patrick Parish, San Diego, effective June 21.

Am I Called?

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

Does the idea come to me often?

Does the idea scare me?

I SHOULD CONTACT

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Simple Power of Tenderness to Transform



In recent days, I had an opportunity to reconnect with my three grandkids, Santiago, Sofia and Carmen. It had been a while since I had thrown myself on the floor to play with them. The pandemic and each family's plans kept us away, even though we would see each other through Zoom.

Being with them put me in contact with tenderness, which I saw in their gestures, hugs and gazes; and which awakened feelings inside me. It's not easy to describe what I felt: A re-energizing mixture of joy, peace, and an impulse to protect and nurture them, a preview of eternity in an instant.

It's not common to experience moments of tenderness these days, as we face anxieties, frustrations and disappointments. Tenderness is an expression that today can be considered "counter-cultural."

Our society does not achieve success nor fame through tenderness; tenderness is not the value that guides our interactions. Tenderness is not imposed, doesn't seek to convince, isn't arrogant; tenderness simply "is," radiating by itself, giving warmth, embracing, touching the heart, melting barriers and building bridges.

**Associate Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality**

**Ricardo
Márquez**



Tenderness is that feeling that springs from the heart to protect, care for and console. Tenderness awakens when we see traces of it around us; it spreads, although it only grows on fertile ground that's watered and maintained.

In our process of socialization, tenderness is seen as a more feminine approach. Labels such as "strong" and "forceful" are more connected to men, "tender" and "sensitive" to women.

Every time we separate and divide to simplify, we lose. The educational challenge for the new generations is to integrate strength with tenderness in both sexes.

I had an opportunity to read *The Night of the Rusty Armor*, a book written by Robert Fisher. Reading it reminded me that, during our life, we surround ourselves with armor, defenses, to protect ourselves from our reality.

At a moment of frustration, sadness or pain, our tears fall, and that's where the road to transformation

begins. The tears begin to rust the armor, the defenses, until they are weakened and cracked.

Grace flows from those cracks.

To feel something you have to open yourself up, but in doing so, you can be hurt. But without the heart opening, without the experience of feeling vulnerable, it's not easy to develop tenderness or to feel the power of emotions.

In the end, it will always be a personal decision: Open yourself up and risk the consequences of feeling or loving; or close yourself off, covered with armor, and protect and isolate yourself.

Tenderness is cultivated looking attentively at "the other" with admiration, without biases, with compassion; looking beyond appearances until finding that "the other" is the same as me, and has the same dignity and value that I have.

The practice of being tender begins with ourselves, in our own house. How can we be tender with others if we're not tender with ourselves?

"We must learn to look upon our weaknesses with tender mercy," Pope Francis urges us to do in *Patris Corde* ("With a Father's Heart"). "We know that God's truth does not condemn, but instead welcomes, embraces, sustains and forgives us. That truth always presents itself to us like

**Tenderness radiates
by itself, gives warmth,
embraces, touches the
heart, melts barriers and
builds bridges.**

the merciful father in Jesus' parable (Luke 15:11-32). It comes out to meet us, restores our dignity, sets us back on our feet and rejoices for us, for, as the Father says: 'My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

If we do the same, we will be tender.

Today, we can be tender with whatever gesture that expresses or radiates respect, compassion and admiration for the sacredness of each life that we encounter.

Blessed are the tender-hearted because they will see God's tenderness in everything.

Read more of Ricardo
Márquez's columns at
[thesoutherncross.org/
perspectives](https://thesoutherncross.org/perspectives).



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Crisis in Mozambique Leads Catholics There to Establish Outreaches to Help Orphans

The Association Cross Mozambique (ACM), a ministry to orphans and founded by Doroteia Balane and a group of other dedicated Catholic women, has become a lifeline to boys and girls victimized by poverty and the blight of the African AIDS crisis. (See story opposite page.)

From the time ACM first began ministering to the thousands of orphans and vulnerable children who live in the Maputo and Namaacha areas, its goal has always been ambitious. Rather than simply ensuring those boys and girls survive day by day, the Catholic ministry has worked to ensure each child is treated with unconditional compassion and is given the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

“What ACM does is incredible. They have become a lifeline to orphans and vulnerable children age 6 to 17 — kids who are at an extremely vulnerable point in their lives — and they have given those children a real chance at a better future,” explained James Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a major international Catholic ministry helping ACM with its programs. “When our ministry decided to make helping Africa’s AIDS orphans a priority, we sought out programs like this one and have been doing everything we can to support them. That is the best way to address the AIDS orphan crisis in Mozambique — by empowering the local leaders already doing great things in the country.”

Doroteia, the founder of ACM, certainly lives up to Cavnar’s positive impression of her. She has made incredible sacrifices to help the orphans in Mozambique and continues to look for new ways to reach those children in greatest need.

“I am so happy because I am doing a job I like, looking after people who are

suffering and helping the children who need a mother,” she said. “Always I am asking for God to give me a long life in order to use me to help people in need.”

To lift up destitute children and restore their hope, Doroteia and ACM take a holistic approach. Not only do they meet each child’s physical needs by supplying food, educational opportunities and preventive health care, but they also bless them spiritually through Bible study and prayer.

ACM starts its process by identifying those orphans and vulnerable children with the greatest needs. It then determines what services will best help each of them to prosper and grow. Once these boys and girls are enrolled in the program, a volunteer also makes weekly home visits to ensure the material and spiritual requirements of the children are being met.

In situations where the orphaned child is living with an overwhelmed extended family member or a sick parent, Doroteia and her team provide assistance and spiritual support to the entire family. By strengthening these families, Doroteia believes she can best fulfill the calling God has given her: to love others with the same compassion Christ has shown her.

“In addition to mobilizing Catholics in America to help Doroteia serve orphans, Cross Catholic Outreach wants to assist ACM with a special program it has developed to educate girls — a particularly vulnerable group in the country,” Cavnar said.

That particular project provides special boarding homes for at-risk girls who are struggling with a wide range of life issues.

“Sadly, Mozambique’s orphan problem is complicated by gender inequity. When these children are taken in by extended family members, the boys are frequently sent to



As it developed its outreaches to help orphans and vulnerable children in Mozambique, ACM discovered a special need among girls. Many were not being educated properly.

school, while girls are left to do domestic work at home. As a result, more than half of Mozambique’s young girls can’t read or write,” he explained.

The Association Cross Mozambique solves this problem by providing at-risk girls in Maputo — the most populous city in Mozambique — with a quality Catholic education. These girls are given the opportunity to attend St. Joseph Institute, a Catholic boarding school run by the Franciscan Hospitaller Sisters in Inhambane on Mozambique’s southern coast.

“While living at the institute’s boarding facilities, the girls can learn and mature in a safe environment. And in addition to receiving a quality education, they are also blessed with nutritious meals, practical job skill training, mentoring from the sisters and spiritual formation,”

Cavnar explained. “As the girls grow up and eventually move out on their own, they will be equipped to get good jobs and raise families who love and serve the Lord.”

Readers interested in supporting Cross Catholic Outreach food programs and other outreaches to the poor can contribute through the ministry brochure inserted in this issue or send tax-deductible gifts to: Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01694, PO Box 97168, Washington DC 20090-7168. The ministry has a special need for partners willing to make gifts on a monthly basis. Use the inserted brochure to become a Mission Partner or write Monthly Mission Partner on mailed checks to be contacted about setting up those arrangements.

Cross Catholic Outreach Endorsed by More Than 100 Bishops, Archbishops

Cross Catholic Outreach’s range of relief work to help the poor overseas continues to be recognized by a growing number of Catholic leaders in the U.S. and abroad.

“We’ve received more than 100 endorsements from bishops and archbishops,” explained James Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach. “They’re moved by the fact that we’ve launched outreaches in almost 40 countries and have undertaken a variety of projects — everything from feeding the hungry

and housing the homeless to supplying safe water and supporting educational opportunities for the poorest of the poor. The bishops have also been impressed by Cross Catholic Outreach’s direct and meaningful responses to emergency situations, most recently by providing food, medicines and other resources to partners in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala impacted by natural disasters.”

Bishop Ronald W. Gainer of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, supports this mission. He writes, “What a joy it is to be part of the

Lord’s redemptive work and to manifest his mercy on earth by caring for our neighbors in need.”

In addition to praising CCO’s accomplishments, many of the bishops and archbishops are encouraged that pontifical canonical status was conferred on the charity in September 2015, granting it approval as an official Catholic organization. This allows CCO to participate in the mission of the Church and to give a concrete witness to Gospel charity, in collaboration with the

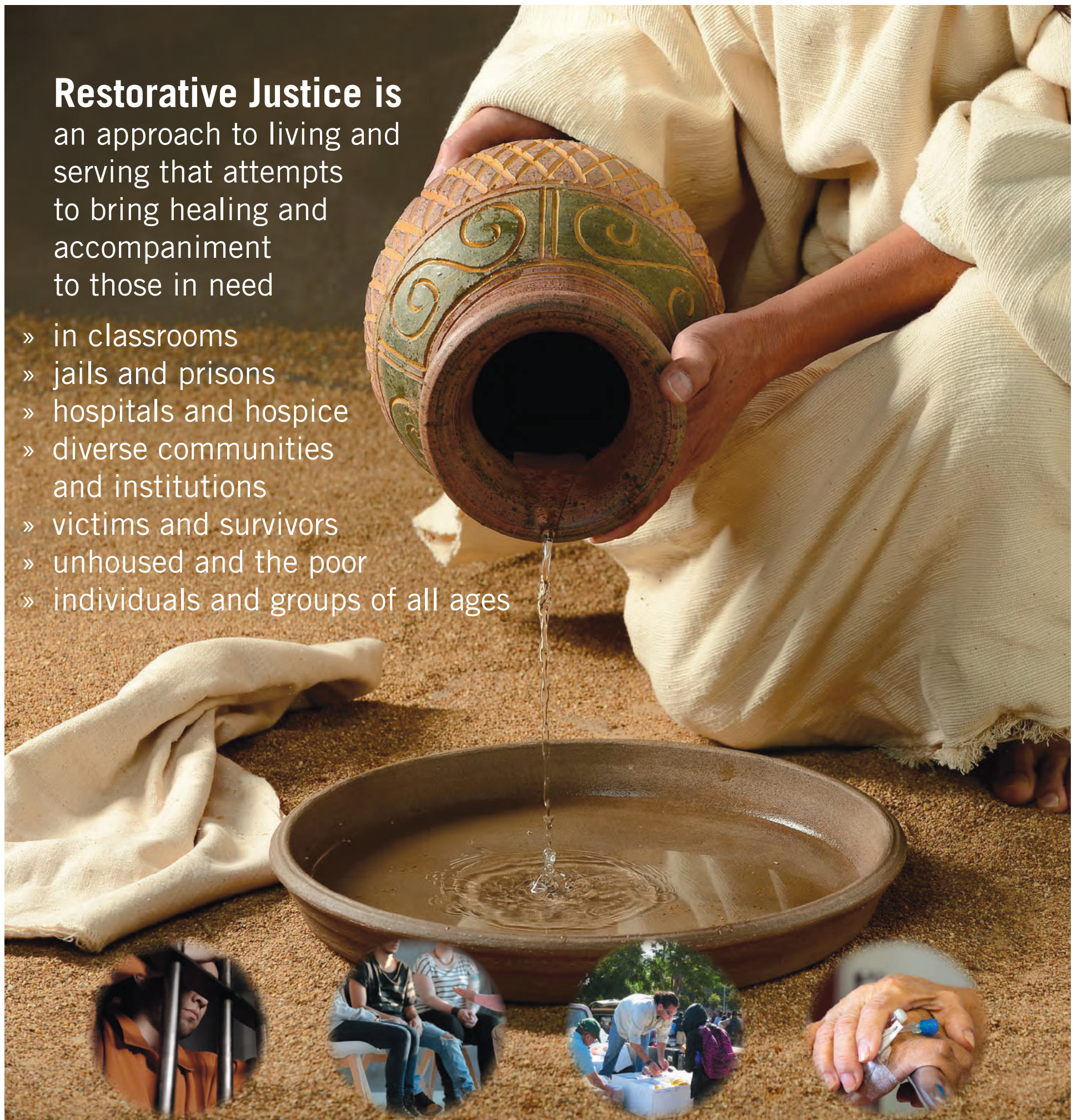
Holy Father.

“Your work with the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development is a strong endorsement of your partnership with the work of the Universal Church,” Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco said. “By providing hope to the faithful overseas by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, delivering medical relief to the sick and shelter to the homeless, and through self-help projects, you are embodying the papal encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*.

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