

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Time to Act

Pages 16-17



FRED GREAVES

MASSIVE: A U.S. Forest Service firefighter near Sciots Camp, Calif., watched the Caldor Fire on Aug. 28, 2021. The fire, which started Aug. 14, had burned more than 220,000 acres and was 76-percent contained by Sept. 23. At least 18 people had been injured, including 16 firefighters. The fire burned from one side of the Sierra Nevada to the other.



Warm Embrace

At age 5, office has transformed the way the Church serves today's families. **Page 3**



\$100,000 Prize

San Diego-based nonprofit wins national Catholic innovation competition. **Page 4**



Groundbreaking

Center for young adults named after teen on track to be first millennial saint. **Page 5**



Guide to the Mass

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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, including photos, videos, and at times an extended version.



Consultation by Church to Begin at Diocese

LISTENING: Pope Francis greeted people during an audience with the faithful at the Vatican on Sept. 18, 2021. He has called for a worldwide synod, or consultation, of Catholics and the wider community exploring the themes of "Communion, participation and mission" of the Church.

Catholic News Service



The Diocese of San Diego, along with all dioceses across the world, will celebrate a Mass on Oct. 17 to mark the beginning of the diocesan phase of the next Synod of Bishops in 2023.

Bishop Robert McElroy, accompanied by Auxiliary Bishops John Dolan and Ramón Bejarano, will celebrate the special liturgy at 3 p.m. in the diocesan Pastoral Center's chapel. Those invited to attend include synod delegates from each of the diocese's 97 parishes, members of the diaconate and women religious councils, priests and members of the diocesan Pastoral Council. The Mass will be livestreamed.

The Vatican issued a document and a handbook for dioceses on Sept. 7 as part of the Church's preparation for the synod, discussing its theme, "For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission."

"Pope Francis invites the entire Church to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission. It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium," the document said.

The purpose of this synod is not to produce another report, the document stressed.

"Rather, it is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make people's hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts, and restore strength to our hands for our common mission," the document said.

The handbook offers guidelines for bishops and those helping facilitate the synodal process locally on how they can best listen to and consult with Catholics and the wider community, particularly those on the margins of society, as

well as Christians and non-Christians.

Chancellor Marioly Galván, of the San Diego Diocese, said the consultative process in the diocese will begin in early 2022 and will "unpack 10 general themes": Companions on the Journey; Listening; Speaking Out; Celebration; Sharing Responsibility for Our Common Mission; Dialogue in Church and Society; Ecumenism; Authority and Participation; Discerning and Deciding; and Forming Ourselves in Synodality.

Some suggested questions included in this phase, according to the preparatory document: To whom does our particular Church need to listen? How are the laity, especially young people and women, listened to? How do we integrate the contribution of consecrated men and women? What space is there for the voice of minorities, the discarded, and the excluded? Do we identify prejudices and stereotypes that hinder our listening? How do we listen to the social and cultural context in which we live?

However, the basic and most fundamental question guiding the whole process is: "How does this 'journeying together,' which takes place today on different levels — from the local level to the universal one — allow the Church to proclaim the Gospel in accordance with the mission entrusted to her; and what steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow as a synodal Church?" the document said.

Local Catholics' responses to the questions contained in the Vatican's handbook will be combined with those from other dioceses and will then be used to guide the discussion at the international level. The synod process will conclude with a General Assembly at the Vatican in October 2023.

Denis Grasska contributed to this story.

Mass on Oct. 17 at 3 p.m. will be live
streamed through [sdccatholic.org/
synodmass](http://sdccatholic.org/synodmass).



Pope: Listen to the Wounded Among Us

Catholic News Service



VATICAN CITY — To listen to the Holy Spirit, members of the Church must listen to each other and especially to those who are marginalized, Pope Francis said, explaining how dioceses are to help the Church prepare for the Synod of Bishops.

This means that, for example, "the poor, the homeless, young people addicted to drugs, everyone that society rejects are part of the synod" because God says they are part of the Church, he said.

"So often the 'rejects' become the 'cornerstones' and those who are 'far off' become 'near.' The marginalized, the poor, those without hope were elected to the sacrament of

Christ. This is the way the Church is," he said.

The pope spoke to members of his diocese, the Diocese of Rome, in the Paul VI audience hall Sept. 18 as the global Church gets set to begin a "synodal journey" toward the 2023 assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

The purpose of the synod is not to collect everyone's opinions, he said, but rather to hear what the Holy Spirit is quietly — and perhaps surprisingly — saying through them.

This will require everyone to dialogue in a way that is "familial," where everyone recognizes their common humanity, reconciles differences and reaches out in order to encounter and engage with others, he said.

"Allow yourselves to be shocked by the dialogue. It is the dialogue of salvation."



LET'S MAKE A DATE: The diocesan Synod on the Family inspired many programs, like the "Date Night" series at Santa Sophia Parish for married couples.

Five Years of Welcoming Today's Families

By Denis Grasska



Family is worth celebrating.

That's the message that the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality hopes to convey with its upcoming Family Mass.

The liturgy will be celebrated at 11 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 23, at two locations. Bishop Robert McElroy will offer the Mass at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch, while Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will preside over the liturgy at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in El Centro.

"(The synchronization is) purposeful, almost like ... it's one Mass and we're just celebrating it in two different places," said John Prust, the office's director.

The Mass in San Diego will be preceded and followed by other activities, including a Family Rosary at 10 a.m. and a resource fair, featuring representatives of various marriage and family ministries. The resource fair will be held for an hour before and after the Mass. Food also will be available for purchase.

The Family Mass coincides with the fifth anniversary of the conclusion of the Diocese of San Diego's Synod on the Family in October 2016. The diocesan synod was inspired by the Synod of Bishops that was held on the same topic in 2014 and 2015 at the Vatican and by Pope Francis' post-synodal apostolic exhortation, "Amoris Laetitia" (The Joy of Love), which was published in March 2016.

Among the 15 proposals that emerged from the San Diego Diocese's

synod was a mandate for restructuring what was then known as the Office for Marriage and Family Life. That office was replaced by the present-day Office for Family Life and Spirituality, which since its inception has worked to decentralize marriage and family ministry by empowering parish-based ministries and has reached out to marginalized communities, including the divorced. Many parishes offer these ministries in Spanish, serving the particular needs of Hispanic families.

Prust said representatives of many parish-based marriage and family ministries will follow Bishop McElroy in procession into St. Gregory the Great Church for the Mass and also will host informational tables at the resource fair.

Janelle Perego, the Office for Family Life and Spirituality's associate director for separated and divorced ministry, explained that gathering these ministries together is "one of the big impulses of the Family Mass." She said the event will remind members that each of their groups is "part of a bigger picture."

This isn't the first time that the Office for Family Life and Spirituality has organized a major event to celebrate an anniversary. In October 2018, marking its second anniversary, the office held a special Mass, picnic and concert at the University of San Diego. The event served as the conclusion of a half-day conference for parish leaders titled "Our Families, Our Future: Creating Cultures of Welcome."

Among the accomplishments in marriage and family ministry since the synod has been the spread of a "marriage catechumenate mindset," said Prust.



TO THE MARGINS: The Family Life and Spirituality Office promotes outreach to the divorced and separated. It has held briefings on that topic for parish leaders, like this one from August 2018.

About one-third of diocesan parishes have adopted Witness to Love, a marriage preparation program that pairs an engaged couple with a mentor couple from their own parish.

Msr. Steven Callahan, pastor of St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach, said the introduction of mentor couples has been "a huge benefit in our parish." Over the past three years, the parish has had more than 70 couples serve as mentors. In addition to preparing the engaged for marriage, he said the program has "enriched the lives" of the mentor couples.

At Santa Sophia Parish in Spring Valley, the Synod on the Family inspired several programs, which are still ongoing, said the pastor, Father Devdas Masillamony. Among them are the parish's monthly "Date Night" events, which are held for 10 consecutive months followed by a two-month break, and a program for divorced and separated parishioners.

"The purpose was to create ... a

community where people feel they are welcomed," said Father Masillamony, reflecting on the synod. He acknowledged that his parish has had noticeable success in this area.

Looking ahead to the Family Mass, Perego noted that there are "so many times when we as a Church talk about the importance of family," but the upcoming event provides the opportunity "to celebrate family life and the joy of being together."

After months of pandemic, that's especially poignant.


"Families come in so many different permutations and face so many different realities," she said, "but anytime we gather to celebrate the love of Christ together, we're living the Gospel."

Visit sdcatholic.org/familylife for information about the Family Mass; office contact: bolivero@sdccatholic.org or (858) 490-8299.



San Diego Organization Wins \$100,000 Prize

The Southern Cross

 Catholic in Recovery, a San Diego-based nonprofit that offers addiction-recovery resources within the context of Catholic spirituality, is one of three nonprofits nationwide receiving a \$100,000 prize from the OSV Institute for Catholic Innovation.

The winners were announced on Sept. 18 at the OSV Challenge Showcase, the culmination of an eight-month contest designed to incubate project ideas that will make a profound impact on the Church and the world. During the virtual event, 12 finalists presented their pitches to a panel of five judges.

The finalists included another nonprofit with San Diego ties, Quo Vadis Catholic. The organization recruits, screens and forms young adults to live in residential communities in vacant parish properties, such as old rectories. The young adults benefit from formation, religious and service opportunities, and below-market rent, while the parishes benefit from a vibrant young adult community and monthly income from rent.

Beginning in February, nearly 600 Catholic entrepreneurs submitted applications for the OSV Challenge, now in its second year.

In addition to the \$100,000 prizes for the three winners, OSV Institute also sponsored a six-week accelerator program in cooperation with the University of St. Thomas in Houston for the 24 semifinalists, which provided a custom curriculum of business courses, spiritual formation, one-on-one mentorship, and pitch consultations. The institute provided additional funding this year to contestants as they advanced through the stages of the challenge.

The three prize winners will continue to receive coaching throughout the coming year to ensure their projects make a meaningful impact for years to come. The other two are FemCatholic, a platform that combines feminism and Catholicism; and Red Bird Min-



WINNER: Scott Weeman, founder of Catholic in Recovery, makes his final pitch during the OSV Challenge Showcase on Sept. 18 in this screenshot from the virtual event.

istries, which guides people through the trauma that comes with the loss of a child.

"I am honored and full of gratitude for Catholic in Recovery to have been chosen as a winner of the 2021 OSV Challenge," said Scott Weeman, its founder.

"The formation, fellowship of leaders, and affirmation that we received from the accelerator, along with the \$100,000 prize, will help us expand our network of addiction-recovery meetings and develop an app/digital platform with comprehensive recovery resources rooted in the sacraments," he said. "This is truly a gift."

Weeman knows addiction firsthand and how it can be overcome with the light of Christ. After what he described as "nine years of darkness," consumed by alcohol and drug abuse, he hit bottom in late 2011 and began the journey toward recovery.

He founded Catholic in Recovery to share with others the healing that he received through the combination of 12-step recovery programs and the sacraments of the Catholic Church. The organization began in the spring of 2015 as a blog. Since becoming a nonprofit in April 2016, it has grown

to include fellowship groups around the country.

There are about 40 in-person Catholic in Recovery groups meeting in 11 states and addressing various types of addictions, said Weeman. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization started nearly 20 virtual groups. He said he receives about six inquiries each week about starting new groups.

Catholic in Recovery held its first retreat last August in Wichita, Kansas, and plans to offer six retreats next year, including one in San Diego. In October, the organization will partner with Rise Up Industries and Kairos

House to provide addiction-recovery services to the formerly incarcerated.

Incorporated in 2019, the mission of Quo Vadis Catholic involves repurposing vacant or underutilized parish properties as residential communities for Catholics in their early 20s to mid-30s. Last year, the organization opened its first two locations at a former rectory at St. Casimir Parish and a former convent at Holy Cross Parish, both in South Bend, Ind.

Every week, residents are expected to eat at least one dinner together, to pray as a community for at least one hour, attend Mass together, and do volunteer work at the parish, said Nathan Poe, a co-founder.

"There are so many young adults who feel sort of adrift, who feel rootless, and they're trying to find a community that they can serve, that they can sacrifice for — not just so that they can hang out, have a good time, but (so) that they can have a meaningful life," Poe said.

"I think that what OSV is doing right now is so needed to find new ideas to serve the Church," he said, "and we're really grateful that we can be one of those new innovative ideas that, hopefully, can bring community and life back to our parishes."

Denis Grasska contributed to this story.

More information available at catholicinrecovery.com. For an extended version of this story, visit thesoutherncross.org/102104.



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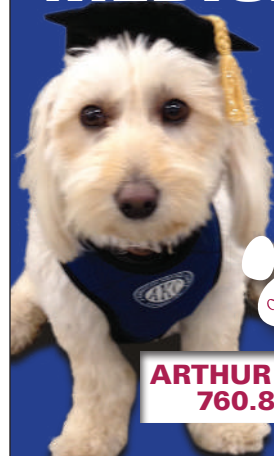
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New Center Honors Teen Bound for Sainthood

By Denis Grasska

SANTEE — Guardian Angels Parish has broken ground on its new youth and young adult center, Blessed Carlo Acutis Hall.

The 2,500-square-foot, one-story building is expected to be completed in early 2022. It was named in honor of an Italian teenager on track to become the first millennial saint.

Bishop Robert McElroy blessed the construction site and took part in a ceremonial groundbreaking Sept. 19 after presiding at the parish's 10 a.m. Sunday Mass.

"I just can't believe that it's actually happening," Ayla Grazier said of the new building.

A lifelong parishioner who grew up attending the parish's youth and young adult groups, Grazier now coordinates youth and young adult ministry at the parish.

She said the new center shows the parish's commitment to its younger members, describing it as a "physical symbol that they belong here."

For Grazier, the name of the new building "could not be more perfect." She and others at the parish have told their young charges the story of Blessed Carlo, who researched and created a website devoted to Eucharistic miracles before his death from leukemia at age 15.

"Our kids already have such a connection to him," she said.

Blessed Carlo was born in 1991 and died in 2006. He achieved an astonishing level of sanctity during his brief



SHOVEL-READY: Father André Ramos breaks ground on Sept. 19 at the site of the new Blessed Carlo Acutis Hall at Guardian Angels Parish in Santee, as Bishop Robert McElroy looks on.

life, marked by deep devotion to the Eucharist and charity towards others. At the same time, he was a contemporary youth who wore Nike sneakers, enjoyed playing videogames and, in one photo, can be seen wearing a Spider-Man costume.

Grazier said that Blessed Carlo, who was beatified on Oct. 10, 2020, is perhaps more relatable for today's youth and young adults than other saints who lived centuries ago.

"I think it brings it more to life that they could possibly be saints one day," she said.

Consisting of one large meeting room and two bathrooms, Blessed Carlo Acutis Hall will serve as a venue for the parish's youth group and young adult community events.

The new center will also be used for "drop-in times after school," Grazier said. It will provide a safe environment where youth will be able to do



Blessed Carlo Acutis

homework or hang out with friends after classes, under the supervision of a parish staff member.

"This building means so much to me ... I'm super-excited because it's like a new place for the youth to enjoy and be around kids just like them, even if it's just for homework or a place to hang out because you are bored at home," said Eli Perez, 17. "We are like family; you have people here who care for you."

Caitlin Wilson, 23, a member of the parish's young adult community, said, "Being able to have a place at Guardian Angels that we can call our own home is something that my friends and I have dreamed of since we were in high school. It is so exciting that we will finally have that place as young adults that we can share with today's youth group."

She added, "This building will help give us a space to make our own, to feel comfortable in and share in creating new memories."

For more information, visit guardianangelssantee.org.



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Day Center for Homeless to Open in Valley

By Roman Flores



EL CENTRO — Catholic Charities

in partnership with several agencies has broken ground on a day center for homeless men and women, a project that Bishop Robert McElroy called a “sign of hope” for this vulnerable population.

The day center will be the first of its kind in Imperial County, providing basic and wraparound services for men and women though not housing, said Catholic Charities’ CEO, “Vino” Pajanor. The agency operates residential shelters in Calexico and El Centro, for men and women respectively.

The 4,997-square-foot, pre-fabricated modular building will go up in a lot just behind the organization’s headquarters, located at 250 West Orange Avenue. It will have a kitchen, dining area, showers, men’s and women’s restrooms, laundry room, freezer, cooler, storage areas, a meeting room, and beds to accommodate up to 100 people.

The \$2.5-million center is being built with grant funds approved by the Imperial County Board of Supervisors that came from the state Homeless Emergency Aid Program. The plan is to open it by Thanksgiving.

The county identified 1,334 individuals experiencing homelessness and an additional 193 in shelters in the



NEW BEGINNING: Bishop Robert McElroy and leaders of Catholic Charities and partnership organizations break ground on a day center for homeless men and women on Aug. 30. The center is the first of its kind in Imperial Valley.

point-in-time count conducted in 2020, the last year it was done, according to Paula Llanas, assistant director for the Department of Social Services.

Catholic Charities proposed the day center to give homeless individuals a place to receive the services they needed.

“Our hope is that this center could be ... where we are able to give them the ‘fish to quench their hunger,’ but also ‘teach them how to fish’ so they can move away from an unsheltered environment, either through Catholic Charities or other partners, and move on to supportive, permanent housing,” Pajanor said.

Various public and private agencies collaborated on the project and attended the groundbreaking, including

the county government, the Imperial Valley Continuum of Care Council, the Cities of El Centro and Calexico, Nielsen Construction and Kitchens to Go.

“Everyone working together in all of these different agencies are collaborators in carrying out the work and fleshing out the notion that we are all a family, and that solidarity in our society is so important, particularly in times of hardship,” said Bishop McElroy, who participated in the groundbreaking on Aug. 30.

The bishop said he hopes to see three fruits come from this project: services to the homeless, continued collaboration among all the agencies involved, and “the life of the Church to emphasize once again that justice, compassion, and outreach are a di-

mension of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and what it means to be Catholic.”

Father Mark Edney, pastor of El Centro Catholic and Catholic Charities’ board member, said the project grew out of the work of the El Centro Catholic Homeless Ministry and its leader, Richard Enriquez, once himself homeless.

Father Edney hopes Catholics will volunteer and donate to the cause to make it “a real community project ... This is just the beginning of something that is going to be great and beautiful.”

More information about services for the homeless is available at ccdsd.org or by phone at (619) 323-2841.



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New Standards Boost Schools' Performance

By Denis Grasska



"Every Catholic school should be excellent," said

John Galvan, director of the diocesan Office for Schools, adding that the Code of Canon Law requires Catholic schools to meet or exceed the standards of neighboring public schools.

But the challenge, as identified by one of the office's associate directors, Dr. Julie Cantillon, is that "we never defined what 'excellent' meant."

That changed with the publication of "National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools," a landmark document intended to establish national consensus on what constitutes an excellent Catholic school. Produced by Loyola University Chicago and Boston College, it represents the distillation of two years' worth of consultations with Catholic educators across the U.S.

Galvan said his office is working to implement those national standards at every Catholic school in the diocese. He said the standards also will play a significant role in the school accreditation process and the professional development opportunities available to local Catholic educators.

The standards are not concerned with curriculum content, but rather school effectiveness. The 13 stan-



EXCELLENT: Local schools like St. Michael's School, Poway, are already implementing the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools.

dards fall under four domains: Mission and Catholic Identity, Governance and Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Operational Vitality. Each standard is accompanied by performance "benchmarks" that schools can use to chart their progress.

Galvan said the Schools Office recently conducted a review of the local Catholic school system in light of the standards and benchmarks. The office shared its findings in August at a meeting of Catholic school principals.

At the meeting, the office presented

the first in a series of modules, developed by the California Catholic School Superintendents Curriculum Committee, which will train the principals on how to implement the standards on their campuses. Subsequent modules will be presented at the next four principals' meetings between October and March.

Cantillon is one of the three co-chairs of the curriculum committee that developed the modules.

The Schools Office's other associate director, Matthew Cordes, reflected

on how some of the standards are being implemented by local schools.

At St. Katharine Drexel Academy, which was established in 2018 by merging Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart schools, Cordes sees a successful application of standards dealing with school governance. The new school formed a board of directors to ensure its financial sustainability.

On the academic excellence front, Cordes pointed to St. Michael's School in Poway, which announced in September that it had received national recognition as a "Level 3 Visible Learning+ Association School." The distinction recognizes the school's adoption and implementation of the Visible Learning educational philosophy popularized by John Hattie, based on the concept of educators helping students to become their own teachers.

Cantillon noted one "big shift" that will take place at schools as a result of the new standards: Teachers will be encouraged to see themselves as sharing responsibility for all the students in that school and to reflect on "how do we leverage each other's strengths in order to support each and every student we have."

For more information about the Catholic School Standards Project, visit catholicsschoolstandards.org.



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Independent Program Paid 197 Abuse Victims

By Aida Bustos



After nearly two years of operation, the Independent Compensation Program formed by six California (arch)dioceses paid just under \$24 million to settle the claims of 197 victim-survivors who were sexually abused as children by clergy.

The San Diego Diocese participated in the program, paying \$7,655,000 to 59 people who accepted offers from the program to settle their claims.

The Independent Compensation Program (ICP) is one of the initiatives the diocese has undertaken in recent years to help victims of past sexual abuse and to expand and strengthen efforts to prevent child abuse in San Diego and Imperial Valley. This work is part of the Church's commitment to acknowledge its past failures, the pain and damage its priests and leadership caused to young people and to enforce strict reforms to prevent such harm from occurring again.

Five dioceses in California and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles agreed to participate in the ICP to provide support and compensation to victims of sexual abuse through a process that was non-adversarial, confidential and settled within months. The program accepted claims regardless of when the abuse occurred. And individuals could file claims regardless of immigration status or whether they were represented by an attorney. All allegations of abuse not previously known were required to be reported to law enforcement.

Two private compensation administrators, Kenneth Feinberg and Camille Biros, ran the program. They developed a national reputation for their fair and compassionate handling of claims arising out of the 9/11 attacks and the BP petroleum disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.

The administrators alone determined if a claim was eligible for the program, the merits of the claim, and set the amount to be paid to settle it.



Kenneth Feinberg

The program was truly independent.

The program began accepting claims through a special website in September 2019. Nearly two years later, the administrators filed their final report on July 30 with the payment of the last claim. The report showed that 929 people registered through the website, that administrators evaluated 580 completed claims, and that the participating dioceses paid out a total of \$23,970,000 in compensation to 197 individuals.

A three-member Independent Oversight Committee was created to oversee the program. The members were former California Governor Gray Davis, former Secretary of Defense and Monterey Congressman Leon Panetta and the former Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Maria Contreras-Sweet.

"We thank the administrators for their hard work, relentless attention to detail, and mostly for their victim/survivor-centered compassion and empathy in administering this program," said Davis, in the Committee's final report, issued on Sept. 2.

The report noted that the administrators had extended the program's deadlines several times to give victims every opportunity to file a claim, particularly in the initial months of the pandemic.

Also participating in the ICP were the dioceses of Fresno, Orange, Sacramento and San Bernardino. Together, the participating dioceses serve more than 10 million Catholics, about 80 percent of California's Catholic population.



Camille Biros

"No amount of money can make up for the evil done to victims of priestly sex abuse, but we can and must finish the job of compensating victim-survivors for the wrong that was done to them whenever it took place," said San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy, when the program was announced in June 2019.

He noted at the time that the funds to pay the claims would come from insurance policies and diocesan financial resources, not from parish resources or from funds from the Annual Catholic Appeal.

In recent years, the San Diego Diocese has responded to Pope Francis' call to defeat "the monstrous crime of the sexual abuse of children and young people."

In addition to participating in the ICP, the San Diego Diocese expanded the work of the Victim Assistance Coordinator, Mary Acosta.

The diocese hired a consulting firm

headed by a former FBI agent, Dr. Kathleen McChesney, to examine the personnel files of bishops, priests, and permanent deacons to identify potential child-abuse cases not previously investigated.

In the fall of 2018, Bishop McElroy conducted eight "listening sessions" with parishioners across the diocese to explain the programs the diocese has implemented since 2002 to prevent childhood sex abuse at its parishes and schools and to answer questions. The diocese has not received any reports of clergy sex abuse of minors that occurred within the last 20 years.

Bishop McElroy underscored that the Church has worked hard to change the culture that allowed the abuse to occur in decades past. He noted the policy of permanently removing from ministry anyone credibly accused of sexually abusing a child.

And he convened all diocesan staff members to come together for the first time in a single meeting — some 2,500 strong — to raise awareness of the problem of the sexual abuse of children in society. And he asked all of them to report any suspected abuse to authorities, not just those mandated by their jobs to do so.

Visit safeinourdiocese.org to learn how the diocese works to prevent child abuse, how it investigates claims, or to report suspected abuse.



Pope Francis Warns Against Abuse of Power in Lay Movements

Catholic News Service



VATICAN CITY—Pope Francis praised Catholic lay movements and associations for living out the Gospel in their everyday lives and for promoting education, social support and evangelization in the world's peripheries. They show how "we don't have to wait for a priest to come, for the priest to evangelize or a missionary," he said.

However, just like the world's religious orders and congregations, the pope said, lay movements are just as susceptible to abuses and problems, all of which stem from an abuse of power.

All associations, not just some or just the large ones, must learn what good governance entails, he added. The pope spoke Sept. 16 in the Vatican's synod hall to people taking part — online and onsite in Rome — in a meeting organized by the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, focusing on the issue of responsible governance in lay movements and associations.

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 23
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Our Lady of Guadalupe
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Join our bishops to celebrate the five-year anniversary of "The Joy of Love" (Amoris Laetitia) and the movement it inspired to welcome and serve today's families.

"The most beautiful thing God made is the family" -Pope Francis

Push for Legalization Continues Amid Setback

Catholic News Service



WASHINGTON

— Advocates

for immigrants,

including U.S. Catholic bishops, hoped this fall would bring historic relief. A decision in September dealt a blow to that hope.

They had hoped a provision in the \$3.5-trillion budget bill Congress is debating would have granted legal status to 8 million farmworkers and essential workers, young adults brought to the U.S. illegally as minors, and recipients of a temporary program for migrants.

Instead, the Senate parliamentarian, Elizabeth MacDonough, a nonpartisan interpreter of rules of how a provision can be used in Senate legislation, said Sept. 19 that the Democrats' plan was "not appropriate" for inclusion in the budget reconciliation bill process.

Senate Democrats hope to pass the budget using reconciliation — meaning it could be passed with a simple majority, not the 60 votes usually needed and with no Republican support.

Many advocates for immigrants across the country, including a coalition of faith organizations in San Diego, vowed to keep working to find relief for undocumented migrants.

"This ruling does not mean this process is over," said Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J. He said Democrats will be working in the coming days to present the parliamentarian a different plan.

Republicans had opposed the tactic and said Democrats should first try



MOVING FORWARD: Migrant families and immigration advocates call for a pathway toward U.S. citizenship as they march toward the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement building Sept. 21, 2021, in Washington, D.C.

to solve the problems piling up at the southern border with Mexico, where thousands of migrants remained trapped under a bridge near Del Rio, Texas, trying to cross over. (See story on Page 18.)

Moving forward on such a grand-scale immigration provision would only have signaled to others to attempt a border crossing and compound the problem already there, said Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, the ranking member on the Budget Committee.

Days before the parliamentarian ruled, Auxiliary Bishop Mario Dorsonville of Washington, who heads the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, had lauded

the proposed wording in the reconciliation measure.

"This is a welcome milestone for many families and the common good," he said. "For decades, the bishops of the United States have been proponents of such reforms, which promote integration and family unity. We cannot persist in relegating these members of our society to the margins, especially when we simultaneously depend on so many of them for our collective well-being."

The San Diego Organizing Project, the largest network of congregations in the local region, emailed a statement after the ruling was announced.

"We believe in the inherent dignity of every human, and as people of

faith, we welcome the stranger and we protect the oppressed," the statement said. "We urge senators to be bold and more forward with an alternative approach to protect and create pathways to citizenship!"

The SDOP statement quoted José "Tony" Martinez, of St. Francis Catholic Church in Vista: "As we organize for the next steps, our faith informs our commitment to stand in solidarity with undocumented essential workers, TPS holders and DACA recipients. More than ever, we are called to remain staunch messengers of God's hope. Let us remember: 'for God all things are possible.' (Matt. 19:26)"

The Southern Cross contributed to this story.



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A Walk Through the Mass: A Step-by-Step



Catholics attend Mass in response to Jesus' command to "do this in memory of Me." But many perform its rituals without knowing why. Every parish is to teach the

following elements on consecutive Sundays (Oct. 10, 17 and 24) as part of the diocesan initiative to deepen the faithful's appreciation of the Eucharist. Details: sdcatholic.org/eucharist.

What is the Mass?

A good way to describe the Mass is to say that it is Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday made sacramentally present today in ritual. It is not merely a meal which reminds us of the Last Supper, or a Passion play which helps recall Good Friday, or a Sunrise Service which celebrates the Lord's Resurrection. The Mass is, therefore, our opportunity as Catholics to praise and thank God for the gift of our

salvation in Christ Jesus. In short, the Mass is one way in which we share in the Paschal Mystery (the Passion, Death and Resurrection) of Christ.

The basic "shape" of the ritual of the Mass can be described as a meal. This is not to say it is "just another meal" or that we are ignoring the Mass as sacrifice. Not at all.

When friends gather for a meal, they sit and talk.

Eventually, they move to the table, say grace, pass the food and eat and drink, and finally take their leave and go home. On our walk through the Mass, we will follow this same map: We will see ritual acts of 1) gathering, 2) storytelling, 3) meal sharing, and 4) commissioning.



Part One: Gathering (The Introductory Rites)

Coming together and forming community is at the heart of our Sunday worship. The reason behind each of the ritual actions of the first part of the Mass can be found in this word: gathering. The purpose of these rites is to bring us together into one Body, ready to listen and break bread together. Note that God is the one who has summoned us to this celebration of the Eucharist.

Genuflection. In medieval Europe, it was a custom to go down on one knee (to genuflect) before a king or person of rank. This practice gradually entered the Church and people began to genuflect to the presence of Christ in the tabernacle before entering the pew. If the tabernacle is not located in the sanctuary, it is proper for members of the assembly to express their reverence for the altar by bowing to it before entering the pew.

Posture, song. When the Mass begins everyone stands up. Standing is the posture of the Christian at prayer that expresses our attentiveness to the Word of God and our readiness to carry it out. Often, we begin by singing together to unite our voices in a common word.

Greeting. We begin with the Sign of the Cross, reminding ourselves of our baptism, and then the priest will greet us, saying, "The Lord be with you." This prayer reminds us of Christ's declaration that "... where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). The ritual

response to this greeting is always the formula, "And with your spirit," which acknowledges that the priest has received the Spirit of God through his ordination.

Penitential Rite. In this rite, we are invited to call to mind our sins and the one (the Lord) sent to save us from the power of sin. While this rite lacks the efficacy of sacramental absolution, we believe that through the reception of Holy Communion our less serious (venial) sins are forgiven.

Glory to God. Just as the angels proclaimed the praise of God at the birth of Christ, saying "Glory to God in the Highest" (Luke 2:13-14), we make our own declaration of praise of the Holy Trinity in singing or reciting the hymn, "Glory to God."

Opening Prayer. At the close of this first part of the Mass, the priest will ask us to join our minds in prayer with the invitation, "Let us pray." As the priest pauses, we offer our intentions. Then he will collect them all into one prayer, to which we all respond "Amen," a Hebrew word for "So be it."



Part Two: Storytelling (Liturgy of the Word)

Liturgy of the Word. When we gather at a friend's home for a meal, we almost always begin with conversation, telling our stories. At Mass, after the gathering rites, we sit down and listen as readings from the Word of God are proclaimed. They are the stories of God's people.

Three readings and a psalm. On Sundays, there are three readings from the Bible. The first reading will be from the Old Testament (except during the Easter season). We recall the origins of the covenants God made with our ancestors in faith. The first reading often relates to the Gospel selection of the day and will give background and an insight into the meaning of what Jesus will do in the Gospel. Then, we will sing or recite a psalm — a song from God's own inspired hymnal, the Book of Psalms. The second reading will usually be from one of the letters of Paul or another apostolic writing. The third reading will be taken from one of the four Gospels.

Standing for the Gospel. Because of the unique presence of Christ in the

proclamation of the Gospel, it has long been the custom to stand in attentive reverence to hear these words. The priest will again greet us with "The Lord be with you." He then introduces the Gospel reading while marking a small cross on his forehead, lips and heart with his thumb while praying silently that God cleans his mind and his heart so that his lips may worthily proclaim the Gospel. In many places, the congregation performs this ritual action along with the priest. The Gospel reading concludes with the ritual formula "The Gospel of the Lord" and we respond, "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ," again proclaiming our faith in the presence of Christ in the Word.

Homily. Then, we sit for the homily. Given by one who is ordained, the homily is an act of worship rooted in the texts of the Mass and Scripture, especially the readings that have just been proclaimed. The homily takes that Word and brings it into our life today.

Creed. On Sundays, we stand and together recite the Nicene or Apostles' Creed. The recitation is both a series of core truths we believe as Catholics, and a statement of our faith in the Word we have heard proclaimed in the Scripture and the homily.

Universal Prayer. We offer prayers for the needs and the salvation of all the world. The petitions usually fall into four categories: the Church, nations and their leaders, people in special need, and the local needs of our parish.

y-Step Explanation



Part Three: Meal Sharing (Liturgy of the Eucharist)

After the readings, we move to the altar for the sacred meal of sacrifice, sharing, and thanksgiving. As at a meal in the home of a friend, we 1) set the table, 2) say grace and 3) share the food (we eat and drink). At Mass, these ritual actions are called 1) the Preparation of the Altar and Gifts, 2) the Eucharistic Prayer, 3) the Communion Rite.

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR AND GIFTS

The early Christians brought bread and wine from their homes to the church to be used for the Mass and to be given to the clergy and the poor. Today, a similar offering for the parish and the poor is made with our monetary contributions.

The priest receives bread and wine brought forward by members of the congregation, keeping the spiritual efficacy and significance of the early Church offerings.

He then mixes water with the wine and washes his hands. (Mixing water with wine and washing hands are things all Jews did at meals in Jesus' day.)

Finally, he invites us to pray that the sacrifice be acceptable to God. We respond "Amen" to the Prayer Over the Gifts.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The prayer that follows is addressed to the Father and brings us to the very center of the Mass and the heart of our faith. While there are several approved Eucharistic Prayers from

which celebrants can choose, the prayer always has this structure: 1) We call upon God to remember all the wonderful saving deeds of our history. 2) We recall who is at the heart of that history, Jesus Christ, and in particular the memorial He left us on the night before He died. We recall His Passion, Death and Resurrection. 3) After gratefully calling to mind all the wonderful saving acts God has done for us in the past, we petition God to continue those deeds of Christ in the present: We pray that we may become one body, one spirit in Christ.

Invitation. The prayer begins with a dialogue between the leader and the assembly. First, the priest greets us with "The Lord be with you." He then asks if we are ready and willing to approach the table and to renew our baptismal commitment, offering ourselves to God: "Lift up your hearts." And we say that we are prepared to do so: "We lift them up to the Lord." We are invited to give thanks to the Lord our God. And we respond: "It is right and just."

To "give thanks" translates the traditional Greek verb that now names the whole action: Eucharist.

Institution Narrative: Consecration. The priest continues the prayer, giving praise and thanks, and calling upon the Holy Spirit to change our gifts of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. He then recalls the events of the Last Supper

— the institution of the Eucharist. At this important moment in the prayer, we proclaim the mystery of faith. The priest continues recalling the wonderful deeds of salvation: the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ.

Prayer for unity and intercessions. The grateful memory of God's salvation leads us to make a bold petition, our main petition at every Eucharist: We pray for unity. To this petition we add prayers for the bishop of Rome and for the bishop of the local Church; we pray for the living and the dead as well as for ourselves that, through the intercession of the saints, we may one day arrive at the table in heaven.

We look forward to that glorious day and raise our voices with those of all the saints who have gone before us as the priest raises the consecrated bread and wine and offers a doxology, a prayer of glory to God in the name of Christ: "Through Him, and with Him, and in Him, / O God, almighty Father, / in the unity of the Holy Spirit, / all glory and honor is Yours, / for ever and ever." Our "Amen" to this prayer acclaims our assent and participation in the entire Eucharistic Prayer.

THE COMMUNION RITE

Our Father and Sign of Peace. We prepare to eat and drink at the Lord's Table with those words taught to us by Jesus: "Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who tres-

pass against us." Keenly aware that communion (the word means "union with") is the source of our reconciliation and union with God and with one another, we make a gesture of union and forgiveness with those around us and offer them the sign of peace.

Invitation to Communion. The priest then shows us the Body of Christ and invites us to come to the table, echoing the words of John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God ..." We respond, "Lord, I am not worthy..." as the centurion did when he asked Jesus to cure his servant (Matthew 8:8). None of us, on our own, are worthy to embrace the fullness of Christ. It is only through the love and mercy of God bestowed upon us that we become worthy to receive. The members of the assembly now approach the altar in procession.

Communion. As God fed our ancestors in the desert on their pilgrimage, so God gives us food for our journey. We approach the minister who gives us the consecrated Host with the words "The Body of Christ," and we respond, "Amen." During this procession, we usually sing a hymn which unites our voices, minds and thoughts, even as the Body and Blood of Christ unites our bodies and souls. Then, we pray silently in our hearts, thanking and praising God. The priest unites our prayers in the Prayer After Communion, to which we respond, "Amen."



Part Four: Commissioning (Concluding Rites)

The burdens we have laid down at the door of the church for this Eucharist, we know we must now bear again — but now strengthened by this Eucharist and this community.

Blessing and Dismissal. We bow our heads to receive a blessing. As the priest names the Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — we make the Sign of the Cross. The priest or deacon then dismisses the assembly: "Go in peace." And we give our liturgical "yes" by saying, "Thanks be to God."

Living the Eucharist in the world. We leave the assembly and the church building carrying Christ within us. What happens in our lives during the week gives deeper meaning to the ritual actions we have celebrated at Mass, whether it's family, work with the poor, or just plain work. It is only in relation to our daily lives that the full meaning of the ritual actions of the Mass becomes clear to us. We bring Christ to the world.

News Briefs

St. Francis Mass Has New Location, Time

A bilingual Mass commemorating the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals and the environment, has a new time and location.

Hosted by the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, the Mass for the Care of Creation will be on Saturday, Oct. 2, at The Immaculata Church, which is located on the campus of the University of San Diego. Mass will begin at 9 a.m.

For those who will be attending in-person, refreshments will follow the Mass. The liturgy also will be livestreamed at sdcatholic.org/stfrancis.

For more information, call (858) 490-8221 or email smeza@sdcatholic.org.

'40 Days for Life' Underway

40 Days for Life, an internationally coordinated 40-day campaign that aims to protect the unborn through prayer and fasting, community outreach, and a peaceful all-day vigil in front of abortion clinics, is underway in communities across the United States and abroad, including San Diego.

A hallmark of the campaign, which runs from Sept. 22 through Oct. 31, is a round-the-clock prayer vigil on the public sidewalk outside of an abortion clinic. Locally, such vigils are taking place at several locations, including the College Area, downtown San Diego, Mira Mesa, El Cajon, Escondido, Vista and South Bay.

For more information about 40 Days for Life and about vigils near you, visit sdcatholic.org/event/40-days-for-life.

Catholic Singer-Songwriter to Perform at Mission

Catholic singer-songwriter Jon Carlo, whose single "Tú Eres Más Fuerte" was among the theme songs at World Youth Day in 2019, is on tour.

The Diocese of San Diego is one of the stops on his SMP Tour ("SMP" stands for "Si Me Preguntarán," which is Spanish for "If They Ask Me" and is the title of a song from his most recent album).

The Dominican Republic-born musician will perform on Saturday, Oct. 2, at the Serra Center at Mission San Luis Rey Parish in Oceanside. The concert will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 at the door. Children under 12 will not be admitted. Masks are required. For more information, visit sanluisreyparish.org.

Women Invited to Fall Brunch

Erika Toraya, a local Cursillista, youth minister and Christian actor, will be the guest speaker at the Whispering Winds Women's Auxiliary's fall brunch. The theme of her talk will be "Climbing the Mountain — Together!"

The event will be held on Saturday, Oct. 9, at Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá. The brunch will begin at 9 a.m. in the California Room. It will be preceded by an optional rosary at 8:30 a.m. in the church.



At the annual Special Needs Family Camp at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp, participant Jack Medved painted a mural on one of the cabins of the creatures that live at the campground. Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan celebrated Mass at the camp and then blessed the cabin. The Medved family is part of the Special Needs ministry at Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado, which embraces people of all ages with varying abilities and offers a variety of activities year-round for the entire family. More information at dcm@sacredheartcor.org and (619) 435-3167, ext. 302.

Tickets are \$45 and include one opportunity drawing ticket. Register online at tinyurl.com/WWWABrunch2021. For more information, call (619) 504-7620 or email kwaddell@swccd.edu.

Diocese Celebrates Mass for Catholic Therapists

All Catholic therapists are invited to a Mass for Mental Health Clinicians.

The liturgy will take place at 9 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 13, in the diocesan Pastoral Center's chapel. The celebrant will be Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan.

Clinicians are invited to stay after the Mass for fellowship, networking, and a light coffee breakfast.

The Pastoral Center is located at 3888 Paducah Drive, San Diego 92117. RSVP to John Prust at jprust@sdcatholic.org.

Father Brown Memorial Golf Tournament Oct. 16

The fifth annual Father Brown Memorial Golf Tournament is planned for Saturday, Oct. 16, to benefit Our Lady's School.

A priest in the San Diego Diocese, Jesuit Father Richard Brown passed away in May 2020 at the age of 93. He was a legend in San Diego, particularly among Latino Catholics, whom he served for 37 years as a priest at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, where the school is located.

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October 16 & 23
8:30 am - 3:00 pm

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MODULES

- Palliative care and hospice
- Caring for parishioners, the roles of clergy and ministers
- Catholic moral teaching
- Advance care planning
- Parish as a loving community, caring for one another, and death and grieving process

- Free entrance, but registration is required
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The event begins at 11:30 a.m. with registration and lunch, 1 p.m. “shotgun,” 6 p.m. dinner and raffle, and 7 p.m. awards. The cost to participate is \$150 for one player, \$600 for a foursome, or \$50 for dinner only. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Online registration is available at olssd.org or through email at alumni@olssd.org. More information is available by phoning Daniel Montañó at (619) 507-9101.

Healthcare Providers Invited to White Mass

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will celebrate the 10th annual White Mass at 10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 30, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Carlsbad.

Named for the traditional white lab coats and uniforms worn by medical personnel, the White Mass is celebrated for healthcare professionals, including physicians, nurses, mental health specialists, hospice workers, pastoral caregivers and others. Those in attendance are invited to wear their white lab coats.

A reception will follow in the parish hall with Dr. Lauren Rubal, a reproductive endocrinologist and infertility specialist from Newport Beach, as the speaker. After a conversion experience, Rubal stopped performing in vitro fertilization, which is recognized as immoral by the Catholic Church, and now practices entirely in line with Catholic teaching.

The annual White Mass is sponsored by the St. Gianna Physician's Guild and Culture of Life Family Services. For information, call (858) 461-0777 or email info@StGiannaPhysicians.org.

Local Parishes Holding Fall Festivals

Holy Family's festival in Linda Vista will be held on Saturday, Oct. 2 (noon-9 p.m.), and Sunday, Oct. 3 (from the conclusion of the 8 a.m. Mass until 6 p.m.). Family-friendly activities include live entertainment, food, games, a silent auction and a raffle. More information is available by phone or text at (858) 568-4004 or email at spa@crprentals.com.

Guardian Angels' festival in Santee will be held on Friday, Oct. 8 (5-10 p.m.); Saturday, Oct. 9 (11 a.m.-10 p.m.); and Sunday, Oct. 10 (11 a.m.-4 p.m.). It will feature entertainment, games, multicultural food, a beer garden, a craft fair and more. The festival will be preceded by a weeklong virtual auction of more than 100 items, running from Oct. 4 to 11; the auction can be accessed at GuardianAngelsSantee.org. Also, Chick-fil-A in Santee will be hosting a fall festival kick-off dinner on Wednesday, Oct. 6, from 5 to 7 p.m.; mention Guardian Angels Catholic Church when placing an order and a portion of the sales will benefit the church. For more information, visit GuardianAngelsSantee.org, call (619) 840-5889 or email centermgr@guardianangelssantee.org.

“An Evening in Bavaria” will be held from 5 to 7:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 15, at **San Rafael Parish** in Rancho Bernardo. The menu will include bratwursts, sauerkraut, German potato salad, pretzels, and strudel with ice cream. The event is sponsored by San Rafael Parish Knights of Columbus Valley of Angels Council #9170. Children can enjoy a kids' menu and their own entertainment. Tickets are



'Caring for Whole Person'

“Caring for the Whole Person” is an initiative of California's bishops and Catholic healthcare system that provides resources to parish leaders, including priests and deacons, who have been called to serve the sick and dying.

Those interested in becoming involved with this initiative are invited to an upcoming two-day training, which will be held on Oct. 16 and Oct. 23 at the diocesan Pastoral Center. Both sessions are required and will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. There is no cost to attend.

“Caring for the Whole Person” is

not a new ministry, but rather a way of helping parishes to better carry out their existing ministry to those at the end of life.

Forty-eight leaders representing 31 parishes in the Diocese of San Diego have already received training in “Caring for the Whole Person.” It is in the process of being implemented at Mission San Diego de Alcalá, San Rafael and other parishes. The diocese's goal is to have 10 pilot parishes implementing the initiative by December.

For more information, visit sdcatholic.org/wholeperson.

available for a suggested donation: \$20 for adults, \$10 for children ages 6 to 18, and free for children age 5 and under. Discounted pre-sale tickets will be sold after all San Rafael Parish Masses on the weekends of Oct. 2-3 and Oct. 9-10. Proceeds will benefit the needs of San Rafael Parish, seminarians and religious vocations, and other charitable causes supported by the Knights of Columbus.

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To make a reservation for the FREE planning seminar, call Lynne McKeon at 760-757-3651, ext. 118





By Denis Grasska



Father Ed Horning is pastor of the Catholic Communities of Brawley and Westmorland.

As such, he oversees three parishes and one Catholic elementary school in the Imperial Valley.

A native of San Diego, he is an alumnus of Our Lady of Perpetual Help School in Lakeside, St. Augustine High School and San Diego State University.

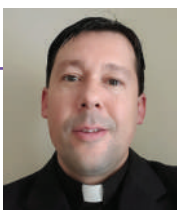
He was ordained to the priesthood on May 28, 2004. Since then, he has ministered exclusively in the Imperial Valley, where he has thrived amidst the heat of the desert and the warmth of the community.

Question: When did you first discern a call to the priesthood?

Answer: It started with the Lord calling me to a deeper relationship with Him. Priesthood wasn't on my radar at all, but the more I became vulnerable to the Lord in prayer — going to daily Mass, reading the Scriptures, going to Eucharistic adoration — the call became clearer and clearer.

I fought with the Lord about it, because I didn't really want to become a priest at first. But I could see that God

Interview with:
Father Ed Horning



knew what was the best path for me. Once I entered the seminary, I never looked back.

How did you end up in the Imperial Valley?

At the same time that God was calling me to the priesthood, I felt drawn to the Imperial Valley.

As seminarians, we got summer assignments. I was assigned to Oceanside three times. When it came time for my six-month internship at a parish, I told the bishop that I wanted to go to the Imperial Valley.

I had never been there before, but it was love at first arrival. As soon as I got there, I just fell in love with the region and the people, and I just felt at home. It was such a great experience that, when it was time for my first assignment as a priest, the bishop didn't even ask; he just sent me back. And I've never left. Counting those months as a seminarian, I've been in the Valley for just about 18 years.

Being in the Imperial Valley is kind

of like being a missionary, but in our own diocese. San Diego County has a lot of good priests, and I believe that Imperial Valley needs good priests, too. That's what I'm trying to be: a good, solid priest.

It's clear from your social media activity that you have a deep appreciation for the Hispanic culture that comprises your parish communities. Where did it come from?

I really fell in love with Spanish at St. Augustine High School. I had a great teacher, Mr. (William) Davis, who's still there. And he really inspired me not only to learn Spanish, but to learn more about the cultures and countries that speak it.

As a seminarian, I studied theology in Mexico City for a few months in 2002, and that really boosted my confidence in traveling and getting to know people.

Never have I experienced any negativity in my interactions with the Hispanic community. Quite the opposite. In Spanish, we say "cariño," which means affection, love and support. That's what I've experienced. Being with them has helped me to grow as a person and become more loving, more joyful, more outgoing. I'm also a fan of the music, especially cumbia and huapango.

October is observed as "Respect Life Month." You have been a champion of the pro-life cause. Why?

I'm the spiritual director for the Imperial Valley Culture of Life. I celebrate Mass once a month outside a local Planned Parenthood abortion clinic.

As soon as the U.S. Supreme Court issued its Roe v. Wade ruling, my paternal grandmother was outside abortion clinics, providing alternatives. She had 10 kids and 50 grandkids. She was very pro-life, and she taught all of us to protect, promote and cherish life. My parents followed her example and I joined them from a young age. I grew up outside abortion clinics, so it's first nature for me to be part of the pro-life movement.

Does desert life agree with you? What do you find most appealing about it?

I'm not a city person. Being out in the desert isn't as stressful as living in the city. There's no traffic; you can get places very quickly.

I also get cold really easy, so I like the hot weather. We have two seasons in the Imperial Valley: hot and cold. We have six months of heat, when the temperature ranges from 80 to as high as 120 degrees. During the summer, I'm happy.

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Unplug, and Begin Inner Journey to Love



Every day, we're bombarded by countless texts, e-mails, news and propaganda that keep us distracted or trapped in what is external and immediate. We're subjected to a barrage of stimuli that don't allow us to concentrate, to maintain focus on a thought, feeling or task. We face more information than we have the capacity to process, discern or digest. We could say that we live in a state of indigestion. The conflicting views about the virus, the vaccines, laws, the war, immigration issues, gender issues and environmental disasters trigger fear and confusion. We don't know what the next chapter of our life will bring and that fuels our anxiety and uncertainty about the future.

All of this is fertile ground for mental illness to take root, with its rage, frustration and depression. Meanwhile, the process to get psychological, emotional and spiritual support has gotten more complicated and therapists and organizations that offer this help are overwhelmed.

In general terms, we could define mental illness as a loss of harmony in

**Associate Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality**

**Ricardo
Márquez**



relation to ourselves, to others and to the reality that surrounds us. We respond instinctively amid the chaos with violence, rigidity, apathy, fanaticism or indifference. What do we do when facing this terrifying situation? Acknowledging that we're in a crisis could awaken us from it, inspiring us to ask for help, beginning the road to our interior selves.

When explorers discover that they're lost, the most sensible course is to return to base camp. What does it mean for us to return to base camp? It means to begin to look inward, to begin to ask, "Where are my reactions coming from? My fears? My emotions?" It means passing from the visible to the invisible, from the apparent to the essential, from the accidental to the fundamental; to truly begin to look at what is important to us. We speak, sometimes superficially, about the importance of cultivating love, respect, compassion and tenderness; it turns out, these things are necessary in moments of crisis.

In recent days, when we were remembering those who disappeared in the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the media shared some of the last messages sent by passengers and crew members in

the hijacked planes to their family members:

"Don't forget that I love you" ...
"I want you to know that I love you" ...
"Tell the kids that I love them" ...
"Forgive me for not spending more time with you" ...

Love is in our DNA, integral to our creation. Creation for believers is a mystery of love, a "big bang" of love that continues to expand; we came from love and will return to love.

Creating silence in our frenetic lives is the first step to beginning a journey to our interior, to creating a space and a moment to reduce the avalanche of external stimuli and to prepare the ground to begin to listen to the interior voice of our conscience, to see ourselves as we are, with our attributes, wounds, lights and shadows. That process, which takes time and requires grace and discipline, is what will lead us to accept and love ourselves, and from there, to respect and love others.

In that intimate place of our conscience is where we find the mystery and greatness of God; it is in that place of loving encounter that we feel like the prodigal son of the parable Jesus shared with us.

If we don't judge ourselves, nor condemn, neither will He condemn us. And from that experience of lived acceptance and love, from that deep transformation, is born the urge to announce to others the Good News that we are all loved and are called to experience that love here and now. This



process takes us to harmony, to the flexibility that we need to move in the midst of chaos and confusion to better mental health. Amid the turmoil, we will know that we are loved and that our life is sacred.

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



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All Called to Care for Creation

FR. EMMETT FARRELL

STEWARD: The Creation Care Ministry in the San Diego Diocese has a campaign to plant trees this fall. Father Sam Nasada, OFM, pitched in Sept. 11 at Mission San Luis Rey Parish, where he serves as associate pastor.

By Aida Bustos



"The cry of the Earth and of the poor is becoming more and more heartbreaking."

That's how the head of the Vatican office that protects life describes what is occurring in every corner of the world.

In response, Pope Francis is asking everyone to join a new global grassroots movement to create a more inclusive and sustainable world. The Vatican will officially launch this initiative, called the Laudato Si' Action Platform, on Oct. 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.

The San Diego Diocese will mark the day with a Mass on Saturday, Oct. 2, at 9 a.m. at The Immaculata Parish on the University of San Diego campus. The Mass is organized by the Creation Care Ministry, which itself developed a diocesan Creation Care Action Plan that outlines what individuals, families and faith communities can do to protect the environment and its vulnerable residents.

Both initiatives have the word "action" in their names for a reason. Climate change is driving more frequent and more intense wildfires, massive flooding, long-lasting droughts, all displacing millions of people worldwide. Earlier this summer in the U.S., hundreds died in a record-breaking heat wave in the Pacific Northwest.



CREATION CARE MINISTRY

ROOTED: Several Catholic schools have Creation Care Teams that encourage students to plant sustainable gardens.

Wildfire smoke caused spikes in emergency room visits, especially among children.

"No temperature rise is safe," said an unprecedented statement issued by 200 medical journals worldwide in September. "In the past 20 years, heat-related mortality among people over 65 years of age has increased by more than 50%."

The encyclical Pope Francis presented six years ago, "Laudato Si': On Caring for Our Common Home," underscored how all of creation was interconnected. And it argued that the environmental crises could not be viewed as separate from social ones, and that solutions were needed to both stop the degradation of the environment and the degradation of the lives of the poor, disproportionately affected by the damage to the natural world.

The online Laudato Si' Action Platform, to be available in seven languages, builds on the encyclical's call to act. The Vatican office that is bringing it to life is called the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, of which San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy, is a delegate. The bishop is a leading advocate in the Church on the principle of "integral ecology" advanced in the encyclical.

The platform provides a framework to help communities worldwide to work in different ways to become totally sustainable in seven years. These include families, parishes, schools, dioceses, universities, hospitals, workers, businesses, organizations and movements.

People can register on the platform to assess what they are doing now and to see how they can contribute to the seven Laudato Si' goals:

- Responding to the cry of the Earth and environmental degradation
- Responding to the cry of the poor and vulnerable
- Creating an ecological-sustainable economy
- Adopting simple lifestyles
- Supporting ecological education
- Promoting ecological spirituality
- Building community awareness, participation and action.

Choosing the biblical time frame of seven years "enables us to work slowly but surely without being obsessed with immediate results," said Salesian Father Joshtrom Kureethadam, coordinator of the "ecology and creation" desk at the dicastery, at a news conference May 25 at the Vatican.

The strategy, he said, is to create a snowball effect by enrolling increasingly larger numbers of groups each year "to create the critical mass needed" for achieving real change in the world.

"The good news is that the critical mass is not a very big number. Sociologists tell us that, if you reach 3.5% of a group" or community, "we have the critical mass."

The Creation Care Ministry in the San Diego Diocese is taking such an approach. Its members are working to improve the quality of life at a given location, one tree at a time. Their fall campaign is focused on promoting the planting of trees in low-income, urban neighborhoods, whose residents



TEAM WORK: The residents of Kairos House in San Diego planted a macadamia tree on Sept. 18 as part of the diocese's campaign.



URGENT CALL: Pope Francis called on people everywhere to take concrete steps to protect creation.

endure the environmental and social costs of having fewer trees.

Father Emmet Farrell, who leads the ministry, calls on people to see what is occurring through the lens of their faith.

"This is a spiritual issue, because we are stewards of the earth," he said. "And we're not doing a very good job of protecting it ... There are a lot of things we can do to moderate our way of living. This won't happen without some sacrifice. But we can be the stewards God intended us to be."

Catholic News Service contributed to this story.

The San Diego Diocese's Creation Care Ministry is at sdcatholic.org/creation and (619) 417-8345.

The Vatican's online platform may be reached at laudatosiactionplatform.org.



What You Can Do

Individuals can take simple steps to care for creation and mitigate devastating climate change. These small efforts, when done by many people over time, can have a meaningful impact in the community. These steps include:

- ✓ **Increase Efficiency:** Turn lights off when not in use or don't turn on if there is natural lighting. Replace inefficient light bulbs with LED or other efficient lighting.
- ✓ **Conserve Water:** Take shorter showers and save water when brushing teeth. Replace water-thirsty green grass with rocks and native shrubs. Some public agencies offer rebates to homeowners who make this change.
- ✓ **Eat Wisely:** If your budget permits, buy organic and locally grown foods. Grow some of your own food. Home cook more meals. Eat low on the food chain — at least one meat-free meal a day — since 18% of greenhouse gas emissions come from meat and dairy production. Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ **Travel Wisely:** Ride your bike to local destinations, take public transit when possible, work from home, and carpool. Organize carpools for community meetings and activities and include transit information in directions for events. If feasible, buy an electric or hybrid car.
- ✓ **Reduce Waste:** Use washable dishes. Use a home filter instead of bottled water. Reduce food waste. Choose products with less packaging. Recycle paper, plastics, bottles and aluminum cans. Buy only what you need: food, clothing, furniture, technology, etc. Use less plastic.
- ✓ **Go Renewable:** Consider rooftop solar, solar hot water, or other renewable choices.
- ✓ **Speak Up:** Talk to friends, family and coworkers about what you are doing to pollute less and be sustainable.

SCHOOL / PARISH / COMMUNITY

You can join with others in your school, parish or community to advocate for or make one or more of these changes:

Educate congregation and community members about the devastating effects of climate change and steps that can be taken to mitigate them.

Use prayer as a sacred moment to reflect that we are one family in a common home.

Organize workshops or a study group on "Laudato Si." Organize a Creation Care Team in the parish, school or community organization.

RESOURCES

Diocesan contact: Father Emmet Farrell:
efarrell@sdccatholic.org; (858) 490-8323.

Diocesan website: sdccatholic.org/creation

Vatican: laudatosiactionplatform.org



DESPERATE: Migrants from Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, walk in the Rio Grande near the International Bridge between Mexico and the U.S. Sept. 18, 2021.

Catholic Leaders Urge Humane Treatment for Haitian Migrants

Catholic News Service



WASHINGTON — The chairman of the U.S. bishops' migration committee and the head of Catholic Charities USA issued a joint statement urging humane treatment of Haitians and other migrants as their numbers grow in southern Texas at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Thousands of Haitians have made their way across the Rio Grande from Mexico and illegally entered the United States at the Del Rio Sector of the border, roughly 145 miles west of San Antonio.

The Haitians and other migrants have been living under the Del Rio International Bridge awaiting processing, while coping with temperatures exceeding 100 degrees and limited access to food, water and shelter.

"We call on the U.S. government to reassess its treatment of migrants in Del Rio and elsewhere along the U.S.-Mexico border, especially Haitians, who face life-threatening conditions if returned to Haiti and possible discrimination if expelled to third countries," said Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington and Dominican Sister Donna Markham.

The bishop is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration and Sister Markham is president and CEO of

Catholic Charities USA.

"As a Church at the service of all God's people, we embrace Christ's call to welcome the newcomer and accompany them wherever they may be," they said.

The Biden administration announced Sept. 18 it would quickly begin deporting the Haitians back to Haiti, even though a majority of them did not arrive at the border recently from their homeland. News reports said many have been living in or traveling through Latin America for varying periods of time after fleeing widespread violence, political turmoil, natural disasters and economic stagnation in Haiti.

The Biden administration has been deporting asylum-seekers using Title 42, despite criticism for doing so from advocates for migrants and a court battle over it.

Title 42 is a provision of U.S. public health law that was activated by the Trump administration to expel migrants at the border, with the exception of minors, over COVID-19 concerns.

Bishop Dorsonville and Sister Markham criticized policies such as Title 42 and expedited removal because "all too often" they "deny the reality of forced migration, disregard the responsibilities enshrined in domestic and international law, and undermine the vulnerability of those against whom they are applied."

Protect Human Dignity From High-Tech Threats, Pope Says

Catholic News Service



VATICAN CITY — Lawmakers need to regulate and develop sound policies regarding today's digital technology, specifically targeting the problems of child pornography, personal data violations, cyber attacks on critical infrastructures and fake news, Pope Francis told Catholic and Christian legislators.

"Prudent legislation can guide the development and application of technology in the service of the common good," he said during an audience at the Vatican.

"I heartily encourage you, therefore, to make every effort to undertake serious and in-depth moral reflection on the risks and possibilities associated with scientific and technological advances, so that the laws and regulations governing them may concentrate on promoting human development and peace, rather than on progress as an end in itself," the pope said.

He was speaking to members of the International Catholic Legislators Network who were in Rome for an annual conference on Aug. 27. It's a non-partisan organization founded in 2010 to bring together practicing Catholics and other Christians in elected office on a regular basis for faith formation,

education and fellowship. It has headquarters in Vienna and an office in Washington, D.C.

The pope told those in attendance that one of the greatest challenges today is making sure technology is used for the common good. Technology cannot be left on its own, he said, otherwise, "these innovations can end up becoming a threat to the dignity of the human person."

"I think of the scourge of child pornography, the misuse of personal data, attacks on critical infrastructures such as hospitals and the spread of false information on social media and so on."

He said that the challenge for lawmakers and government representatives when the pandemic ebbs is to foster a holistic "renewal of your communities and of society as a whole."

This requires more than "seeking to return to the status quo prior to the pandemic; no, that would be a failure. It demands confronting the deeper causes that the crisis has laid bare and aggravated: poverty, social inequality, widespread unemployment and the lack of access to education."

"In an age of political polarization, legislators and politicians in general are not always held in high esteem," he continued. "Yet what loftier vocation can there be than that of serving the common good and placing the welfare of the community before your personal advantage?"

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American Catholics Rally to Provide Poor Families With Safe Water Through Fr. Meaux's Kobonal Haiti Mission

When Father Glenn Meaux and his missionary team arrived in Kobonal, Haiti, in 1989, he was deeply disturbed by the magnitude of poverty he saw there. Hardly anyone in the village owned the land their fragile huts occupied. No one grew gardens or raised animals. Very few employment opportunities existed for the unskilled, uneducated population, so very few families were able to earn money to buy food.

During the rainy season, the women and children would gather water from the plentiful streams and rivers — but the water was obviously tainted. During the dry season, people resorted to digging holes in the sand in order to find water.

“There was no agriculture, there was no irrigation system — there was literally no hope at the time.”

Fr. Glenn Meaux,
Haiti Kobonal Mission

In addition to suffering hunger and thirst, the people were also starving for spiritual guidance. Entrenched in superstition and occult practices, few had ever heard the name of Christ.

“There was no agriculture, there was no irrigation system, there was literally no hope at the time,” Fr. Meaux recalled. With this sense of hopelessness, it is easy to see how Kobonal earned its reputation as the “darkest corner of the Diocese of Hinche.”

This is the challenging ground on which the Kobonal Haiti Mission took root, and in the three ensuing decades, the mission has worked marvels, helping hundreds of families improve their lives. Still, Fr. Meaux's heart breaks every time he sees a mother or child living in a dilapidated shack or gathering water from a murky stream.

“Fr. Meaux has already given the best years of his life to the people of Haiti (see story on opposite page), but he always has his eyes forward, looking for the next thing he can do to help relieve the people's suffering and increase their opportunities in life,” explained Jim Cavnar, president of Cross Catholic Outreach, a leading Catholic relief and development ministry that has partnered with Fr. Meaux for more than a decade and a half. “Many people are aware of the wonderful things he's done to address the people's urgent needs, but his ultimate goal is to break the cycle of poverty in this part of Haiti and forever change the



fate of the families he serves.”

Fr. Meaux stated his objectives even more simply.

“As Catholics, we must extend our hands to help our brothers and sisters in need,” he said.

Currently, one of the mission's primary project goals is to bring clean water to the people of Kobonal, ending the need for families to collect unsafe water from remote sources.

“Women and children are often tasked with finding and collecting water, and the murky streams they draw from aren't fit for animals, much less people,” Cavnar said. “At Cross Catholic Outreach, we work on many projects like this, obtaining donations from U.S. Catholics to pay for the equipment and organize the construction efforts involved. Our current goal is to help Fr. Meaux put in

two clean-water wells, build a community distribution point and repair five existing wells. If we can accomplish this, it will serve the daily needs of about 616 adults and 2,152 children who currently face the greatest challenges to their health and well-being. The people in these villages will not only use the water for drinking and cooking, but also to sustain important gardens they depend on for food and income.”

According to Cavnar, the wells will make use of freestanding hand pumps, and the families in each community will choose a leader to oversee and perform maintenance on the equipment. Each well will have a cement wall around it for security and be available daily during specific hours of operation. The water

will be free, but the benefiting families will be encouraged to contribute a token amount to a community fund that can be tapped if repairs are ever needed on the wells. Contributing in this way will give villagers a sense of ownership and pride in their community.

“Anticipation is mounting for this project, and volunteers have already stepped forward to offer their help with the construction of the wells. Now, all that's needed are the funds for drilling, purchasing pumps, constructing a pump house to store supplies and training community members to handle maintenance of the new facilities,” Cavnar said. “Our goal now is to make American Catholics aware of the project and gain their support.”

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. AC01760, PO Box 97168, Washington, DC 20090-7168. The brochure also includes instructions for becoming a Mission Partner and making a regular monthly donation to this cause.

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