

# THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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**LET'S HEAR YOU!:** The Vatican began a three-year process to invite Catholics worldwide to encounter one another, listen to each other's experiences in the Church and discern ways to make it more inclusive. The diocesan phase began with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Robert McElroy on Oct. 17 at the Pastoral Center chapel.



## New Leader

The Commission for African American Catholics charts new course. **Pages 4-5**



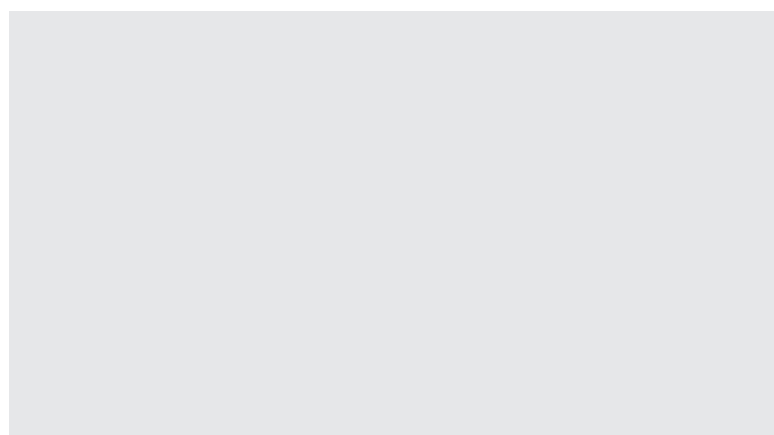
## Navy Chaplain

A priest killed in Vietnam inspires a ministry for Catholics in the military. **Pages 10-11**



## Not Forgotten

Youth ministers learn how to help young people facing challenges. **Page 13**



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THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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

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



**PARTNERS:** Representatives of parishes, cultural Catholic groups, and ministry leaders attended the San Diego Diocese's Mass Celebrating the Initiation of the Synodal Way on Oct. 17 at the Pastoral Center chapel.

**By Aida Bustos**  
 Encounter. Listen. Discern.  
That's what Pope Francis is asking every Catholic to do worldwide. He is asking them to truly understand and respect each other's experiences in the Church, beginning a process to make it more inclusive and welcoming.

This process is at the heart of a monumental initiative called the Synod on Synodality, which the pope formally launched on Oct. 10 and began at the diocese a week later. In basic terms, a "synod" is a meeting of Church leaders, and "synodality" refers to the way they make decisions. According to *America*, a monthly magazine published by the Jesuits, synodality "is a model that includes listening to a broad range of people and then discussing the issues together with the goal of hearing where the Holy Spirit is calling the Church." This collaboration "enables the entire People of God to walk forward together to participate in the mission of the Church and the communion that Christ establishes between us," according to the document the Vatican released to prepare dioceses for the synod. The goal of the synod is to identify barriers keeping individuals and communities from fully participating in the life of the Church, and by the end, proposing ways to lift them. The pope began the three-year synod with a Mass at St. Peter's Basilica on Oct. 10. A week later, bishops worldwide launched the diocesan phase of the synod, which is to last through April. Locally, Bishop Robert McElroy initiated the "synodal journey" in the diocese with a Mass on Oct. 17 at the Pastoral Center attended by representatives from parishes, cultural Catholic commissions, pastors and religious women. "We begin this synodal process when we're asked to look into our hearts and souls as a local Church and to ask ourselves: To what degree do we incorporate into our lives the

principles of synodality? How can we move forward in doing so?" the bishop told them. "Dioceses across the world are beginning the same inquiry into their ecclesial life, not with any sense of fear, but with a sense of openness and joy to what the Holy Spirit of God will reveal to us in the process." At the Mass, he outlined the path the diocese would follow in the synod. In the next four months, the local Church at all levels will undertake a "penetrating examination of conscience" to discern the degree to which the characteristics of synodality are present in the local Church, and where they are absent. This information will be shared with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Vatican, which will use it to prepare for a universal Synod of Bishops in 2023. More importantly, the findings of the examination of conscience will become the foundation for a process that will begin next February and stretch into 2023 seeking "to transform our local Church by bringing the qualities of synodality much more powerfully into the life our parishes, schools, institutions and the diocese as a whole." The bishop said that he had appointed a commission of 17 women and men to coordinate the process, including lay parish leaders; leaders in life, peace and justice issues; and those serving marginalized communities. He also announced that there would be distinct processes for San Diego and Imperial counties to reflect the individuality of their communities. "Like the people of Israel journeying into the desert," he said, "we embark upon this synodal pathway unsure where it will lead us, relying upon the belief that our God will guide our way and deepen our sense of the community we are called to be."

More information is available at [sdccatholic.org/synod](https://sdccatholic.org/synod).



**LAUNCH:** Bishop Robert McElroy began the "synodal journey" at the Mass, outlining the process the diocese will undertake in the next two years.





**ON THE MOVE:** St. Martin of Tours Parish relocated to its present-day campus in 1948. The process involved physically moving the existing church building, the second of the three church buildings that have housed the community over the past century.

## Slow Down? 100-Year-Old Parish Steps It Up

### The Southern Cross



LA MESA — St. Martin of Tours Parish is turning 100.

The theme for its centennial celebration is “Immensely Grateful for a Century of Blessings.”

Certainly, one of those blessings is the fact that the 100th anniversary happened to fall in 2021, rather than 2020, when the most stringent of COVID-19 safety protocols were still in place.

“It’s indeed a prayer answered for us to be able to celebrate (this milestone) in person,” said Father Elmer Mandac, pastor.

The La Mesa parish will welcome Bishop Robert McElroy at 10 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 7, to preside at its centennial anniversary Mass.

Over the past century, St. Martin of Tours Parish has grown into what Father Mandac describes as a “very alive, very vibrant” community with about 1,800 registered families.

It is also a parish community dedicated to social justice. The parish has operated a food pantry for more than four decades and, more recently, has been active in the fair trade movement and in efforts to promote environmental sustainability.

“Over the past decade, St. Martin of Tours Academy and Parish has focused its commitment towards fair trade principles and (Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment) ‘Laudato Si’ by taking care of the earth and the poor,” said Anne Pacheco, a parish leader in these efforts.

This work has earned national recognition.

In 2014, St. Martin of Tours Academy became the first Catholic elementary school in the country to be designated a “Fair Trade School” by Fair Trade Campaigns, a grassroots movement dedicated to increasing the availability of these products. In



**GATHERING PLACE:** Parishioners are seen outside St. Martin of Tours Church after Mass. The parish’s current church was completed in 1965.

2015, the parish was named a “Fair Trade Congregation.”

Spiritual life for Catholics in La Mesa was very different before the founding of St. Martin of Tours Parish. With only about 50 Catholic families in the area, the community wasn’t deemed large enough to warrant a full-time priest. So, Catholics gathered in private homes where, on special occasions, a visiting priest would celebrate Mass.

In those early days, La Mesa Catholics who desired to attend Mass regularly had to travel by train or other means to the nearest Catholic churches in San Diego and El Cajon.

This changed in 1920, when the first regularly scheduled Sunday Masses in La Mesa were celebrated in the main hall of a local undertaking parlor.

A small lot at the corner of Normal Street and La Mesa Boulevard was

purchased, and construction began on a permanent church in 1921. The community was able to celebrate Christmas Mass that year in the new church.

La Mesa received an influx of war workers, service personnel, and their families during World War II. St. Martin added extra Masses to accommodate the growing number of parishioners. Catholic men’s and women’s groups were organized. For parish youth, a comprehensive catechism program was organized.

By 1948, the parish was in need of larger facilities. Around 1,000 faithful were seeking to attend Mass every Sunday in a church that measured only 70 by 40 feet. Even with four Sunday Masses, it was almost impossible to obtain a seat in church.

So, the parish relocated once again. The existing church on Normal Street

was uprooted and transported to a new site on El Cajon Boulevard. It was then cut in two and expanded to twice the original length. The exterior of the church underwent extensive alterations.

Construction on St. Martin of Tours Academy commenced in fall of 1950; the school welcomed its first students the following September. The parish hall was completed in October 1952.

With the population of La Mesa continuing to increase, eventually a still larger church was needed. The parish broke ground on its current church in June 1964. It was completed in time for Christmas Mass 1965 and dedicated on Feb. 13, 1966.

Today, the previous church building is known as Barry Hall, named after Father Dennis Barry, who was pastor during the construction of the current church.

Father Mandac credits the parish’s strong sense of community with sustaining it for the past century.

Jim and JoEllen LaRue have been members of the St. Martin of Tours community for 44 years.

In an interview recorded to mark the centennial, Jim recalled that they had joined the parish after having previously been members of another St. Martin of Tours Parish in Maryland.

After relocating to Southern California, he said, “We had visited about four or five other parishes (and) just decided when we met the people here (at St. Martin’s) that this was a place where ... we would like to be.”

“St. Martin’s is warm and welcoming. That’s really what attracted us to the place,” added JoEllen, who said the couple “nestled right in” at the parish and “got involved in everything” there.

“We’re still happy here, after 44 years,” she said. “I wouldn’t move anywhere. They’ll have to carry me out.”





**MEMBERS:** The Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics includes (left to right) Selma Johnson; Joseph Cummings; Deacon Marvin Threatt; Richard Stewart, the group's new chair; and Jacqueline Morgan. They gathered on a recent Saturday at Christ the King Parish.

JOHN GASTALDO

## Black Catholics Renew Their Faith Community

By Aida Bustos



November is special for African American Catholics.

It's been designated as Black Catholic History Month, when the contributions of Black saints and martyrs are recognized, and stories are shared about the Black men and women on the road to sainthood.

In the San Diego region, the Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics is planning a month of special homilies to highlight the story of Black Catholics in the U.S., and the role they are playing in today's Church.

"Many people don't know this history," said Richard Stewart, "including African Americans."

Stewart is the new chair of the

commission, founded in the mid-1970s, one of the oldest cultural Catholic organizations in the diocese. African Americans represent about 3 percent of the Catholics in the diocese, according to 2014 data from CARA, a national Catholic research center.

A San Diego native, he is a graduate of St. Jude Catholic School (now closed) and St. Augustine High School. He's long attended Christ the King Parish, where he's a member of the gospel choir.

Cultural commissions serve an important role in a multicultural diocese like San Diego.

Each commission serves to highlight the diversity of the Church and the gift of being a diverse, multi-ethnic community. The diocese, meanwhile, works with each commission to support its community and share its

faith traditions and celebrations with the larger Catholic community.

The 15 African American commission members have used the beginning of Stewart's term to review the group's goals and to chart their events for the next year.

One of them is expanding their efforts to share Black Catholic spirituality with the broader Church, he said.

The commission's advisor, Deacon Marvin Threatt, explained that this

spirituality is borne of enslaved Africans and their descendants, who yearned for deliverance from slavery. They developed their own ways to worship God, expressing their faith through joyful prayer, songs and other rich cultural traditions.

Stewart said that in the current debate about racism in many spheres of life, commission members can share "the sensitivity of who we are as African American Catholics" with the diocese. They can provide advice, particularly

*Continued on Page 5*

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**LEADERS:** Richard Stewart and Selma Johnson represented the Commission for African American Catholics at the Mass on Oct. 17 to initiate the synodal process.

*Continued from Page 4*

in matters of liturgy and social justice, that supports and celebrates African American spirituality.

The Black Catholic presence has traditionally been strongest at three parishes in the diocese — St. Rita, Christ the King, and Holy Spirit — though their ranks have diminished over the years.

Another commission goal is to grow the African American presence at Christ the King Parish, which currently offers one Mass in English and two in Spanish. In the 1970s

and 1980s, the parish was home to a vibrant Black community, said Deacon Threatt, whose first assignment after being ordained was at the parish. At the time, four Masses in English and one in Spanish were celebrated there.

“You had to get there early to get a seat,” Deacon Threatt recalled.

He retired from Holy Spirit Parish in June and has returned to Christ the King Church, working with its longtime pastor, Father Tommie Jennings, to re-invigorate the Black Catholic presence there.

The Black population in San Diego County decreased in the last decade

by about 1,000 people, according to 2020 Census data, which showed around 145,000 lived here. Their ranks have declined even further in the last 18 months, Deacon Threatt said, which will make it more challenging to attract Black faithful.

“The African American community has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said.

Stewart said commission members plan to visit Catholic schools to invite young people to attend a parish that celebrates African American faith culture.

Beyond that, they are planning

## Black Catholic History

Christ the King Parish, 29 32nd St., San Diego 92102, will highlight Black Catholic History in the homilies to be proclaimed in November at its 8:30 a.m. Sunday Mass.

**Nov. 7:** Deacon Robert Booth

**Nov. 14:** Deacon Marvin Threatt

**Nov. 21:** Father Tommie “TJ” Jennings (Feast of Christ the King)

**Nov. 28:** Father Tommie “TJ” Jennings

major events through next summer, including the annual Mass to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Call to Service” in January and the Juneteenth Mass.

He stressed that the invitation to experience Black faith traditions is open to everyone, not just African Americans.

He said all the commission’s activities have a single focus.

“Our mission is to evangelize,” Stewart said. “We’re about sharing our gifts that God has given us. Once you have a chance to experience Black Catholic spirituality, perhaps it will touch your heart and it will lead to a deeper understanding.”

More information about the Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics: [sdccatholic.org/culturaldiversity](https://sdccatholic.org/culturaldiversity).



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## Faithfulness Remembered

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

The Vietnamese Catholic Community will welcome Bishop Robert McElroy on Sunday, Nov. 21, for the annual diocesan commemoration of the Vietnamese Martyrs.

The bishop will celebrate Mass at 2 p.m. at Good Shepherd Parish, with a reception to follow. Good Shepherd Church is located at 8200 Gold Coast Drive, San Diego 92126.

The feast of the Vietnamese Martyrs commemorates the sacrifices of the many Catholics martyred for their faith in Vietnam during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, but especially the 117 martyrs canonized by Pope John Paul II in 1988. Of that number, some were foreign missionaries, but 96 of them, including Father Andrew Dung-Lac, were Vietnamese.

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COURTESY OF MISSION SAN DIEGO DE ALCALÁ PARISH

**SEEING MIRACLES:** An estimated 600 people visited the Vatican International "Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibit" at Mission San Diego de Alcalá Parish Oct. 9-10. The traveling exhibit will next be seen Nov. 5-7 at Guardian Angels Parish in Santee.

## Eucharistic Miracles Exhibit Headed to Santee

### The Southern Cross



**SANTEE** — The Vatican International "Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibit" is coming to Guardian Angels Parish.

The traveling exhibition, which features information about 140 documented Eucharistic miracles, can be seen in the Cunnane Parish Center on Nov. 5 (4-9 p.m.), Nov. 6 (10 a.m.-9 p.m.) and Nov. 7 (8 a.m.-4 p.m.). There is no cost to attend.

The Catholic Church teaches that, when the priest speaks the words of consecration at Mass, bread and wine are transformed into the Body and

Blood of Christ. But, typically, they retain the appearance of bread and wine. The Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibit focuses on those extraordinary historical instances when the bread and wine have been physically changed into human flesh and blood in a manner that has baffled scientists.

The exhibit represents the culmination of the work of Blessed Carlo Acutis, an Italian teenager who spent years documenting the many Church-approved Eucharistic miracles from the eighth century to the present day. Blessed Carlo died from acute leukemia at age 15, but his short life was marked by deep love for the Eucharist, which he called "my highway to Heaven."

An estimated 600 people visited the exhibit during its previous stop at Mission San Diego de Alcalá Parish from Oct. 9-10.

"This exhibit took me off the fence of wondering if (the Eucharist) is God to knowing this is God," said Dave Megert, a parishioner at Mission San Diego, who was moved by what he saw.

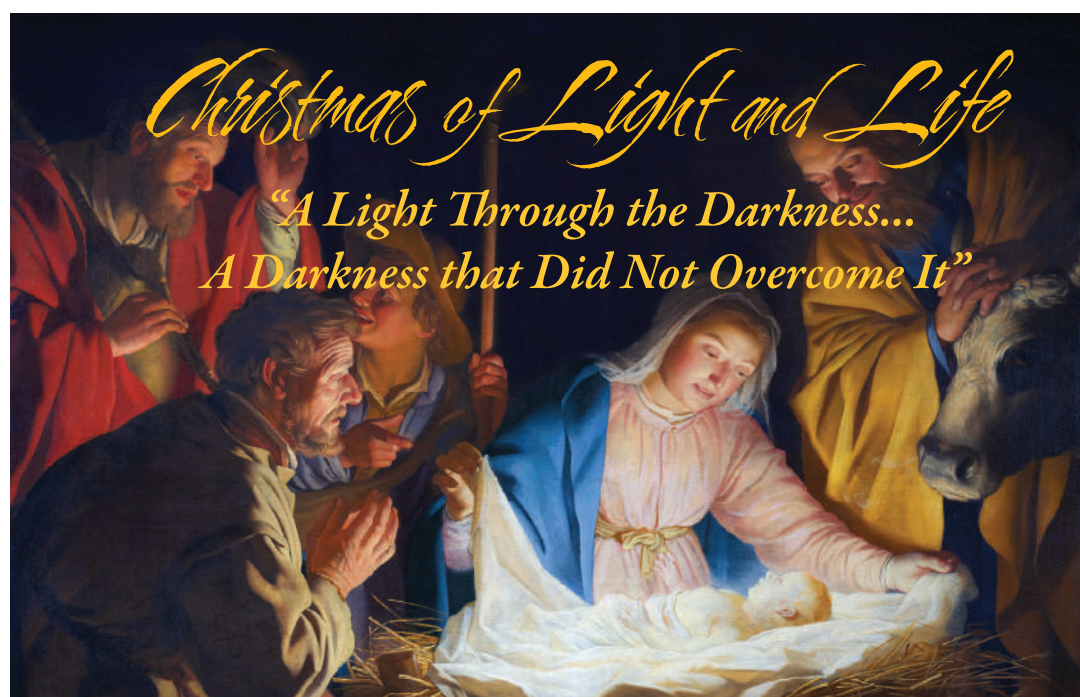
For Megert and many others, the experience heightened their understanding that a miracle takes place at every Mass.

For more information about the upcoming exhibit at Guardian Angels, email [barbara.wojtach619@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.wojtach619@gmail.com) or call (619) 596-3282.

Father Peter Escalante, pastor of Mission San Diego, said his parish was "truly blessed" to host the exhibit.

"It was on display after all weekend Masses, and I was so pleased to see the number of parishioners who took advantage of this rare opportunity," he said. "It is a beautiful display and a real source of grace and inspiration. I highly recommend any parish to pursue hosting this exhibit."

The local exhibition was made possible through a generous donation from Jon Kern, a parishioner of St. Patrick's in Carlsbad. Other parishes or schools interested in hosting the exhibit can contact Kern at [jkernpt@gmail.com](mailto:jkernpt@gmail.com).



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# Community for Military Catholics Flourishing

By Denis Grasska



Every day is Veterans Day at the Capodanno Society. The organization not only welcomes active duty and retired personnel, but civilians, as well.

The Capodanno Society, a ministry based at St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach, is open to all. It is named after a Catholic priest who was killed in action as a U.S. Navy chaplain during the Vietnam War, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, and is on the path to canonization.

The Society's mission, as expressed on its Facebook page, is "Building community among active duty and retired military Catholics and their families in San Diego."

It has accomplished this through a variety of events, including monthly dinner socials featuring guest speakers. The dinner socials began in March of 2019 and were discontinued with the COVID-19 lockdowns, but are to resume in November. The next one will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 18, at St. Brigid's Ministry Center.

Noreen Domingo and David Murphy co-founded the group in the fall of 2018 after a conversation about the common challenges they faced as Catholics and members of the armed forces.

Both have since concluded their service in the U.S. Navy, and Murphy has relocated to South Bend, Ind.



**RUNNING THE RACE:** The Capodanno Society held its first annual "9/11 Run to Remember 5K" this year to mark the anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Domingo, who serves as president of the Capodanno Society, said the group was envisioned as "a place where military Catholics can go once a month" to find a community of people who can relate to their experiences.

However, it soon became apparent that the group's dinner socials were also attracting civilians, who felt that the speakers' presentations had practical applications for their own lives.

Murphy said he hopes the Capodanno Society gives "people in the pews ... a place to meet and encounter military Catholics, be they active duty, reserve, veterans, dependents, or simply supporters."

Attendance is now evenly split between those with a professional or familial connection to the military and those without such ties, said Domingo. Through the group's events, civilian attendees have developed a better understanding of military life, even to the point of knowing some of the jargon.

Diverse life experiences can be seen among the group's military members.

"It's really unique to have a retired admiral on one side of the room and then a junior enlisted, who just signed up two months ago, in the room at the same time," said Domingo, who sees this as one expression of the universality of the Catholic Church.

Murphy recalled one of the Capodanno Society's first meetings, where a newlywed couple was able to hear two retired captains, an active-duty lieutenant, and a former staff sergeant share their advice for a successful Catholic military marriage.

"The (younger) spouses exchanged numbers with the older spouses," he said. "Later, I found out that one of the retired couples took a young spouse out, when her husband was deployed, to give her a night out and be there for her."

Last year, at the height of social distancing, the Capodanno Society held

*Continued on Page 11*

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*Continued from Page 10*

several virtual events, including one in May of 2020 where two group members reflected on the similarities between deployment and the COVID lockdown and on how lessons learned from the former could be applied to the latter.

That same month, the group organized a rosary drive on behalf of a group member who was preparing to go on deployment and wanted to provide rosaries to fellow Marines in his weekly prayer group.

The Society also held its second annual Polar Plunge in February, where more than a dozen participants jumped into the frigid waters off of Law Street Beach in an expression of asceticism shortly before the start of Lent, and its first annual “9/11 Run to Remember 5K” to mark the anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

The 5K was preceded by talks by Deacon Adam Curtis, a retired Navy SEAL captain, and Denis Creamer, a retired San Diego Fire Department captain, reflecting on how the events of Sept. 11, 2001, affected them.

At the request of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, the Capodanno Society has been offering weekly catechism classes at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego (MCRD) since the summer of 2020. Domingo developed the curriculum with Harrison Trubitt, director of religious education at St. Therese of Carmel Parish.

The catechism classes are held every Sunday, except on days when the base has scheduled a guest speaker for all recruits, said lead catechist Thomas zu Hone, a Capodanno Society



**INSPIRATION:** Maryknoll Father Vincent R. Capodanno, a Navy chaplain who was killed while serving with the Marines in Vietnam and whose canonization cause is underway, is pictured in an undated photo. He is the namesake of the Capodanno Society, based at St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach.

member who served in the Navy until late July. The curriculum is composed of 12 lessons, each of which runs for about an hour and a half before the recruits are dismissed to attend Mass.

About 250 recruits attend a typical week's class, though that number can swell past 400 during the summer, he said.

“Through the ministry at MCRD, I feel I have been blessed with the opportunity to help these young Marine recruits get an early start to building their faith and their faith community with fellow Marines,” the catechist said. “In doing so, they

will hopefully be encouraged and grounded in their Catholic faith in order to boldly pursue a life of Christ while in the military.”

Murphy said he hopes that, through the Capodanno Society, people will encounter the group's namesake, Servant of God Father Vincent R. Capodanno.

“Father Vincent was not some 1,500-year-old saint with a huge beard and robed in a habit, emerging through the mists of time across the centuries,” said Murphy, who cited pictures of him smoking with Marines, videos of him flying in military

helicopters, and testimonies of those who served alongside him.

“He showed that even in the military, in the throes of combat, in the difficulties of deployment, amidst a battalion of infantry Marines, sanctity and holiness is possible,” he said. “I hope, through meeting this saint, people see that they can incorporate their faith into their daily lives and military careers.”

To learn more about the Capodanno Society, email [noreen@saintbrigidparish.org](mailto:noreen@saintbrigidparish.org).



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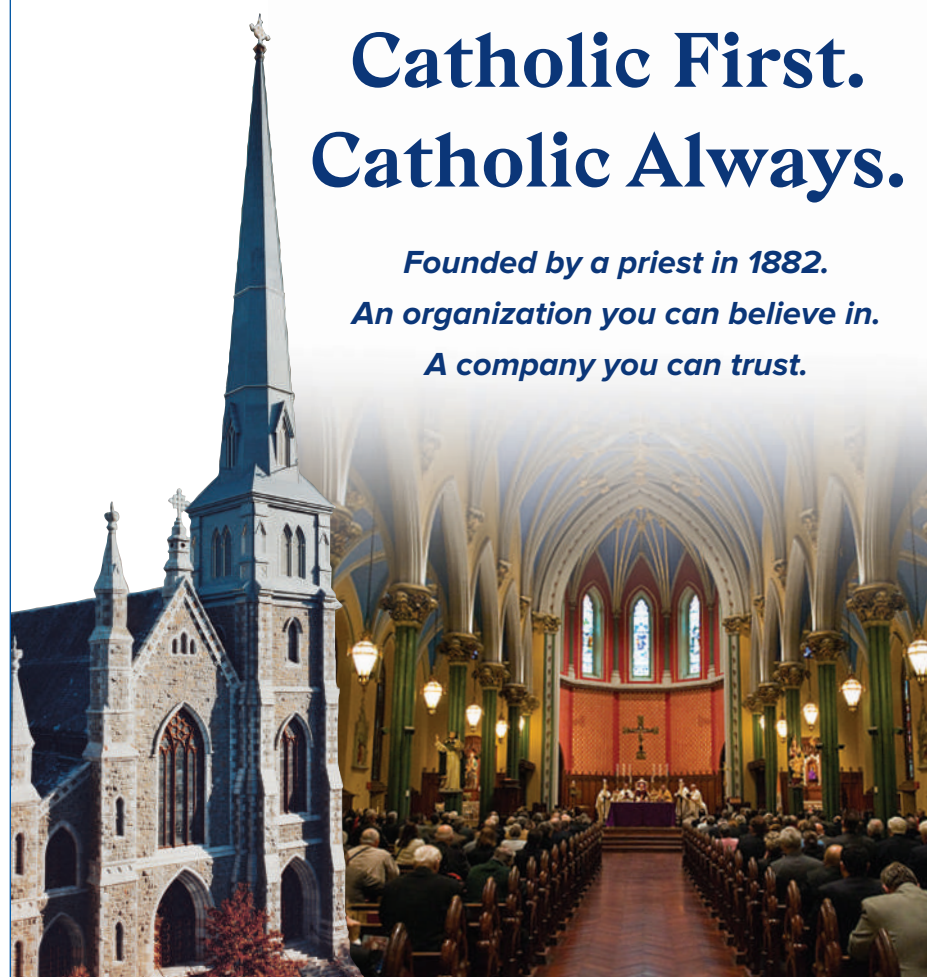
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# How Divorced Can Navigate Holiday Season

By Denis Grasska



The holiday season is considered a joyful time of year.

But for those who have recently lost a spouse, either by death or divorce, that often isn't the case. And the big family gatherings, festive traditions and cheery music that dominate the season can more likely than not be triggers for strong feelings of grief or regret.

Janelle Perego, associate director of the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality, has some advice for the widowed and divorced who may be approaching the holidays with trepidation.

## Trust your instincts

Perhaps you're the type of person who is looking forward to that holiday party and would take comfort in being around others. Or perhaps the very concept of attending that party fills you with dread. You know best which of these is true.

"It's important for you to trust in yourself and not to be talked into anything by anyone else," Perego said.

She encourages family members and friends to "check in" with their widowed and divorced friends about whether they plan to attend particular events, but don't pressure them into a decision. Be supportive and accepting of whatever they choose to do.

"Just be their champion," she advises.

## Evaluate your relationship with solitude

Solitude and loneliness are not the same thing. Nevertheless, many well-meaning people assume that, just because their widowed or divorced friends are on their own more than they used to be, they must be lonely.

"That may not necessarily be true," said Perego, who notes that the newly acquired solitude might be a welcome opportunity for examining their own thoughts, listening to music, or simply being free from the pressure they had been under recently.

Perego encourages the widowed and divorced to reflect on what their needs are in terms of solitude, and she



urges others to respect those needs and not "project their own thoughts" onto the situation.

## Begin creating new traditions

Perego recounted a recent conversation she had with a divorced mother of teenage children.

The woman told her that one of her family's holiday traditions used to include a big Christmas Eve celebration to which they even invited the neighbors. Not feeling up to it that first Christmas after her divorce, she and her children tried something different: They ordered pizza, watched Christmas movies and gorged on junk food.

"It was fun, it was easy, and they've made that their new tradition. ... Her sons and daughters are young adults now, but they still look forward to that on Christmas Eve, because they have so many positive associations with that first year doing it together."

## Learn to pray with the Psalms

The Old Testament's Book of Psalms includes hymns of praise to God and expressions of thanksgiving, as well as laments.

For centuries, Jewish and Christian believers have found solace and consolation in the inspired words of the Psalmists.

"The Psalms give us such breadth of human emotion," said Perego, promising that somewhere among the 150 Psalms is one or more that correspond to whatever your present situation is.

## Embrace the spirit of Advent

While many people do think of Christmas as "that joyous, family-centered holiday," Perego said, "The grace of the Church is that we (also) have Advent; we have this more introspective time, when we're preparing for the birth of Jesus."

Perego recommends that widowed and divorced Catholics find ways to enter into the spirit of the four-week liturgical season of Advent, which begins this year on Sunday, Nov. 28.

Her advice is to use this graced moment "to refocus your prayer life, because God is always with you in this pain." One possible way is to attend any Advent services offered at your local parish.

When preparing for Christmas, Perego said, we are preparing to celebrate "the power of Christ to change the world, the power of Christ to heal our wounds."

"I think Advent can be a beautiful time to sink into that."

## RESOURCES FOR THE WIDOWED AND DIVORCED

Many resources are available to those navigating life after divorce or the death of a spouse, including:

### "Coping with the Holidays"

A free workshop with suggestions and resources for those who have lost a loved one. 4 to 6 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 17, in the Ministry Center at St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach. Facilitated by Mary Pat Warner, licensed marriage and family therapist, and Barbara Bailey, registered nurse. Advance registration required; RSVP to [balbailey@yahoo.com](mailto:balbailey@yahoo.com) or (858) 945-2370.

### Beginning Experience

In the new year, Beginning Experience will be offering various in-person workshops and retreat opportunities. Beginning Experience is an international ministry that helps the widowed, divorced and separated move beyond grief with weekend programs. More information available at (858) 748-2273 or [BeginningExperienceSD@gmail.com](mailto:BeginningExperienceSD@gmail.com).

### Parish-Based Support Groups

There are ongoing grief-support groups, offering peer-to-peer support in both English and Spanish, at parishes throughout the diocese. Those interested in more information should contact Janelle Perego, associate director of the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality, at (858) 490-8292 or [jperego@sd catholic.org](mailto:jperego@sd catholic.org).

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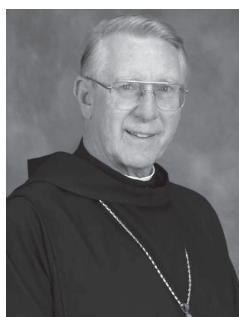
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# Workshop on 'Red Flags' in Youth Mental Health

By Denis Grasska

What can youth ministers do to direct young people with anxiety, depression and other challenges toward the help they need?

That question provided the impetus for the diocesan Office for Youth Ministry's upcoming workshop on mental health.

It will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Thursday, Nov. 11, at the diocesan Pastoral Center. The presenter is Deacon Bill Adsit, the diocese's mental health ministry coordinator.

"We're not therapists, we're not (mental health) professionals, but it always helps to know the red flags," Maricruz Flores, director of the Office for Youth Ministry, said of fellow youth ministers.

She said the event is open to "anybody who has contact with our young people in our parishes."

The workshop also will serve as a reminder for participants to make sure that they are taking care of themselves and not ignoring any red flags in their own mental health, said Flores, who made an analogy to how airplane passengers in emergency situations are told to put on their oxygen mask first before helping others.

She hopes the workshop results in a "domino effect" of youth ministers reaching out to young people with mental health challenges and then those young people providing a similar service for their peers, even those outside of their parish communities.



Deacon Adsit, a retired orthopedic surgeon who was ordained to the permanent diaconate last year, has coordinated mental health ministry in the diocese since May 2019. He was appointed to that position by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan. The

Diocesan Mental Health Ministry Network, composed of mental health ministries at local parishes, seeks to accompany those suffering with mental health issues and those who love them, to refer them to mental health professionals, and to work to end the

stigma associated with mental illness.

Mental health challenges among the young are a serious concern.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is the second-leading cause of death for ages 14 to 18. The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey revealed that 18.8 percent of students reported having seriously considered suicide during 2019.

Deacon Adsit said it is important "to intervene now ... and change their thoughts while they're just thoughts."

In his upcoming presentation, Deacon Adsit intends to explain the need for mental health outreach; provide youth ministers with helpful online resources, including mental health screening tools available through Mental Health America ([mhanational.org](http://mhanational.org)); and offer a Catholic perspective on the issue.

He said, "Part of the pathology when kids are thinking about harming themselves (is) they've forgotten who they are ... and they've also forgotten that they have a purpose in their life," even if that God-given purpose isn't yet understood.

"These are beloved sons and daughters of our Lord," he said, "and He loves them and He calls us to love them."

Register for the workshop  
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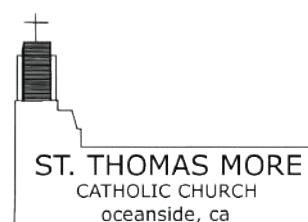
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# Intern's Witness of Life on Margins of Society

I was born and raised in Westchester County, N.Y., which is 45 minutes north of New York City. Eight communities in Westchester County are ranked on Bloomberg News' 200 wealthiest places in the country.

I have been very blessed with access to a private Catholic education, a wonderful family, and many other opportunities not afforded to most of our nation's citizens. Most people from Westchester County do not know that much about poverty, and certainly have not experienced it, nor hunger or homelessness.

This past summer, I was fortunate to be selected as the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) intern with the Diocese of San Diego's Office for Life, Peace, and Justice. The campaign is actually an organization under the umbrella of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and is our domestic Church's response to address the root causes of poverty. I was able to learn about many of the reasons for poverty and, more importantly, how we as Catholics are called to accompany the poor.

My own "accompanying experience" as a part of my internship was working one day a week at the Neil Good Day Center at Father Joe's Villages. Some of the services at the center for the unsheltered homeless people living

Intern for Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Jack Cherico



in downtown include providing storage space, connecting with a housing coordinator, and access to food, showers and mail services. In a very limited but very "eye-opening" way, I had the opportunity to serve and accompany some of the city's homeless men and women. It was humbling for me to witness that something as basic as checking my mailbox for the daily mail or getting a hot shower is not always available for this population.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to witness what people in our most marginalized community, the prison population, have to carry with them every day. I corresponded with many prisoners during my 10-week internship, and learned that most California prisoners are indigent, and very rarely have family or loved ones available to support or accompany them.

Through my correspondence with prisoners, I learned how even a simple gift that the Office for Life, Peace, and Justice could provide, such as a packet of ramen noodles or a new toothbrush, is received with love and gratitude. I also learned how important it is for prisoners to have contact with the outside world and know that someone cares about them — even



**LIFELINE:** Catholic Charities' Emergency Food Distribution Network provides food to individuals and families facing hunger.

loves them! Writing to prisoners was one of my favorite experiences during my internship because every inmate I wrote responded back promptly and asked about who I am, what were my interests, and where I lived. I learned that the inmates were genuinely interested in me, and longed to establish a relationship with someone who cared about them.

Lastly, I came to realize we are blessed with an abundance of food in our nation, yet people are still going hungry every day. I spent a week working with Catholic Charities of San Diego's Emergency Food Distribution Network, distributing food to parishes all over San Diego County. I learned that some individuals and families rely on organizations like Catholic Charities to receive basic food and support. I now realize that we do not have a

food scarcity issue in our country but a food distribution problem, and our Church is doing its part to support and accompany those most in need.

Through my experience in this internship, I have more understanding and compassion for our poor, our imprisoned, and our homeless brothers and sisters. I am grateful and humbled that I was able to put my faith into action!

*Jack Cherico is a sophomore at the Catholic University of America (CUA), majoring in Political Science, and serves in Army Reserve Officer Training Corps there.*

Read more perspective columns at [thesoutherncross.org/perspectives](https://thesoutherncross.org/perspectives).



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# Volunteers Pair Service with Spiritual Life

By Denis Grasska



Service and spirituality go hand in hand in the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC).

The nonprofit service organization, which was founded on the East Coast in 1995 and has been active in the San Diego area since 2001, provides retired and semi-retired individuals with opportunities to serve the poor and marginalized.

But that's not all.

"A lot of people can sign up to volunteer at an agency, and that's fantastic and wonderful," said Curran Gaughan, San Diego regional director of IVC, explaining what sets the organization apart. "What we want to do is provide some support to our service corps members who are out there serving in the community, to really help nourish their spiritual life and to provide them with a supportive community that will sustain them over time."

So, in addition to their individual service assignments, IVC members in each of the 21 regions nationwide gather once a month as a group. At those gatherings, they attend Mass, engage in communal prayer, reflect on their service work, and discuss assigned reading materials.

"For someone who has the desire to serve, IVC has ample opportunities in a variety of work and is willing to support you in your volunteerism with a spiritual



**PARTNER:** Mike Trunzo serves as an Ignatian Volunteer Corps member at Cristo Rey San Diego High School, where he coaches students on how to navigate the corporate world.

connection," said Mike Trunzo, who began his service commitment last August at Cristo Rey San Diego High School, which offers a college-preparatory Catholic education exclusively to low-income students.

Trunzo serves as a volunteer associate for Cristo Rey San Diego's Corporate Work Study Program. At the school, he has worked with students to help them develop a spirit of professionalism. Through the work study program, the centerpiece of Cristo Rey's innovative educational model, students spend five days a month at a professional workplace and earn about half the cost of their education.

Trunzo praised the spiritual component of IVC, including the

assigned readings, saying that the result is that one is "more fulfilled" in one's service work.

IVC members also have the optional benefits of one-on-one meetings with a "spiritual reflector," who helps them to recognize God's presence in their service work, and an annual retreat.

The IVC was founded in 1995 by two Jesuit priests.

Prospective Ignatian Volunteers must be age 50 or older and able to commit to between eight and 16 hours of service each week for a period of 10 months. There are currently 20 IVC members in San Diego, where volunteers are placed with eight partner agencies, including Catholic Charities, Cristo Rey San Diego High

School, Nativity Prep Academy, Our Lady's School, and Birthline of San Diego County.

Gaughan said that IVC's nonprofit partners have opportunities available for bilingual Ignatian Volunteers who are fluent in Spanish, and some are also seeking volunteers who can speak Haitian Creole.

Terrie Ventura Schlosser was volunteering with Catholic Charities' Emergency Food Distribution Program when a friend told her about the IVC. After becoming an Ignatian Volunteer, her first assignment kept her with the food distribution program. But after about a year, she said, she was looking for "something a little more involved." That led to her current assignment as the volunteer librarian at Nativity Prep Academy.

When she arrived on campus in August, the library was more idea than reality. She saw the room "that they were going to call the library," as well as about 30 to 40 boxes of books. Through her efforts, she was able to transform this into the now finished school library.

"This was a lot of hard work, but this was a lot of hard work with a lot of love," she said, reflecting on how the spiritual and service dimensions of IVC complement each other.

To contact the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, call (858) 822-9814 or email [cgaughan@ivcusa.org](mailto:cgaughan@ivcusa.org).



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## Another St. John Paul?

By Carol Glatz



VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has signed a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of Pope John Paul I, clearing the way for his beatification.

The Italian pope served only 33 days as pontiff; he died in the papal apartments Sept. 28, 1978, at the age of 65, shocking the world and a Church that had just mourned the death of St. Paul VI.

The Vatican announced Pope Francis' decision along with a number of other sainthood decrees Oct. 13.

In the sainthood cause of Pope John Paul I, the approved miracle involved a young girl in Buenos Aires, Argentina, who developed a severe case of acute encephalitis and uncontrollable and life-threatening brain seizures, and eventually entered septic shock.

After doctors told family members her death was "imminent," the local priest encouraged the family, nurses and others to pray to the late pope for his intercession, according to the website of the Congregation for Saints' Causes. A panel of experts studying the cause determined there was no scientific explanation for her complete recovery in 2011 and that it could be attributed to the late pope's intercession.

The Vatican did not immediately announce a date for the beatification ceremony.

Pope John Paul I was born Albino Luciani on Oct. 17, 1912, in the small



Italian mountain town of Canale D'Agordo.

He was ordained a priest in 1935 and was appointed bishop of Vittorio Veneto in December 1958 by St. John XXIII. More than 10 years later, he was named patriarch of Venice by St. Paul VI and was created a cardinal in 1973.

During his time as patriarch of Venice, then-Cardinal Luciani was known for his dedication to the poor and the disabled.

His surprise election, after St. Paul VI's death, did not sway him from continuing his humble manner of living, such as rejecting the use of the traditional papal tiara and calling his first Mass as pope the "inauguration" of his papal ministry rather than a coronation.

"Let us try to improve the Church by becoming better ourselves," he said Sept. 13, 1978. "Each of us and the whole Church could recite the prayer I am accustomed to reciting: 'Lord, take me as I am, with my defects, with my shortcomings, but make me become as You want me to be.'"

Catholic News Service



**SACRILEGE:** An almost 90-year-old statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is seen Sept. 15, 2020, at St. Patrick's Cathedral in El Paso, Texas, after it was destroyed by vandals.

## Attacks on Catholic Sites Are 'Acts of Hate'

Catholic News Service



WASHINGTON — The Oct. 10 vandalism of Denver's cathedral

basilica that resulted in satanic and other "hateful graffiti" being scrawled on its doors and at least one statue brought to 100 the number of incidents of arson, vandalism and other destruction that have taken place at Catholic sites across the United States since May 2020.

That month, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Religious Liberty began tracking such incidents, according to an Oct. 14 USCCB news release.

"In all cases, we must reach out to the perpetrators with prayer and

forgiveness," Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty, and Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, said in a joint statement included in the release.

They called on the nation's elected officials "to step forward and condemn these attacks."

"Where the motive was retribution for some past fault of ours, we must reconcile; where misunderstanding of our teachings has caused anger toward us, we must offer clarity; but this destruction must stop. This is not the way," they said.

"These are not mere property crimes — this is the degradation of visible representations of our Catholic faith. These are acts of hate."



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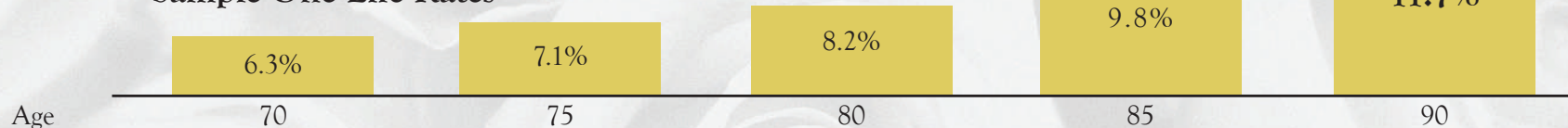
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## News Briefs

### 'Theology on Tap' to Feature Bishop Bejarano

On Thursday evenings, Oct. 28 to Nov. 11, young adult Catholics (ages 18 to 39) will gather for dinner, fellowship and to hear a talk by a dynamic Catholic speaker.

The next series of Theology on Tap, sponsored by the diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry, will feature a strong line-up of speakers, including Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano.

Each week's installment will be held from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch. Admission is \$15 per person and includes a dinner of tacos and beer.

Speakers include Krizia (Kiki) Rocha, an abortion survivor and a dating and sexual integrity coach for women, Oct. 28; Scott Weeman, founder of the nonprofit organization Catholic in Recovery, which offers addiction-recovery resources within the context of Catholic spirituality, Nov. 4; and Bishop Bejarano, Nov. 11.

For more information, visit [yamsd.org](http://yamsd.org) or call (858) 490-8260.

### Father Joe Carroll Recognized with Award

The American Red Cross of San Diego and Imperial Counties awarded the Spirit of Hope award posthumously to Father Joe Carroll in honor of his life-long service to end homelessness in San Diego.

Deacon Jim Vargas, president and CEO at Father Joe's Villages, accepted the award in his honor during the 19th annual Real Hero Awards, hosted virtually Oct. 1.

Msgr. Joseph Carroll, better known as "Father Joe," died July 11 at age 80. For almost three decades, he directed what grew to become Father Joe's Villages, San Diego's largest homeless services provider.

### Workshop Offers Ways to Transform Parishes

The diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry is teaming with The Evangelical Catholic to present "The Parish as the Center for Mission Formation."

The workshop will be offered twice on Wednesday, Nov. 10 — from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for pastors and parish staff, and from 7 to 9 p.m. for parish volunteers — at the diocesan Pastoral Center.

It will be presented by two representatives of The Evangelical Catholic, Peter Andrastek and Kendra McClelland. Andrastek and McClelland serve as senior ministry consultant and mission advancement officer, respectively. The Evangelical Catholic is a nonprofit that works with parishes, dioceses and other Catholic entities to train leaders in evangelization.

For more information, call (858) 490-8237 or email [mgalvan@sdccatholic.org](mailto:mgalvan@sdccatholic.org).



## Explorer Day

The Diocese of San Diego is hosting an Explorer Day for men who are interested in a possible vocation to the priesthood, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 6, at St. Francis de Sales House of Priestly Formation at the University of San Diego. Those interested should pick up a registration form at their parish office or call Father Lauro Minimo at (619) 291-7446.

### CCHD Collection Set for Nov. 21

The annual collection to support the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) will take place on Sunday, Nov. 21.

The CCHD is the national anti-poverty program of the U.S. Catholic Bishops. It focuses on addressing the root causes of poverty and funds nonprofit organizations throughout the U.S., including in the Diocese of San Diego, that work to reverse the systemic causes of poverty.

Robert Elnow, director of the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, described contributions to the national CCHD collection as "an investment in the organizations within our diocese that work to alleviate poverty and build a brighter future for our communities."

### Women's Prayer Group Seeking New Members

Women seeking to grow closer to God and deepen their relationship with the Bible are invited to join a women's prayer/Bible study group conducted via Zoom.

The group, which meets virtually at 6 p.m. every Thursday, offers fellowship and prayerful reading of the books of the Bible.

For more information, call (619) 955-3985.

### Healthcare Professionals to Present on Grief, Accompaniment

The Mental Health Ministry at St. Michael's Parish in Poway will present a Grief

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## Burial Plots

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# IN LOVING Memory

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

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and Loss Workshop from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 6.

Through the event, which will be held at the parish's Holy Family Center, participants will learn about grief and loss, as well as how best to accompany those who are grieving.

The speakers include Dr. Sidney Zisook, M.D., professor of psychiatry at UCSD School of Medicine, who specializes in grief, anxiety, and mood disorders; Cyndi Peterson, M.D., physician, speaker and author; and Jim Reiser, M.A., a licensed marriage and family therapist with Hospice of the North Coast.

RSVP to Deacon Bill Adsit at [billa@smpoway.org](mailto:billa@smpoway.org).

#### USD Aligns Investment Policy with Environmental Goals

The University of San Diego Board of Trustees has unanimously adopted an amended Investment Policy aligned with Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, "Laudato Si'," becoming one of the first universities in the world to do so.

In the 2015 encyclical, the pope called for urgent action to care for our common home, the poor, and the vulnerable who are disproportionately impacted by global environmental problems, such as climate change, pollution, access to clean water and loss of biodiversity.

"This change (to the investment policy) is part of multiple commitments that USD is making to set the standard to ensure a healthy environment and a sustainable common home for future generations," said James T. Harris, president of USD.

#### Parish Women's Club Sells Crafts, Baked Goods

The Catholic Women's Club at Our Lady of Grace Parish in El Cajon will hold its annual craft fair and bake sale from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 6, at the parish.

The event will feature gift items from more than 75 crafters, baked goods, peanut brittle, fudge and more. Coffee, donuts and lunch also will be available. For more information, call (619) 980-6841.

#### Halloween Candy to Become Christmas Treats

Local Catholics are once again invited to donate a portion of their Halloween candy to be included in the Christmas distribution at the Casa de Los Pobres (House of the Poor) in Mexico.

Donations of new toothbrushes and toothpaste are also welcome.

The Sisters of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady, Queen of Peace coordinate an annual Christmas food distribution for about 1,700 impoverished families in Tijuana.

For more information about the candy collection, email [carolinekelner10@gmail.com](mailto:carolinekelner10@gmail.com). For pick-up dates and times, email [inwaogwu@nd.edu](mailto:inwaogwu@nd.edu).

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# Am I Called?

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

**Does the idea come to me often?**


**Does the idea scare me?**

**I SHOULD CONTACT**

**Fr. Lauro Minimo**  
619.291.7446  
[lminimo@sdccatholic.org](mailto:lminimo@sdccatholic.org)

**Sr. Kathy Warren**  
858.490.8289  
[kwarren@sdccatholic.org](mailto:kwarren@sdccatholic.org)

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## Seminarians Abroad



Bradley D. Easterbrooks, left, and Guillermo A. Hernandez, right, of the Diocese of San Diego were ordained to the transitional diaconate Sept. 30 at the Papal Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican.

They were among 20 seminarians from the Pontifical North American College, the American seminary in Rome, who were ordained that day. The previous day, they had the opportunity to meet with Pope Francis.

During the ordination, the new deacons promised to live a life of prayer, celibacy, and obedience to their diocesan bishops. They will have an additional year of theological studies and spiritual formation before being ordained to the priesthood in their home dioceses. It is expected that the priestly ordination of Deacons Hernandez and Easterbrooks will take place in June in San Diego.

The ordaining prelate at the Mass was Cardinal Wilton Gregory of Washington, D.C. Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego and Father Matthew Spahr, rector of San Diego's house of priestly formation, concelebrated. Father Dickens Remy of Holy Spirit Parish in San Diego vested Easterbrooks as a deacon; Father Joseph Tabigue of Our Lady of the Rosary Parish in San Diego, pictured center, vested Hernandez.

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**PARISH VOLUNTEERS**  
7-9PM


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**Peter Andrastek**  
Senior Ministry Consultant  
The Evangelical Catholic




**Kendra McClelland**  
Mission Advancement Officer  
The Evangelical Catholic



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