

# THE SOUTHERN CROSS

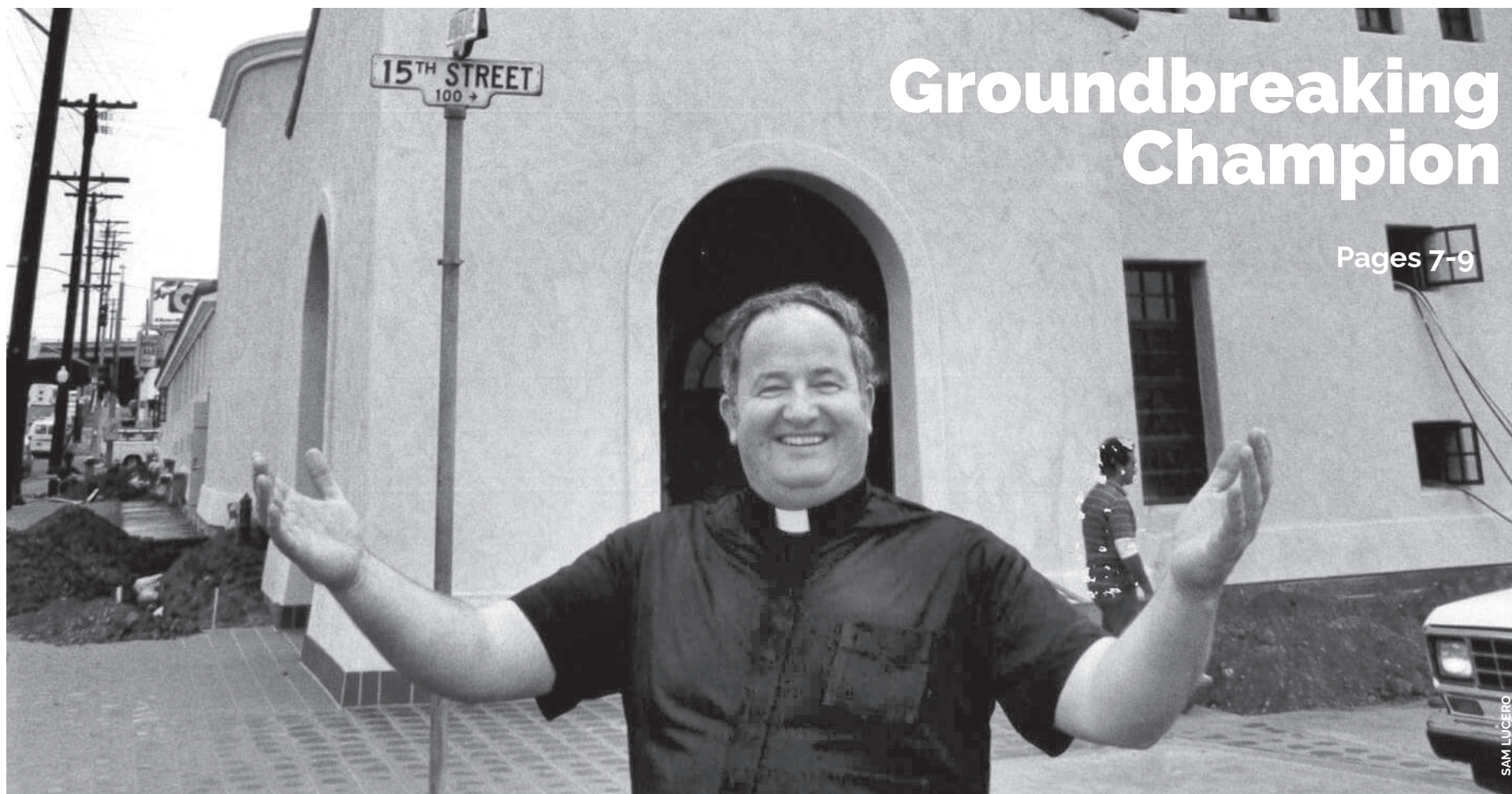
THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



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**ICON:** With his ingenuity and effervescent personality, Father Joe Carroll transformed how the region views and assists homeless neighbors. He died on July 11 at the age of 80.



## Faith in Action

Faith leaders call on their congregants to lobby Congress on undocumented migrants. **Page 2**



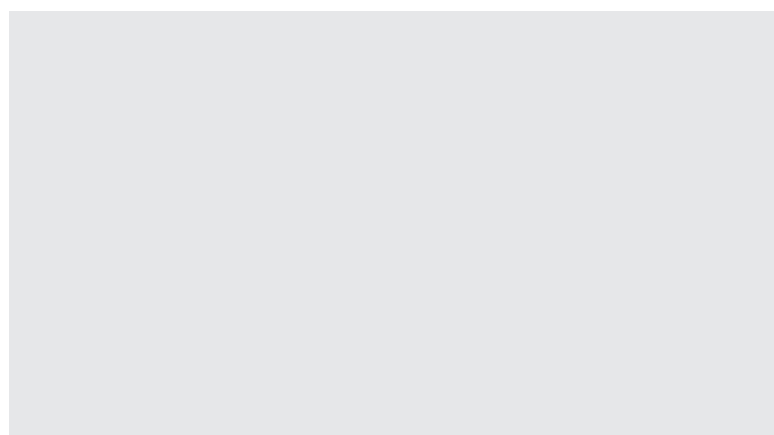
## Young Adult Mass

Celebration will highlight how large and diverse the diocese's young adult population is. **Page 13**



## Musical Tribute

San Diego musician writes and records song to celebrate the singular gifts of St. Joseph. **Page 15**



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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, [thesouthernncross.org](http://thesouthernncross.org), including photos, videos, and at times an extended version.



**UNITED:** Leaders from Christianity, Judaism and Islam came together on June 28 in downtown San Diego in a prayer vigil to urge the faithful to ask Congress to include a path to citizenship for undocumented workers in pending legislation.

## Faithful Urged to Lobby Congress

By Aida Bustos



Leaders from various faiths nationwide are asking their congregants to press their members of Congress to create a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, particularly essential workers.

In San Diego, several Catholic clergy members, led by Bishop Robert McElroy, joined an interfaith prayer vigil on June 28 to urge action.

The campaign is calling on people of faith to phone their U.S. representatives and senators at (844) 332-6361 to urge them to include a pathway to citizenship in President Joe Biden's American Jobs Plan, whose goal is to create millions of jobs and rebuild the nation's infrastructure.

The San Diego Organizing Project coordinated the evening prayer vigil in front of the downtown federal building. Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano led the vigil, which featured testimonies from immigrants and refugees. Each described why they left their homeland and their experience in building a new life in the U.S.

A faith leader addressed each immigrant after they spoke and offered a prayer for them. Then they handed them an American flag, telling them, "You are Home." They included Father Tommie Jennings, from Christ the King Parish; Father Martin Silva, from Our Lady of Guadalupe in Barrio Logan; and Imam Taha Hassane, from the San Diego Islamic Center.

Eulalio Flores was one of the migrants. A member of St. Leo Parish in Solana Beach, he said he continued to work at a restaurant during the pandemic despite the health risks.

"Unfortunately, I got COVID, and had to remain quarantined for several weeks, unable to make a living," he said. "I thank God that I'm a person of faith."

Bishop McElroy noted the vital role immigrants played during the pandemic.

"We recognized them when we needed them, and yet when it comes time to recognize them as fellow men and women in our society, as families in our midst, we refuse to pass the laws that we need to."

He said many times Congress appeared ready to offer a

pathway to legalize some of the 11 million undocumented migrants, only to fail to do so.

"We can't stand by anymore and watch our political processes — broken as they are — destroy the dreams and the hopes of the refugees and the immigrants who have not only come here and lived but came here and helped build our nation."

He noted that the experience of fleeing injustice and repression is "at the very center" of the various faiths.

"In our experiences — as peoples of faith — the experience of being refugees, the experience of being enslaved and threatened, these are not secondary to us; they are right at the core. We stand in vigil with those in Washington who are putting themselves on the line to change our broken immigration system ... We do so as people of faith, because that is what our faith calls us to do."



**AT HOME:** Father Tommie Jennings symbolically welcomed an immigrant to the U.S., telling her "You are Home," as part of the prayer vigil.

**To contact your members of Congress to urge that a pathway to citizenship for undocumented migrants be included in the American Jobs Plan, please call (844) 332-6361.**



## Virus Gaining Force This Summer

The Southern Cross



Residents are returning to their routines in public, like eating at restaurants, without masks and physical distancing.

San Diego County statistics paint a different picture:

- 355 new cases of coronavirus in just one day, July 12, compared to

the average of 78 per day in May. There was twice as many cases of the Delta variant, which is far more contagious and makes people far sicker.

- 68% of eligible residents are vaccinated, leaving nearly 3 out of 10 residents without that protection.
- 99 percent of all new cases, hospitalizations and deaths occurred among unvaccinated.

- Deaths continue to pile up, 3,786 as of July 14.

Leaders across the spectrum continued their plea to those not vaccinated: Get the facts from reliable sources, get the vaccine, and save yourself and loved ones.

**For more information, visit [sdccatholic.org/vaccine](http://sdccatholic.org/vaccine)**





# She's Made 25,000 Rosaries — and Counting

By The Southern Cross



Despite being 96 years old, Inocencia Gamboa accomplishes decades of work every single day.

That is to say, she strings together rosaries — each consisting of five decades of 10 beads each — that ultimately find their way to Catholic missions around the world and to prisons in North America.

One of her nine children, Dr. Edgar Gamboa, expressed wonder at what she has accomplished.

"I knew she made rosaries, and I thought that was a meaningful way to spend her time. It's a hands-on, practical way to help the missions," said Dr. Gamboa, a surgeon who lives and works in Monterey, California. "But I was astounded when, on her 94th birthday, I learned that she had made over 25,000."

His mother has been making rosaries since 1993, taking up this ministry in the wake of her husband's death. It's a skill she learned from her late sister, a Third Order Carmelite, who made rosaries even as she was dying of terminal breast cancer.

Gamboa, who marked her 96th birthday on July 28, used to consistently make 10 rosaries a day. But because of the arthritis in her hands, there are days when she is only able to make three or perhaps just one.

Even after almost three decades, she has continued making them because the need is still there.

"The more you are giving, the more they (are) asking," she told *The Southern Cross* around noon on June 16, a day when she had already met her goal of 10 rosaries.

"The demand is very great," added Gamboa, who has 27 grandchil-



**ROSARY-IN-PROGRESS:** Inocencia Gamboa shows off her handiwork as she makes rosaries July 6. Since 1993, she has made more than 25,000.

dren, 27 great-grandchildren and six great-great-grandchildren.

She purchases her rosary-making supplies from Our Lady's Rosary Makers, an apostolate based in Louisville, Kentucky. The completed rosaries are packed in batches of 200 and shipped to those who oversee their distribution.

Gamboa used to send rosaries to San Giovanni Rotondo, the southern Italian town that was home to St. Pio

of Pietrelcina. A Capuchin priest there dutifully handed them out to pilgrims or left them on Padre Pio's crypt as keepsakes for visitors.

The "Requests for Rosaries" section of Our Lady's Rosary Makers' newsletter later connected her with an international flight attendant, who lives in southeastern Florida and distributes rosaries to various missions around the world, and a Pennsylvania man who sends rosaries to Mexico, Canada and prisons in the United States. She began sending packages of rosaries to these two individuals; nowadays, she mails them primarily to the latter.

Raised in a Catholic family in the Philippines, Gamboa immigrated to North America in 1979, ultimately settling in the San Diego area in 1985. She currently lives in the Escondido home of her daughter Daisy Gonzalez and son-in-law Virgilio.

A member of St. Mark Parish in San Marcos for the past 12 years, she has been unable to attend Mass in person amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. But she has stayed connected with the Church by watching livestreamed Masses on St. Mark's YouTube channel or televised Masses on EWTN, and, of course, by making rosaries.

"I don't want to stop," she said of her work.

Gonzalez said rosary-making means a lot to her mother.

"I think it's her way of helping other people," said Gonzalez, whose childhood memories include praying a fam-

ily rosary every night with her parents and siblings.

Dr. Gamboa, who also remembers those family rosaries, said his mother's rosary-making is "a natural extension of her daily prayers."

He shared that she has prayer books filled with prayer cards and various novenas, and she prays every day for the souls of the faithful departed — including a list of 500-plus family members and friends whose names she keeps in her notebook.

For Dr. Gamboa, his mother continues to be a source of inspiration.

"Our parents taught us, by word and example, to always trust in Divine Providence," he said. "They instilled in us the confidence that God will always take care of things, no matter how bleak things might be, no matter what happens. They taught us to think of the welfare of others. To always forge ahead. To always stand up when we fall."

Gonzalez said that her mother has taught her brother Edgar how to make rosaries, and she has thought about asking her mother to teach her, too.

"I think it would be a very good thing to continue her legacy," Gonzalez said.

*Denis Grasska contributed to this story.*



**SENT WITH LOVE:** Inocencia Gamboa and her daughter, Daisy Gonzalez, pack Gamboa's hand-made rosaries to be mailed to those who will distribute them.

See more photos of Inocencia Gamboa's rosary-making at [thesoutherncross.org/082103](https://thesoutherncross.org/082103).





# Schools Ready 'to Hit the Ground Running'

By Denis Grasska



Diocesan School  
Superintendent  
John Galvan

predicts a 2021-2022 school year that will "look more normal" than the year before.

He foresees a return of field trips, retreats and other events that were canceled to slow the spread of COVID-19. He also hopes that parents, many of whom were pained by COVID safety measures that essentially barred them from campus, will be able to become active again with their children's schools.

The first day of classes at most local Catholic schools will be Aug. 18.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on July 9 issued new COVID-safety recommendations for K-12 schools. On July 12, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) followed up with its own guidance, putting the CDC's recommendations into a California context.

Per the CDPH, masks are optional outdoors for everyone in K-12 settings. Students are to wear masks indoors, with certain exemptions from the CDPH; adults must be masked when indoors with students.

The most recent diocesan directives, issued by Bishop Robert McElroy on June 17, do not require the vaccination of students, faculty or staff, although it is strongly encouraged.

Regarding whether many of the other COVID-safety measures that were adopted last year at local Catholic schools should be continued, the diocese is leaving that decision to the discretion of individual schools. This includes the clear plastic partitions that many schools chose to erect around each student's desk.

Similarly, the Schools Office strongly recommends that schools continue to offer a distance-learning option.

Galvan said that schools "at the very least" should be prepared to provide "seamless continuation of learning" when individual students are required to quarantine or self-isolate.



**FIELD TRIP:** Cristo Rey San Diego High School students enjoyed an end-of-the-year field trip to the movies on June 18.

Tiffany Krisman, a fifth-grade teacher at Santa Sophia Academy in Spring Valley, recalled how teachers were "anxious, worried and in a constant state of stress" last year as they prepared for the beginning of the school year.

Looking back, she quipped, "We could all be yoga instructors with the flexibility levels we have attained as educators."

Bolstered by last year's success, however, educators are approaching this year with confidence.

"I think we can all expect that flexibility will still be the key to a successful school year," said Krisman. "But I also believe that we have seen that our schools are more than capable of adjusting to new expectations and requirements while consistently maintaining a positive, healthy, learning-focused environment for all of our students."

For students who formerly attended St. Michael Academy in Paradise Hills, this school year will be different in another way.

After several years of declining enrollment, during which the diocesan Office for Schools worked closely with the community to save the school, this was considered no longer feasible.

The school closed at the end of last year. The diocese has pledged tuition assistance through eighth grade to students who attended St. Michael Academy last year in grades K through seventh and who would like to continue to receive a Catholic education.

Galvan said that many families took up that offer and their children have transferred to neighboring Catholic schools.

Diocesan schools were also asked to give additional consideration to faculty and staff from St. Michael Academy in their hiring process this year.

Dr. Julie Cantillon, associate director of the Office for Schools, said that local Catholic schools' success

last year in safely providing in-person instruction to students has led to increased interest in Catholic education. She pointed to increased enrollment diocese-wide and noted that many schools have waiting lists at all grade levels.

For Cantillon, it's cause for celebration that most of the diocese's Catholic schools were able to offer a full 180 days of in-person instruction last year and that students did not experience any of the learning loss that parents might have feared.

"We're able to actually hit the ground running in August when students come back to school."

Read about the latest health  
guidelines for San Diego  
Catholic schools at  
thesoutherncross.  
org/082104.



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# A Special Room for Struggling Moms-to-Be

By Iliana De Lara



**NATIONAL CITY —** Thanks to a group of determined women of faith, mothers-to-be facing challenges have a warm place they can receive articles for their babies and for themselves at no cost.

The project is known as “Baby’s Room,” or “El Cuarto de Bebé” in Spanish, and it’s organized by a small team of parishioners from St. Anthony of Padua Church. The team helps pregnant women or moms with babies under 1 year of age.

Alejandra Arroyo, who began the project with her friend, Hilda Parra, explained that the parish loaned them a little house that they adapted to look like a store. They stocked it with small items, from “onesies” and tiny socks for newborns to outfits for older babies to toys on brightly decorated racks. There are also large items, such as playpens, cribs and car seats. The items are either new or lightly used, and everything is donated.

Most of all, the group wanted to create a positive environment for the women, who can select between eight and 10 items, two of which could be large ones. They can also select items for themselves, including maternity wear.

“The mothers can have an experience as if they were going shopping,” said Arroyo. “We want it to



**PARTNERS:** Hilda Parra, Alejandra Arroyo and Marisa Arellano, left to right, open Baby’s Room once a month to help pregnant women facing difficult situations.

look as nice as possible, so the women feel special, not like they are getting stuff others have discarded.”

Women sign up to be able to visit Baby’s Room, which is open one Sunday a month. They can take up to 30 minutes to select their items, having the room all to themselves.

It was important for the women to be treated with dignity, not made to feel like poor residents scrambling for whatever they could get.

Since opening on March 21, Baby’s Room had served an average of 10 to 12 women for the first couple of months. By mid-July, the number was up to 30. That’s not all. As word of the project has spread, the donations have piled up, allowing more moms to be helped.

Women who received the gifts in the early months of the project have now started to return with their newborns to thank the women.

“We have begun a wall for babies’ photos,” said Arroyo. “This really motivates us to work harder so we can help more mothers.”

Women who would like to visit Baby’s Room may call Alejandra Arroyo at (619) 666-9045 or email [arroyoalejandra63@gmail.com](mailto:arroyoalejandra63@gmail.com), to register for the next session, scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 1.



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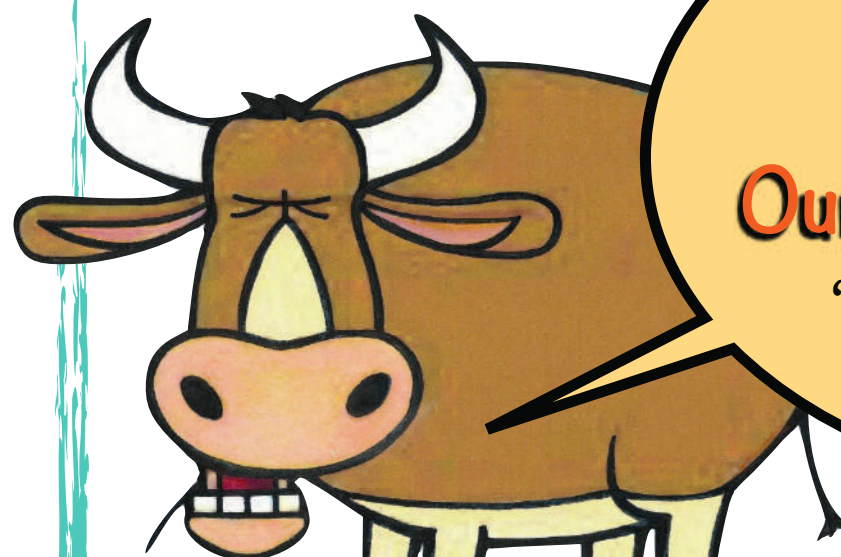
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## Priest Transformed Support for 'Our Neighbors'

COURTESY OF FATHER JOE'S VILLAGES

**BLESS US, O LORD:** Father Joe Carroll offers a blessing before a meal in this archive photo.

By Denis Grasska



With his strong Bronx accent and sly smile, Msgr. Joseph Carroll was a San Diego icon.

"Father Joe," as he was far better known, was the president emeritus and namesake of San Diego's largest homeless services provider, Father Joe's Villages.

After years of declining health, which saw the amputations of both of his feet as the result of complications of diabetes, Father Joe died in the early hours of July 11. He was 80.

Father Joe once said his greatest accomplishment was helping others to see that the homeless are just "neighbors who need our help."

"When you take the name 'homeless' out of it ... it seems to take the fear out of working with our neighbors in need," Father Joe told about 800 people who had gathered at the Town and Country Resort & Hotel in Mission Valley in late June 2012 to celebrate his life and work.

Father Joe added that his life had been enriched by daily encounters with people who have benefited from the programs of Father Joe's Villages.

Thanks to a series of long-running television commercials, in which he solicited donations of not only cars, but also boats and planes to fund local homeless services, Father Joe was more than the face of Father Joe's Villages. For San Diegans of diverse faiths, he was arguably the most recognizable local Catholic. And for local Catholics, including bishops and fellow priests, he was a larger-than-life personality and a force of nature.

This was made abundantly clear during Father Joe's funeral Mass July 20 at St. Rita Parish, where a packed

church included more than 70 priests and such dignitaries as former U.S. Rep. Susan Davis; David Malcolm, longtime business and civic leader; and former San Diego Mayor Roger Hedgecock, among many others. A total of 25 family members from the East Coast also attended, including one brother and three sisters.

In remarks near the beginning of the Mass, Bishop Robert McElroy described Father Joe as "a wonderful man of faith who took that faith and taught people to see through the eyes of Christ particularly those who were marginalized in our society, those who were abandoned, those who were homeless, to see them as brothers and sisters in Christ."

In his homily, Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan noted that Father Joe had accumulated many titles and received numerous prestigious honors, including being recognized by President George H.W. Bush as one of his "Thousand Points of Light" in 1990, named "Mr. San Diego" by the Rotary Club of San Diego in 2012, and awarded an honorary doctorate from San Diego State University in 2019.

"But, at the end of the day, he wanted to be remembered as a good priest," Bishop Dolan said, explaining that it was those three words — "A good priest" — that Father Joe had requested to be inscribed on his burial marker.

Another longtime friend, Msgr. Terry Fleming of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, eulogized Father Joe at the conclusion of the Mass.

"Joe had such a great love for and respect for the human person," he said.

Msgr. Fleming, who shared that he was wearing Father Joe's monsignor's cassock as a tribute, urged those in attendance to do two things for Father

Joe: Drink a Diet Pepsi, which was the priest's beverage of choice, and say a prayer for him. He also asked Bishop McElroy to overrule Father Joe's request that "A good priest" be inscribed on his burial marker.

"I think that's wrong," said Msgr. Fleming, "and I'm asking (Bishop McElroy) to issue a decree that it not say 'A good priest,' (that) it will say 'A great priest.'"

Joseph Anthony Carroll was born on April 12, 1941, in New York City.

Raised in the Bronx, he moved to

Southern California in 1963. There, he entered the seminary.

Father Joe was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of San Diego on June 28, 1974, at St. Joseph's Church in Carpinteria, California. The ordaining prelate was Bishop Leo T. Maher.

His early years of ministry as a priest were spent in parish life, including assignments as associate pastor of Our Lady of Grace, El Cajon; St. Pius X, Chula Vista; and St. Rita, San Diego.

In July 1982, Bishop Maher tapped

*Continued on Page 8*



COURTESY OF FATHER JOE'S VILLAGES

**HARD HAT, SOFT HEART:** Though Father Joe Carroll did not start the homeless ministry that evolved into Father Joe's Villages, the enterprising priest grew it into San Diego's largest homeless services provider.



‘This guy touched more lives, did more good for more people, than any San Diegoan has ever done.’

*David Malcolm,  
businessman and  
philanthropist*

‘One of God’s angels on earth’

*Judy Kay Jones*

‘Father Joe’s relentless dedication to serving our most vulnerable saved, and changed, countless lives. His legacy will continue to be written for years.’

*San Diego Mayor  
Todd Gloria*

‘Thank you, Father Joe. You helped me live my life immediately after having to leave home. I wasn’t ready. But I made it! Having the Village saved my life. Glad I got to meet you. I’ll miss ya.’

*Lisa Gomez*

‘What a legacy Father Joe left for all of us to follow. See you on the other side.’

*Tina Murphy*

‘I grew up seeing Father Joe on TV. He was an early example in my life of someone who stood up for people who didn’t have a voice. We will continue his mission of caring for people experiencing homelessness.’

*County Supervisor  
Terra Lawson-Remer*



**PROCESSION:** Bishop Robert McElroy celebrated Father Joe Carroll’s funeral Mass at St. Rita Parish on July 20. He was accompanied by Deacon Jim Vargas, right, and Father Efraim Bautista, center. Father Joe’s ashes were carried by José González, his longtime assistant, Msgr. Terry Fleming, front, Msgr. Dennis Mikulanis and Patrick Carroll, Father Joe’s grandnephew.

*Continued from Page 7*

him to serve as director of the St. Vincent de Paul Center, which was already in existence about a quarter-century before Father Joe was even a priest.

“A lot of people think this reach-out to the homeless is all Father Joe Carroll, but it was here long before I was,” Father Joe said in April 2010, as St. Vincent de Paul Village marked its 60th anniversary.

In his early years as director, Father Joe served peanut butter sandwiches to the homeless daily. He also began traveling the country to learn about what social services were available to the poor and homeless. He may not have been its founder, but under the enterprising priest’s watch, the center would grow into the present-day Father Joe’s Villages, which has a four-block comprehensive campus in East Village and programs across the county that house about 2,000 nightly.

Last year, the organization served nearly 12,000 homeless individuals. It has served more than 60,000 people in the last decade.

“Given the task of rejuvenating our diocesan outreach to the homeless four decades ago, he completely recreated that outreach and gave to San Diego an incredible network of programs for those without shelter that radiate a profound and unrelenting humanity and hope,” said Bishop McElroy in a statement on July 11 commenting on Father Joe’s legacy.

“(Father Joe) took ... something that had been lingering for some time and gave it life. He made it something exciting,” said Father “Chuck” Fuld, editor emeritus of *The Southern Cross* newspaper.

“The (St. Vincent de Paul) ministry had been there for years,” he said. “It always sort of rolled along ... but he got into it and, all of a sudden – wow! All of a sudden, buildings started going up.”

Father Joe’s Villages owns and manages 10 buildings across San Diego County and provides support services and rental assistance to even more. Its most recent building, Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa, is a 14-story building at

14th and Commercial streets. Expected to open next January, the building will include 407 units for more than 500 people and community space on every floor.

On various occasions, Father Joe has recounted his initial reluctance to accept the assignment that ultimately would define both him and his priesthood.

“I argued with Bishop Maher at the time that I wasn’t the right person,” he recalled in 2010. “Now, of course, I have to look back and say, I guess bishops do know what they’re doing.”

Msgr. Dennis Mikulanis, a longtime friend, explained the reason for Father Joe’s appointment. In remarks given at a celebration in Father Joe’s honor in 2012, Msgr. Mikulanis said the decision was made after Bishop Maher and the entire diocesan personnel board for priests agreed that Father Joe was “the biggest hustler in the diocese.”

“He has been a hustler for Christ, for the Church, from the very beginning,”

*Continued on Page 9*



**DRIVEN:** Car dealer Bob Baker presents a key to Father Joe Carroll on July 13, 1989. Father Joe famously appeared in television commercials soliciting donations of cars, boats and planes to raise funds for homeless services.



*Continued from Page 8*

said Msgr. Mikulanis. “None of it has benefited him. It’s benefited the Church. It’s certainly benefited our community.”

In a 1984 television commercial for Father Joe’s Villages’ vehicle donation program, Father Joe made that “hustler” persona his own. His opening line was, “Hi, I’m Father Joe. I’m a hustler.”

That moniker also made it into the title of his memoir (written with Kathryn Cloward), “Father Joe: Life Stories of a Hustler Priest,” which was published in May.

He led Father Joe’s Villages until his 70th birthday on April 12, 2011, at which time he transitioned to the role of president emeritus. He retired from active ministry that November.

“Though I am personally saddened at Father Joe Carroll’s passing, I fondly remember the stories and laughs that we shared, and his legacy will live on in all that we do,” Deacon Jim Vargas, president and CEO of Father Joe’s Villages, said in a statement hours after Father Joe’s death.

Noting how Father Joe had “selflessly and tirelessly served our community” for decades, he said, “We celebrate his lifetime of service.”

In addition to his work with the homeless, Father Joe supported the Boy Scouts of America, serving as their diocesan chaplain from March 1975 through July 2014, and the Knights of Columbus, serving as chaplain for the California State Council in the early 1990s.

Father Fuld recalled how Father Joe, as Boy Scout chaplain, convinced him to be one of three chaperones on a cross-country trip to attend the



**DEDICATION:** Father Joe Carroll is seen with philanthropist Joan Kroc at the dedication of the St. Vincent de Paul Center, which San Diego Bishop Leo Maher blessed in August 1987.

1981 National Scout Jamboree, held in Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia.

Still a lay Catholic at the time, Father Fuld credits that trip with helping him to discern a priestly vocation.

“It was one of the things that got me pointed in that direction,” said Father Fuld, who was ordained in 1986.

Father Joe was made a monsignor on Dec. 16, 1988.

Msgr. Fleming once shared that Father Joe wasn’t keen on receiving that honorific title.

“I remember the conversation when Bishop Maher told him he was being made a monsignor,” he recalled in 2012. “He objected vehemently. He said, ‘Bishop, people won’t give money to ‘Msgr. Joe.’ You’re going to ruin my image.’”

Bishop Emeritus Robert Brom, who succeeded Bishop Maher in 1990 and led the Diocese of San Diego until his retirement in 2013, said what struck him most about Father Joe was the late priest’s response to suffering.

“There was significant suffering as a part of his life,” said Bishop Brom, “but he never brought attention to it and he never complained. Ever. ... He would join his sufferings to those of Jesus on the cross for the salvation of the world.”

“He learned that his greatest contribution to promoting the reign of God was perhaps, not his fundraising, not his ‘hustling’ ... but the suffering he silently bore to promote the reign of God,” Bishop Brom said.

“Father Joe Carroll was a heroic man who helped his community with the entirety of his heart and soul. He helped the poor, the hungry and the homeless and had a gift for bringing people together in his mission to serve,” recalled U.S. Rep. Juan Vargas, who represents the 51st Congressional District.

“I hope the Church canonizes him, as his work was truly saintly.”

‘I remember him from St. Rita’s Church. Always liked him. He really put all his energy into helping the homeless.’

*Lupe Valdes*

‘The world is less today.’

*Sandy Martin Hinesly*

‘Father Joe Carroll was a heroic man who helped his community with the entirety of his heart and soul ... I hope the Church canonizes him, as his work was truly saintly.’

*U.S. Rep. Juan Vargas*



**SOLE MAN:** Father Joe Carroll found many creative ways to help the homeless, as this archive photo shows.



**SHARING THE JOY:** Bishop John Dolan greets Father Joe Carroll after his ordination as auxiliary bishop of San Diego in June 2017 at St. Therese of Carmel Parish in Carmel Valley.



PAID ADVERTISEMENT

## Honoring Father Joe Carroll's Legacy

During his lifetime, Father Joe Carroll touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in San Diego and helped tens of thousands of neighbors end their homelessness for good.

In 1982, Father Joe became the Director of the Saint Vincent de Paul Center and soon took San Diego and the country by storm with his charisma and determination. As a self-proclaimed “hustler priest”, Father Joe was able to grow the organization into what is today, the largest homeless services agency in San Diego offering comprehensive services and housing programs to address the complex needs of people experiencing homelessness.

**He will be missed more than words can express.**

Father Joe's Villages is dedicated to honoring Father Joe Carroll's legacy of preventing and ending homelessness, one life at a time.



*Father Joe Carroll at the Construction Site of Saint Vincent de Paul Center, later known as the Joan Kroc Center.*

## Father Joe Carroll Memorial Promenade

Father Joe's Villages sees a profound opportunity to carry forward this mission through Father Joe's Villages' Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa affordable housing community. Upon opening in 2022, the complex will end the homelessness of over 500 men, women and children through 407 units of affordable and supportive housing.

Situated adjacent to Father Joe's Villages East Village campus, the residents of Saint Teresa of Calcutta will have access to comprehensive, life-changing services that will help them maintain housing for good, including employment assistance, integrated behavioral and physical health care, benefits assistance, life skills training, and much more.

In addition to continuing Father Joe's legacy of ending homelessness through housing and services, the front of the building will feature

the Father Joe Carroll Memorial Promenade with landscaping, statues, and interactive features, honoring Father Joe's decades-long devotion to building innovative housing solutions and comprehensive services that would best serve neighbors in need.

To recognize his impact, two plaques on the face of the entrance will honor Father Joe's motto “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” and a commemoration of the Congressional Medal of Honor he received in 2013. Additionally, parallel to the main sidewalk will be a path with an interactive design that highlights Father Joe's purposeful journey in providing compassionate care. Pedestrians can walk alongside his footsteps, joining Father Joe on the path to end homelessness, and, at the end of the path, carrying on his legacy where his footsteps end.



*A rendering of the Father Joe Carroll Memorial Promenade, located on 14th Street in front of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa.*



PAID ADVERTISEMENT



A rendering of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa, Father Joe’s Villages newest affordable housing community opening in 2022.



Plaques honoring Father Joe’s Motto of “Neighbors Helping Neighbors”.



The Field of Donors, where donors have a one-time opportunity to reserve a paving stone.

## Reserve an Honorary Paver

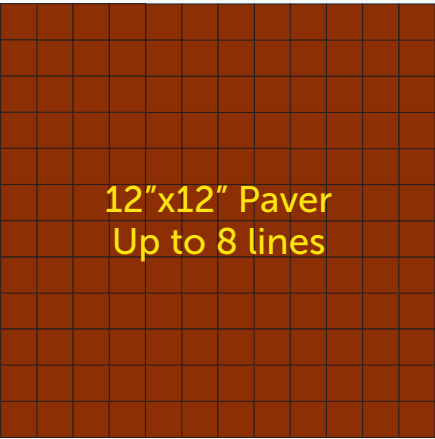
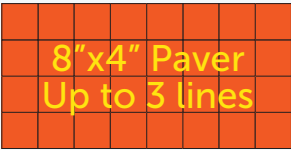
### Single Paver Options

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Honor your family, organization, or company with an arrangement of neighboring pavers.

- One 8”x8” Paver and four 8”x4” Pavers
- Two 8”x8” Pavers and two 8”x4” Pavers



Father Joe’s Villages is inviting all of San Diego to join us in honoring Father Joe’s legacy and support the continuation of services that help neighbors leave homelessness behind for good by reserving a paver in the Father Joe Carroll Memorial Promenade. With three different paving stone sizes, participants have this one-time opportunity to make themselves, their family or loved ones a permanent

part of this special Memorial of Father Joe and the mission he cared so much about.

The three sizes include an 8”x4” paver, an 8”x8” paver and a 12”x12” paver or a paver array to honor one’s family, organization, or company with an arrangement of neighboring pavers.



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# Young Catholic Professionals Ready to Rebuild

By Denis Grasska

As the new president of the local chapter of Young Catholic Professionals, Kendra McClelland has her work cut out for her.

YCP San Diego had been going strong ever since it started in 2016, hosting monthly events to build community among young adult Catholics and to equip them to live their faith while pursuing successful careers.

But, with the COVID-19 pandemic, everything stopped.

A YCP event in late March of 2020 was canceled. Between April and November of that year, there were only four events; three were virtual. When an event billed as the “YCP San Diego Re-Launch” was held on June 8, it had been seven months since YCP San Diego had held an event of any kind.

While some might feel overwhelmed by the challenge of rebuilding after the hiatus, McClelland sees opportunity.

“This is a grace-filled time when people are really hungry for community,” said McClelland, 30, who was introduced as president during the re-launch event. “Many people have experienced isolation and loneliness during the pandemic, and YCP San Diego offers them a place of belonging, encouragement and inspiration in their Catholic faith.”

McClelland, who attends St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Mission Hills, anticipates “exceptional growth in the months to come.”

Cort Peters, chair of YCP San Di-



COURTESY OF KENDRA MCCLELLAND

**MADAM PRESIDENT:** Kendra McClelland is the new president of Young Catholic Professionals' San Diego chapter.

ego's board of directors, is also bullish about the organization's future.

Not having a busy schedule of social events during the pandemic has drawn many people closer to God, said Peters, and that “renewal of faith” presents an opportunity “to make YCP stronger than ever” moving forward.

Peters said YCP San Diego's board of directors saw the formation of a new leadership team as their priority

and were “unanimous that (McClelland) would be the right person at the right time to lead.”

Before the pandemic, YCP San Diego hosted a monthly Executive Speaker Series, where young adult Catholics had opportunities to network and to listen to a guest speaker reflect on how he or she had successfully integrated faith and career. There were also quarterly happy hours and bian-

nual half-day retreats.

The re-launch event was primarily an occasion to explain the responsibilities of the various leadership positions with YCP San Diego and to encourage interested young adults to apply. McClelland expects to have the new leadership team in place soon — “and then, we'll get to work.”

She hopes to be hosting regular events once again by this fall.

Professionally, McClelland is in her fifth year with The Evangelical Catholic, a nonprofit that works with parishes, dioceses and other Catholic entities to train leaders in evangelization. She relocated from San Diego to Madison, Wisconsin, in the summer of 2017 to work for the organization. She returned to San Diego in August 2020 to lead its regional expansion on the West Coast.

McClelland, who earned a Master of Divinity from the Franciscan School of Theology in 2017, sees “so much complementarity” between the mission of The Evangelical Catholic and YCP. She noted that, in their own ways, both promote evangelization, which is the call of every baptized Christian.

“YCP is really seeking to empower young professionals to be Christ's hands and feet in the workplace and wherever they find themselves,” she said, “and I see that as the starting point for transforming our culture and society.”

More information  
about YCP San Diego  
is available at  
[ycpsandiego.org](http://ycpsandiego.org).



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**[LogosBibleStudy.com/groupstudy](http://LogosBibleStudy.com/groupstudy)**



# 'Amazing' Mass to Celebrate Young Faith

By Denis Grasska

The Diocese of San Diego's annual Young Adult Mass takes on added meaning this year, as the COVID pandemic winds down.

The diocesan liturgy, open to Catholics ages 18 to 39, will be celebrated at 6:30 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 15. It will be preceded by an hour of Eucharistic adoration, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

The Mass will be held inside The Immaculata Church, which is located on the campus of the University of San Diego, with Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano presiding and liturgical music provided by Imperial Valley native José Martínez.

Patrick Rivera, director of the diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry, noted that the Young Adult Mass typically draws between 500 and 600 young adults from all corners of the diocese, including the Imperial Valley.

He said this year's Mass, coming after a year and a half of social isolation, will provide a reminder of just how large and diverse the diocese's young adult population is.

"We're so used to seeing the people at our parish and maybe a few friends from other parishes," said Arla Sigarlaki, 35, who coordinates youth and young adult ministry at St. Michael Parish in Paradise Hills. "But seeing the immensity of how alive the diocese is, especially with young adults, I think that's what's so amazing" about the annual Mass.



**NOT ALONE:** Young adults pray inside The Immaculata Church during the diocese's annual Young Adult Adoration and Mass in 2019. This year, the event will be held Aug. 15, again at The Immaculata.

After months of keeping in touch primarily through Zoom and social media, Sigarlaki said, "To actually gather again as a community, to see everyone in person, to celebrate our faith and the Mass all together as one, I think it's kind of indescribable."

The Young Adult Mass was first celebrated in 2012. Last year, amid the COVID pandemic, it was held in October at St. Gabriel Parish in Poway, where a large courtyard and parking lot provided a safe worship space for more than 200 young adults.

Allan Mena, 25, is a member of St. Jude Shrine of the West Parish, where

he is part of the music ministry. He has attended the annual Young Adult Mass since 2017 and plans to attend this year's as well.

"We're not the future, but the present; we're the now," he said of young adults in the Church.

Mena explained what makes the Young Adult Mass so meaningful.

"It really opens up our eyes to see that we're not alone as young adults and that there are other young adults that are seeking Christ."

For Kierstin Rowell, 29, the upcoming Mass represents "a bit of a celebration of the fact that we've gotten

through all of that (pandemic) craziness and gotten to a point where we ... can all be in the same place, celebrating the liturgy together."

Because Catholics' faith is centered around the Eucharist, she said, "I think it's a really approachable way to return (to young adult events), but also I don't think there is a better way that we could."

**The Young Adult Mass will be on Sunday, Aug. 15, at The Immaculata Church.**



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## News Briefs

### Mass, Banquet to Celebrate St. Rose of Lima Centennial

St. Rose of Lima Parish in Chula Vista is celebrating the 100th anniversary of its founding with a series of events in August.

The highlight will be a centennial Mass and banquet on Aug. 28. The 4 p.m. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Robert McElroy. A catered banquet with live entertainment and a silent auction will follow the Mass.

Other centennial events include a "Taste of St. Rose," 5 p.m., Aug. 8, featuring different recipes from the parish community; a novena to St. Rose of Lima, 6 p.m. daily, Aug. 15-23; and a centennial fair, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Aug. 21, including games, food, entertainment, and the opportunity to meet local vendors, ministries and organizations.

For more information, and to RSVP for the Taste of St. Rose and centennial banquet events, visit [strosecv.com](http://strosecv.com) or contact the parish at (619) 427-0230.



### Local Serra Club Has New President

Faye Hammond was recently elected as president of Serra Club of San Diego-North Coast. She succeeds Gerald Roughan, who had served as president for the last five years.

The Serra Club fosters vocations to religious life, encouraging and supporting clergy and religious, and enriches the spiritual and social life of its members.

Hammond previously served as president of the Women's Auxiliary for St. Elizabeth Seton Parish and is the Oceanside Deanery president for the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.

Hammond also has raised funds for college scholarships for women, taught religious education for 25 years, and hosted the Miles Christi Bible Study in her home for two years.

Recalling her conversion to Catholicism 30 years ago, she said, "My desire for Communion became so great that I just had to become Catholic."



### Diocese Hosts Workshops for Catechists

The diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry is offering the following workshops this month:

- Sophia Institute Workshop: Exploring Catholic Social Teaching." 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday, Aug. 9
- Pre-Baptism Certification Course. 6:30 to 9 p.m., Tuesdays, Aug. 17 and 24
- New DCM (Director of Catechetical Ministry) Orientation. 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 25

To register for the Sophia Institute workshop or pre-baptism certification course, visit [sdcatholicdisciples.net](http://sdcatholicdisciples.net); to register for the DCM orientation, call (858) 490-8237.

### Panel Discussion to Reflect on Racial Equality

Pax Christi San Diego and St. James Parish's Faith in Action Committee will host a virtual panel discussion, "Bridging the Gaps of Racial Equity as a Faith Community," via Zoom on Tuesday, Aug. 10.

The interfaith event, which will run from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., will share personal experiences of inequity in the community and offer solutions for change. The featured speakers are Arturo Sotelo, a Catholic, who attends St. Leo Mission in Solana Beach; Yusef Miller, a Sunni Muslim who serves as community outreach liaison for the Islamic Society of North County; Chris Ibañez and Irene Koppel of Christians on the Outside; Judy Nakatomi of Vista Buddhist Temple & Order of Interbeing with the Plum Village Community of Thich Nhat Hanh; and Deanna Diaz of the Tonawanda Band of Seneca.

Special guest Kayla Bohan will speak about the mission of Urban Teachers to combat racial and socioeconomic inequality in urban schools.

The virtual panel discussion is being held as part of Interfaith Awareness Week, which is observed from Aug. 8 to 15.

For more information and the Zoom link, contact Christy at [christybohan@cox.net](mailto:christybohan@cox.net) or (760) 652-4035.

### Tree-Planting Campaign to Energize Youth

The Diocese of San Diego's Creation Care Ministry is offering a way for young people to take concrete action to protect the environment. This September, youth and young adults in every parish are invited to take part in a tree-planting campaign.

Participants will choose the type of tree from the lists provided in the registration form; pick a site for the tree on parish, school or private property; and indicate the size and price range preferred. Every 10th parish or person that registers will be awarded another free tree.

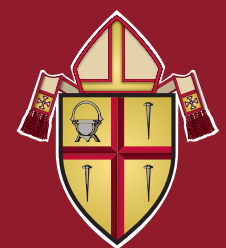
The tree-planting campaign coincides with the "Season of Creation," an annual ecumenical celebration that runs from Sept. 1 through Oct. 4. The season brings together Christians for reflection and action on behalf of the environment.

A Zoom conference, to be held in August, will explain the basics of tree-planting. Upon registering, participants will receive a PowerPoint presentation explaining "How to Plant and Care for Your Tree."

For more information, contact David Larom at [dlarom@sdsu.edu](mailto:dlarom@sdsu.edu).



## SUMMER/FALL 2021 Diocese of San Diego Office for Liturgy & Spirituality In-Person Workshops For Liturgical Ministers



### EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Saturday, August 7 | 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Saturday, November 13 | 9:00 am-1:00 pm

### MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Saturday, July 31 | 9:00 am-1:30 pm *plus*

Thursday, August 5 | 6:30-8:30 pm

Saturday, November 6 | 9:00 am-1:30 pm *plus*

Thursday, November 11 | 6:30-8:30p

### SACRISTAN TRAINING

Saturday, July 31 | 9:00 am-12:30 pm

Saturday, November 6 | 9:00 am-12:30 pm

LOCATION: Diocesan Pastoral Center | 3888 Paducah Drive San Diego, CA 92117

REGISTRATION: [sdcatholic.org/workshops](http://sdcatholic.org/workshops) for more information and to register online.

NO WALK-INS ACCEPTED



# New Song Celebrates Gifts of St. Joseph

By Denis Grasska



San Diegan Donna Lee is singing the praises of St. Joseph.

The Catholic singer-songwriter, who last year marked 30 years in music ministry, recently wrote and recorded "Song of St. Joseph."

With lyrics drawn primarily from the Litany of St. Joseph and other prayers, the song will debut at the upcoming Saint Joseph Summit, a free virtual conference that will be presented by Spirit Filled Hearts Ministry from Sept. 30 to Oct. 3.

"He's so special," Lee said of the subject of her song. "All our saints are special. But I think, with St. Joseph being the foster father of Jesus, he's all the more special to bring us closer to Jesus."

Though Lee's strong devotion to the Blessed Mother dates back to the 1980s, her devotion to St. Joseph is of recent vintage. Despite having made the occasional prayer to him over the years, she said, he had "never been on my radar."

That changed this year, when she read Father Donald Calloway's new book, "Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father." She is preparing to consecrate herself to St. Joseph on Aug. 21.

The Catholic Church is currently observing the Year of St. Joseph, as declared by Pope Francis. It began on Dec. 8, 2020, and will end on Dec. 8 of



**SAINTLY SOUNDS:** Donna Lee has written and recorded a song in honor of St. Joseph.

this year.

Lee was inspired to write her song on March 19, the Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin

Mary. But her creative juices stopped flowing after producing only about a paragraph's worth of lyrics, and she set the project aside.

She resumed her work on the eve of the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, which is observed on May 1, and she completed the song on the feast day itself.

"It really just came together, with the help of the Holy Spirit and St. Joseph," said Lee, a member of Holy Family Parish in Linda Vista.

On May 2, she shared her new song at a fundraiser for the Saint Joseph Summit, where it was well-received and adopted as the summit's theme song. At the suggestion of a fellow attendee, she incorporated into her song one of the seven new invocations that, with papal approval, had been added to the Litany of St. Joseph the previous day.

Lee recorded her vocals in late May and filmed a music video on June 26. The song is also being scored for music ministers and choir directors.

After its debut at the Saint Joseph Summit, the song will be available for download wherever digital music is sold.


Her prayer for the song is simple: "Lord, whatever Your will is for this song, let it be used for Your glory, to inspire people to learn more about St. Joseph and his role in our Catholic faith."

More information  
about Donna Lee and  
her music is available  
at [donnalee.ws](http://donnalee.ws).



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**WELCOME!** New members introduced themselves at the quarterly meeting of the diocese's Hispanic Commission on July 13 at the Pastoral Center. Commission members put the final touches on their conference planned for Aug. 9 and 10.

## Hispanic Conference Returns

By The Southern Cross



The diocese's Hispanic Commission returns to in-person events with a two-night conference for families

Aug. 9 and 10.

The Spanish-language conference, cancelled last year due to the pandemic, will feature two speakers. Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will address this year's theme, "The Mission: Sow with Love, Harvest with Joy." And Dr. Irma Covarrubias-Lugo, a family medicine physician, will share the latest about the vaccines against the coronavirus.

The commission is made up of representatives of parishes that celebrate Masses in Spanish.

The conference will be held from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Church, 8200 Gold Coast Drive, in Mira Mesa. Tickets are \$10 for both nights and may be bought at the door. Children 12 and under are free.

More information is available from Alejandra Diaz at (858) 490-8306 or [adiaz@sdccatholic.org](mailto:adiaz@sdccatholic.org), and at [sdccatholic.org/conferencia2021](http://sdccatholic.org/conferencia2021).



Aux. Bishop  
Ramón Bejarano



Dr. Irma  
Covarrubias-Lugo



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**

Yolanda C. Osuna	07/12/2021	Our Lady of Angels Church
Georgia M Mckearly	07/17/2021	Our Mother of Confidence
Richard D. Greenleaf	07/25/2021	St. Therese Parish
Robert Francis Hild	08/04/2021	Mission San Diego
Helene Hennessy	08/13/2021	Goodbody Mortuary Chapel
Ofelia M. Canedo	08/15/2021	Goodbody Mortuary Chapel
Peter Luu Ho	08/17/2021	Holy Spirit Catholic Church
Arturo Maniquis Rivera	08/18/2021	Goodbody Mortuary Chapel



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## Obituary

### Father Michael Ratajczak

Father Michael Ratajczak, pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Oceanside, died July 14. He was 72.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, he was ordained to the priesthood on Jan. 31, 1975, for the Archdiocese of Detroit. He ministered in Michigan until 1986. In early August of that year, he relocated to the Diocese of San Diego. He was incardinated into the diocese in early May 1990.

In the Diocese of San Diego, Father Ratajczak served as associate pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Encinitas and San Rafael Parish in Rancho Bernardo. He was later pastor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish in San Diego and Santa Sophia Parish in Spring Valley.

Father Ratajczak was pastor of St. Thomas More Parish in Oceanside from July 2003 until his death.

Bishop Robert McElroy shared news of Father Ratajczak's death in a letter to priests the following day. He said that, two weeks earlier, Father Ratajczak had called to inform him that his doctor had found a massive brain tumor and scheduled immediate surgery.

"He told me that he was ready in joy to continue to lead his parish community or to meet God," the bishop said, adding that Father Ratajczak never recovered from the surgery.

"His death is a great loss for our presbyterate, the parish community of St. Thomas More, and the family that loved him deeply."



## Priest Assignments

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

**Father C. Sylvester Nwutu** has been assigned as hospital chaplain at UCSD and Scripps Mercy hospitals, in residence at St. Joseph Cathedral, effective July 10.

With the permission of his superior, **Father Feliere Louis, CS**, has been assigned as associate pastor of St. Mary Parish, Escondido, effective July 24.

With the permission of his superior, **Father Andres Ernesto Torres, CJM**, has been assigned as associate pastor of St. Pius X Parish, Chula Vista, effective July 24.



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# Collapsed Building Is a Metaphor for Our Lives



The collapse of the Champlain Towers South condominium building on June 24 in the town of Surfside, Florida, touched us.

Weeks of intense efforts to rescue anyone who had survived have ended. On July 20, the death toll stood at 97, with some residents still missing.

I have felt many emotions as the images of the falling building were shown over and over again. They have led me to see the collapse as a metaphor for life.

A metaphor is a tool of language that invites us “to go further,” to compare a concrete reality with another reality that is more expansive. In this case, the reality of what happened with this building invites us to go further and think about our own lives.

During our life’s journey we build structures, beliefs, that lead us to think that we are protected, that we are strong and safe when we have accumulated wealth, material goods or a svelte figure. Along the way, we neglect to maintain the things that matter: love, friendship, respect, compassion and humility.

At some point, the emotional overload of frustrations, problems, illness or conflicts lead the structure of a person to crack and collapse, at times into depression and death.

**Associate Director,  
Family Life &  
Spirituality**

**Ricardo  
Márquez**



We saw diverse reactions to the tower’s collapse. Some asked, “Where is God in all of this?” Others expressed doubt and even rage at what happened, and the pain it caused. These feelings challenged the image of God that we cling to.

Others spoke of an “awakening,” of realizing what is important in life. Faced with the danger of the collapse, the first thing they did was rush outside to save the lives of those they could. They did not stop to look for a checkbook, or a safe, or clothes, or documents. Having to face the possibility of dying in an instant led them to value each instant of whatever life awaits them going forward.

It’s in moments such as these that the lights and shadows that accompany us as human beings truly emerge. The mother with broken hips who rescued her daughter from the rubble and escaped with her. The man who ran away and didn’t stop to open the door of people begging for help from inside. The first responders and search-and-rescue brigades from all



over the world who tirelessly worked to save, rescue and return the victims to their loved ones. That’s life: In an instant, we see who we are and who we could be.

This event, like the pandemic, continues to tell us that we are one, that we are connected, that we are not indifferent to pain, that what I do or stop doing matters to heal and elevate or to injure and divide. The option we take is in our hands.

This is my hope as the collapse begins to recede from the headlines:

that each of us is willing to reflect on our life, to appreciate it and to nurture it; that the sudden death of our brothers and sisters doesn’t leave us untouched; and that we continue to search for what is important, for “the hidden treasure” that gives meaning and joy to our life.

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



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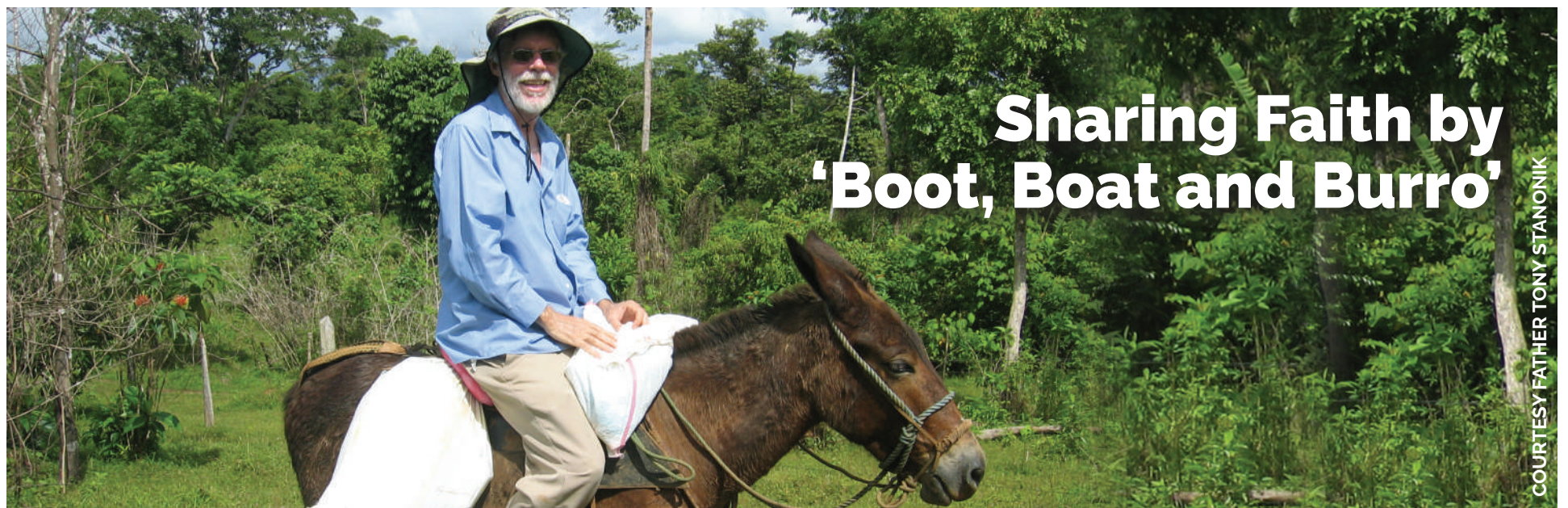
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**ON THE TRAIL:** Traveling among the 25 chapels entrusted to his pastoral care is not as simple as getting into a car for Father Tony Stanonik, a San Diego priest who ministers in Bluefields, Nicaragua.

By Denis Grasska



Father Tony Stanonik recently celebrated his 39th anniversary of priestly ordination.

He was ordained for the Diocese of San Diego on July 9, 1982. But he has served for more than 22 years in Nicaragua. He requested and received permission from the bishop of San Diego to serve as a missionary. He sees himself as “an outreach of our local Church,” essentially on “loan” to the bishop of Bluefields, Nicaragua.

Since 2003, he has been pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish in the Diocese of Bluefields on the Caribbean coast.

Father Stanonik spoke with *The Southern Cross* during his annual summer visit to San Diego, a trip that includes fundraising for projects for the Nicaraguan parish.

**Question: What did the Catholic faith mean to you as a youth?**

**Answer:** I was baptized Catholic, but wasn't in the practice of going to church.

It was in high school that I was searching for answers to questions like: What is the meaning of life?

We were studying (American poet Henry David) Thoreau, maybe in 11th grade, and his line “Most men lead lives of quiet desperation” really

Interview with:

**Father Tony Stanonik**



hit me between the eyes. That's the way most people live? That's horrible. What a waste!

I started going to church, and the Mass really captivated me. There was some powerful mystery at work there, even though I didn't quite understand it. I decided to go through catechism for first Communion and confirmation. For some people, it's the adolescent rebellion to not want to go to church, but for me it was to go to church.

**What did you find attractive about the priesthood?**

My experience in high school was a pretty profound moment in my life. It was pretty clear to me that, if I was going to get into this faith stuff, it was sort of an all-or-nothing decision. Priesthood seemed to be the “all” end of that possibility. In some ways, that's the very nature of love. If you love only halfway, what is that about?

**How did you end up in Nicaragua?**

I was feeling called to be a missionary in Cambodia. But a friend suggested that Nicaragua might be a good fit for me. I decided to go down there for three or four weeks to see what it was like.

That was in November of 1998. A week after I got there, Hurricane Mitch blew in and destroyed everything. Experiencing that tragic loss of life and property — not just the crops were washed away, but the soil was washed away — I thought, “Lord, if You need me here ...”

**How is being a pastor in Bluefields different than in San Diego?**

The big difference is it's not one church; it's 25 chapels. Just getting around is a big part of the challenge. I travel by boot, boat and burro.

From St. Martin de Porres Parish in the town of Bluefields, I go up to Pearl Lagoon to visit the communities along the edge of the lagoon. From there, I go further north up the River Wawashang, where there are 14 villages at last count. Some of them are right on the river, but others require a couple hours' journey inland.

I also take the ferry from Bluefields

out into the Caribbean Sea for about 50 miles, because there are some islands out there, too. The trip takes about six or seven hours.

**What have you learned from your parishioners in Nicaragua?**

The faith of the people just touches me deeply.

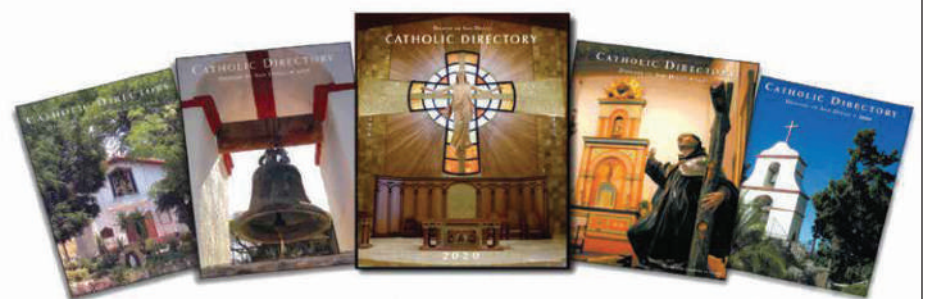
It's a lay Church. It's the delegates, who lead Sunday services, and the catechists who really keep the community going on a daily, weekly basis.

They are people with seemingly so little, but what a wealth of love, of family, of faith! What a generosity of spirit! It's humbling to be with them, and I just feel very honored to walk with them on their journey.

Support St. Martin de Porres Parish through the Missions Office: (858) 490-8250; missions@sdccatholic.org.



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## Cross Catholic Outreach Makes Addressing Food Crisis in Nicaragua a Ministry Priority

Hunger is clearly on the increase in the developing countries of the world — in some cases as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic — and Catholic leaders are working diligently to provide the hardest hit communities with relief.

For one of the larger Catholic ministries involved in this effort, addressing the hardships faced by the poor in Nicaragua has become a special priority [see story on opposite page], and American Catholics are being encouraged to join their cause.

“As a ministry, we are always striving to make poor families self-sufficient, but there are always times — particularly after a natural disaster or a crisis like this — when help with food is necessary,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, one of the key ministries involved in overseas outreaches. “At times like these, parents face incredible stresses, not knowing how they will provide their children with the next meal.”

The reason Cross Catholic Outreach chose to focus on Nicaragua is clear to anyone familiar with the country’s level of poverty. Sandwiched between Honduras and Costa Rica, Nicaragua has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world and the third lowest per capita income in the Western Hemisphere. Its families are plagued by high unemployment and a low literacy rate, so most struggle to survive on next to nothing.

“The men and women living in the remotest parts of Nicaragua typically scrape together a living by working as field hands — the only job available for someone with little education and no skills training. Basic services provided by the government, such as health care,

are often located too far away for people to use. Children rarely attend school because their parents can’t afford the supplies, uniforms and registration fees needed to attend ‘free’ public school,” Cavnar said. “As we investigated the situation in remote areas of the country, we learned that families often didn’t have enough food to last a full week, so their children would routinely skip meals. The COVID-19 pandemic only made things worse. It was clear to us these communities were in desperate need of a God-sized solution to their hunger problem, so we stepped in to help local Church leaders provide food and hope to these struggling families.”

Fortunately, Cross Catholic Outreach excels at addressing problems like this, and its methods are both empowering and cost-effective. Wherever possible, the ministry works through existing parishes or Catholic missions to solve problems, which means an existing infrastructure can be used for distribution and most of a supportive donor’s contribution can be used to obtain food, medicines and the other tangible items the poor need.

“While in-country ministries are well positioned to help the poor, they are



*Tragically, children are often at the greatest risk of malnutrition during a food crisis. For that reason, Cross Catholic Outreach makes serving them a priority.*

usually operating with a very limited budget, so they must rely on us for food, medicines and other important resources,” Cavnar explained. “We communicate a mission’s needs to American Catholics and use the donations of those friends to obtain and ship what the in-country ministries have requested. It’s an incredibly effective program because it supplies a mission with the specific items it needs to supercharge its work. It is especially important to feeding programs.”

Cavnar added that supporting feeding programs is critical because hunger can

easily lead to malnutrition, and extreme cases can do serious physiological harm, producing lasting physical and mental damage — even death in some cases.

“As Americans, it’s hard for us to imagine a child suffering from stunted growth or permanent mental damage for lack of food, but that can and does happen in developing countries because the poverty is that extreme,” he said. “That is why we consider providing food to at-risk children our highest priority.”

**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. AC01758, 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.**

### The Impact of Poverty in Nicaragua

**Economy:** Though the unemployment rate is 5.6%, underemployment is at 46.5%. This means the average income of families living in rural Nicaragua is less than \$500 annually.

**Poverty:** About 48% of the population lives below the poverty line.

**Education:** Only 67% of the population can read and write.

**Malnutrition:** 22% of children under 5 suffer stunted growth due to inadequate nutrition and lack of food.

## Legacy Giving Provides Catholics With Unique Opportunity to Bless Others

If you are like many Catholics born in the 1950s or before, you have probably begun to think about the spiritual legacy your life and actions represent. What did we care about? What did we value? These are some of the things we hope will be remembered.

“For a growing number of Catholics, this introspection has led to the exploration of ‘legacy giving’ — the use of one’s will, trust, life insurance or retirement policies to leave behind an echo of one’s beliefs, deeds and values — a blessing of others that will reverberate beyond our

own lifetime, hopefully influencing our family and others we cherish,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, an official Catholic relief and development charity with a staff dedicated to such estate planning.

According to Cavnar, Cross Catholic Outreach has helped many Catholics establish these “legacy gifts” and expects them to play a significant role in future ministry missions.

“A will or trust can also reflect a person’s special heart for a country or for an area of need. It can be used to

build houses for poor families or to build classrooms to educate children, for example,” Cavnar said. “Others simply want to help the poorest of the poor and make their legacy gift for that purpose. It’s their way of saying, ‘As a Catholic, I value life and support works of mercy. I want my family to understand that calling and believe in it too.’ And because legacy gifts can be quite large, they often achieve incredible things. A single one might build an entire school or fund the construction of hundreds of homes. It’s producing an amazing

impact, and serves as an incredible testament to the faith of the giver.”

In addition to this service, Cross Catholic Outreach’s staff can also support donors seeking to establish a charitable gift annuity, charitable remainder trust or special endowment. Financial planners can also obtain information to help those who seek professional counsel or have donor-advised funds.

To learn more about these services, the charity recommends readers visit its special online portal at [CrossCatholicLegacy.org](http://CrossCatholicLegacy.org).



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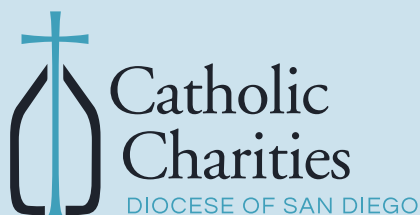


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## Dear Friends and Family of Catholic Charities:

As we embrace each other in this summer of reemergence, the emotions are raw and overwhelming. The immense joy, relief, and happiness we now feel from a simple embrace gives us pause to reflect.

While we are thankful for technology and the ability to see loved ones on a screen, standing six feet apart—and for so many, a state, country, or ocean away—created a barrier to the physical presence and connection that we now realize is so important and vital to our emotional wellbeing.

We all lived in fear and suffered out of love, especially when it came to protecting our senior and elderly family members who were and still are most vulnerable to the virus. Meanwhile, they were hurting and longing to reunite with us. That is what makes that first step off the plane, or that first knock on the door—followed by that first embrace—so powerful.

For seniors, the pandemic brought deep despair and isolation. One study found that one in four adults ages 65 and older reported anxiety or depression. In that same study, nearly half of adults ages 65 and older said the worry and stress harmed their mental health. This amid the reality of the virus itself. Adults ages 65 and older account for 16% of the U.S. population, yet 80% of COVID-19 deaths in the country.

I was brought to tears when I spoke with a woman named Billie in Imperial County. Billie is an example of a quiet crisis in America that was growing before COVID and has since accelerated during the pandemic: middle-class hunger.

When Billie receives Catholic Charities' food deliveries to her home, she eats. In the meantime, she waits. She is one of many in Imperial County who are hanging on by a thread. Before Billie was referred to us, she had once gone five days without food, finally turning to the only food on hand: cat food. She foresees the looming possibility that she could one day lose her home. However, her spirit and outlook on life is positive and contagious as she works to live her best life.

Then there is Rosa, also in Imperial County. She came to our women's shelter, House of Hope, in unbearable physical pain and was later diagnosed with cervical cancer. The day before her surgery, Rosa pulled a friend and fellow participant at House of Hope to the side. "If I don't come back, you can have my clothes," Rosa told the woman. "They're clean and we both wear the same size." During the pandemic Rosa defeated cancer while going through treatment and staying at House of Hope.

Neither Billie nor Rosa have family members who were able to care for them. Even if they had, they wouldn't have been able to safely visit and assist in person. I hope you will take time to read both Billie's and Rosa's stories on our website.

Melanie, a participant at Catholic Charities' Rachel's Women's Center in downtown San Diego has lived an unbelievably hard life. A drug dealer killed her son. Her husband died from a brain aneurysm—Melanie was tasked with the excruciating decision to take him off life support. She has experienced loss, rape, drugs and abuse. Rachel's helped her stay clean, safe, and soon she will move into permanent housing. Last March, Melanie was isolated for a month with COVID-19 symptoms but, there were no available tests. She had two scares with seasonal allergies and the third time she did end up contracting the virus but endured those 2 weeks with mild symptoms. She is thankful that she had a safe place to stay during the pandemic; off the streets and away from the demons that lived there freely during the world shut down.

Lan, a 91-year-old woman who lives in senior residential housing, said she was immensely fearful of COVID because she has breast cancer. But moreover, she felt deeply saddened that she wasn't able to see and celebrate with her children during the holidays. The special sleepovers only a grandmother could hold were canceled along with the hugs and personal interactions.

Stories like these are countless. We all experienced loss over the last 17 months, loss of touch, loss of friendly in person conversations, loss of celebrations and for some loss of family members that we could not grieve properly with a goodbye. That is why Catholic Charities continues to provide food, shelter, and services for these seniors and so many others—just like we have been for over a century.

Catholic Charities San Diego needs your local support now to sustain and expand these programs, which were essential long before the world labeled them as such and will continue to be crucial in our communities going forward. As we begin our "new" normal lives we hope that our dedication to continue to serve the most vulnerable in our communities is supported by our neighbors and friends.

Donate today through mail or by visiting [ccdspd.org/giving](https://ccdspd.org/giving).

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**Appaswamy "Vino" Pajanor**  
Chief Executive Officer