

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



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WELCOME SURGE: Enrollment at the San Diego Diocese's elementary schools increased by nearly 15 percent this year, including at St. Gregory the Great School in Scripps Ranch, which is up 27 percent.



Turning 10

San Diego Walk for Life marks milestone as Supreme Court takes on abortion issue. **Page 3**



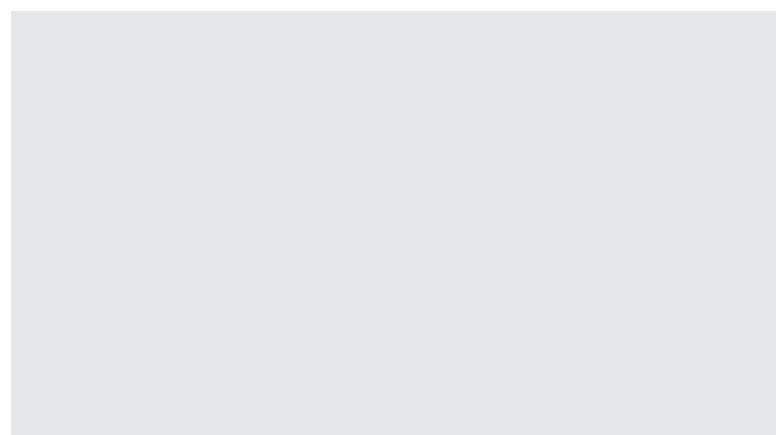
Hitting the Streets

More than 2,000 turn out for Our Lady of Guadalupe procession. **Page 13**



Lift Your Gaze

Don't expect to experience an Epiphany if you're staring at your cell phone. **Page 17**



Keeping the Faith

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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.



LEO FONSECA

GUIDES: The synod commission for the San Diego region met at the Pastoral Center on Dec. 6 to fine-tune the plan the diocese has developed to begin the consultation of the faithful and those no longer practicing their faith in the coming year.

Parish Consultations in February

By Aida Bustos



Pastors in the San Diego Diocese are spending the first days of the year organizing how their parishioners will participate in a worldwide Catholic consultation convened by Pope Francis.

Parishes will host the consultations in February. The consultations are at the heart of a process formally called a synod. Pope Francis is inviting all Catholics to “journey together,” listening to each other’s experiences in the Church. And he’s asking them to explore ways the Church can be “more synodal,” that is, inviting greater participation and diversity of the faithful at all levels.

This consultation is important because the insights that emerge will shape how the Church fulfills its mission going forward as it renews and grows.

“Given the wide range of social ills and divisions that plague our human family, it is truly historic that Pope Francis wants to hear from each of us. Just as important is that he wants us to see and hear each other,” said Katrina “Kat” Albrandt, a parishioner at

FOLLOW PROCESS



The latest information, videos, and more about the diocese’s synod is available at sdccatholic.org/synod, @DioceseSanDiego on Facebook, and #SDCatholics on Instagram.

The Immaculata Parish and member of the Diocesan Synod Commission in San Diego.

“This synod provides a Holy Spirit-filled moment for authentic encounter in our diverse diocese. It invites each of us to listen and discern — to open our hearts as brothers and sisters in Christ, to choose what is right, and to embrace the social mission of our Church.”

The diocese will hold the synod in three phases. The first, October 2021 to August 2022, will focus on “encounter”; August to October of 2022 will be a time to “discern”; and the final phase, October 2022 to May 23, will be one of “action,” in which the diocese will begin to implement the proposals that emerge from the first phase.

The “encounter” phase calls for six to eight people to gather in a small

circle for 75 minutes or so to listen to one another as they share their experiences in the Church and their hopes for it. They will be people in the pews, clergy, religious and seminarians, as well as individuals who have stopped actively participating in the faith or are living on the margins of society.

The participants also will come from a wide variety of groups, including service-oriented organizations, ecclesial groups, cultural Catholic communities, and agencies serving new migrants and refugees. Most groups will hold their consultations in March.

Staff and parents from the diocese’s Catholic schools also will be invited to participate.

Parishes will invite their parishioners to register to participate through their website or electronic media. Some parishes may hold the consultation on one day, hosting multiple circles to accommodate all of those who registered. Others may host small-group circles on two or more days and times. Still others may organize the circles around language use, scheduling them on a day when it makes sense for them. The circle discussions will be held in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Masks Required at Indoor Masses

The Southern Cross



The Diocese of San Diego is asking its faithful to comply with California’s latest mandate, and wear a mask at its indoor Masses and other services.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced Dec. 13 that masks must be worn in all indoor public settings statewide in response to the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19. This applies to both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. The mandate, effective Dec. 15, will continue until at least Jan. 15.

In a letter to pastors on Dec. 14, Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan wrote, “We ask all parishioners, out of concern for the personal health risk due to the Omicron variant and the general concern for the health of others, to comply with these requirements.”



HOWARD LIPIN

CAUTIOUS: A parishioner at the Juneteenth Mass of 2021 at St. Rita’s Church.

Father Tommie Jennings, pastor of Christ the King Parish in San Diego, said the bishop’s letter reinforced the message that the pandemic isn’t over.

“They may be tired of the virus,” he says of his own flock, “but the virus is not tired of them.”

Father Efrain Bautista, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Bonita, said the new mandate is “probably

necessary” to keep down the number of COVID cases.

If it accomplishes that, he said, “I think it’s a good thing.”

Even before the new mandate, Father Bautista said there were still “a good number of people wearing masks” at his parish.

He contrasted the latest mandate favorably with the more stringent restrictions of 2020, when all indoor Masses were suspended.

“We don’t want to go back outside, especially with this cold weather.”

As of mid-December, there had been more than 74,700 deaths statewide from the virus, nearly 4,400 of those in San Diego County and nearly 800 in Imperial County.

For both Omicron and other variants, the CDPH continues to urge vaccination, including booster shots; washing one’s hands frequently; and staying home if feeling sick.



IN THE BEGINNING: The San Diego Walk for Life has been an annual tradition for 10 years. The inaugural event, held on Jan. 19, 2013, in Balboa Park, is pictured in this file photo.

Pivotal Moment for San Diego Walk for Life

By Denis Grasska



The 10th annual San Diego Walk for Life couldn't come at a more critical time for the pro-life movement, as the U.S. Supreme Court considers its first major abortion case in decades.

In mid-January, when an estimated 3,000 people will converge on Waterfront Park, it will have been about a month and a half since the court heard oral arguments in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health*, a case challenging Mississippi's ban on most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

Recent changes in the make-up of the court, including the appointment of three justices by the pro-life Trump Administration, have given pro-life advocates hope that this case might return to states the power to restrict or prohibit abortion. The court's ruling is expected in July. (See story on page 5.)

The San Diego Walk for Life is the region's largest pro-life event. It will be held from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Jan. 15, at Waterfront Park, located downtown beside the San Diego

County Administration Building.

Last year, when the Walk for Life was reimagined as a socially-distanced car caravan in light of the pandemic, about 150 vehicles decorated with pro-life messages drove in procession around Waterfront Park. All previous walks had been held along the western edge of Balboa Park. The relocation to Waterfront Park, an area with

heavy traffic, means greater visibility for the event.

The centerpiece will be a half-mile walk with pro-life signs and banners along city sidewalks. There will also be a line-up of inspiring speeches and testimonials, live music, and about 60 exhibitor booths representing pro-life and pro-family organizations.

Shawn Carney, president and

"The (pro-life) community is ready to gather again and to celebrate life," said Maria Valencia, associate director of culture of life in the diocese's Office for Life, Peace and Justice.

Valencia, who has been involved with the walk since the beginning, noted that the loss of life that many experienced as a result of COVID-19 adds another dimension to this year's event, serving as a reminder that "life is fragile and invaluable."

But, as always, the event primarily represents an opportunity "to stand up and to witness for the most vulnerable, which are the unborn," she said.

Since 2013, the San Diego Walk for Life has been held every year around the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, which on Jan. 22, 1973, took away a state's right to prohibit abortion and established a right to abortion nationwide.

The event took inspiration from the March for Life, which has been held in Washington, D.C., every year since 1974, and the Walk for Life West Coast, which has taken place annually in San Francisco since 2005.

Kent Peters, who retired in 2018 as director of the diocesan Office for Social Ministry, recalled the event's humble origins as a "grassroots" effort of lay Catholics who felt that San Diego should have its own pro-life walk.

Once it became clear that their idea would come to fruition, Peters said, the diocese "jumped in with both feet." Today, it continues to be one of the main organizers of the annual event.

Planning for the San Diego Walk for Life is overseen by a 10-member committee that meets every month of the year. Within two months of each year's walk, committee members already are discussing themes and possible



ALL AGES: Different generations were represented at the 2018 San Diego Walk for Life.

Volunteers Needed

The San Diego Walk for Life needs 60 volunteers to set up tables, help exhibitors, collect a free-will offering from attendees, distribute snacks, clean up, and tear down.

The volunteer orientation will be held at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 5, at the diocesan Pastoral Center. Refreshments will be provided.

Register at <https://bit.ly/3cNhpYp>. For more information, email mvalencia@sdccatholic.org or call (858) 490-8323.

co-founder of 40 Days for Life, will deliver the keynote address. Other speakers will include Bishop Robert McElroy; Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano; Dr. George Delgado, medical director of Culture of Life Family Services; and registered nurse Debbie Bradel. Music will be provided by Santiago Fernández, one of the Catholic Church's leading Spanish-language liturgical composers.

Simultaneous translation into Spanish will be provided for the speeches.

This year's theme is "Celebrating All Stages of Life."

Walk for Life

Continued on Page 4

Young Adults Invited to Advocate for Life

By Denis Grasska

As part of a continuing effort to encourage young adult participation in the annual San Diego Walk for Life, two diocesan offices are joining forces.

The Office for Young Adult Ministry, in collaboration with the Office for Life, Peace and Justice, will host a Young Adult Holy Hour and Vigil Mass for Life. Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will preside.

The event, which is open to Catholics ages 18 to 39, will be held on Friday evening, Jan. 14, at Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado.

The 10th annual San Diego Walk for Life will take place the next day, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, at downtown San Diego's Waterfront Park. The pro-life walk is held every January near the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, which created a right to abortion almost 49 years ago.

"The whole idea is for us to gather and pray in vigil for life, and then, the next day, to put our prayer and our faith into action," explained Pamela Poe, associate director of the Young Adult Ministry Office.

The Young Adult Holy Hour and Vigil Mass for Life will begin at 6 p.m. with 60 minutes of Eucharistic adoration, accompanied by praise-and-worship music as well as periods of prayerful silence. Confessions will be available throughout the holy hour.



BREAD OF LIFE: Holy hours and Masses are held frequently for young adults in the Diocese of San Diego, like this one from August 2019 at The Immaculata.

Bishop Bejarano will celebrate Mass at 7 p.m.

Maria Valencia, associate director for culture of life in the Office for Life, Peace, and Justice, said the Mass will be an educational event as well as a spiritual one. Through Bishop Bejarano's homily, she said, young adults will learn more about why human life has such value and why it is essential to stand up for the unborn.

Refreshments will follow the Mass.

"We're young adults and we love to socialize, so we wanted to offer that opportunity," said Poe, who promised Valencia that the social wouldn't run too late, so that the young adults will be able to wake up early enough to attend the next day's Walk for Life. It will conclude at 9:30 p.m.

The upcoming holy hour and vigil Mass is not the first event of its kind.

A diocesan Young Adult Mass, preceded by a holy hour, is celebrated every August. Held at The Immaculata Church on the campus of the University of San Diego, the event typically attracts 500 to 600 young adults from throughout the diocese.

The number of holy hours organized by the Young Adult Ministry Office has increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Poe said.

"I've been just so impressed with ... how the young people in San Diego just love the Eucharist," she said.

"The opportunity to be in His presence and in the presence of other young people worshipping Him is powerful," she said.

This also isn't the first time that the organizers of the San Diego Walk for Life have made an effort to reach out to young adults.

Last year, the Walk for Life was recast in response to the pandemic. Bishop Bejarano celebrated an outdoor Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Parish for young adults before a car caravan.

In 2020, the event's organizers featured young adults prominently in the line-up of speakers and entertainers. Cathedral Catholic High School students also were positioned at the front of thousands of walkers, immediately followed by other teenagers and young adults.

Valencia said she hopes that the upcoming holy hour and vigil Mass will not only increase the number of young adults attending the San Diego Walk for Life, but that they will receive the spiritual strength to bear witness to the sanctity of life in other venues.

"It's easy to be a witness there (at the Walk for Life), when everybody shares their values, and their beliefs, and their passion, but it's hard when you have to be a witness around your friends that are not Catholic (or) around your friends that are pro-choice," Valencia explained.

To her fellow young adults, Poe makes this appeal: "Let's pray together and let's be witnesses to the world. ... As young people, we can come together and witness to the beauty of life."

Contact the Office for Young Adult Ministry at yamsd@sdccatholic.org or (858) 490-8263.



Walk for Life

Continued from Page 3

speakers for the next year's.

Over the past decade, the San Diego Walk for Life has produced many memorable moments.

For example, in 2017, there had been talk of canceling the event after several days of heavy rain and a forecast predicting even more on the morning of the walk.

Peters recalled visiting the site in the late afternoon of the preceding day and seeing large, muddy puddles throughout the area where participants would gather and where the stage and exhibitor booths were to be erected.

"It was like a giant swimming pool," Peters said, humorously making allusions to the biblical account of Moses parting the Red Sea.

Fortuitously, the puddles were gone the next morning, Peters said, describing it as "a miracle" that the walk was able to proceed that year.

Even so, there was a torrential downpour. Organizers distributed hundreds of disposable rain ponchos, while other participants bundled up in hooded jackets or stood beneath umbrellas.

"We still had a huge turnout (that year)," recalled Roger Lopez, leader of the local chapter of Helpers of God's Precious Infants, who has been



KEEPING IT REAL: Local man demonstrates his support for life at last year's San Diego Walk for Life, which was held at downtown San Diego's Waterfront Park.

involved with the San Diego Walk for Life since its inaugural year.

"It showed that people are dedicated and, if they want to attend the event, weather is not going to stop them," he said.

Lopez said that pro-life advocates tend to feel that theirs is "a minority

view." But when they see the large number of like-minded people at the Walk for Life, he said, it "invigorates" them "to know that they're not alone."

For the 2019 walk, organizers decided to spotlight people with Down syndrome. The theme, "All Are Welcome," was inspired by statistics

showing that three-quarters of pregnant women in the United States and more than 90 percent of their counterparts in some European countries choose abortion if prenatal testing suggests that their unborn child will have Down syndrome.

Entertainment that year was provided by twin brothers Tommy and Jimmy Kuebler, who have Down syndrome.

"That particular theme was ... very inspiring. I think it opened a lot of people's eyes," said Scott Maxwell, a member of the planning committee, who has been involved for all 10 years.

With its new location, this year's walk seems poised to create even more memories.

"We've had a lot of people saying they wanted to see us walking in the streets," said Lopez. "This is the next closest thing because we're on the sidewalk along busy streets. We're going to get a lot of exposure."

Maxwell said, "As people see us walking with our signs and with several thousand people gathering together, hopefully, that will encourage others to attend next year."

San Diego Walk for Life details at sdccatholic.org/walkforlife



Supreme Court Weighs Major Abortion Case

Catholic News Service



WASHINGTON

— Activists on contrasting sides

of the abortion debate stepped up their advocacy as the U.S. Supreme Court is hearing the first major case on this issue in decades.

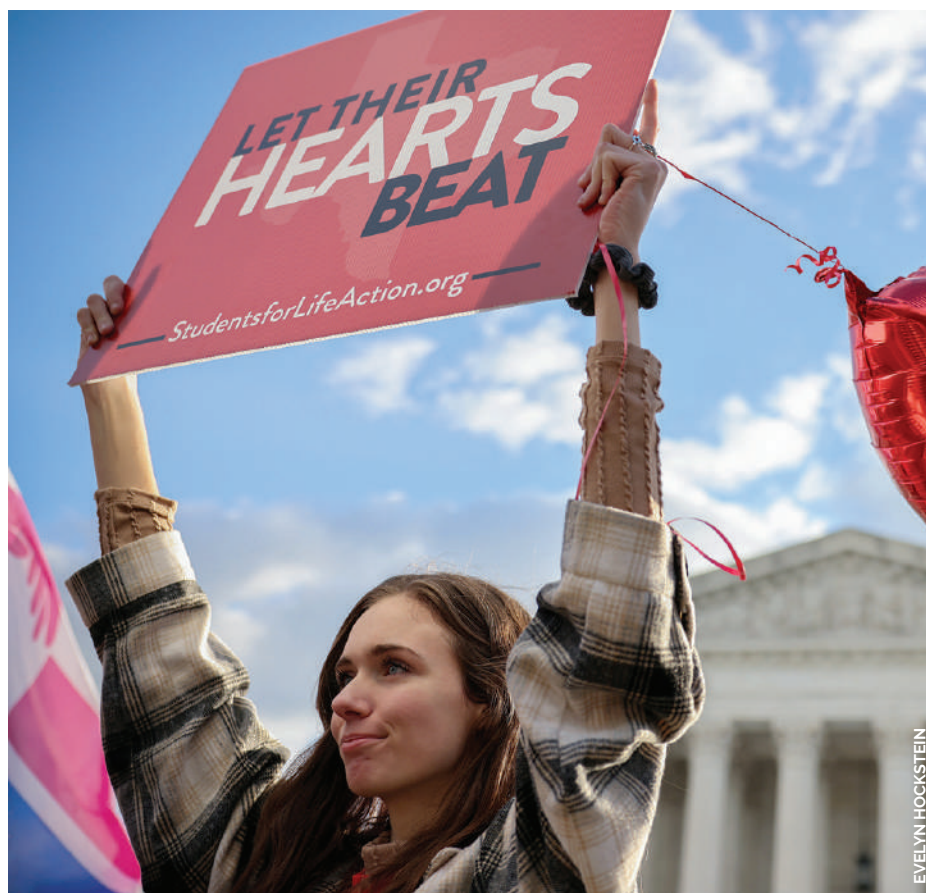
The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is urging the faithful to unite in prayer for the court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* in its eventual ruling on Mississippi's ban on most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

On Dec. 1, the court heard oral arguments in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, an appeal from Mississippi. Its ban was struck down by a federal District Court in Mississippi in 2018 and upheld a year later by the New Orleans-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit.

The Mississippi law is being challenged by the state's only abortion facility, the Jackson Women's Health Organization.

"In the United States, abortion takes the lives of over 600,000 babies every year," said Baltimore Archbishop William E. Lori, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities. "*Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health* could change that."

"We pray that the court will do the right thing and allow states to once again limit or prohibit abortion, and in doing so protect millions of unborn children and their mothers from this painful, life-destroying act," he added.



SIGN OF THE TIMES: Advocates for and against abortion have been demonstrating outside the U.S. Supreme Court in recent weeks. This activist participated in a rally on Nov. 1, 2021.

If the court's ruling, expected in July, upholds the ban, it possibly also could overturn *Roe* and send the abortion issue back to the states to decide laws on it.

Archbishop Lori directed people to prayfordobbs.com for Catholic and ecumenical prayers and resources for community engagement.

Statements about the Mississippi law came from all quarters.

U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H.,

predicted there would be "a revolution" if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned. She said that young people in particular would find it unacceptable if the court strikes down the legal precedent set by *Roe* in 1973 legalizing abortion nationwide.

U.S. Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., called on the Senate to Pass the Women's Health Protection Act. The measure, passed by the House Sept. 24, codifies *Roe* and establishes the

legal right to abortion on demand at any stage of pregnancy in all 50 states under federal law.

Pro-life advocates emphasized how many scientific advances have been made in the nearly 50 years since that decision was handed down, advances they argued have led to unprecedented information on the developmental stages of the unborn child from conception to birth.

In California, Catholic bishops criticized a new plan endorsed by Gov. Gavin Newsom to make the state a "sanctuary" for legal abortion if *Roe* is overturned.

"When families are struggling to put food on the table and pay rent, it is absurd for the state to focus on expanding abortion when the real needs of families for basic necessities remain unmet," said Kathleen Buckley Domingo, executive director of the California Catholic Conference in a statement Dec. 9.

The plan, titled "Recommendations to Protect, Strengthen and Expand Abortion Care in California," was released by the California Future of Abortion Council, a group made up of more than 40 abortion providers and advocacy groups convened by Newsom, according to *The Associated Press*.

"We'll be a sanctuary," Newsom told the *AP* in an interview. The groups' 45 recommendations include using taxpayer money to help pay for travel expenses, lodging, child care and abortion procedures for women who come from out of state seeking an abortion in California.

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Inspired by 'Wonders of Our Spiritual Father'

By Denis Grasska



ESCONDIDO —
About five years ago, Father Donald Calloway was reflecting on the serious problems affecting contemporary families.

"I thought, what better person to go to in these crazy times than the (human) father of Jesus, the husband of Mary, the great St. Joseph," he said.

That was the inspiration for his latest book, "Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father," published in early 2020 by Marian Press. The book is now available in 18 languages and has sold more than 1 million copies in English alone.

On Tuesday, Jan. 25, Father Calloway will visit Resurrection Parish in Escondido. He will give a talk on the history of devotion to St. Joseph and will sign copies of his book, which will be available for purchase. The event will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Admission is \$10.

Father Calloway, a member of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception, has had a devotion to St. Joseph since his conversion to Catholicism in 1994 and, as a seminarian, would "talk to him every day and ask him for help."

He explained that St. Joseph's rank in Heaven is "right after the Virgin Mary" and "even above the angels." He described the saint as a paragon of humility and chastity, as well as an exemplar of fatherhood.

"He's kind of the quiet man of Chris-



BOOK SALE: Father Donald Calloway signed hundreds of copies of his book "Consecration to St. Joseph: The Wonders of Our Spiritual Father" at a conference last summer in Hartford, Conn.

tianity ... We don't have any words from him in the New Testament," he said. "We only have his actions, but his actions speak loudly."

At his upcoming talk, Father Calloway hopes to fill attendees with "a desire to want to know this great man and to have him be part of their life, their family, their marriage, and then to do the consecration."

What does it mean to consecrate oneself to St. Joseph? Father Calloway explained that "consecration" is really just another word for "entrustment."

"(Jesus) entrusted Himself into the hands of Mary and Joseph; He grew

up under their care," he said. "And, as brothers and sisters of Jesus, it's good to imitate Him in that. (Mary and Joseph are) our spiritual parents as well, and so we want to ask them to help us become holy."

Father Calloway modeled his "Consecration to St. Joseph" after St. Louis de Montfort's Total Consecration to Jesus Through Mary. It consists of 33 days of spiritual readings based on the saint's various titles from the Litany of St. Joseph, paired with stories about miracles attributed to him, shrines dedicated to him, and even apparitions of him.

With all of the research required, it took Father Calloway three years to write his book. It was published in 2020 in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of St. Joseph's designation as "Patron of the Universal Church."

Father Calloway wrote a letter to Pope Francis, which was hand-delivered by Argentine Bishop Hector Zordan on May 2, 2019. In his letter, he requested that the pope declare a special year dedicated to St. Joseph in 2020.

"Lo and behold, he did," Father Calloway said, referring to the Year of St. Joseph that was observed from Dec. 8, 2020, through Dec. 8, 2021.

"I feel like I should be giving the pope royalties or something," he said with a laugh.

Even though the Year of St. Joseph has officially ended, that doesn't mean that the time for honoring and seeking the heavenly assistance of St. Joseph has passed.

"In light of a lot of the anxieties in the world, the stress, and everything that's going on," said Father Calloway, "we really need a loving father to comfort us, to give us hope, to give us peace."

For more information about the upcoming talk and book-signing, contact Resurrection Parish at (760) 747-2322. Learn more about Father Calloway's book at consecrationtostjoseph.org.



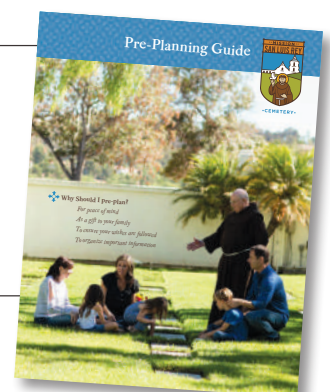
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#SDW4L    

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
SHAWN CARNEY
Author & CEO, President and
Co-Founder of 40 Days for Life



Get Ready to 'Spring Forward'

The Southern Cross



All parish catechists are invited to attend "Spring Forward."

The annual event is the diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry's mid-year catechetical conference.

Three separate conferences will be offered in San Diego and Imperial counties, with a different presenter for each.

The theme for San Diego's Spring Forward is "United in the Breaking of the Bread." It will be presented by ValLimar Jansen, a nationally-known speaker, composer and recording artist. The event will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 22, at Holy Trinity Parish in El Cajon. Registration is \$25.

A week later, Jesuit Father Eduardo Fernández will present the Imperial Valley's conference, with the theme of "The Eucharist & Social Justice," from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 29, at St. Mary Parish in El Centro. Father Fernández will reflect on how the Eucharist nourishes us to be missionary disciples sent out to a world in great need. The cost to attend is \$15.

Both of these conferences will be in English. A Spanish-language Spring Forward, presented by Franciscan Brother Moisés Gutiérrez, is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 5, at St. Michael Parish in Poway.

"Spring Forward Mid-Year Catechetical Conferences serve as a booster shot for catechists and catechetical



LEADING 'FORWARD': ValLimar Jansen, pictured at an event in Chicago in this 2014 photo, will present one of the San Diego Diocese's three "Spring Forward" conferences Jan. 22.

leadership as we begin the second half of the faith-formation year," explained diocesan Chancellor Marioly Galván, who also directs the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry.

Galván said this year's themes were selected to follow up on the diocese's Eucharistic renewal initiative that took place in the fall. The conferences are intended to provide an opportunity for participants to deepen their knowledge as they prayerfully reflect

upon what it means to be a Eucharistic community.

"The hope for these catechetical events is to draw our practitioners to a deeper appreciation of their faith through ongoing formation, prayer and fellowship," Galván said.

For more information or to register for "Spring Forward" conferences, visit sdcatholicdisciples.net.



Bishop to Take Part in Christian Unity Event

The Southern Cross

LA MESA — Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will take part in a panel discussion titled "Reflections on Practical Ecumenism: Stories of Spiritual Care from the San Diego Convention Center's Teen Migrant Shelter."

Coinciding with the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the event will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 19, at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in La Mesa. There will be a prayer service at 7 p.m., followed by the panel discussion from 7:20 to 8:30 p.m.

Joining Bishop Bejarano on the panel will be: Rev. Rebecca Dinovo of St. James by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, La Jolla; Rev. Sarah Sumner-Eisenbraun of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, San Diego; Erendira Jimenez Esquina of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego; Franciscan Brother Adolfo Mercado of Saint Vincent Friary, San Diego; Rev. Bill Radatz of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, San Diego; and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Susan Snook, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego.

The discussion will focus on ministry at a temporary shelter for unaccompanied migrant children and teenagers that was open from late March through July of 2021 at the San Diego Convention Center.

All are welcome to attend "Reflections on Practical Ecumenism," either virtually or in-person, but registration is required. Register at tithe.ly/event-registration/#/4412936.



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Day's Sainthood Cause Heads to Vatican

By Beth Griffin



NEW YORK — The diocesan phase of the sainthood cause for Dorothy Day has ended.

Next up: The documents collected during the 23-year process and detailing Day's holy and heroic virtues will be reviewed by the Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes.

There are 50,702 pages of documents in 17 original sealed boxes on their way to Rome. They weigh almost 700 pounds. And of course, the shipment also includes a copy of each document, per congregational instructions.

Dorothy Day was born in Brooklyn in 1897. She worked as a journalist for several Socialist newspapers and was an activist deeply interested in the plight of farmers and workers. She was received into the Catholic Church in 1927.

In a homily delivered Dec. 8 at a Mass marking the end for the cause's diocesan phase, Cardinal Dolan said Day was dismayed at the lack of visible Catholic advocacy or witness when she covered a hunger march in Washington in 1932.

On Dec. 8 of that year, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, she prayed at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception (now a basilica), for God to reveal a providential plan for her as a Catholic to serve the poor and unemployed.

When she returned to New York, she met Peter Maurin, an itinerant French worker and scholar who was steeped



A GOOD DAY: Sealed archival boxes containing documents related to Dorothy Day's canonization cause are seen Dec. 8 at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City.

in Catholic social teaching, and he and Day developed a vision of a society constructed on Gospel values.

Day and Maurin founded *The Catholic Worker* newspaper, "houses of hospitality" for the indigent and ultimately a lay movement dedicated to the daily practice of the works of mercy, the embrace of nonviolence, prayer and life in community and voluntary poverty.

There are now 240 local active Catholic Worker communities. *The Catholic Worker* newspaper is published seven times a year and is sold for 1 cent an issue.

Day was a daily communicant who practiced social justice, pacifism and charity. She was arrested multiple times for protesting in support of striking workers and against wars. She died in 1980 at a Catholic Worker

house in New York City.

George Horton, one of the vice postulators of Day's cause for sainthood, told *Catholic News Service* that Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York asked him in the late 1990s to convene a group of people who knew Day to examine if she should be proposed for sainthood.

Horton said Day's pacifism was seen as a threat by some people and there was concern that an abortion she obtained in the 1920s would be singled out as a defining issue.

Cardinal O'Connor initiated the canonization process in 2002 and Day was given the title "Servant of God."

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, current archbishop of New York, said Day's cause got a huge boost when Pope Francis visited the U.S. in 2015 and identified her as an important representative of the American people.

Horton and Jeffrey Korgen, the cause coordinator, said the road to sainthood is a complex legal process.

The process entails collecting public and private written works and interviewing people who knew the candidate. Experts review the documents and weigh in on their consistency with Catholic doctrine, Korgen said.

He said the record includes Day's entire FBI file detailing multiple investigations into accusations she was a Communist. She was cleared each time, he said, and the reports generally concluded, "some might consider her a pain, but they still vouched for her and that she was well-intentioned."

Once the documents are received in Rome, they will be studied. Then would come the next step in the canonization process — a declaration of Day's heroic virtues, after which the Church would give her the title "Venerable." Next would come beatification, after which she would be called "Blessed." The third step is canonization.

In general, a miracle verified to have occurred through the intercession of the sainthood candidate is needed for beatification and another such miracle is needed for canonization.

Horton said, "Dorothy Day is a saint for our time. She gives us a center when there is so much division in our country. She was an orthodox Catholic who fed the poor and worked for social justice. She gives us a vision of finding common ground and building community."

Catholic News Service

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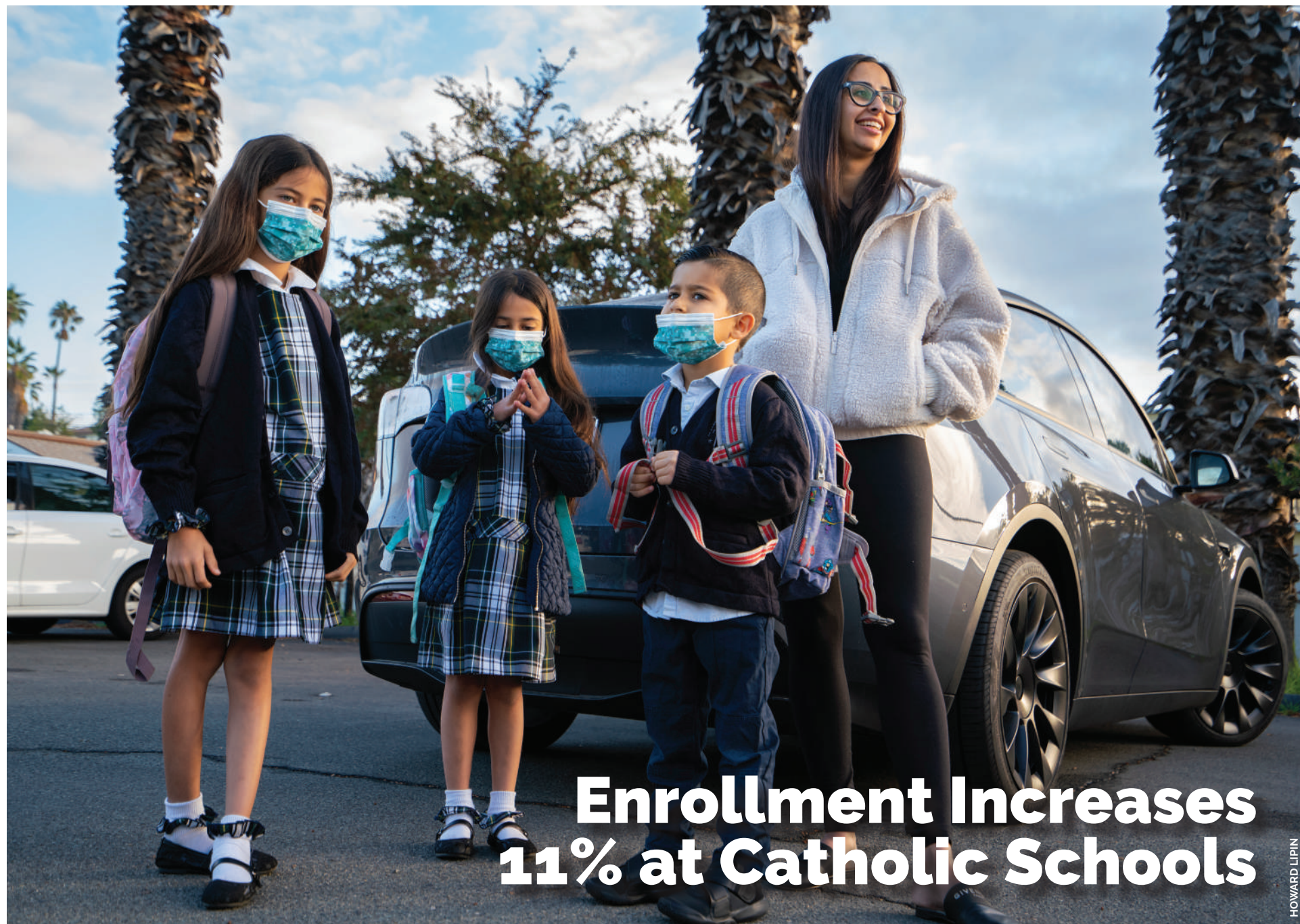
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Enrollment Increases 11% at Catholic Schools

HOWARD LIPIN

READY: Melissa Bachoua waits with her children — from left, Lourde, Avila and Leonel — for the gates to open at Santa Sophia Academy Dec. 8 for the start of the school day.

By Denis Grasska



Enrollment is up by historic margins at San Diego's Catholic schools this year.

Amidst the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents for the first time opted to give Catholic education a try.

"What we've seen is an 11.3-percent total increase in enrollment this school year. We haven't seen the likes of that in over a decade," said John Galvan, director of the diocesan Office for Schools.

Enrollment has increased by 14.8 percent at local Catholic elementary schools and by 4.2 percent at Catholic high schools. In the Diocese of San Diego, the total Catholic school student population is 14,371 — an increase of 1,460 from last year.

Schools are not only celebrating this achievement but are inviting more families to consider a Catholic education. They are particularly encouraging them to contact the school that interests them during Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 30 to Feb. 5, when many will offer special events, open houses, and tours for prospective families.

In San Diego County, the Catholic elementary schools with the greatest

increases in enrollment are Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in San Ysidro with 91 new students, St. Michael's School in Poway with 80, and Santa Sophia Academy in Spring Valley with 67.

In Imperial Valley, all three elementary schools saw increases: 60 at St. Mary School in El Centro, 57 at Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy in Calexico, and 13 at Sacred Heart School in Brawley.

Only two Catholic elementary

schools in the diocese experienced a decline in enrollment between the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.

At the high school level, the biggest gains were at Cathedral Catholic High School and Mater Dei Catholic High School, where enrollment increased by 58 and 52, respectively.

Galvan believes the increased enrollment can be credited to the fact that Catholic schools re-opened for in-person instruction earlier than

their public school counterparts and, once parents "got a taste of the Catholic school experience," they were convinced that it was "worth the price of admission."

He said the influx of new students offers "a wonderful opportunity to evangelize" and "to continue to bring (these families) into what it means to be Catholic."

The diocesan Office for Schools' biannual parent satisfaction survey, which was sent out to all Catholic school parents in the fall, yielded encouraging results. To a question that asked parents whether they felt the value of the Catholic education their children were receiving was worth the price of tuition, more than 85 percent answered yes and a little over 11 percent were undecided.

Three parents, whose children are experiencing Catholic education for the first time this year at Santa Sophia Academy, told *The Southern Cross* what it has been like.

Melissa Bachoua, who has children in kindergarten, second grade and fourth grade, had the sense that her children's public schools were "becoming too liberal" and promoting things that were inconsistent with her values. She wanted her children in an environment where they would grow deeper in their faith.

"We do go to church every Sunday,



MASS EXODUS: Students at Santa Sophia Academy walk to Mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, shortly after the start of the school day.

HOWARD LIPIN

but I felt like they needed more, and that was my main reason why we put them in Catholic school,” she said.

From Bachoua’s perspective, Catholic education is a good investment because her children have “such a personal relationship with the teachers.”

On Dec. 3, when she spoke with *The Southern Cross*, she said she had received a message that day from the second-grade teacher. The teacher shared how Bachoua’s daughter had lacked confidence earlier this year to read in front of the class, but had raised her hand the previous day and volunteered to do so.

Erika Alonso, mother to a second-grader and a fourth-grader at Santa Sophia Academy, recently left a job as a medical assistant at a health center. In that role, she saw firsthand how public high schools facilitate students seeking birth control or even abortions without their parents’ knowledge.

“I thought that was very scary,” she said.

Alonso said concerns about troubling changes to the health curriculum in public elementary schools inspired the decision to enroll her children in Catholic school.

She said that her son loves his religion class and tells her about the day’s lessons when he comes home from school.

“I didn’t go to a Catholic school, so I only know so much about religion,” she said, explaining that these conversations with her son are educational for her as well.

Erika Ramos, whose husband is a permanent deacon, recognized the value of Catholic education, but “just assumed” that it was financially out of reach. But thanks to a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and a sense that public schools are promoting values contrary to their faith, the



LARGER: Enrollment increased at St. Columba School by 25 percent this year.



TUTORING: Enrollment has increased 31 percent at Sacred Heart School in Brawley, which offers after-school enrichment sessions.

family opted to take a closer look at Catholic education.

All three of the Ramos children are attending Santa Sophia Academy — in transitional kindergarten, kindergarten and fourth grade. The family had homeschooled last year.

After meeting with Principal Kristin Klant and learning about the financial aid available, she and her husband wondered, “Why haven’t we done this before?”

“We love — love — the school,” she said. “The experience has been amazing.”

Week to Celebrate

Many of the San Diego Diocese’s schools are inviting prospective families to an open house during Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 30 to Feb. 5, the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. They are able to speak with the principal and teachers and visit classrooms and other campus facilities.

In addition, many schools are hosting special events on one day or during the entire week to celebrate their school community. These include service projects, pancake breakfasts, dances and more. Families may also schedule a tour of the school at their convenience.

Please visit the website sdcatholicsschools.org for a schedule of special events this week at the diocese’s schools. Families may also visit the website of the school that interests them for information or to schedule a tour.

More information about the diocese’s Catholic schools is available by phoning (858) 490-8240 or visiting sdcatholicsschools.org.



DIGGING IN: St. Rita School broke ground on its “Art, Play, Pray” project on Dec. 3. The renovation will include a new field, art studio, basketball court, playground, and prayer grotto. It is expected to be completed by August 2022.

Mass Promotes King's Call to Service

The Southern Cross



On the third Monday in January, the U.S. observes Martin

Luther King Day, the only federal holiday designated as a national day of service to encourage everyone to volunteer to improve their community.

The Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics invites all people to its third annual Special Mass on Jan. 16 to Commemorate Dr. King's Call to Service, to be celebrated by Bishop Robert McElroy at St. Rita's Church.

Deacon Marvin Threatt, a founding member of the commission, said Dr. King's vision of an equal, just society for all "is needed now more than ever."

He noted that there has been significant social progress in the nearly 60 years since Dr. King galvanized the civil rights movement, leading to the passing of landmark civil and voting rights legislation.

"But we have seen a decline in democracy in the last few years, and that affects all Americans, not just African Americans," he said. "We have to continue to invoke Dr. King's call for justice, equality and service."

For people of faith, a commitment to service means living the Gospel in daily life.

"It's wishing the same good things



DEDICATED TO SERVICE: Members of the Ladies of Peter Claver attended the Mass to Honor Dr. Martin Luther King's Call to Service on Jan. 17, 2021, at St. Rita's Church. The Mass will be held this year on Jan. 16 at the same location.

for others as we wish for ourselves, as the Gospel calls us to do," Deacon Threatt said. "It's wanting justice for others as we want for ourselves."

The Mass will be at 10 a.m. at St. Rita's Church, located at 5124 Churchward Street in Southeastern San Diego, with parking across the street.

The Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics, one of the oldest cultural organizations in the diocese, works to share Black spirituality and to promote social justice. It's part of the diocese's Office for

Ethnic and Intercultural Communities, which launched a project in 2019, "Working Together to Overcome Racism," to raise awareness of racism in society, including in the Church, and to propose ways to root it out. More information is available at sdcatholic.org/racism.

More information is available by phoning (858) 490-8306 or visiting the page sdcatholic.org/mlk.



Celebration of Santo Niño at Jan. 15 Mass

The Southern Cross

A Portuguese explorer, Ferdinand Magellan, introduced the Catholic faith to the Philippines in 1521, when his ship arrived on a southern island. The local ruler and his people decided to adopt the Catholic faith, and Magellan gave him a statue of the Christ Child on his baptism.

The explorer would die soon thereafter and it would be 44 years before the next expedition would arrive. This time, the locals rebuffed the Europeans and, in retaliation, they torched the town of Cebu. However, the statue was found unscathed in the ruins, considered a miracle. The devotion to Santo Niño, as the Christ Child became known, was born.

Filipinos worldwide are celebrating those roots during the 500th anniversary of Christianity reaching the Philippines.

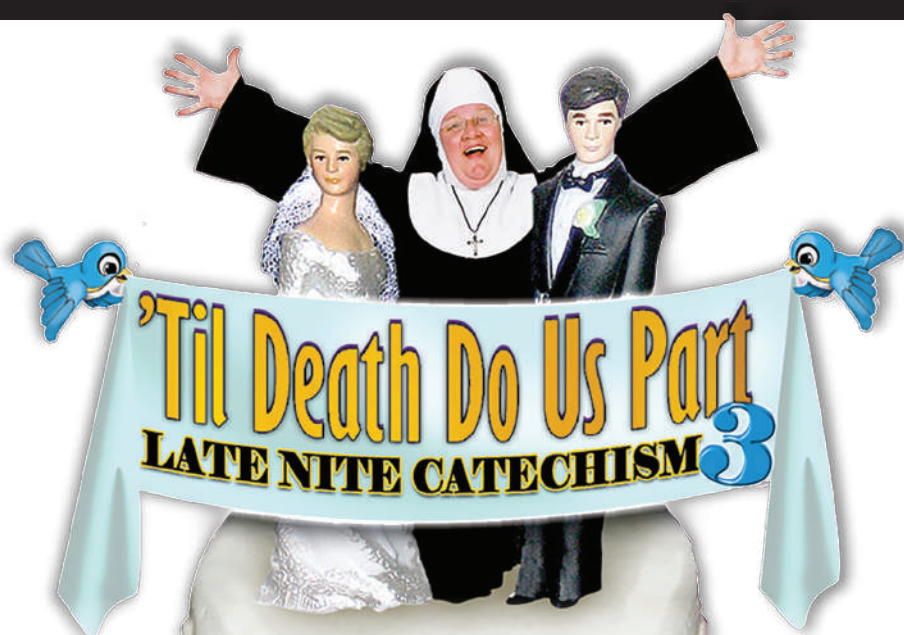
As a part of that celebration, the Diocesan Commission for Filipino Catholics will hold a Mass for the Feast of Santo Niño on Jan. 15 at 2 p.m. at St. Michael Church, San Diego. The faithful will bring their Santo Niño statues to be blessed at the Mass, which also features a blessing for the children.

It's one of several Masses that will be held to honor Santo Niño at parishes across the diocese.

For more information: (858) 490-8306 and sdcatholic.org/santonino.



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Joyous Celebration for 'Queen of the Americas'



The Southern Cross

Nearly 2,000 faithful attended the diocese's annual Mass to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe in December. The celebration followed a joyful procession, marking the return of this decades-long tradition after a break due to the pandemic in 2020.

More than two dozen parishes, apostolates and "movimientos," or faith communities, from across San Diego County walked, danced and rode in brightly decorated cars through North Park streets on Dec. 5. They began at Morley Field and ended at St. Augustine High School, where the Mass was celebrated in the gym.

The diocese's Hispanic Commission and the Confederación Guadalupeana organized the event, led by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano. After the Mass, the community paid tribute to revered Auxiliary Bishop Gilberto Chávez, who died in March of 2020 after serving the diocese for 60 years.

See a photo gallery at sdcatholic.org/guadalupe2021.



Parish groups, "movimientos" and apostolates celebrated Our Lady of Guadalupe in their own way, their colorful depictions brightening North Park streets on Dec. 5. Nearly 2,000 faithful crowded into the gym of St. Augustine High School for the special Mass, celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano, accompanied by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan. Afterward, a longtime associate and friend of the late Auxiliary Bishop Gilberto Chávez, Enrique Méndez, paid tribute to him.

ALL PHOTOS BY JOHN GASTALDO



'Greatest Blessing Is Seeing Students Grow Up'

By Denis Grasska



Father Peter McGuine, 58, has served as pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish in El Cajon for eight years.

He shepherds not only the parish with its approximately 1,550 registered families, but also the parochial school and its more than 280 students.

Born in Harbor City, Calif., Father McGuine grew up in Orange County and moved to San Diego to attend the University of San Diego in 1981.

He was ordained a priest for the Diocese of San Diego on June 29, 1990.

Question: What was the practice of the faith like in your childhood home?

Answer: Both my mother and father are Catholic. They were married in the Church and raised a Catholic family of six kids. I can't remember a Sunday when we ever missed Mass.

When did you feel called to the priesthood?

At the invitation of a priest at Mater Dei High School in Santa Ana, I started to investigate the possibility of a priestly vocation during my junior and senior years.

Not being convinced yet, I went to the University of San Diego and studied Business Administration. There, I remained active in campus ministry and became friends with a lot of the seminarians.

Near the end of my four years, Father Owen Mullen, one of the USD chaplains at the time, thought I had a priestly vocation and suggested I go speak with the vocations director

Interview with
Pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish
and School:

Father Peter McGuine



of the diocese. I took his advice, met with Father Peter Escalante, and was invited to enroll in the priestly formation program at St. Francis Seminary here in San Diego.

What have you found most fulfilling about priestly ministry?

Being an agent of mercy and reconciliation on behalf of God. It's God who forgives sins; it's God who's extending mercy; it's God who's inviting people into a deeper relationship with Him and to a change of life. It's a true joy to be a part of that.

As pastor of Our Lady of Grace, you're also responsible for its school. Why are Catholic schools important?

Catholic schools provide a solid education in a Catholic environment where students can flourish. They are also "points of evangelization." Many students come to the Catholic faith because of their studies in religion and because of the overall school environment. Non-Catholic parents also sometimes come to the faith because of the evangelizing nature of the school.

Are you a product of Catholic education? If so, what role did that play in your formation and discernment?

Every school in which I have been enrolled has been a Catholic school, except for preschool, which I think was Lutheran! It was in elementary

school where I experienced dedicated and happy parish priests; in high school where the possibility of a priestly vocation was presented; and in college where an observant chaplain invited me to seriously consider a priestly vocation.

Catholic schools were very instrumental in the discernment of a priestly vocation. Of course, priestly vocations can be discerned by those who attend non-Catholic schools. This happens all the time! For me, that process simply happened more naturally in a Catholic school environment.

What is a pastor's role in school administration?

Ultimately, as with a parish, the pastor is the one responsible for a parochial school. He sets the tone for the school and must have a good grasp as to how the school operates.

At Our Lady of Grace, I meet with the principal every other week for nearly two hours at a time to provide guidance and to discuss whatever she has on her mind.

My role on campus and in the lives of the students is mostly liturgical and sacramental. All grades, except kindergarten, attend Mass weekly. From time to time, we have all-school Masses where all the students are present; at other times, it's just two grades at a time. Parishioners are present for nearly all Masses with the school. Students also have the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of Penance at least once a year during the school day.

From time to time, I'm invited to a classroom to speak about a particular topic, and I'm happy to come be with the students.

What are the greatest challenges of leading both a parish and

a school? What are the greatest blessings associated with that?

Probably the greatest challenge, especially in these COVID years, has been facility usage. In 2020-2021, when most non-Catholic schools were doing remote-learning, Catholic schools were, for the most part, open for in-person instruction. At OLG, the school needed to expand into quite a few additional parish facilities to provide adequate physical distancing. This year is better because those requirements have been relaxed.


The greatest blessing is watching the students grow up, become active in their high schools and in parish life, and really embrace the Catholic faith for themselves.

What advice do you have for brother priests about pastoring a parish with a school?

The words that come to mind are Scripturally based: "Do not be afraid!" There are many people in the parish and school communities who want to see the school succeed as much as you do. I would advise any priest to tap into those resources. The success of the parish school does not depend on you alone as the parish priest.


The more a pastor can help parishioners see that it is "our parish school" and not just the school of the parents who currently send their kids there, the better things will be.

A parochial school doesn't exist apart from its parish. Rather, the school is a large — perhaps the largest and most costly — department of the parish. It's an important aspect of parish life and it really does help spread of the Gospel in so many ways.



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Lugosi Stars in Horror Novel with Faith Twist

By Denis Grasska



Horror movie star Bela Lugosi is one of the main characters in "This Thing of Darkness," a new book written by K.V. Turley and Fiorella De Maria.

While the film legend was a real person, the story itself is a work of fiction. Not only that, it is a supernatural horror novel infused with its co-authors' Catholic faith.

"I have to say straightaway, this is not a biography ... It is very much an alternate history," De Maria told *The Southern Cross*.

At the heart of the novel is a fictionalized version of Lugosi, who achieved stardom with the lead role in the 1931 film version of "Dracula" and followed that with a series of classic horror films throughout the Thirties and Forties.

"This Thing of Darkness" is set in 1956, after Lugosi's star had waned, his battle with drug addiction had become public, and his career had been reduced to appearances in low-budget schlock.

In the novel, journalist Evangeline Kilhooley reluctantly accepts the assignment of interviewing the aging star, who recounts for her the story of his life.

"As the interviews progress, she starts to suspect that something is not quite right ... and she gets drawn into this world, a dark world of Hollywood



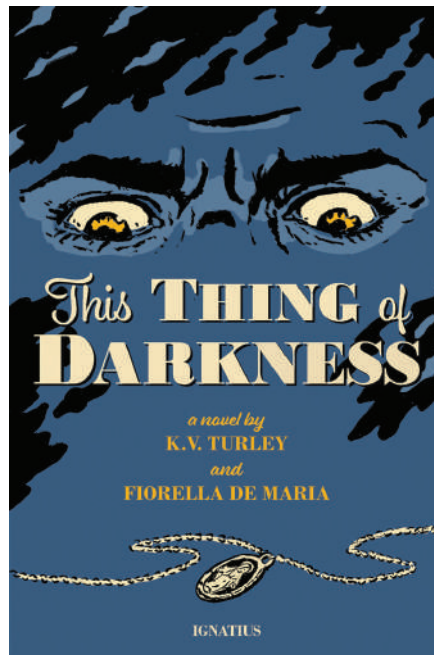
COURTESY OF IGNATIUS PRESS

STORYTELLER: Fiorella De Maria, left, is co-author of the Catholic-themed horror novel "This Thing of Darkness."

horror, and her own demons start to emerge during the course of the book," De Maria said.

Despite containing many accurate details about Lugosi's filmography, the novel takes a sharp detour into fantasy territory. It asks readers to imagine what might have happened if Lugosi's on-screen persona hadn't been entirely an act, if the actor had dabbled in the occult off-screen as well, surrendering himself to the forces of preternatural evil and facing the spiritual consequences of such choices.

Of course, the authors aren't alleging that any such thing happened.



"I'm very keen to point out this is an alternate history," reiterated De Maria. "We're not trying to tell the genuine story of Bela Lugosi."

Reflecting on the possibility that readers might mistake the book's fiction for fact, she acknowledged that she had "worried terribly" about including real people as characters. However, she noted that the real-life Lugosi was "a man who had all sorts of myths swirling around him, some of which I think he encouraged and certainly his agents encouraged."

The haunting cover art for "This Thing of Darkness" depicts not only

an illustration of Lugosi's hypnotic eyes, but also a Miraculous Medal necklace, which is among the Catholic Church's powerful sacramentals.

De Maria doesn't consider herself to be a horror novelist, specializing instead in crime fiction and historical fiction. Her works include the "Father Gabriel" mystery series, which features a crime-solving Benedictine priest. She credits co-author Turley, a longtime horror movie buff, with the idea for "This Thing of Darkness."

But, though a neophyte to the genre herself, De Maria said Catholics are "uniquely placed" to write horror "because we understand the reality of evil and we understand the reality of the supernatural."

"This Thing of Darkness" points not only to the existence of preternatural evil, but also to the Catholic belief that human beings are not left to confront it on their own. Rather, God and His angels and saints stand ready to fight with them. And, as the Bible promises, good triumphs over evil in the end.

For that reason, she explained, the novel provides readers with the opportunity to "explore the horror genre without fear."

"It's not a book without hope," she said, "and I would say to anyone who has an interest — or who is nervous perhaps — about the horror genre, this might be the book for you."



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Presenter:

FR. EDUARDO FERNÁNDEZ, SJ

Father Fernández teaches pastoral theology and missiology at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley. He publishes, directs workshops and retreats, and assists at local parishes.

Holy Land Christian Leaders: Guarantee Our Protection



VANDALISM: A statue of Mary and the Christ Child was shattered after vandals broke into St. Stephen Church in the Beit Jamal Salesian monastery near Jerusalem Sept. 26, 2017.

Catholic News Service



JERUSALEM — Christian leaders in the Holy Land have asked for “an urgent dialogue” with Israeli, Palestinian and Jordanian leaders “to ensure that no citizen or institution has to live under threat of violence or intimidation.”

They also want to discuss creation of a special Christian cultural and heritage zone in Jerusalem’s Old City to preserve Christian sites.

“Since 2012, there have been countless incidents of physical and verbal assaults against priests and other clergy, attacks on Christian churches, with holy sites regularly vandalized and desecrated, and ongoing intimidation of local Christians who simply seek to worship freely and go about their daily lives,” the leaders said Dec. 13. “These tactics are being used by such radical groups in a systematic attempt to drive the Christian community out of Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land.”

The patriarchs and heads of churches acknowledged the Israeli government was committed to preserving the Christian community “as an integral part of the tapestry of the local community.”

“It is therefore a matter of grave concern when this national commitment is betrayed by the failure of local politicians, officials and law enforcement agencies to curb the activities of radical groups who regularly intimidate local Christians, assault priests and clergy, and desecrate Holy Sites and church properties,” their statement said.

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*

Helen Clara Kapelczak	11/02/2021	St. Rita Church
Daniel Mendez	11/04/2021	St. Jude Shrine of the West
Maria de Jesus Mejorado Rivas Medina	11/11/2021	Blessed Sacrament
Hue Thi Nguyen	11/18/2021	Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Donald Raymond Kojis	11/19/2021	Santa Sophia Church
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St. Joseph Teaches Value of Keeping Silence, Pope Says

Catholic News Service



VATICAN CITY — The absence of any words attributed to St. Joseph in the Gospels speaks volumes about the importance of silence, Pope Francis said.

St. Joseph’s silence was “not mutism,” but a quality that allowed him to listen to the word and will of the Holy Spirit, the pope said during his weekly general audience Dec. 15.

“This is why we must learn from Joseph to cultivate silence — that interior space in our days in which we give the Spirit the opportunity to regenerate us, to console us, to correct us.”

Pope Francis continued his series of talks on St. Joseph, reflecting on his silence which “is an important personal aspect” that even Christ incorporated in His own life and ministry.

“Jesus was raised in this ‘school,’ in the house of Nazareth, with the daily example of Mary and Joseph,” the pope explained. “And it is not surprising that He Himself sought spaces of silence in His days and invited His disciples to have such an experience.”

At the same time, the pope said that often “silence frightens us a little because it asks us to delve into ourselves and to confront the part of us that is true.”

“Many people are afraid of silence, they have to speak, and speak and speak, or listen to the radio or television,” the pope said.

Another challenge, he continued, is that while silence allows men and women to listen to the Holy Spirit, “it is not easy to recognize that voice, which is very often mixed up with the thousand voices of worries, temptations, desires and hopes that dwell within us.”

Furthermore, without the practice of silence, Christians can be tempted to use their words for “flattery, bragging, lies, backbiting and slander” rather than “making the truth shine.”

Calling on men and women to follow the example of St. Joseph, Pope Francis said the benefit of silence in one’s heart, will “heal our language, our words and above all our choices.”

Too often, he said, “we work on something and, when we finish, immediately we look for our telephone to make another call ... Profoundness of the heart grows with silence ... that leaves space for wisdom, reflection and the Holy Spirit. We are afraid of moments of silence. Let us not be afraid! It will do us good.”

Mary Elizabeth Accardi, M.A.

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

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Does the idea scare me?

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What If the Three Wise Men Had Cell Phones?



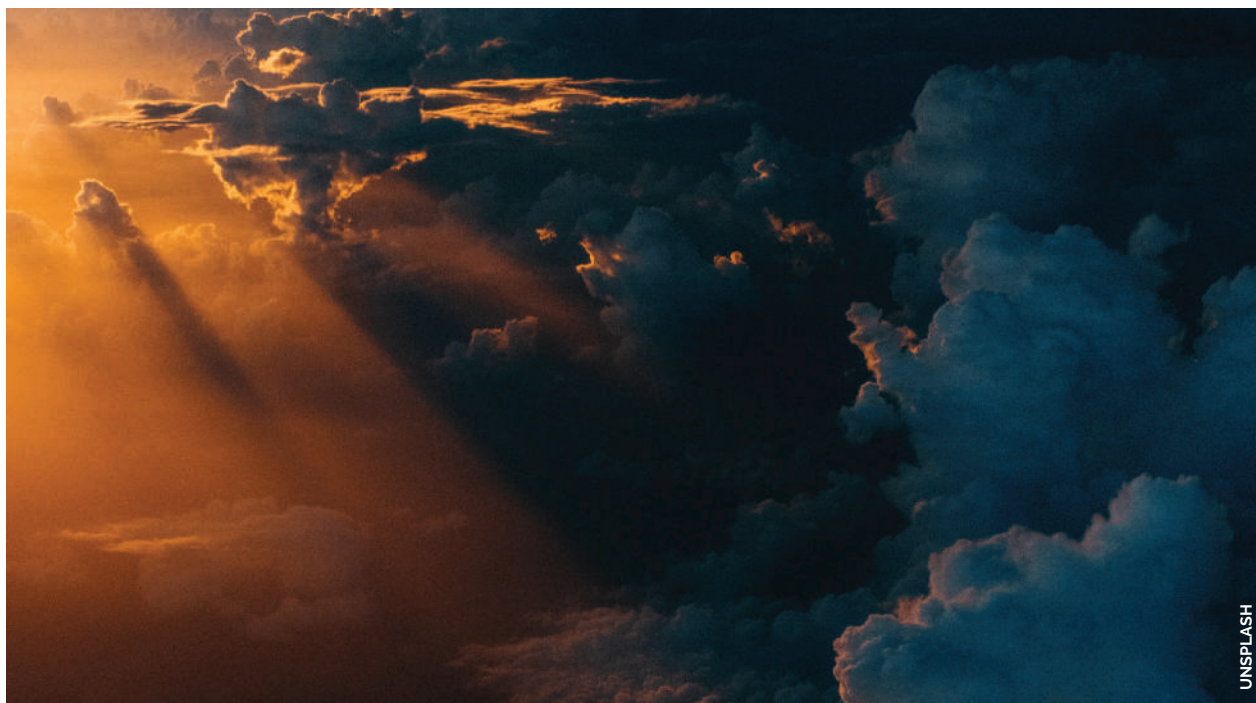
What would have happened if the Three Wise Men had an iPhone or Android phone in their pockets? Surely, they would not have become aware of what was happening in the heavens, would not have seen the star that shined so brightly. They would have missed out on the extraordinary moment of meeting Jesus, Joseph and Mary.

Wherever you put your attention, your gaze, that's where your interests, your wishes and your heart is. What can happen when we spend long hours focused on a small screen? We're familiar with the answer: sedentarism, obesity, sleep disorders, depression, anxiety and more. Mental and emotional disturbances have increased during the pandemic.

The need to be listened to, to be close to and embrace someone is increasingly noticeable. It's not unusual to hear this when we embrace someone, "It's been such a long time since I hugged anyone." This crisis is underscoring what we're missing, what we need, the details that matter most.

To lift our gaze upwards, away from a screen to look at the heavens, has an inspiring significance. Not to leave reality behind, but rather to return to it with new eyes, eyes that after contemplating the grandeur and vastness of "what's above" return to view "what's inside" with admiration because what's in the heavens is inside of us, that same grandeur of the stars and galaxies is reflected in our body, in each cell, in our eyes, in the human brain. It's in that movement of gazing up and returning to our interior that we gather strength and renew hope.

The light that's above illuminates, allowing us to see human possibilities. The Gospel tells us that on the cusp of special moments in His life, Jesus raises His eyes to the heavens (John 11:41, John 17:1), drawing inspiration and strength from His Father, the Creator.



UNPLASH

Associate Director,
Family Life & Spirituality

Ricardo Márquez




In January, we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, what occurred when kings and astrologers from a foreign culture gazed upon a star with a special brightness in the sky. They had a revelation, a spark, and the grace to know intuitively that something special was happening and that the star would guide them to its origin. They set forth, arriving where Jesus was born, encountering Him and "adoring" Him. That's what the Greek word "epiphaneia" means, something revealed in daily reality that results in a discovery of something essential for life.

Today, we ask the Lord, in our moments of silence,

of contemplation and prayer, for our eyes to see what lies beyond cell phone screens, up in the sky, toward the immensity, beauty and grandeur of creation. And in doing so, to renew our hope, to see with new eyes the importance of the small details in our daily life — the hugs, the smiles, the tenderness — that illuminate and renew our desire to live to serve.

Let's go out these days as a family to the park, to see the butterflies and birds, to see the sunsets and the stars. Let's share stories around the dinner table, surprise a homeless person with food or a lonely senior with a visit. These will be "stellar" moments, luminous events that will take us to encounter what is great in each of us, to God who was born and lives within us. That's when we will have our "Epiphany," and begin to raise our eyes more often to the heavens to give thanks, and to be aware of being "one with Him."



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News Briefs

Rivera Steps Down as Young Adult Ministry Director



Patrick Rivera, who served as director of the diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry for six years, stepped down from that role on Dec. 1.

A search is currently underway for his successor. Those interested in applying for the position should send their cover letters and resumes to mhabana@sdccatholic.org.

Rivera, who was born in Ventura, Calif., and grew up south of Nashville, Tenn., joined the diocesan staff on July 6, 2015, taking leadership of the office that supports parish-based young adult ministries and organizes diocese-wide events for young adult Catholics, such as the Young Adult Christmas Gala every December and the Diocesan Young Adult Mass every August.

His tenure overlapped with the diocese's Young Adult Synod, a formal consultation of young adult faithful throughout the diocese that was conducted in the fall of 2019. In all, about 240 young adults from diverse backgrounds participated in the synod, which yielded 30 proposals to facilitate greater young adult involvement in the life of the Church.

Jan. 22 Is a Day of Penance

WASHINGTON — For Catholics in the United States, Jan. 22 is a day of penance and prayer in commemoration of the Roe v. Wade decision issued by the U.S. Supreme Court on that date in 1973.

The 7-2 court decision established a constitutional right to abortion.

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 373, states: "In all the dioceses of the United States of America, Jan. 22 ... shall be observed as a particular day of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life."

'Late Night Catechism' Combines Comedy with Catechesis

OCEANSIDE — A participatory theater experience that describes itself as "part catechism class, part stand-up routine" is coming to Mission San Luis Parish in Oceanside.

"Late Night Catechism" features an actress as a habited religious sister and the audience as the students in her religion class. In previous shows, "Sister" taught about the saints, venial sins and other topics. In "Late Night Catechism 3: Til Death Do Us Part," she presents humorous lessons about matrimony and last rites, including her own wacky version of "The Newlywed Game."



More than 200 vulnerable families received unwrapped toys, food, holiday apparel, books, blankets, diapers and more Dec. 6 through Dec. 9 from Birthline of San Diego County.

The local nonprofit held its Annual Holiday Event in the courtyard outside of its Clairemont location. Its current clients — pregnant women and families with young children — were invited to schedule an appointment for the give-away. Volunteers and staff, dressed as Christmas elves, checked clients in, ensured COVID-19 guidelines were followed, and personally shopped for the clients.

Each client left Birthline with a large bag filled with holiday items and a beautifully wrapped spa gift. Toys from the "Toys for Tots" program and from local donors were distributed to children ages 0 to 9 years.

"This Christmas, we have made our highest-needs clients our first priority," said Jeanne Hansen, director of Birthline's Clairemont office. "These moms work so hard to provide for their children under the most challenging circumstances. To be able to share the true spirit of the holidays with them and give generously is what this season is all about."

And Birthline clients are appreciative. As one mother who is battling cancer put it, with tears in her eyes, "Birthline is always here for me."

More information is available at birthlineofsd.org.

The performance will take place at 6:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 21, in the parish's Serra Center. Food will be on sale at 5 p.m., and the doors will open 6 p.m.

Tickets are \$40 per person for general admission and \$70 per person for the "premiere package" that includes front-section seating and admission to an hors d'oeuvre reception in St. Francis Hall after the performance.

Purchase tickets online at sanluisreyparish.org, via telephone at (760) 757-3250, or in-person after weekend Masses.



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Celebration Reaches for the Stars

The Southern Cross

ESCONDIDO — Around 800 faithful from across the region attended the Simbang Gabi Vigil Mass, the Filipino community's colorful tradition.

The Diocesan Commission for Filipino Catholics teamed up with the diocese to present the Dec. 14 Mass at Resurrection Church. Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan celebrated the second annual Mass, accompanied by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano and 15 pastors.

A total of 11 parishes and devotional communities presented "parols," illuminated lanterns in the shape of the star of Bethlehem.

The Mass opened the novena of Masses held in 19 parishes from Dec. 16 to 24 to accompany the Blessed Mother as she waited for the birth of the Savior.



Parish Hosting Suicide-Prevention Training

Do you know the warning signs of suicide? Would you know what to say or do if you suspected someone was suicidal?

Learn the answers to these and other questions during a QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) Gatekeeper Training session on suicide prevention.

The training will take place from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Jan. 22, 2022, at Church of the Nativity. The event will take place in the parish hall, located at 6309 El Apajo Road, Rancho Santa Fe 92067. Register at NatMHMinistry@gmail.com.

Priest Assignments Announced

The Bishop's Office has announced the following priest assignments.

Father Anthony Stanonik has been appointed as associate pastor of St. Mary Parish in Escondido, effective Dec. 4, 2021.

Father Minh Do will be associate pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Lakeside, effective Jan. 1, 2022. He will succeed Father Khuyen Van Lai, who has ministered in the Diocese of San Diego since 1975 and, on Jan. 1, will retire after 18 years as associate pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

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