

# THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

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## Why Go to Mass?

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**GREATEST GIFT:** The Diocese of San Diego is launching an initiative to help the faithful to rediscover the riches of the Mass, none greater than the Eucharist.



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Catholic Charities working to resettle Afghan families locally. **Page 2**



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As students return, Catholic schools remain vigilant against contagious Delta variant. **Page 4**



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Diocese launches sweeping climate plan for individuals, parishes and schools. **Page 9**

## Keeping the Faith

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



# Agency Receiving Afghan Families

**RESPIRE:** A family from Afghanistan that Catholic Charities is helping to settle in the San Diego area sat down on Aug. 19 to share their story with the news media, including The Southern Cross and Abbie Alford from CBS News 8. The patriarch worked with the U.S. military for 19 years.

By Denis Grasska



Many Afghans risked their lives by assisting the U.S. in its two-decade-long war against the Taliban.

Now that the U.S. military has pulled out of Afghanistan and the Taliban has regained control of the country, those stalwart allies and their families are in grave danger. The total number could be around 100,000 people, according to one international aid agency.

Nadine Toppozada, director of Refugee and Immigration Services with Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego, said the U.S. owes them a debt for the lives that have been saved as a result of their help — and it's time to pay them back.

"It's our responsibility to honor our promise ... of bringing them and their families to safety and not leaving them behind," she said.

As a refugee resettlement agency, Catholic Charities is a key player in that mission across the nation. The federally funded program is supplemented by donations.

Afghans formerly employed by the U.S. government are eligible for Special Immigrant Visas. Catholic Charities staffers meet arriving families at the airport, transport them to a furnished apartment, supply them with food and basic household items, and provide 90 days of services, including health assessments and assistance with enrolling the children in school and helping the adults to find employment.

The agency has been resettling Afghan immigrants for years. It typically had welcomed two to three families per month, she said, but it is now receiving that many per week.

One of those families was at the Catholic Charities Refugee Services office in Grantville on Aug. 19.

Asif, 46, had worked with the U.S. military for 19 years

until this past June. He and his family — including his wife, Hanifa, and their six children — came to the U.S. on Special Immigrant Visas. They arrived at Los Angeles International Airport on July 13, about a month before the Afghan government fell to the Taliban. They were transported by bus to San Diego International Airport, where they were met by Catholic Charities staff.

Asif's 18-year-old son, Ismail, who has English proficiency thanks to eight months of study before the COVID pandemic, acted as a translator and spokesperson for his family.

He relayed his father's surprise at how quickly Afghanistan had fallen.

"We didn't believe that, in a few days, (there would be a) take-over by (the) Taliban," he said.

Ismail expressed his family's gratitude for being in the United States, where they would be safe and where he and his siblings will be able to continue their education.

"We're happy to come here because we are feeling safe," he said.

Two of Ismail's sisters shared that they wanted to study medicine and become doctors, something that would have been impossible under the Taliban, which restricted women's education when it previously ruled the country from 1996 to 2001.

Ismail said that the Taliban had killed two of his father's uncles and that his father had been "lucky to escape" from an attack.

**Catholic Charities seeks volunteers to help the arriving Afghan families, many of whom speak English. Information available at [ccdsd.org/refugee-services](http://ccdsd.org/refugee-services).**



# Desperate Need

Residents of Camp-Perrin receive food from the World Food Program near Les Cayes, Haiti, on Aug. 19. U.S. bishops are holding a special collection to help Haitians recover from the magnitude-7.2 earthquake that struck Aug. 14, killing nearly 2,200 people, injuring around 12,000, and leaving thousands homeless. Faithful of the San Diego Diocese may contribute by visiting [sdccatholic.org/Haiti](http://sdccatholic.org/Haiti).

# Priority Program Challenges Myths Youth Have

By Denis Grasska



To an audience of local Catholic school educators

and catechists, Jesuit Father Robert Spitzer shared the sobering statistic that 42 percent of young people will become unbelievers before age 25.

And almost half of them will do so “for one reason only” — the misguided notion that faith and science are incompatible, he said during a presentation July 31 at Good Shepherd Church in Mira Mesa.

But Father Spitzer, a theologian and physicist, wasn’t simply pointing out problems. He was sharing a potential solution in the form of Credible Catholic ([crediblecatholic.com](http://crediblecatholic.com)), a free educational curriculum for middle school and high school that he developed through his nonprofit organization The Magis Center.

“Sacred Scripture was never meant to do science, and science was never meant to do Sacred Scripture,” he said, noting that the two fields “complement one another perfectly.”

The purpose of Credible Catholic is “to give the kids a fighting chance” to keep their Catholic faith in “a culture that is progressively trying to use science — wrongly — to prove secularism,” explained Father Spitzer, a former president of Gonzaga University.

This year, Creative Catholic will be implemented in Catholic schools and parish religious education programs throughout the Diocese of San Diego. Parish catechists and school teachers will begin by teaching Module 2, “Evidence of God’s Existence from Science,” which uses the science of the Big Bang, entropy, the “fine-tuning” of the universe for habitability, among other things to argue for the necessity of an Intelligent Creator.

The California Conference of Catholic Bishops unanimously endorsed adopting Credible Catholic, which consists of a series of online video modules accompanied by teacher workbooks and sample lesson plans, said John Galvan, director of the diocesan Office for Schools. But the San Diego Diocese is the first diocese in the state to implement it.

“We’re really taking this on as a priority for our kids,” said Galvan, who stressed the urgency by noting that the median age for religious disaffiliation is age 13.

The diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry will be hosting additional workshops in September and October to assist catechists in implementing the Credible Catholic curriculum. There will be three workshops in English on Sept. 15, 23 and 27, and two workshops in Spanish on Sept. 21 and Oct. 6. Details are available at [sdcatholic.org/faithandscience](http://sdcatholic.org/faithandscience).

During his July 31 presentation,



**COLLABORATION:** Catechists and Catholic school teachers attended a July 31 workshop at Good Shepherd Parish on a curriculum that teaches the compatibility of faith and science. It included presentations by its creator, Jesuit Father Robert Spitzer (pictured below), and two breakout sessions.



THE MAGIS CENTER

Father Spitzer did not limit himself to the content of Module 2, but shared some of the analytical data that the other modules offer to dispel erroneous assumptions about faith and science.

For example, he noted that many youth believe that a majority of scientists are atheists. Credible Catholic refutes this with hard numbers, including polling data showing that 51 percent of scientists believe in God, 73 percent of physicians believe in miracles, and 76 percent of physicians

are religious or spiritual.

Lessons also show that, far from being an enemy of science, the Catholic Church and its members have been responsible for some of the most significant discoveries. Examples include Augustinian friar Gregor Mendel, who is recognized as the father of modern genetics, and Father Georges Lemaitre, who proposed the Big Bang theory.

Credible Catholic also covers miraculous phenomena that science has been unable to explain, as well as reports on near-death experiences from peer-reviewed medical journals that provide compelling evidence for the existence of a transphysical soul.

Bethanny McGuire, a middle school teacher at Nazareth School, attended the July 31 workshop. She appreciated the statistics that Father Spitzer provided and felt they were something that would resonate with students.

“I teach history, and so one of the big things is evaluating the sources — who’s saying it, why are they saying it, what’s the purpose?” said McGuire. “And I think this (curriculum) will give (students) that religious foundation to combat some of the things that they see in secular society.”

Elena Platas, director of religious education at St. Didacus Parish, said

the evidence that Father Spitzer provided for the existence of the soul was “eye-opening.”

Lamenting that so many Catholic youth stop practicing the faith after receiving the sacrament of confirmation, she sees the information provided by the Credible Catholic curriculum as a way to address this situation.

Diocesan Chancellor Marioly Galván, who directs the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry, said some diocesan schools have been piloting the program in advance of the diocese-wide implementation. Principals, teachers and catechists who have done so “speak very highly of the program.”

“They’re very positive and upbeat that it’s being implemented diocesan-wide,” she said.

One of those teachers is June Poling. At the July 31 workshop, where she led one of the breakout sessions, Poling said she felt like “part of something that’s going to be really big.”

At St. Michael’s School in Poway, she has been teaching Credible Catholic’s Module 1, “Evidence of a Soul from Medical Studies,” to eighth-grade science students. She has taught Module 2, focused on scientific arguments for God’s existence, as part of seventh-grade science.

Her colleague, Dawn Wright, has been incorporating Modules 3 through 7 into her middle school religion classes.

Poling recalled a student reaction from her first year of teaching Module 1.

“There’s this one student whose eyes just lit up and she says, ‘It’s real, it’s real, Jesus is real.’ And that was, to me, a huge defining moment.”



COURTESY OECM

The diocese has created a webpage at [sdcatholic.org/faithandscience](http://sdcatholic.org/faithandscience) to assist educators as they implement the curriculum. More information is available at [crediblecatholic.com](http://crediblecatholic.com).



# Joy of New School Year Tempered by Virus

By Denis Grasska



Catholic schools throughout the diocese welcomed students back for a new academic year.

Though public health authorities have loosened many of the restrictions imposed to slow the spread of COVID-19, local Catholic school leaders aren't letting their guard down — especially with the highly contagious Delta variant sweeping the country.

John Galvan, director of the Office for Schools, said the diocese is adopting “the same strategy” of close adherence to state and county health guidance that proved successful last year.

Masks continue to be required indoors, he said, and all school employees must provide proof of vaccination or be tested weekly for COVID-19.

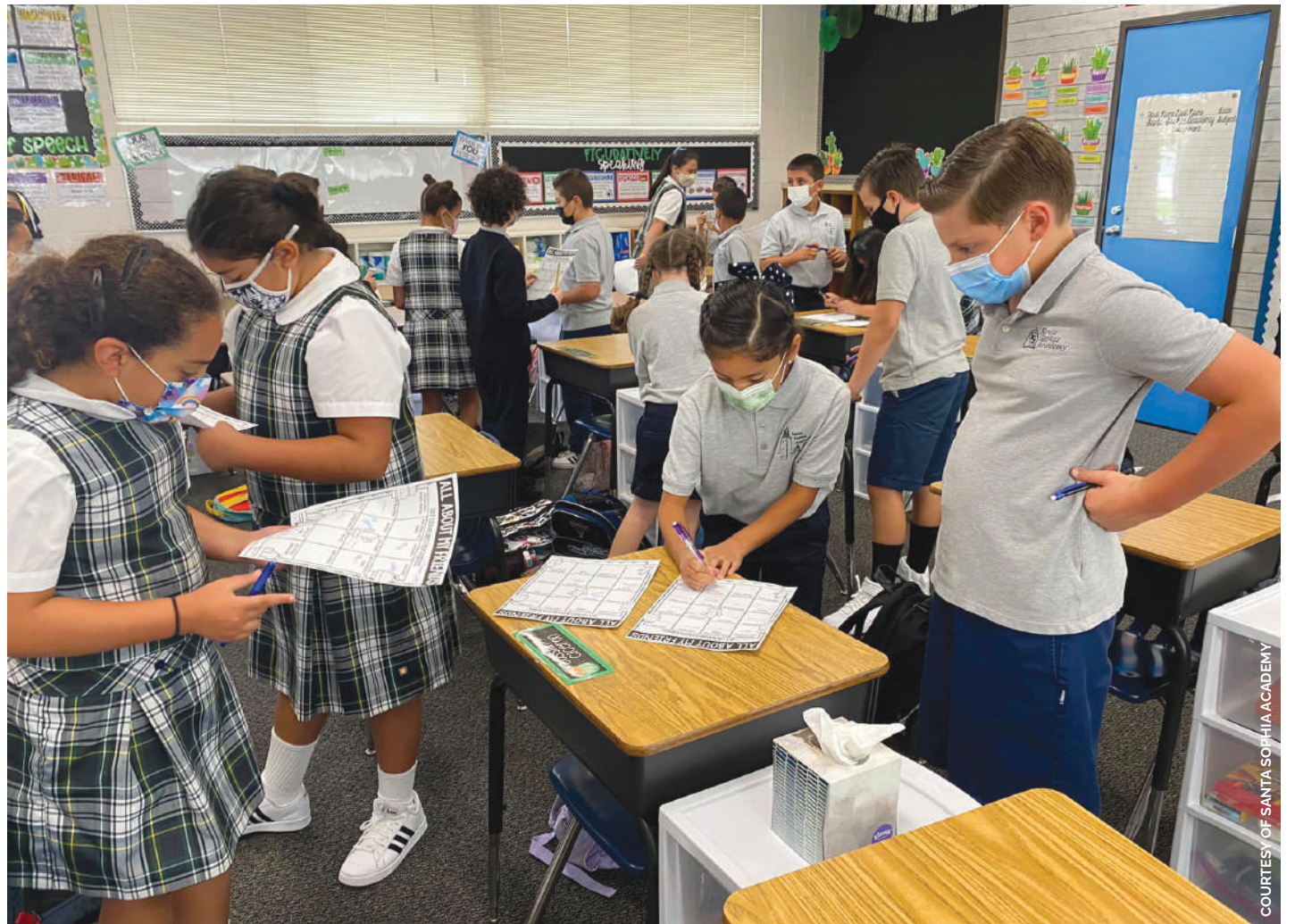
Amidst the challenges of the pandemic, however, there are encouraging signs of growth and vitality at the schools.

For instance, after years of adding one elementary grade level each year, Mater Dei Catholic is now the first Catholic school in the diocese to offer education from transitional kindergarten through 12th grade. There are 1,043 students at the high school; an additional 446 elementary school students attend Mater Dei Juan Diego Academy.

Like many Catholic schools in the diocese, St. Rita's School is experiencing a large jump in enrollment this year. And, in late 2021, a campus renovation project will transform a parking lot and playground into the site of a grassy field, basketball court and art studio. Other schools like St. Mary's in Escondido and St. Columba in San Diego also were blessed with renovations and enhancements this school year.

At Cathedral Catholic High School, the new school year was supposed to begin Aug. 16, but was delayed one week after a community member tested positive for COVID-19.

“No one wanted to start the school year this way,” said Dr. Kevin Calkins, president of Cathedral Catholic. “But



**GROWTH:** Catholic schools throughout the diocese are seeing increasing enrollment. The fourth grade class at Santa Sophia Academy began the current school year with seven new students.

COVID is still around, and we need to be humble about its impact.”

Speaking to *The Southern Cross* on Aug. 19, three days after classes began at Mater Dei Catholic High School, Principal Frank Stingo said the school had already encountered its first positive COVID case of the new school year. Close contacts were identified and quarantined.

“We keep asking all of our students, and faculty, and everybody — our whole community — to continue to remain vigilant and protect each other,” he said. “We’re in this together.”

Sylvia Benning, principal of St. Charles School in Imperial Beach, is “more apprehensive” about this year because of the combination of the Delta variant’s contagiousness and the loosening of restrictions.

“We’re following almost the exact

protocols (on campus that) we did last year, even though the (Centers for Disease Control) has relaxed pretty much every guideline except for masking,” Benning said, noting that students will continue to maintain 6 feet of physical distancing, sit at desks surrounded by transparent plastic screens, and regularly use the more than 20 handwashing stations.

St. Charles’ students returned to school Aug. 18. By Aug. 20, there already were “a couple of incidents” of COVID cases associated with members of the school community who had contracted the virus off-campus and needed to quarantine, Benning said.

At St. Rita’s School, which resumed classes Aug. 23, Principal Gina Olsen said that one of the challenges this year is that many parents are “already

a little tired” of COVID protocols, especially those fully vaccinated.

“But our outlook has not changed,” said Olsen, whose school also is keeping in place the same safety measures employed last year.

St. Rita’s is experiencing an increase in enrollment. In addition to families that have transferred from public schools, newcomers include former students from St. Michael’s Academy in Paradise Hills, which closed last summer.

Last year, many schools offered a distance-learning option. Though this year represents a return to mostly in-person instruction, schools like St. Katharine Drexel Academy continue to offer distance-learning. All schools will ensure uninterrupted learning for any quarantined students.

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# School Returns to Campus After Year Away

By Roman Flores



CALEXICO — Eighteen months of virtual learning came to an end for students at Vincent Memorial Catholic High School as the Imperial Valley's only Catholic high school began the new academic year on campus.

The school had to shut its gates to students in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fundraising efforts continued, however, to both modernize its classroom building and add a new one that now houses eight classrooms, said its principal, Sister Lupita Hernández, SJS.

On the first day of school on Aug. 18, the students — all donning face-masks — asked for directions to their new classes at the front office or from staff members walking by.

"They're practically almost coming to a new school (because) nothing looks the same as when they left," the principal said. "We're really happy and excited about it."

The campus facelift has bolstered enrollment, she said. As of the first day of the new academic year, 300 students are enrolled at the school, compared to 265 last year.

In addition to the classrooms, the new building will house a chapel, in the process of being furnished. The principal hopes to have it ready for use for Mass on campus by December.

Some teachers were ecstatic the virtual classes are over, saying it is much



**NEW HOME:** Students at the only Catholic high school in the Imperial Valley, Vincent Memorial in Calexico, returned to campus for the first time in 18 months on Aug. 18.

easier for students to concentrate in person than behind a computer.

"Zooming is the worst thing they ever invented and it's good to get back to person-to-person" instruction, said Dennis Jacobelli, veteran religion

teacher and long-time sports coach.

"They want to be with their friends ... and be able to interact during the day," he said. "You would think for a student (they would say), 'I liked it better when I could get out of bed at 9

in the morning and just turn my computer on' but no, they're happy (to be on campus)."

His colleague, science teacher Raziel Lizarraga, agreed.

"We have to take into consideration that some of the students have not been in class for a year and a half," he said. "That means that the incoming freshman haven't been in class since seventh grade; it's been all online."

Lizarraga plans to focus on their introduction to the social-emotional aspects of being in high school.

"It feels like I have to shepherd them out of the isolated, non-social environment into interacting with other teenagers."

Lizarraga said that getting the students up to speed in their biology and chemistry studies would be easy in the new building with its "laboratory-driven" equipment that they can use to learn by doing experiments and more.

Both teachers and their principal said they hope their students return to some sense of "normalcy" now that they are back on campus, despite the ongoing COVID precautions.

"We're going to be taking care of ourselves, so hopefully we continue (on campus) throughout the whole year," the principal concluded.

An extended version of this story is available at [thesoutherncross.org/092105](https://thesoutherncross.org/092105).



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## Parish to Host 9/11 Memorial Concert

OCEANSIDE — To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the terror attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, St. Thomas More Parish is presenting “Moments of Silence and Music, Remembering a Historic American Day: Sept. 11, 2001.”

The 70-minute concert, featuring the Concordia Wind Orchestra with Jeff Held as conductor, will be held at 1 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 11, at the parish.

There will be a Presentation of Colors by the Oceanside Fire Department, with bagpipes playing “Taps” and “Amazing Grace.”

The San Diego County Sheriff’s Department and the California Highway Patrol will be participating.

While there is no charge, a \$10 donation is suggested to help defray costs. Masks are recommended at this function for everyone, regardless of vaccination status, in accordance with CDC and county guidelines.

St. Thomas More Parish is located at 1450 South Melrose Drive, Oceanside 92056. For more information, contact Theresa Harris at [theresah@stmoside.org](mailto:theresah@stmoside.org) or (760) 758-4100.

# Masses Celebrate Key Community

By Denis Grasska



The Diocese of San Diego appreciates its catechists.

That’s the message behind the diocesan Commissioning Mass held each year shortly before the annual observance of Catechetical Sunday.

This month, Bishop Robert McElroy will celebrate two Commissioning Masses, one each for teachers of the faith in San Diego and Imperial counties. The first will be celebrated Sept. 9 in the diocesan Pastoral Center’s chapel, the second on Sept. 13 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in Imperial. Both Masses will include a special blessing for the catechists.

“This is a moment to come together to reaffirm and celebrate the vocation of catechists,” diocesan Chancellor Marioly Galván said of the annual event, which will run from 6:30 to 9 p.m., with the Mass followed by a presentation by Bishop McElroy and a small reception.

Galván also serves as director of the diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry, which organizes the Commissioning Mass each year. The Office for Schools, the Office for Youth Ministry, and the Office for Liturgy and Spirituality help promote the event.

She sees the Commissioning Mass as a way to “kick off the catechetical year,” which officially begins on the third Sunday of September, or Catechetical Sunday.



**SENT FORTH:** Catechists came together in prayer and fellowship at the annual diocesan Commissioning Mass, which marks the beginning of the catechetical year, in this photo from 2016.

About 200 to 250 people are expected to attend the Commissioning Mass in San Diego and about 150 in the Imperial Valley.

“It’s very important to continue to foster that sense of community,” said Galván, reflecting on the fellowship that is a key feature of the annual event. “Now, more than ever, it’s important to be together, to be and feel as one community.”

Linda Arreola, one of the diocese’s master catechists, said that attending the Commissioning Mass is “a way of renewing and deepening, not only our baptismal call but also our call as missionary disciples to serve God and one another.”

“It is important to attend this beautiful celebration because the pastoral activity of the Church needs many lay people from our communities,” said Vicky D. Jiménez, who serves as religious education director at Our Lady of Refuge Parish in Pacific Beach.

“The ministry of the catechist is irreplaceable,” she said, “and we ask the Holy Spirit to give us the grace to continue in service.”

For more information about the Commissioning Mass or to register, visit [sdcatholicdisciples.net](http://sdcatholicdisciples.net).



# SUNDAY

## September 26, 2021

**OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY**  
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**2:00 PM**  
Video of Fatima Basilica  
Rosary — Confessions

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Auxiliary Bishop of San Diego

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# Small Neighborhood Groups Make Big Impact

By Denis Grasska



Eighteen years ago, as a parish priest, Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan created "Christ in Our Neighborhood."

The Scripture study program utilizes the "small church community" concept, bringing together groups of about 10 or fewer Catholics in private homes for weekly reflection on the upcoming Sunday Mass readings.

Bishop Dolan doesn't claim to have created anything revolutionary.

"It's certainly not the only game in town and it's certainly not the most unique idea," he said.

Yet it does seem to have satisfied a hunger. Since starting at St. Rose of Lima Parish in Chula Vista, the program has spread to multiple parishes in the diocese in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. These include St. Michael's Parish in Poway, where more than 55 groups have been active at the same time, as well as Our Mother of Confidence, St. Charles and St. Martin of Tours parishes.

Last year proved that Christ in Our Neighborhood can work virtually. (Bishop Dolan currently leads two groups on Saturday mornings via Zoom.) But with the loosening of COVID-safety restrictions, an effort is underway to bring back in-person groups and expand the program.

On Saturday, Sept. 25, the diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry will host "Christ in Our Neighborhood: Break Open the Word." The workshop, presented by Bishop



**LIKE THE MUSTARD SEED:** "Small church community" groups provide opportunities for weekly reflection on Scripture and for fellowship.

Dolan, will run from 9 a.m. to noon at the Holy Family Center at St. Michael's Parish in Poway. It will model a typical meeting of Christ in Our Neighborhood and equip attendees to form new groups for the Advent season.

The concept behind Christ in Our Neighborhood is simple. A small group meets in the group leader's home for about an hour each week for a set number of weeks. Using guides available on the Christ in Our Neighborhood website, the group reads and discusses the following Sunday's Mass readings.

The printable guides — available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese — include an opening prayer; a brief commentary and discussion question for each reading; a suggested weekly task, such as striving to arrive at Mass 15 to 20 minutes early or to make the Sign of the Cross when eating in public; a group prayer; and that week's

Responsorial Psalm. Each week's session concludes with the recitation of the Our Father.

"I think it's an invitation to a fuller participation in the life of the Church," Bishop Dolan said.

Alice Beas, who serves as lead facilitator of a Christ in Our Neighborhood group at St. Michael's Parish, agrees.

"When you're at Mass on Sunday, everything just makes so much more sense, and you remember what everybody talked about (during the group meeting), and you're looking forward to hearing the homily ... to hear what (the priest) says about it," she said.

Beas said the groups have forged human connections among fellow parishioners who otherwise might not have entered into conversation with one another, and group participants end up with another 10 people they can "give a big hug (to) at Mass."

Jane Cruz Alfano, of St. Luke Parish

in El Cajon, has been attending one of Bishop Dolan's Saturday morning groups.

She said the program offers the opportunity "to share our faith with our peers; learn more content of our faith, particularly Scripture; and make us better disciples."

Her group has also allowed her to interact with Catholics from other parishes.

"I've had that benefit of meeting with other Catholics throughout the diocese and sharing our faith together," she said, "and it just gives you a feel of the larger Church."

Originally only a Lenten Bible study, Christ in Our Neighborhood has expanded to cover all Sundays of the year and the three-year cycle of liturgical readings. Unlike many other Scripture study programs, Christ in Our Neighborhood is free.

While the program runs yearlong, it consists of multiple series, many of which are only six weeks long. So, participants need not make a long-term commitment.

"If anybody is debating whether to join a (Christ in Our Neighborhood) group, join a group," advised Beas. "Don't be shy. It is hands-down the best thing that you can do to enrich your Catholic life."

More information about Christ in Our Neighborhood is available at [christ-ion.com](http://christ-ion.com). Register for the Sept. 25 training workshop at [sdcatholicdisciples.net](http://sdcatholicdisciples.net).



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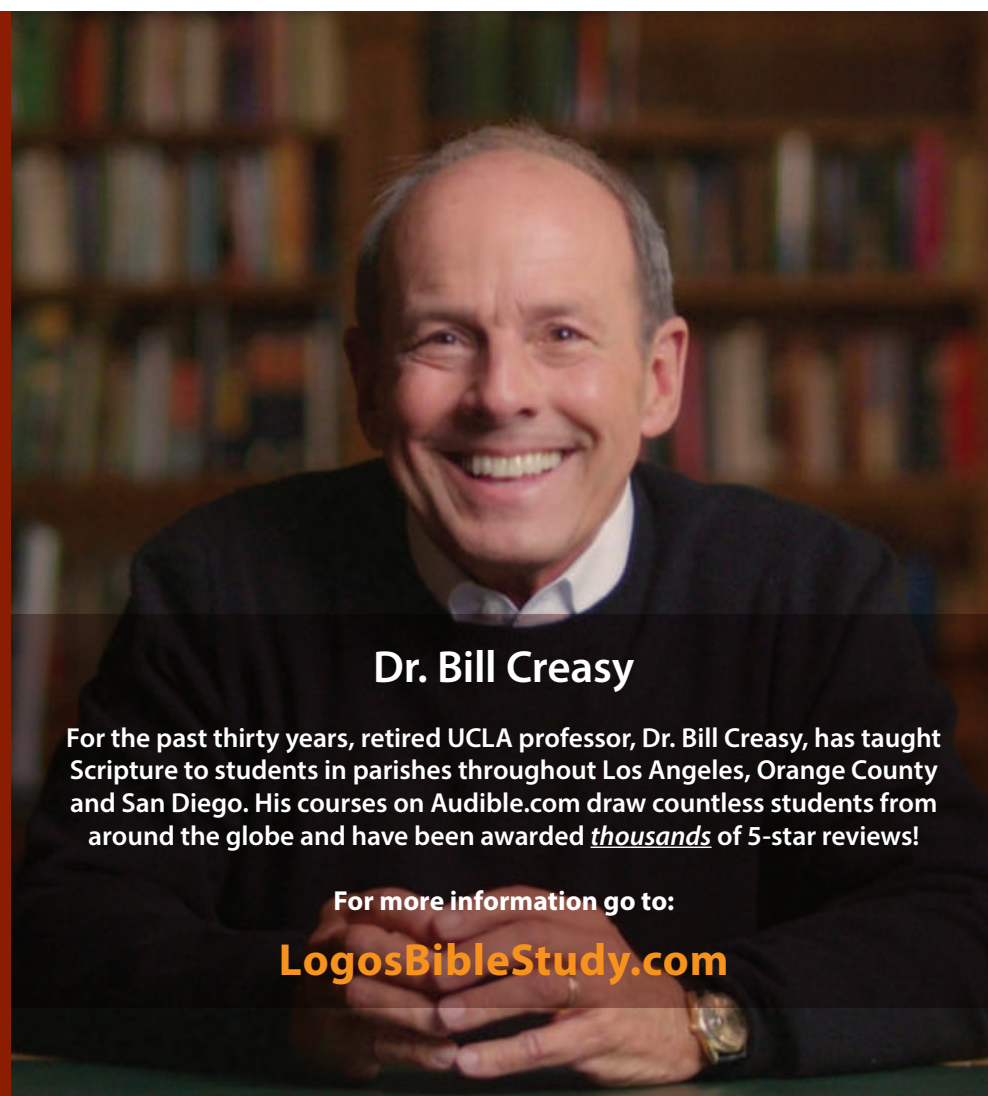
**Where:** Mission San Diego de Alcalá  
St. Francis Chapel  
10818 San Diego Mission Road  
San Diego, CA 92108

**When:** September 8 – October 27, 2021  
Wednesday evenings, 7:00 – 9:00 PM

**Cost:** \$85.00

**Registration:** [logosbiblestudy.com](http://logosbiblestudy.com) or "At the Door"

Catechetical renewal credit may be obtained for those who successfully complete the courses taken through the Logos Bible Study program.



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# Celebration for First Filipino Saint

By The Southern Cross



The Filipino Catholic community will celebrate the Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz of Manila, the first Filipino saint and martyr, with a Mass on Sept. 11.

It's one of two events being held that month to mark the 500th anniversary of Christianity arriving in the Philippines.

St. Lorenzo Ruiz was born in Manila in 1594 and grew up in a Catholic family. He became a missionary and sailed to Okinawa in 1636, along with three Dominican priests. In Japan, he refused to renounce his faith and died after two days of torture at the age of 42.

"I am a Christian, this I profess until the hour of my death and if I had a thousand lives I would give them all to the Lord," he is said to have declared before dying.

The community is highlighting its faith traditions during the anniversary celebration. San Lorenzo Ruiz is the patron saint of altar servers, and their service will be honored at the Mass on Sept. 11.

The celebration begins with a procession and rosary at 9 a.m., followed at 10 by a Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert McElroy. There will be a fiesta afterward, featuring food and entertainment.

Everyone is welcome to attend this celebration at Santa Sophia



**DEVOTION:** The Filipino community annually celebrates the Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz with a procession, special Mass and fiesta, as they did in the 2019 edition at Corpus Christi Church.

Church, 9800 San Juan St., Spring Valley. It's recommended everyone wear a mask indoors, regardless of vaccination status.

The Diocesan Commission for

Filipino Catholics is organizing this event. For more information call Alejandra Diaz at (858) 490-8306, or visit [sdcatholic.org/saintlorenzoruiz2021](http://sdcatholic.org/saintlorenzoruiz2021).

## Special Marian Mass on Sept. 18



The veneration of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is one of the oldest (almost 50 years) and largest Filipino Marian celebrations in San Diego.

Usually held in a large park, with processions, Eucharistic celebrations and entertainment, recent celebrations have been scaled back due to the pandemic.

This year, after nine weeks of devotional prayers, the Solemnity of Our Lady of Peñafrancia will be celebrated on Saturday, Sept. 18, at St. Michael Church in Paradise Hills, beginning at 9:45 a.m. Bishop Robert McElroy will celebrate the Feast Day Mass, accompanied by Auxiliary Bishops John Dolan and Ramón Bejarano.

This year's theme, "Sharing the Gift of Faith in the Spirit of the Faithful Obedience of Mary and Joseph," links to the 500th anniversary of Christianity in the Philippines and Pope Francis' "Year of St. Joseph" celebration.

The Mass, organized by Pag-Iribang Bikolnon, will be livestreamed through Facebook @penafranciasandiego.

For more information, visit [penafranciasandiego.com](http://penafranciasandiego.com).



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# Diocese Launches Creation Care Action Plan

By Aida Bustos



The San Diego Catholic Diocese has launched

a sweeping action plan that calls for the region's families, parishes, schools, and other organizations to take concrete steps to urgently care for creation.

The plan supports the Laudato Si' Action Platform, the Catholic Church's unprecedented, seven-year strategy for everyone to work together to respond to devastating climate change and the plight of the poor. The Church envisions small, local efforts, sustained over time, as making a big impact on the environment and society.

The Vatican plans to officially launch the platform on Oct. 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of the environment and animals.

The diocesan action plan was developed by the core committee of the Creation Care Ministry, led by Father Emmet Farrell. The ministry, housed in the Office for Life, Peace and Justice, is organizing a bilingual Mass on Oct. 2 at St. Rita's Church at 10 a.m. to celebrate the feast day.

In September, the ministry will begin a campaign that invites individuals, parishes and schools to plant trees, particularly in low-income neighborhoods where a dearth of them contributes to a poor quality of life.



**MENACE:** Climate change has fueled the size and frequency of massive wildfires, like the Dixie Fire in northern California, which had consumed more than 730,000 acres by Aug. 25.

The diocese's 55-page action plan begins with a brief review of Pope Francis' monumental encyclical, "Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home." The letter casts the vital mission of the Gospel within the concept of human ecology, "which simultaneously answers the call of the earth in its suffering with the cry of the poor," said Bishop Robert McElroy in his introduction.

"We, as the Catholic community of San Diego and Imperial counties, must adopt a radical new commitment to such goals if we, as a plan-

et, are to survive meaningfully and hand-on a life-giving existence to the coming generations," said Bishop McElroy, a national and international faith leader on this issue.

The Creation Care Ministry invites parishes and schools to form teams to carry out concrete steps to care for the environment and for their vulnerable neighbors. Ministry team members provide them with information and resources in English and Spanish to get started. Teams at several parishes and schools have been working for years on this front, carrying out a

variety of projects.

The care ministry wants to combine these efforts with public ones at the municipal, county and state level to create meaningful impact. For instance, the ministry supports the City of San Diego's goal to reach 100-percent renewable energy and a 50-percent reduction of greenhouse gases by 2035.

The action plan includes a section on Catholic teaching and science that lays out the foundation for people of faith to act. And it outlines a series of specific steps that can be taken, dividing them in three levels, "easy or personal," "moderate or parish" and "advanced or society." The ministry plans recognize these actions by awarding achievement certificates.

Nearly 100 percent of the world's scientists agree that climate change is real, and its consequences are grave. For people of faith, however, there are other reasons to act urgently to care for creation.

"This is a moral and spiritual issue because we are stewards of the earth," said Father Farrell, the ministry's leader. "We're not doing a good job of protecting it. There are so many things we can do."

Read the diocese's Action Plan at [sdcatholic.org/creation](https://sdcatholic.org/creation), which carries information and contacts of the Creation Care Ministry.



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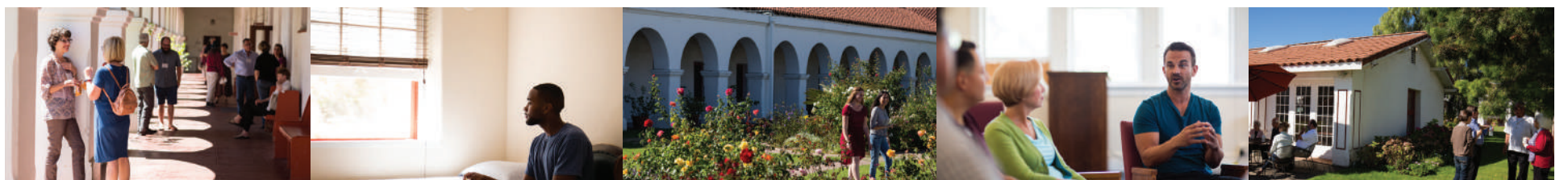
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# Rediscovering Greatest Gift



**THIS IS MY BODY:** Bishop Robert McElroy celebrated Mass on Dec. 14 at Mater Dei Parish for the Filipino Catholic community's Simbang Gabi celebration. Catholics believe that, when the words of consecration are spoken at Mass, bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus.

By Denis Grasska



The Eucharist is the "source and summit of the Christian life," in the words of "The Catechism of the Catholic Church."

St. Pio of Pietrelcina, better known as "Padre Pio," once expressed the value of the Mass in this way: "The earth could exist more easily without the sun than without the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."

The novelist Flannery O'Connor, a devout Catholic, had a blunt response to the claim that the Eucharist is merely a symbol and nothing more.

"Well, if it's a symbol, to hell with it," said O'Connor, for whom the Eucharist was "the center of existence" and "all the rest of life is expendable."

But according to a Pew Research Center Survey released in August 2019, only one-third of U.S. Catholics believe that the bread and wine at Mass are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

To increase local Catholics' understanding of and affection for the Blessed Sacrament, the Diocese of San Diego is launching a seven-week Eucharistic renewal program that will be presented at every parish.

"It is my deepest hope that these weeks will be for us all a time to grow in our love for and understanding of this most beautiful sacrament and, in doing so, come closer to the God who has bestowed upon us every blessing we know in this world," Bishop Robert McElroy said in a recorded message that will be played for parishioners attending the Saturday vigil and Sunday Masses on Sept. 11 and 12.

The first phase of the renewal program will begin that weekend and continue through Sept. 26.

On three consecutive weekends, videotaped homilies will be present-

ed at every parish on the following themes: "The Eucharist is a direct personal encounter with Jesus Christ" (Sept. 12), "The Eucharist is the sacrificial memorial of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection by which we have been redeemed" (Sept. 19), and "The Eucharist is the sacred meal that nurtures us, bonds us together and sends us forth to transform the world" (Sept. 26).

These homilies will be available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. In addition to being shown at Masses, the parishes will be sharing them through electronic communication and social media to reach parishioners who still haven't returned to Mass even after the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass was lifted in July.

During the weekend Masses of Oct. 2 and 3, every pastor in the diocese will dedicate his own homily to the topic of the Eucharist. And priests will celebrate "teaching Masses" during the weekends of Oct. 9 and 10, 16 and 17, and 23 and 24, pausing at various points to explain the meaning and history of the rituals.

"I've been ordained for 43 years and I've never seen a project quite this ambitious," Father Peter Escalante, pastor of Mission San Diego de Alcalá Parish, said July 28 after recording one of the homilies that will be shown Sept. 26.



**SHARING THE GIFT:** Catholics across cultures seek out the gift of the Eucharist. Deacon Andy Orosco of the Diocese of San Bernardino, a member of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, distributed Communion at a Mass held July 23 at the Barona Shrine to honor St. Kateri Tekakwitha.

JOHN GASTALDO



JOHN GASTALDO

While the Eucharist is indeed the “source and summit” of the Catholic faith, he said, “what that really means can be fleshed out in a new way that’s going to be more meaningful for people.”

That’s what the Eucharistic renewal program is intended to achieve.

Father Ruben Arceo, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Vista, recorded a homily to be shared at Sept. 19 Spanish-language Masses.

At his own parish, Father Arceo said he has seen plenty of Eucharistic devotion and is unaware of any doubts about the Real Presence, the belief that the Eucharist is Jesus Himself. He encounters long lines for confession every Saturday, and parishioners tell him it is their desire to receive Communion that brought them there.

At Mass, between Communion and

the final blessing, he said, “I see our people on their knees, praying, truly connecting to what they have received.”

That being said, Father Arceo acknowledges that not all is well when it comes to Catholics’ appreciation for the Eucharist. He cited those Catholics who view Mass as “just another activity on their agendas” as well as those who simply “don’t care” about the sinfulness of missing Mass without a legitimate reason. He also finds it heartbreaking that, for many Catholics who are enthusiastic about devotions like the rosary and novenas, the Eucharist “is not something that is powerful for them.”

Father Matt Spahr, pastor of The Immaculata Parish at the University of San Diego, said that, despite the results of the Pew survey, he believes that Catholics “intuit the meaning” of the Eucharist. However, he added, they’re “not always able to articulate it” — and that is, in and of itself, a problem.

Father Spahr, who recorded one of the homilies for Sept. 12, said the diocese’s Eucharistic renewal program will “give people a language” to express why the Eucharist is important. That knowledge will not only benefit them personally, he said, but enable them to be “evangelists” to their friends and family.

Father Peter McGuine, pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish in El Cajon, reflected on the correlation between poor understanding of the Real Presence and the percentage of Catholics for whom Mass doesn’t seem to be a priority.

“If people really understood what the Eucharist was about and what was being offered in the sacrifice in which we participate, they would never want to miss a Sunday or a holy day,” said Father McGuine, whose homily will be heard Sept. 19.

Bishop McElroy said that he has been hearing from pastors that Mass attendance is about 70 percent of what it was before the pandemic. But he cautioned against viewing the Eucharistic renewal program as “simply a pathway to get more people to come to Mass.”

“Even for those who’ve always been coming to Mass,” the bishop said, “the more people understand about the grace, and the depth, and the richness of this self-donation of Christ in the Eucharist, the deeper the relationship between the people and God will be.”



## Invitation to Renewal

**Every parish in the diocese will present a taped homily on an aspect of the Eucharist:**

**“The Eucharist is a direct personal encounter with Jesus Christ.”**

*Sept. 12, 2021*

**“The Eucharist is the sacrificial memorial of Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection by which we have been redeemed.”**

*Sept. 19, 2021*

**“The Eucharist is the sacred meal that nurtures us, bonds us together and sends us forth to transform the world.”**

*Sept. 26, 2021*

**Videotaped homilies and additional resources:  
[sdcatholic.org/eucharist](https://sdcatholic.org/eucharist)**



HOWARD LIPIN

**IN TOUCH:** A participant in the Filipino tradition Flores de Mayo procession and Mass received Communion on May 29 at St. Mary’s Parish in National City.



By Denis Grasska



Sister Aurora López-Ornelas, 53, is a Sister Servant of the Blessed Sacrament.

She was born in Guadalajara and grew up in Arandas, both located in the Mexican state of Jalisco, where the Sister Servants of the Blessed Sacrament were established over a century ago.

After entering the convent on Aug. 19, 1984, she professed her first vows on Aug. 15, 1987, and her perpetual vows on Aug. 15, 1993.

Sister López-Ornelas is a member of the Province of the Immaculate Conception, her order's first province outside of Mexico, based in Bonita. A former director of the diocesan Office for Vocations, she teaches third grade at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in San Ysidro.

**Question: When and how did you first feel called to religious life?**

**Answer:** When I was 14, I went to a Catholic secondary school, where I belonged to the Vocations Club. In the beginning, I thought that every woman had to be married. But then, in that club, I learned that there was another call from God.

Interview with:

**Sister Aurora López-Ornelas**



Two years later, I attended a retreat where I met a lot of sisters from my community. I saw how joyful they were and I saw how beautiful their life was. It was something that I really liked. At the retreat, I felt bombarded by God, telling me how beautiful religious life was. I experienced the love of God and, when I thought about Him, I felt so much joy. I felt loved by Him and I wanted to give love back to Him.

I had always wanted to get married and have my own family. I even had a boyfriend. I was wrestling with God, trying to say no to Him. But I felt the love of God in my heart and I needed to respond to that love.

**What aspects of your vocation have you found most attractive?**

I think a religious sister understands the meaning of being a mother, a spiritual mother. For example, when I was working in vocations, I used to listen to women who wanted to find their path in life. By praying for them, listening to them and talking to them,

I found the fulfillment to my vocation of being a spiritual mother.

**What is the charism of the Sister Servants of the Blessed Sacrament?**

Our charism is to love and adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and make Him known and loved through Catholic education for children and youth.

In addition to attending daily Mass, our constitutions state that each member of our order is to adore Jesus in the Eucharist for one hour every day. When we do so, we try to make reparation for sins against the Eucharist.

Because our mission is education, we also use our time before the Blessed Sacrament to pray for the young people whom we serve. When we are at school, we try to teach the love of Jesus to them. Once a month, we take them to our chapel at the convent for Eucharistic adoration.

**Our diocese is beginning a Eucharistic renewal program this month to deepen appreciation for the Eucharist. What recommendations do you have for Catholics?**

Now that the churches are being opened more, I would like to invite everybody to consider spending more time with Jesus to make up for the months that we were not able to attend Mass in person. We should spend

time with Him in the same way we spend time with our friends and make a point to see them.

**Any tips for making the experience of Eucharistic adoration more fruitful?**

During Eucharistic adoration, we can adore Jesus, thank Him, ask Him for forgiveness, and make requests and petitions to Him.

First, we can praise God for all of His beautiful creation, giving honor and glory to God with our own humble words. Then, we may have a long list of things that we want to say "thank you" for. In asking God to forgive us, we acknowledge that sometimes we're not doing God's will. Finally, we make petitions; we may have a lot of them, but it's good to save them for the end, after we've shown Him our love and gratitude.

Sometimes, we don't even know what to say to God. In my own experience, sometimes, my mind is like a blank piece of paper for the full hour of adoration. Sometimes, it's just good to sit down the way we would when we visit a sick friend: We don't say many words, we just stay quiet and look at the person. Many times, even though we don't feel anything, God is speaking to us. We know that in the silence of our hearts, God speaks.

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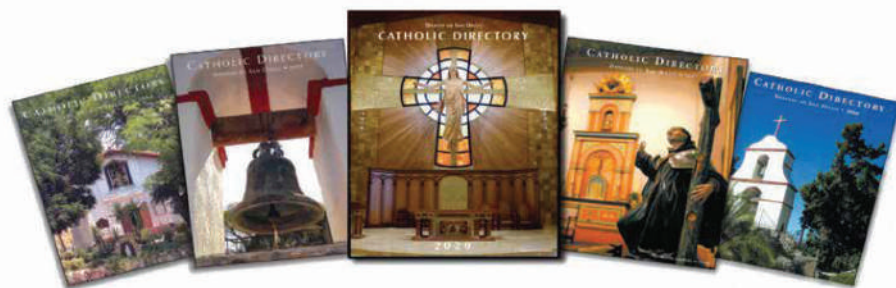
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# Welcome to the New CCFSD CEO!



## An Introduction from Manny Rubio

You may have previously read our Southern Cross article piece covering our Five-Year Anniversary highlights and the amazing work we've done since the inception of the foundation. The piece featured our former Executive Director, Gary Rectenwald, and we thank him for all the efforts he has made. We wish him all the best in his retirement!

With that, it is with great sincerity and humility that I introduce myself to you as the new CEO of the Catholic Community Foundation of

San Diego. I want to thank the Foundation's Board of Trustees for the confidence and trust you have placed in me to continue to advance the work we are doing in San Diego and Imperial County.

Having served in several capacities across the nonprofit sector over the past 25 years I believe that my experience, and some very well-placed interventions by the Holy Spirit, have brought me to this point and I am grateful to be here to serve in this capacity.

One of my favorite biblical accounts in the Gospel is that of the loaves and fishes. Each time I read it from the Gospels, and each time I hear it told, we are reminded of something that we've heard on many occasions

in our life - that God will provide. But we are also reminded that when a community gathers as a collective, we can also provide for one another.

The key takeaway that I always seem to read in these Gospel accounts is community. A community of believers, a community of the faithful, a community of people who acted, and a community willing to serve one another.

This must also be our work. We are called to be an organization that serves the community. We have taken amazing strides to get to where we are today, but there is much more work to do. As I transition into this new role, I want to be a resource. A resource for our four pillars: parishes, Catholic schools, vocations, and social services; a resource for our donors; and especially a resource for the many organizations in San Diego and Imperial Counties that are doing God's work by serving those in most need among us.

I look forward to having the opportunity to meet you and work with you in the future, and please do not hesitate to contact me at (858) 397-9700 or email me at [mrubio@ccfsd.org](mailto:mrubio@ccfsd.org).

May God bless you and thank you for your continued support of the Catholic Community Foundation of San Diego. We hope you will continue to pray for us and for those in our community that are in need.

Yours in Faith,

Manny Rubio  
CEO, Catholic Community Foundation of San Diego

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• **Wednesday September 22nd 6pm-8pm**

• **Friday-SPANISH September 23rd 6pm-8pm**

# Christ-Centered Justice for Lasting Healing



What happened?  
How do we make  
things right?

These are two of the primary questions asked when using a Christ-centered approach to justice to address harm or misconduct.

In the 2021 spring semester, two harmful incidents occurred involving four local high schools. In April, a few football players from Cathedral Catholic posted photos with racist undertones aimed at their rival Lincoln High School football team members. In June, following a boys' championship basketball game, some people from the Coronado side threw tortillas following a victory over rival Orange Glen High School, whose players were predominately Latino.

The response was swift — community members were enraged, apologies were made, and sensitivity training mandated. The body that governs athletics sanctioned two of the schools involved in the incidents.

This writing is not intended to rehash those incidents. Rather it is intended to provide an alternative framework for addressing harm, especially when our children/students are involved.

In the United States, we have more people in prison and jails on an aggregate and per capita basis than any other nation.

As Catholics and people of faith, we need to stop this very punitive, damaging approach to addressing

Director,  
Life, Peace & Justice

**Robert  
Ehnow**



harm and crime. At the heart of our Catholic faith are unconditional love and forgiveness. Jesus calls us to love and forgive all, including our enemies and those who harm us. A restorative justice approach is a model we can offer to our children and students that most closely resembles the notion of Biblical justice. In most instances involving harm with children, the opportunity for learning and growing is much more valuable and lasting than simply meting out a punishment.

We often equate Old Testament justice with a punitive, harsh form of punishment. The concept of an “eye for an eye,” or “lex talionis,” was not simply a form of vengeance offered to the Israelites as the appropriate response after a harm or crime occurred. Rather, “an eye for an eye” codified the concepts of restraint and proportionality in addressing harm in their ancient form of justice. It was what the Israelites could understand and apply in the time of Moses.

Jesus provided us with a more radical departure from proportionality in response to harm; Jesus offered us a justice that centered on mercy, forgiveness, and love. Our faith and Our Church, as Pope Francis has repeated often in his papacy, should rally



around mercy and forgiveness. Is our legal system focused on forgiveness and mercy? Do we approach student discipline with mercy and love?

Restorative justice approaches harm and crime from a profoundly different perspective than our school disciplinary and criminal justice systems. The focus is not to punish the offender or wrongdoer, although punishment may be one of the outcomes. Rather, the focus is to repair the harm that was done, and more importantly, repair the relationships that were damaged.

This is not an easy process, and it requires a commitment from all involved — those harmed, those that committed the harm, and the communities involved.

Justice is not supposed to be easy, and following the example that Je-

sus provides us is not easy either. Christ-centered justice is necessary for us to live in communion with one another. Restorative justice may allow us to lessen the current divisions we all are encountering and repair harmed relationships.

We, as people of Christ, should ensure that the students and communities at Cathedral Catholic, Lincoln, Coronado and Orange Glen high schools repair the harm, and most importantly repair the relationships that were harmed. In other words, **make things right!**

An extended version of this  
perspective is available at  
[thesoutherncross.org/082114](https://thesoutherncross.org/082114).



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## Florence “Flo” Theresa Murphy

March 3, 1933 – July 5, 2021

SAN DIEGO, CA – Florence “Flo” Theresa Murphy died peacefully on July 5, 2021, surrounded by her loving children, Michael, Mary, and Kathleen as they recited the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy, a devotion that she wholeheartedly espoused throughout her life – Trust in God’s Mercy, show God’s Mercy to others, and pray for the salvation of souls.

Florence was born on March 3, 1931, in St. Louis, MO to Ambrose and Eva Kondracki and was the fourth of eight children. Her many accomplishments includes member of the first U.S. women’s soccer team (St. Louis Bobby Sockers 1950); computer programmer for the U.S. Federal Government;



first woman President and first woman Governor of the San Diego Serra Club, whose mission is to foster Catholic vocations; dedicated parishioner of the Mission San

Diego for more than 30 years.

Catholic Charities honored Florence with the “Matthew 25” award in 2008 for her “Faith in Action” and devotion to serving the poor. Florence was also known as “the shoe lady” and “the jacket lady” for her donation of hundreds of shoes and coats year after year to a Catholic orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico.

She loved to travel and went on numerous pilgrimages including Rome, Medjugorje, Paris, Lourdes, Fatima, Knock, Krakow, Barcelona, Quebec, Mexico City and Mallorca – the birthplace of Saint Junipero Serra. Also, Florence and her grandson Kevin drove the California coast to visit all 21 Missions along the historic Mission Trail.

Florence is survived by her children and their spouses, Michael and Linda Murphy, Mary Murphy, Randall and Kathleen Murphy Jones; her grandchildren Kevin, Kristen, Sean, Kristina, Eric, and Anne Murphy and Dax and Mia Jones; her great grandchildren James, Jude, Clementina, Eva, and Lincoln Murphy and Collin Jones; her sisters Mary Kelly and Jean Mockobey; and her many beloved nieces, nephews, and friends.

A Mass for Florence was held on Saturday, August 28, 2021, at the Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá, officiated by Msgr. Mark Campbell. In lieu of flowers, please give to a charity in memory of Florence.

# Retreat Fosters Young Adult Faith and Fun

By Denis Grasska

Christine Kubeck was still new to the San Diego area when she attended the annual Diocesan Young Adult Retreat for the first time.

She left the 2019 retreat feeling “hopeful” and “ready to apply my weekend reflections and readjust areas of my life towards my faith.”

“I couldn’t recommend (this retreat) enough,” she said. “It creates a great getaway to refocus on faith, reflect, have some fun, and meet new friends.”

The popular event was canceled last year, one of many casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic. But about 150 young adult Catholics, ages 18 to 39, are expected to attend this year’s retreat, which will be held from Sept. 17 to 19 at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center in Julian.

“This year, more than ever,” said Kubeck, “I see so many young people at our parishes seeking to reconnect or find a faith-based community.”

Patrick Rivera, director of the diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry, said the annual retreat fosters a “strong sense of community” among its young adult participants.

“On the last day, when we leave, that last Mass is bittersweet as much as it is powerful,” said Rivera, who reflected on the poignancy of being in a room filled with young adults singing praise-and-worship songs before the Blessed Sacrament.

By the time of the closing Mass,



**CHANGED:** The Diocesan Young Adult Retreat is a transformative experience. Attendees celebrated their participation in the 2012 edition.

participants have already packed their belongings and loaded their cars for their return trip, he said. Looking around the room, it’s not hard to see “how people have grown and bonded with each other.”

The retreat will begin with check-in from 6:30 to 7:30 on Friday evening and end on Sunday at noon. The schedule includes talks by Catholic speaker Mari Pablo of Ascension Presents and Father Michael O’Loughlin of the “Catholic Stuff You Should Know” podcast. There will also be two Masses; Morning Prayer and Night Prayer; opportunities for Eucharistic adoration, confession, and spiritual direction; designated times for small group discussion, personal reflection and social activities like a bonfire; and free time that can be used for hiking, swimming, zip-lining or playing Ultimate Frisbee.

Departing from longstanding tradition, this year’s retreat will not be

dividing participants by sex on the second day to hear a gender-specific talk.

“I think it ran its course,” Pamela Poe, associate director of the Office for Young Adult Ministry, said of the men’s and women’s talks that had been retreat staples.

In place of attending either the men’s or women’s talk, participants of both sexes will be free to choose from among breakout sessions on topics connected with the themes of discipleship, service and evangelization.

In another departure from previous years, a religious sister as well as a priest will be available for spiritual direction.

Nathan Montemayor of St. Michael Parish in San Diego has “been to a few of these” diocesan retreats over the years.

In addition to the insights provided by the speakers and the sacramental and liturgical celebrations held during the retreat, Montemayor said he has

enjoyed “the overall fellowship” and “just being able to meet new people, to share our faith together, and to inspire each other in the small groups.”

“I did form some relationships ... through this retreat,” he said, “so I’m very thankful for that.”

Poe has a similar story. In 2011, six years before she joined the diocesan staff, she served as a volunteer member of the retreat team and facilitated one of the small groups. A decade later, she still counts several members of that group among her good friends. And it was at the same retreat that she met her future husband.

The cost to attend the Diocesan Young Adult Retreat is \$175 per person. Registration and payment is required by noon on Tuesday, Sept. 7.

More information is available at [www.yamsd.org](http://www.yamsd.org), [yamsd@sdccatholic.org](mailto:yamsd@sdccatholic.org) or (858) 490-8260.



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# Special Liturgy for Survivors of Suicide Loss

By Denis Grasska



Those who have experienced the loss of a loved one by suicide are invited to a special liturgy on Saturday, Sept. 4.

Organized by the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice and the Office for Family Life and Spirituality, the third annual Mass for Survivors of Suicide Loss will be celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan at 5 p.m. at San Rafael Parish in Rancho Bernardo.

"I want (survivors of suicide loss) to know that they're not alone," said Bishop Dolan, who lost three family members to suicide. He is co-editor of the award-winning books "Responding to Suicide: A Pastoral Handbook for Catholic Leaders" and "When a Loved One Dies by Suicide."

Bishop Dolan will be assisted by Deacon Bill Adsit, director of the diocesan Mental Health Ministry Network. Mass-goers will be invited to lay a white flower at the feet of a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in remembrance of a loved one who died by suicide. The lectors will be survivors of suicide loss.

The Mass will be preceded by a workshop at 4 p.m. on suicide awareness and prevention presented by Michele Madden, director of support and prevention programs with the nonprofit Survivors of Suicide Loss.

Deacon Adsit said the workshop "is open to all and could literally save someone's life."



**TRIBUTE:** Participants placed flowers at the feet of the Blessed Virgin at Our Mother of Confidence Church, where the diocese held its first Mass for Survivors of Suicide Loss on Sept. 20, 2019.

The Mass coincides with National Suicide Prevention Week, which will be observed from Sept. 5 through Sept. 11.

"Over 60 families who attended the annual Mass for Survivors of Suicide Loss have expressed gratitude for coming together as a community to pray and remember their loved ones. ... They realize that they are not alone in this mourning process," said Maria Valencia, associate director in the Office for Life, Peace and Justice.

The Catholic Church still teaches that suicide is a serious matter. However, thanks to a deeper understand-

ing of human psychology, the Church now recognizes that mental illness can limit a person's free choice and therefore diminish culpability for suicide.

"Suicide is one of the sad tragedies

of human history," said Bishop Dolan, "and the Church's response has improved over the many years as we have had a better understanding of ... what goes on in the human mind."

He hopes that families rocked by suicide will be able to talk about it "like other deaths," he said, describing suicide as "a disease" no less than cancer.

Deacon Adsit said, "My greatest hope is that attendees will leave with peace, knowing that they are not alone, that their loved ones are not forgotten, and with a sense of hope that intervention is possible and may lessen the possibility that another person will experience the tragedy they are living through."

For more information, or to provide the names of loved ones who died by suicide to be included in a special book of prayer, email [bolivero@sdccatholic.org](mailto:bolivero@sdccatholic.org) or call (858) 490-8299.



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



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## News Briefs

### Bishop's Book Named 'Resource of the Year'

BALTIMORE, Md. — "Responding to Suicide: A Pastoral Handbook for Catholic Leaders," authored by Association of Catholic Mental Health Ministers and edited by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan of San Diego and Deacon Ed Shoener, is the Association of Catholic Publishers' 2021 "Resource of the Year."

One judge emphasized that one of the strengths of this book was that it focuses on a timely topic and is presented in an accessible way. Another noted that the guide explores the psycho-social-spiritual aspects of suicide in a balanced and pastoral way that makes this book a necessary resource for those in parish ministry.

### All Faithful Invited to Mass to Honor St. Teresa

San Diego's Indian Catholic Community invites all faithful to its third annual Mass to pay tribute to St. Teresa of Calcutta on Saturday, Sept. 25, at 10:30 a.m., at Good Shepherd Church. Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will celebrate the Mass.

The Mass honors the life of St. Teresa, the legendary founder of the Missionaries of Charity, who tend to the most vulnerable across the globe. They have a strong presence in the San Diego-Tijuana region and many of their members attend this Mass.

Good Shepherd Church is located at 8200 Gold Coast Drive, in Mira Mesa. More information is available on the Facebook page @sandiegoindiancatholic.

### RCIA Classes to Be Held for Chinese-Speakers

The San Diego Chinese Catholic Community will be hosting Chinese RCIA at St. Therese of Carmel Catholic Church.

Classes will be held from 3 to 4:30 p.m. every Sunday, from Sept. 12 to April 17, 2022, and facilitated by a Chinese priest and members of the laity. All are welcome to participate in the Chinese-language Mass celebrated from 2 to 3 p.m., before the RCIA classes.

St. Therese of Carmel Parish is located at 4355 Del Mar Trails Road, San Diego 92130. For more information, call Teresa at (858) 837-4949 or Luke at (858) 666-5064.

### Marriage Encounter to Host In-Person Weekend

San Diego Marriage Encounter will hold its next in-person weekend experience Sept. 17 to 19 at the St. Charles Retreat Center in Imperial Beach.

The weekend begins at 8 p.m. on Friday and ends at 4 p.m. on Sunday.

For more information or to register for the upcoming in-person Marriage Encounter weekend, visit [www.me-sandiego.org](http://www.me-sandiego.org) or call (760) 659-9102.



## Head of the Class

The top administrators at the Diocese of San Diego's Catholic schools gathered Aug. 5 at the diocesan Pastoral Center for the first of five General Principals' Meetings to be held during the 2021-2022 school year. Among the approximately 40 in attendance were three Catholic educators who are first-time principals this year, and another who has transitioned from classroom instruction to her first position in educational leadership. Pictured, from left, they are: Kim James, principal of St. Didacus Parish School; Elizabeth Creech, assistant head of school at Notre Dame Academy; Brian Sesito, principal of St. Patrick Catholic School (Carlsbad); and Jennifer Miller, principal of St. Martin of Tours Academy.

## Priest Assignments

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

**Father Brent Kruger**, who was incardinated in the Diocese of San Diego on July 1, has been appointed as pastor of St. Thomas More Parish, Oceanside, effective Aug. 20.

**Father Oscar Lopez** has been appointed as associate pastor of Good Shepherd Parish, Mira Mesa, effective Aug. 20.

**Father Victor Maristela** has been appointed as associate pastor of St. Michael Parish, Poway, effective Aug. 20.

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## Foosball Isn't the Devil

Pope Francis plays foosball after his general audience in the Vatican's Paul VI hall Aug. 18, 2021.

## Pope Accepts Byzantine Bishop's Resignation

Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Bishop John S. Pazak of the Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy, which is based in Phoenix. The eparchy covers 13 western states, and its parishes include Holy Angels Byzantine Catholic Church in San Diego.

On Aug. 13, Bishop Pazak turned 75, the age at which canon law requires bishops to turn in their resig-

nation to the pope. Latin-rite Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted of Phoenix was appointed as apostolic administrator of the eparchy.

For the past three years, Bishop Olmsted had served as apostolic administrator "sede plena" of the eparchy. "Sede plena" means that the diocese still has a bishop.

A legal dispute among Eastern Catholics in the U.S. was the reason for Bishop Olmsted's appointment three years ago. With the pope's recent decision, he will continue as apostolic administrator until a new bishop of the eparchy is named.

## Becket Exhibit Gives Sympathetic Look at Past

By Jonathan Luxmoore



LONDON — When the exhibition, "Murder and the Making of a Saint," opened in May at The British Museum, the curators said they hoped to depict St. Thomas Becket's (1120-1170) journey from a humble clerk to one of Europe's most popular miracle-working saints.

After attracting record crowds for the 850th anniversary of his death, many are struck by the exhibition's warm evocation of the country's Catholic past and dramatic reconstruction of the centrality of Church and faith.

"There's no doubt the anti-Catholicism long embedded here is dissipating now, enabling a more sympathetic understanding of the past, which cultural events like this can subtly reflect," Father Timothy Byron, a historian, told *Catholic News Service*.

Born in London, Becket was appointed chancellor to King Henry II in 1155, responsible for royal revenues, becoming a close and trusted confidant; just seven years later, the king named him archbishop of Canterbury.

The exhibition includes artifacts from Becket's early London life, a rare document bearing his seal, and an alabaster altar panel depicting him delivering a blessing at his episcopal consecration just a day after he had been ordained.

The exhibit also noted how the king's neat arrangement soon unraveled.

Henry had expected his new chancellor-archbishop to do his bidding, but Becket adopted an ascetic lifestyle and opposed the king's authority, notably when he sought to tighten control over the Church with a series of statutes in 1164.

Becket was killed at Canterbury Dec. 29, 1170, by four knights who had witnessed the king's Christmas tirade against "miserable drones and traitors" he had "nourished and promoted" in his royal household.

Evidence indicates the intruders planned to take Becket to Winchester. When he resisted, they lost control and hacked the archbishop to death in his cathedral during vespers.

His martyr cult quickly developed, and just 26 months later, he was canonized by Pope Alexander III. His four disgraced murderers later died while serving in the Holy Land by papal order, while in 1174, Henry II begged forgiveness.

During the 16th-century Reformation, under King Henry VIII, all references to Becket were ordered erased from prayer books, while the king proclaimed an end to his feast-day — a move that hastened Henry's excommunication.

The exhibition includes a carved marble base from Becket's desecrated tomb, as well as a bone fragment reputedly from the saint's skull.

*Catholic News Service*



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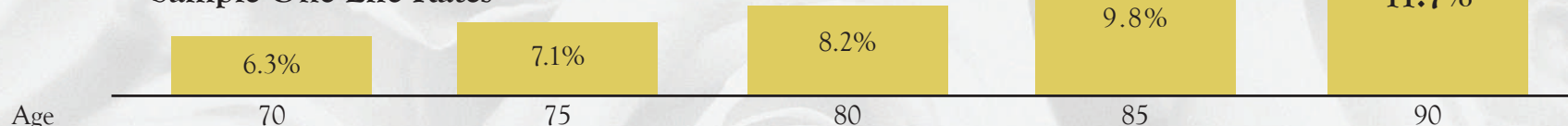
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# Cross Catholic Outreach Asks American Catholics to Support Ambitious Plan to Bless the Philippines' Poor

Years have passed since Typhoon Reming left its catastrophic mark on the Philippines, but many destitute families in Sorsogon are still reeling from its impact.

"For the families that lost nearly everything, escaping extreme poverty has become nearly impossible because additional setbacks have prevented them from gaining any ground," explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a leading Catholic relief and development ministry with years of experience in serving the poor in Southeast Asia.

According to Cavnar, everything from additional tropical storms and volcanic eruptions to the rising costs of necessities contributes to this problem and makes it very difficult for many poor families to survive — much less improve — their dismal standard of living.

"Very few have the means to afford suitable homes, for example, so those

***"Boys and girls [are] in the position of having to play in garbage-strewn streets or near open sewage trenches, and many are left with little hope of ever attaining a better life."***

**James Cavnar**  
Cross Catholic Outreach

poor parents must resign themselves to raising their children in one-room shacks pieced together with bits of wood, corrugated tin and plastic tarp," he said. "For families living in that kind of precarious position, every storm threatens destruction, and every night leaves them vulnerable to vermin and intruders. Depending on how bad a plot of land they occupy is, these homes also put boys and girls in the position of having to play in garbage-strewn streets or near open sewage trenches, and many are left with little hope of ever attaining a better life."

Under these demoralizing conditions, it is easy for men, women and children to succumb to despair, seeking solace or "opportunity" in crime, gambling or substance abuse.

"Their situation is terrible, but there is an effective way to change the circumstances these poor families face, and it begins with the work of the Church," Cavnar said. "Through compassionate intervention and the support of local Catholic ministries, dejected families can escape this



*Cross Catholic Outreach plans to replace patchwork shanty houses in the Philippines with sturdy homes while also transforming poor communities spiritually. Doing both, CCO says, is essential to producing lasting change.*



helplessness. They can break out of the brutal cycle of poverty that has kept them captive for generations."

The strategy Cavnar and Cross Catholic Outreach use to achieve this transformation is called integral human development, and its goal is to address both the material and spiritual needs of the poor in powerful ways.

"A project we are pursuing in the Philippines demonstrates the importance of this two-pronged approach. (see story on opposite page). It begins by drawing a

community together in Christ and, through intentional Catholic formation, creates the foundation for the physical work to be done, which is the construction of new homes to replace the terrible shanties families are living in," he explained. "Because the people come into the work with a spiritual perspective, they are motivated by love, they support their neighbors, and they take pride in the new homes they help build. It's a process that transforms once-dilapidated and conflict-plagued neighborhoods, turning them into hope-filled communities where families can thrive and can focus on further

improving their lives."

Today, Cavnar's priority is expanding the work he has already begun by encouraging American Catholics to support this mission of mercy.

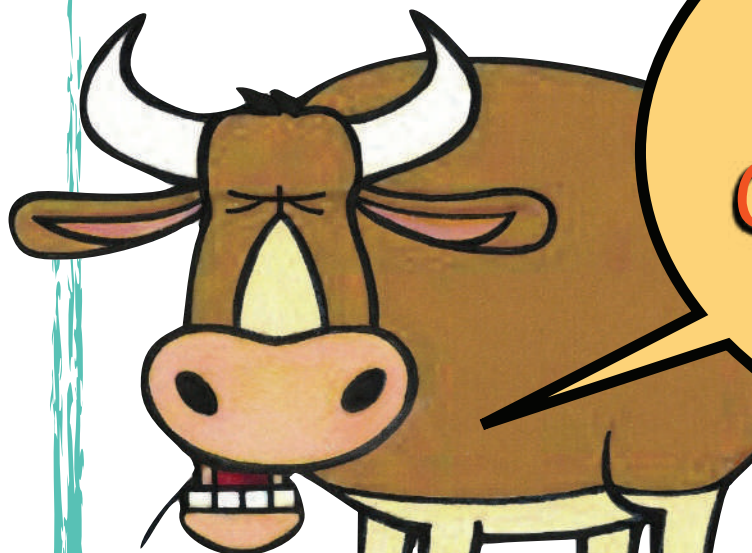
"Cross Catholic Outreach is currently raising funds from American Catholics to provide more spiritual training and to build more houses for the poor in the Philippines," he said. "We have an ambitious goal — to transform additional slum communities for the glory of God — and our hope is that other Catholics will also want to get involved. Working together, I really do believe we can change the world."

## How to Help

**To fund Cross Catholic Outreach's effort to help the poor worldwide, use the postage-paid brochure inserted in this newspaper or mail your gift to Cross Catholic Outreach, Dept. AC01759, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions on becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.**

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