

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



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MARCH 2022

Are You In?

Church needs us
in the circle at
pivotal time

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LEO FONSECA

LISTENING: In March, parishes in the diocese are inviting the faithful to participate in circle sessions to share their experiences in the Church and their hopes for its future, as part of a worldwide consultation.



Welcome!

Nearly 900 catechumens and candidates to attend Rite of Election. **Page 3**



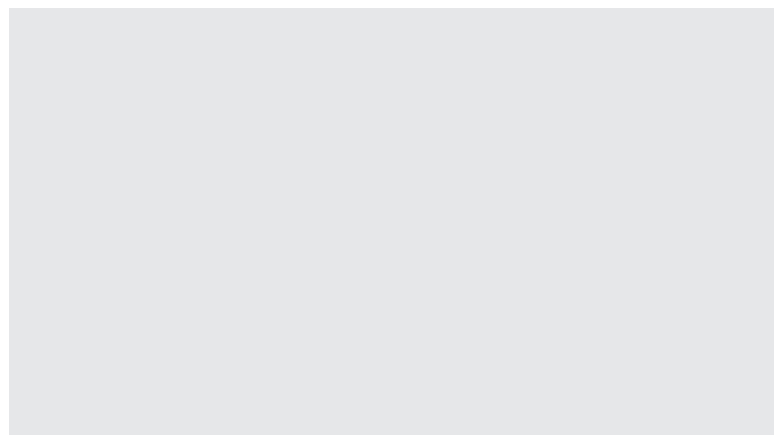
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Building Opens

Father Joe's project
offers 407 units for
homeless.

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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.



THE SOUTHERN CROSS.ORG

Consultation of Faithful in March

By Aida Bustos



"It's an opportunity to be heard."

That's how José Raul Martínez sees the consultation that begins at parishes in March, part of an effort to listen to Catholics worldwide.

The Diocese of San Diego will hold this consultation in small groups of people sitting in a circle sharing their experiences in the Church and their hopes for its future. The sessions will last about 2½ hours and will be held in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Everyone is invited to register at their parish as soon as possible to join this conversation, which also will include clergy, religious, young adults, and Catholic schools' staff and parents.

Pope Francis called for this consultation, formally known as a synod, at a pivotal moment in the history of the Church. Societies are deeply divided, economic inequality is growing, and virtually everyone is struggling to regain their footing from a devastating pandemic.

As the COVID-19 virus eases, many faithful have not returned to Mass at their parishes, many of which were already struggling with declining attendance.

"The pope is asking us to come together and have a serious conversation about the future of our diocese and the Universal Church, open to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and unburdened, as the Holy Father put it, by the idea that 'we've always done it this way,'" Bishop Robert McElroy said at a special Mass Oct. 17 that opened the synod at the diocese.

"Even more to the point, he wants to bring this spirit of encounter and renewal into the daily life of the Church, to force all of us out of our comfort zones, and to initiate a journey down a path that fosters unity, mission and the revitalization of our Church."

The diocese is holding the synod in three phases. The first one involves listening in the small-group sessions in March and April, which also will be held among individuals who live on the margins of society.

The insights and data collected from the sessions will be submitted in June to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which in turn will summarize



INVITATION: Ushers distributed forms to Mass-goers at Good Shepherd Church on Feb. 5 to register for the circle sessions the parish will hold in March.

REGISTER AT PARISH TO PARTICIPATE

Catholic faithful in San Diego and Imperial counties can register at their parish to participate in small-group sessions to be held in March as part of a worldwide consultation.

Online information is available at sdccatholic.org/synod (English) and sdccatholic.org/sinodo (Spanish).

it and submit it to the Vatican.

The San Diego Diocese is going further, however.

The diocese also will reach out to its faithful through a survey, to be conducted over the summer.

The second phase begins in the fall and stretches to early next year. Two commissions of lay Catholic commu-

nity leaders are guiding the diocese's consultation in San Diego and Imperial counties. Commission members, supported by consultants, will analyze the insights and the data from the small-group sessions and the survey.

They will discern ways that parishes and the diocese can journey more closely with all members in their community and welcome them to participate fully at all levels of the life of the Church.

The third and final phase calls for action, implementing the recommendations the commissions make, under the guidance of Bishop McElroy.

José Martinez, a parishioner of Sacred Heart Mission in the town of Heber, is a commission member from the Imperial Valley. He's a middle school teacher and a leader in music and young adult ministries.

"If we pray for a better Church, then action must accompany the intention, and this is one step toward making it happen," he said of the synod. If the pope "wants to learn about what is happening in the hearts of God's people, now is the time to speak."

Pastors to Decide Mask Requirement

The Southern Cross



Are facial coverings still required at Mass?

Based on the most recent guidance from the Diocese of San Diego, the answer to that question may vary from parish to parish.

On Feb. 15, state and county officials lifted a two-month mask mandate in indoor public spaces. A day later, Bishop Robert McElroy sent a letter to

the priests in the diocese, leaving the decision of whether to require masks to their discretion.

The diocese had been requiring masks at Mass, regardless of parishioners' vaccination status, for the past two months.

The bishop recommended that pastors, in collaboration with parish leadership, review their parish mask-wearing requirement given that the prevalence of the Omicron variant had declined and public health authorities had relaxed prevention measures.

Meanwhile, county health officials continue to urge all eligible residents to get any of the approved COVID-19 vaccines, including the additional booster, all of which are free and readily available.

Though the number of confirmed cases of the Omicron variant has dropped significantly in the last few weeks, the virus continues to drive hospitalizations and deaths. A total of 93 people died in San Diego County between Feb. 9 and 16 due to the virus; the previous week, a total of 119 had died.



Nearly 900 Preparing to Join Catholic Church

GATHERED: The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion was celebrated at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa last year. This year, it will be held at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Imperial, as well as at Good Shepherd.

The Southern Cross



In the Diocese of San Diego, almost 900 people are preparing to become Catholic this Easter.

These include 230 adult catechumens — those who have never been baptized — and 612 adult candidates — those who were baptized but have yet to receive their First Communion or confirmation — as well as 46 child catechumens and candidates.

Last year, there were 256 catechumens and 401 candidates.

They come from diverse backgrounds and have followed their own unique paths toward the Catholic faith.

Among them is Jessica Dempsey, who is participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) process at Corpus Christi Parish in Bonita.

Her brother's suicide in July 2020 played a significant role in leading her to the Catholic Church.

"It was a very sad time for me, especially with the pandemic and lockdowns happening," she recalled. "Although I loved my Evangelical church and I

learned a lot about being a Christian there, I was struggling to relate to the messages. As time went on, I felt as if I was being left to read the Bible on my own and guide myself, which led me to ask: Why go to church?"

That Christmas Eve, she watched an online Mass with her husband and took comfort from the priest's homily. She began looking into the history of the Catholic Church, coming to recognize it as the Church founded by Jesus. Her research also provided an answer to her question about why going to church is important: Jesus is present in the Eucharist.

"Since deciding to join the Church, I've learned so much about what the Kingdom of God is and what being a part of it means," she said. "It has truly expanded and deepened my faith."

For Tevita Mickelsen, becoming Catholic "was always going to be a part of my journey."

He and his wife recently adopted their foster daughter and enrolled her in the religious education program at Mater Dei Parish in Chula Vista. It seemed like an appropriate time for him to take the next step in his own faith journey.

RITE OF ELECTION

The diocese's catechumens and candidates are proclaimed ready to receive the sacraments at the Rite of Election, which this year will be held as three liturgies on March 5 and 6. It is a ticketed event and not open to the general public.

The liturgies will be livestreamed at sdcatholic.org/roe



"We've always wanted to build our family in the Catholic faith and Church," said Mickelsen. "My experience so far has been nothing but amazing. I'm always excited to go to church on Sunday with my wife and daughter and, each week, I look forward to participating in the RCIA sessions."

He said, "I love the process and I'm excited to continue in the faith and see what the future has for us, with God and this faith by our side."

Sarai Rubalcava, currently in the RCIA process at Santa Sophia Parish in Spring Valley, has taken a "long and somewhat varied" path to where she is today.

She grew up in a Catholic family that attended Mass only on Christmas and Easter; she visited numerous Pentecostal and Baptist churches with friends, was baptized in a non-denominational megachurch, and had a Catholic wedding.

When her husband joined the choir at Santa Sophia Parish, she accepted his invitation to do the same. She said it was at the parish that she "felt the need to understand Mass and the multitude of Catholic traditions."

"One thing that continues to motivate me on this journey to becoming a

Catholic is the beautiful reverence for God that is displayed in every tradition and Mass that I have been a part of thus far," she said. "It's amazing how it feeds my spirit and makes me feel closer to God."

Throughout their 22-year marriage, Michael Decker's wife has prayed that he might become Catholic.

Today, Decker feels "spiritually stronger" since entering the RCIA process at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Vista. Every day, he prays the rosary, makes a "spiritual communion," and performs an examination of conscience.

"My growth in the knowledge of salvation history and present understanding has become a hunger that I must feed through Lord Jesus as never before in my life," he said. "My reverence and zeal (are) magnified using the liturgical calendar and all the Catholic faith has to offer."

In March, the diocese's catechumens and candidates will attend the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion, an annual liturgy where they are presented to the diocesan bishop and proclaimed ready to receive the sacraments of initiation at their parishes at the Easter Vigil.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Rite of Election was celebrated as one massive gathering at a non-parish location, like Golden Hall in downtown San Diego or the Town & Country Convention Center in Mission Valley.

Like last year's, the Rite of Election this year will be separated as three separate parish-based liturgies to ensure social distancing: one on Saturday, March 5, at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Imperial and two others on Sunday, March 6, at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa.

Collectively, 68 of the diocese's 97 parishes will be represented and 2,676 people will be in attendance. These include the catechumens and candidates, as well as their sponsors, guests and members of their parish RCIA teams.



BY THE BOOK: Bishop Robert McElroy signs the Book of the Elect, containing the names of a parish's catechumens.



MAKING MEALS: Above, the upcoming Million Meal Event is a diocesan-level version of the food-packaging events hosted by individual parishes, like this one at St. Brigid Parish in 2016; below, packaged meals will feed hungry families in Tijuana, Mexico, the Philippines and Zambia.

Call to Pack Million Meals for Hungry Families

By Denis Grasska



There are about 120 permanent deacons in active ministry in the Diocese of San Diego.

But, even with those numbers, the “Million Meal Event” is an ambitious undertaking.

The deacons and their wives are spearheading the diocese-wide charitable project, through which more than 170,000 food packages will be prepared during one weekend in June. With each package containing enough food for multiple meals, that’s more than 1 million nutritious meals for individuals and families living in extreme poverty in Mexico, the Philippines and Africa.



COURTESY KIDS AROUND THE WORLD, INC.

The event won’t take place until the June 11-12 weekend at Cathedral Catholic High School, but the deacons already have their work cut out for them. In the coming months, they will have to raise at least \$250,000 and recruit 3,000 volunteers.

They hope to raise half of the money from major donors and event sponsors, and the other half in smaller donations from participating parishes. The funds will cover the cost of the red lentils, rice, vitamins and seasonings that comprise each food package, as well as the cost of shipping the prepared packages.

Materials and equipment will be provided by the deacons’ partner in this effort, the nonprofit organization Kids Around the World, Inc. The packaged meals will be sent to the Casa de los Pobres in Tijuana, Mexico, as well as to charities in the Philippines and Zambia.

Each deacon will be responsible for promoting the event, raising funds and recruiting a team of about 75 volunteers at his own parish.

There will be three two-hour shifts during the Million Meal Event — Saturday, 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m.; Sunday, 1 to 3 p.m. — during which the volunteers will work in small groups in assembly-line fashion.

The event’s lead organizer, Deacon Mike Daniels of St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach, promises a festive atmosphere with music playing as the volunteers do their work. Food and drink also will be available. All ages are welcome, from young children to grandparents.

Deacon Daniels acknowledged that it will be a challenge to raise the \$250,000 at a time when parish collections are already down because of decreased



Mass attendance during the pandemic.

“We’ll know on May 1 how much money we raised and we’ll know how many volunteers we have,” said Deacon Daniels, “and, if we have to scale the event back, we will. But I don’t think we’re going to have to.”

St. Brigid Parish, Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado, and St. James Parish in Solana Beach have each held their own single-day food-packaging events. Those successes provided the inspiration for this diocese-wide event.

St. Brigid’s parishioner Caroline Kelner brought the idea of a food-packaging event to her parish, where it was done from 2014 through 2019. (The pandemic brought an end to the tradition.) Deacon Daniels asked her to serve on the planning committee for the Million Meal Event.

“I am so excited for this event to happen, and how it presents the opportunity for children to learn about our Christian responsibility to help others in need,” she said.

Deacons Kevin Murray of Sacred Heart Parish and Jim Scull of Ascension Parish in Tierrasanta are assisting

Deacon Daniels with organizing the Million Meal Event.

Deacon Murray recalled the food-packaging events that have been held over the past few years at his parish, where up to 75,000 meals have been packaged in one Saturday morning.

“These events have been fun, energetic days in which all the members of the parish came together to help the needy. ... People of all ages were able to make a difference in the lives of others, in response to Jesus’ call to feed the hungry,” he said.

Deacon Scull is confident about the Million Meal Event’s chances for success.

“I have seen the Holy Spirit work with resounding power again and again in my own parish, especially when an invitation is put forth to help with a charitable event,” he said.

Though deacons are engaged throughout the year in their own service projects, the Million Meal Event represents the first time they have all been invited to participate in a single, diocese-wide endeavor.

Deacon Scull hopes the event will help others to understand what diacnal ministry is about.

“I have always thought that a diocesan-wide service event led by and participated in by deacons in every parish could help our faithful see more clearly our diaconal identity as the icon of ‘Christ the Servant,’” he said.

Ask your deacon about participating in this project. To register to help pack meals and donate funds, visit sdccatholic.org/millionmeals



Pastor Retiring from 'Soul of San Diego'

By Denis Grasska



For Father Peter Escalante, serving as pastor of Mission San Diego de Alcalá has been "a real privilege."

But all good things come to an end.

On March 1, his 70th birthday, Father Escalante will not only step down as pastor, but also will retire from active priestly ministry.

He described his almost seven years at Mission San Diego as "a memory that I will continue to savor" in retirement. In the years ahead, he plans "to stay active" by celebrating Masses at various parishes and "being whatever help I can to the bishop and to the diocese."

Under his leadership, Mission San Diego marked its 250th anniversary and also navigated the COVID-19 pandemic.

A thriving parish as well as a historical landmark and tourist attraction, Mission San Diego was founded in 1769 by St. Junipero Serra, a Franciscan friar, as the first of California's 21 Spanish missions.

Following two years of planning and preparation, the iconic parish celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2019 with a full year of events. Father Escalante noted that the parish sought "to highlight various aspects of the mission's rich history," including the role of the local Native American population.

Deacon Andy Orosco of the Diocese of San Bernardino, a Kumeyaay from the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, was brought onboard as a



FAMILIAR FACES: Father Peter Escalante places photos of his parishioners in the pews of Mission San Diego de Alcalá in this image shared on the parish's Facebook page in April of 2020.

Native American consultant. Father Escalante said the deacon's presence served as "a real bridge to the Native American community," many of whose members have negative feelings about the Mission Era.

Father Escalante said the anniversary year was "a wonderful experience" and "a memorable celebration."

Less wonderful, albeit still memorable, was the emergence of a novel

coronavirus early the following year.

"The pandemic certainly made parish life a challenge," Father Escalante said.

He shared that, during the lockdown phase when the celebration of public Masses was suspended, parishioners were invited to send in photos of themselves and their families. These were printed out and affixed to the pews of the mission church.

"The entire church was filled with

pictures. ... We left them up for several months," recalled Father Escalante, who said the photos made everyone at the parish feel "very connected during that time when there was such isolation."

The parish's priests were able to look out upon the pictures as they recorded Masses for their quarantined parishioners. Meanwhile, those parishioners saw them on video, while the opening hymn was sung.

Once outdoor liturgies were permitted, said Father Escalante, "our beautiful courtyard proved to be a very suitable setting for Masses."

A lifelong San Diegan, Father Escalante said it was during his seminary years that he first came to appreciate the mission and its history.

"I think (Mission San Diego) holds a special place in the hearts of all of us," said Father Escalante, who describes the iconic church as "the soul of San Diego."

He recalled that he often took walks around the mission grounds as pastor. In his first years at the parish, he said he was continually discovering new statues and shrines, which are "sprinkled throughout the property."

The historic church itself is his favorite spot on the grounds, of course, but another favorite is a Marian shrine on the west end of the campus.

"When you come on the grounds here, you're immediately struck by the history and the beauty of the surroundings," he said. "And then, when you ponder what has gone on here for some 250 years, it's very inspiring and edifying."

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407 New Units Offer Chance to Leave Streets

By Denis Grasska



After two years of construction, a 14-story affordable housing project in downtown San Diego has opened on schedule and on budget.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa, located at the corner of 14th and Commercial streets, represents the first new construction undertaken as part of Father Joe's Villages' Turning the Key initiative.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Feb. 10, with Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan blessing the new building. Residents were able to move into their new homes beginning in early January.

Deacon Jim Vargas, president and CEO of Father Joe's Villages, expects the building to be fully leased by the end of March.

Through its Turning the Key initiative, which was announced in early 2017, Father Joe's Villages set a goal of introducing 2,000 affordable housing units in San Diego through a combination of new construction and the acquisition and refurbishment of local motels.

In 2020, Father Joe's Villages purchased what had been an EZ-8 Motel in the Otay Mesa area and transformed it into Benson Place, an 83-unit affordable housing project.

With the opening of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa, the initiative is another 407 units closer to its goal.

One of those units is now home to Janos Szilagyi, 40, who spoke with *The Southern Cross* a few days before his Feb. 14 move-in date. He had been



MOVED IN: Joseph Fish and his daughter, Abigail, are among the residents of Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa.

homeless for four years.

"I tried finding help, but I didn't know where to go ... I was stuck, and I had no idea that there was help like this that was going to come my way," he said.

Szilagyi has been disabled since age 8, after being hit by a car. The accident left him with one functioning arm; he is unable to open his right hand. That disability made him even more vulnerable during his years of homelessness.

Of his new home, he said, "It means a lot to me. ... I'm just so glad that I'm finally going to get my own place."

Deacon Vargas recalled an encounter he had with two of the building's future residents while it was under construction. The deacon had been about to lead a tour of the site, when he was approached by an "elated" man and his daughter. The man shared that he and his daughter had been approved to live

at Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa.

"He told me that he was so happy that he would be able to provide a home, finally, for his daughter," said Deacon Vargas. "It more than warmed my heart. It brought tears to my eyes."

The majority of the units in the \$145-million high-rise are studio

New Units

Continued on Page 7

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OLP Student Selected for National Award

The Southern Cross



A senior at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace

was one of only 10 students nationwide and the only one in California to win the Youth Virtues, Valor, and Vision Award from the National Catholic Education Association.

The award is given annually to Catholic school students in the United States who, through their selfless service, innovation, and commitment to social justice, are changing the world.

According to OLP's website, Isabella Cubillas founded and serves as president of the Tijuana Sin Hambre (Tijuana Without Hunger) social justice club at OLP, which supports a local nonprofit focused on ending hunger in that city.

Isabella volunteered more than 785 hours in 2021, delivering food and home goods to low-income families living in Tijuana. The group has 60 members and has helped more than 20,000 Mexican residents.

"Isabella is a tremendous representative of (OLP's founders) the Sisters



AWARD-WINNERS: Left, OLP senior Isabella Cubillas, center, is pictured with Dr. Lauren Lek and Matthew Cordes; right, Cathedral Catholic junior Courtney Ralph is seen with Principal Marlena Conroy, Stacy Wells and Dr. Julie Cantillon.

of St. Joseph of Carondelet, living out their charism of unifying love and their mission that all may be one," said OLP's head of school, Dr. Lauren Lek. "We are grateful to her for being an example to all of us, and for carrying on their tradition beyond these walls; beyond, even, this country."

Matthew Cordes, associate director of the diocesan Office for Schools, presented the NCEA award to Isabella on Feb. 1, during the national observance of Catholic Schools Week.

Also during Catholic Schools Week, a local high school student received the annual San Diego Catholic Seton Award. Presented by the diocesan Of-



fice for Schools, the award is named after St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, patron saint of Catholic schools.

Each Catholic high school in San Diego and Imperial counties was invited to nominate two juniors who best exhibit the values of faith, excellence and service. The theme for Catholic Schools Week, which was observed this year from Jan. 30 to Feb. 5, is "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service."

The eight "distinguished nominees" from four local Catholic high schools each recorded a two-minute video via Flipgrid, sharing how they lived out one or more of the values. The com-

mittee selected one overall winner, Courtney Ralph of Cathedral Catholic High School.

Dr. Julie Cantillon, associate director of the Office for Schools, presented the award to Courtney on Feb. 15. Courtney received a certificate signed by Bishop Robert McElroy, a congratulatory letter from Schools Office Director John Galvan, and a \$500 college scholarship.

"Courtney is one of our most kind-hearted, genuine, respectful students," wrote Stacy Wells, dean of mission and ministry, in her nomination. "She lives her faith joyfully as Christ to others."

"An exceptional student," Courtney created a program to distribute Thanksgiving meals to families during the pandemic and is active in student government and campus ministry, Wells wrote.

The other nominees are: Esteban Murillo, Cathedral Catholic; Lora Frigerio and Morgan Pack, Academy of Our Lady of Peace; Nathaniel Kotnik and Jack Elgas, St. Augustine High School; and Margarita Alfaro and Maeve Hagarty, Mater Dei Catholic High School.

New Units

Continued from Page 6

apartments, but there are also 24 one-bedroom and 26 two-bedroom apartments. Eighty of them are designated for veterans and 270 for those with disabilities.

There is community space on each level of the building. There are also five outdoor gardens, including one where produce can be grown; a children's playground that boasts a view of the Coronado Bridge; pet-relief areas; and a large multi-purpose room that opens to a large barbeque area.

Residents also will have access to a host of comprehensive services offered by Father Joe's Villages, including those provided by its health center, employment and education services, and therapeutic childcare center.

"It's not just a matter of providing these homes," explained Deacon Vargas. "It's a matter of helping individuals to retain their homes."

Deacon Vargas said that Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa "fills a very real need within the community."

He explained that San Diego has the fifth-largest homeless population in the United States, and the average market-rate studio apartment here can range from \$1,500 to \$2,000.

When the Turning the Key initiative was first announced, he said, there were "naysayers" who thought the focus on affordable housing was "misguided," given the immediate need of taking people off the streets and how long it can take to create new affordable housing.

Deacon Vargas said that Father Joe's Villages continues to offer more homeless shelter beds than any other homeless services provider in the county and



NEW HOMES: Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa, located at the corner of 14th and Commercial streets, offers 407 units of affordable housing.

that creating affordable housing helps to free those beds for homeless individuals still sleeping on the streets.

"Housing is what breaks the cycle of homelessness," he said.

"At the end of the day, a shelter is not a home," explained Deacon Vargas. "A home is what we work towards, and that's what Saint Teresa of Calcutta (Villa) provides."

Deacon Vargas acknowledged that creating affordable housing does take time, noting that it took three years before ground was broken on Saint Teresa of Calcutta Villa and another two years of construction.

Future projects are currently in the works, although none of them are as large as the 14-story Saint Teresa of Cal-

cutta Villa, which is expected to house about 550 people at full capacity.

Plans for a second 14-story building, which was to be located at the intersection of 13th and Broadway and provide another 270 units of affordable housing, were abandoned after it was determined that the project would not be financially feasible.

Father Joe's Villages has identified four sites for new construction, as well as a few motels with potential to be refurbished. Each of these would provide between 80 and 120 new units of affordable housing.

Deacon Vargas said it will be a while before any of these are ready to welcome their first residents.

He estimates that it might be as long

as two years before ground is broken at the construction sites and perhaps another 12 to 18 months before construction is finished.

Similarly, Father Joe's Villages is still early in negotiations for purchasing the motels, he said. If those negotiations are successful, there will still be a yearlong capital campaign before the refurbishment can begin, meaning that it would probably be a minimum of two years before these units could be available.

But Deacon Vargas is undaunted by the lengthy process.

"It doesn't matter how long it will take. With God's help — always with God's help — we'll get this done, because we need to get it done. There's a dire need for it in the County of San Diego."



HOWARD LIPI

Universal Church Comes to Life

The beautiful mosaic that is the Catholic Church comes together in the diocese's fifth annual Pentecost Mass for All People on Saturday, June 4, at 11 a.m. at Cathedral Catholic High School. More than 25 cultural communities will share their faith traditions in this singular event. A festival follows the Mass, featuring fellowship, entertainment and food from around the world. Information: sdcatholic.org/pentecost or (858) 490-8306.

Powerful Volcano Eruption Devastated Life in Tonga

By Aida Bustos



The people who live in Tonga are wearing masks these days.

But it's not because of the COVID-19 virus.

"Tonga is the only place where people are wearing them because of the ash," said Lio Taulanga, the leader of the Tongan Catholic community in the Diocese of San Diego.

He recently shared details of what occurred in his homeland on Jan. 15, when an undersea volcano erupted with such power that its shock waves were felt around the world. The eruption triggered a tsunami that flattened homes on nearby islands, killing three people. And it spewed thick ash that blanketed the islands, ruining crops and damaging the water supply of the nation's 100,000 residents.

Taulanga was born on the island of Eua, one of the 169 islands that make up the nation, 36 of which are inhabited. His mother, three sisters and their children live on the island. He said they struggled to get drinking water in the days after the eruption.

"They had to drink coconut water" until relief workers arrived, bringing food and water.

The workers brought something else, COVID-19. Previously, there had been no cases of the virus on the islands, he said. Fortunately, the local population has a high vaccination rate, and most COVID cases were mild ones, he added.



Lio Taulanga

The eruption damaged an underwater cable that provided phone communication to the islands. He's had to keep in touch with his family through Facebook messages.

Taulanga plans to send supplies to his family members, but packages can take a month or more to reach them.

He estimated that 10 families make up the local Tongan Catholic community, one of the more than 20 cultural communities in the diocese. His home parish is St. Kieran's in El Cajon; other families are members of parishes across the San Diego region.

The Tongan families used to come together once a month, but the gatherings have been suspended due to the pandemic.

He was asked what his fellow Catholics could do to help his countrymen back home.

"Prayer is always good."

To donate to Catholic Relief Services, which is assisting the residents of Tonga, visit crs.org



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Young Adult Events Invite 'Return to the Lord'

By Denis Grasska

The diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry has planned a series of Lenten-themed events for Catholics ages 18 to 39.

First up is an installment of Theology on Tap, which will be held on Thursday, Feb. 24, less than a week before Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of the penitential season of Lent.

Next, on Saturday, March 5, the Young Adult Ministry Office will co-host a Lenten Pilgrim Walk from The Immaculata Parish in Linda Vista to St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach.

Pamela Poe, associate director of the Office for Young Adult Ministry, said that both events will be connected by a common theme, taken from the first reading at Ash Wednesday Mass.

"Even now, says the Lord, return to Me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God," the reading from the book of the prophet Joel begins.

"We're going to be focusing on returning to the Lord with our whole hearts this Lent," Poe said.

The Young Adult Ministry Office will



WALK OF FAITH: Young adults are invited to take part in a Lenten Pilgrim Walk from The Immaculata Parish to St. Brigid Parish on March 5. A similar event, along the same route, was held last June with about 35 young adults participating.

conclude its Lenten programming on Thursday, March 31, with "Abide," an evening of praise-and-worship music followed by a social.

Theology on Tap is a catechetical program that brings young adults together to enjoy food and fellowship and to listen to a talk by a Catholic speaker. The upcoming installment will run from 7 to 9 p.m. at St. Luke Parish in El Cajon. Admission is \$15, including drinks and tacos.

The speaker will be Beth Davis,

director of ministry advancement for Blessed is She, a ministry based in the Diocese of Phoenix.

Davis, who hosts a popular catechetical series on Instagram called "Teachable Tuesday," is "a phenomenal speaker," Poe said.

The Pilgrim Walk on March 5 will begin at 9 a.m., with registration, refreshments, and an opening prayer and reflection at The Immaculata Church. Participants will walk an almost 7-mile route to St. Brigid's, where there will be a closing prayer and reflection, as well as lunch.

The event will conclude around 2 p.m., and transportation back to The Immaculata will be provided. The cost to participate is \$20, which includes refreshments and lunch.

"Abide" is an initiative of the Office for Young Adult Ministry that began in 2018 and had been held monthly

before the start of the pandemic. Beginning with the March 31 installment, which will be held from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Therese of Carmel Parish in Carmel Valley, "Abide" will return as a quarterly event.

At "Abide," professional musicians lead participants through a series of praise-and-worship songs, punctuated by periods of prayerful silence. There is no cost to attend.

Reflecting on her office's Lenten events, Poe expressed hope that they might provide young adults with "a time of renewal."

"I would just pray that this Lent be a time where we really see that the Lord is our strength and that He is with us."

More information is available at sdccatholic.org/youngadult



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PHOTOS BY HOWARD LIPIN

GIFT: Adriana Grub, a professional chef, combines her Catholic faith with her culinary expertise to inspire families to prepare and eat meals together. She recently shared a fish recipe perfect for the Lenten season.

Chef's Passion Is to Nourish Body and Soul

By Iliana De Lara



"Food goes hand-in-hand with our religion."

That's how chef Adriana Grub explains the genesis of her Spanish-language radio program, "The Flavors of Faith," where she combines the lessons of the Holy Scriptures with recipes she shares with her audience.

"One day, I wondered what foods the Holy Family ate and thought how important it was for families to come together around meal times," she said. "Family unity is fundamental, and there is no better opportunity to harvest it than at the moment we prepare meals and sit at the table to eat them."



She began with the idea of writing a book, but life experiences led her to host the weekly program on Hombre Nuevo Radio, an online station that serves the local Latino Catholic community. That's how "Los Sabores de la Fe" came to life in 2018, which combines corporal nourishment with spiritual nourishment.

She plans the theme of each program according to the liturgical calendar.

"I see what festivities are coming up and I choose recipes accordingly."

As the Lenten season approaches, she shared a simple fish recipe that she said is perfect for a family

to prepare while conversing about the life of Jesus.

Grub was born to a Catholic family in Mexico City. She began trying her hand in the kitchen when she was 6 years old, alongside her mother and grandmother, who taught her to prepare everything from tasty rice to exquisite cakes. By age 10, she was in charge of the traditional holiday turkey meal, she said, complete with traditional stuffing she helped her mother prepare.

These foundational experiences inspired her to share the beauty of cooking as a family.

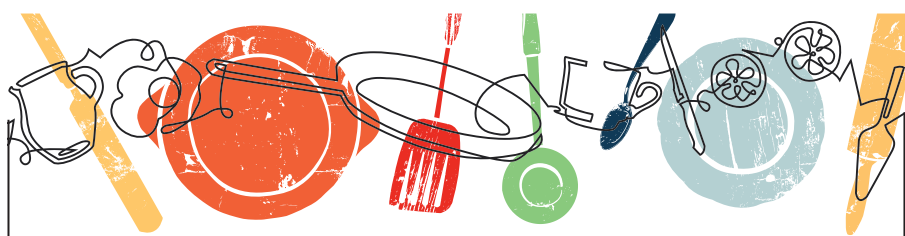
"We're losing family unity due in large part to being so rushed to do so many things," she said. "We just don't make time to sit together at the table."

"That's why, with each recipe that I share, I invite families to come together to prepare it, set the table, say a prayer, chat during the meal and then do clean-up together like the team that they are."

Her show is streamed on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. through the Facebook page of Hombre Nuevo Radio.

The station is a Catholic, nonprofit organization that aims to give Christ and the Church a strong voice in the media. Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano serves as the spiritual director of the apostolate.

In addition to sharing a recipe every week, she features a guest who chats with her about a timely topic in the faith. And she invites audience members



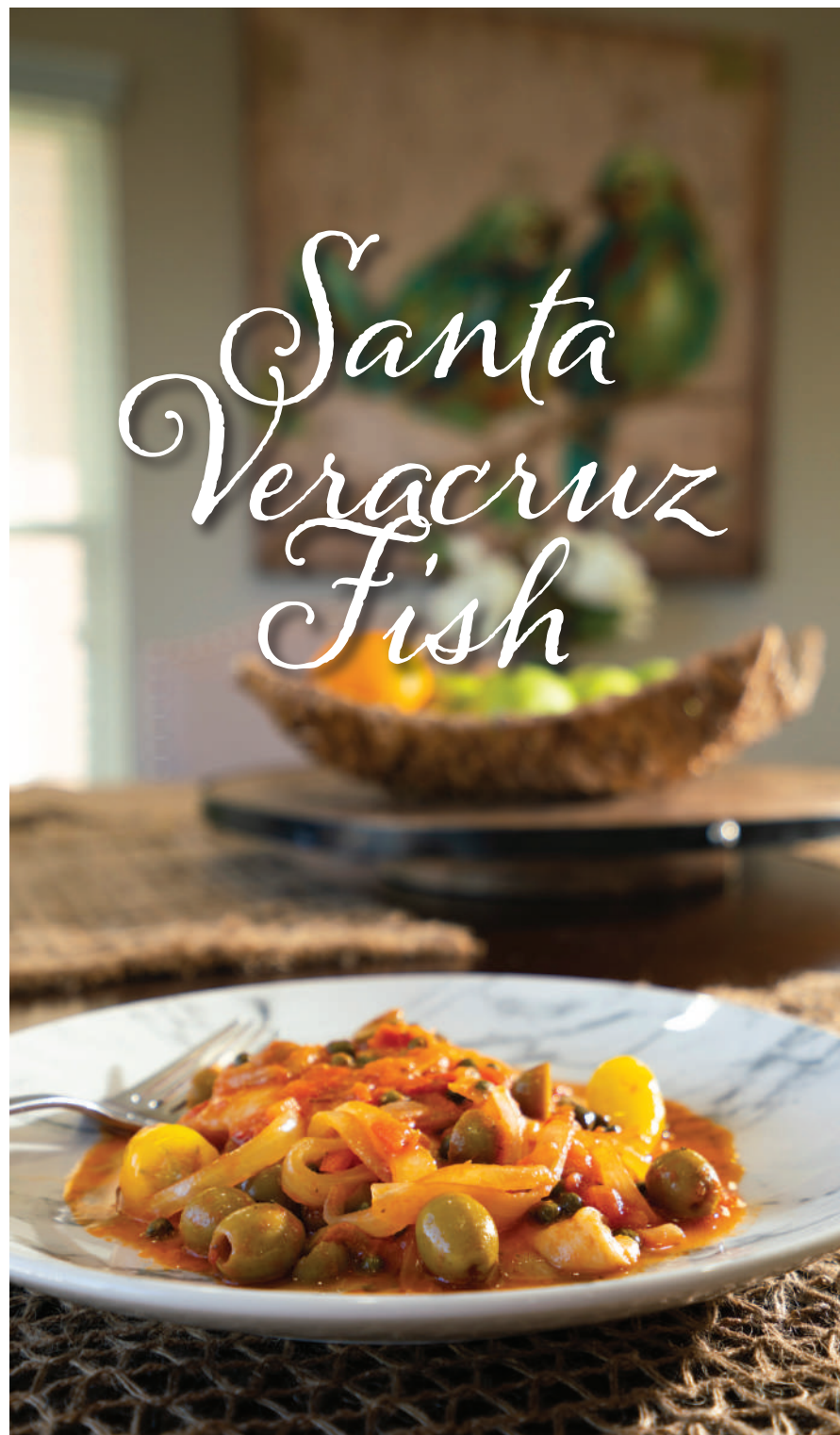
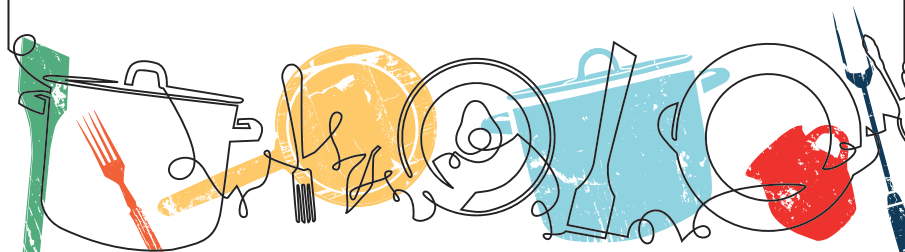
Santa Veracruz Fish

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 fillets of white fish
- 1 onion, sliced in half rings
- 4 tablespoons of Roma tomatoes, chopped without skin
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 cup of capers
- 1 tablespoon of green olives, chopped in half
- 1 tablespoon of parsley
- 1 can of chiles güeros
- 3 tablespoons of olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat the olive oil in a large pan. Cook the onion and garlic until they are transparent.
2. Add the tomato. Cook for 10 minutes or until it starts to fall apart.
3. Add the parsley, capers, olives and chiles güeros. Add salt and pepper to taste and turn down the heat to simmer.
4. Add the fillet of fish to the simmering salsa. Cover the pan and cook for 10 minutes.
5. Serve with a side of white rice.



You may cut along the dotted line to save this recipe.



to send in their personal petitions to present before the Blessed Sacrament.

For the upcoming liturgical season, the chef shared a recipe for fish served Veracruz-style, perfect for a Friday meal during Lent.

Fish has been recognized a Christian symbol since the earliest days of the Church. Scripture tells us of Jesus' miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes (John 6:30-40) and how He instructed Peter and his brother, Andrew, to "Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

She sums up her goal for her work this way:

"To continue to spread love, hope and charity for my neighbor with my culinary skills as well as the Word of the Lord."

The Spanish-language program "Los Sabores de la Fe" is transmitted on Wednesdays at 12:30 p.m. through the Facebook page of Hombre Nuevo Radio. The station is found online at hombrenuevo.com



Return to Dust, Return to Normalcy



This Ash Wednesday, when Catholics are reminded that “to dust (they) shall return,” they will also experience a return to normalcy.

The Diocese of San Diego has announced that clergy may once again use the traditional method of imposing ashes with the thumb, “with due consideration for members of the faithful who may have personal concerns.”

It will be left to pastors’ discretion whether they continue last year’s COVID-friendly method of applying ashes to the foreheads of the faithful with individual cotton swabs. Unlike last year, that approach is no longer mandatory.

“We have a renewed sense of hope as we are returning to celebrate liturgies again with our worshipping community, with the rituals that we have grown to embrace as part of our Catholic tradition of faith,” said Noreen McInnes, director of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality.

And there’s something about the personal touch of the priest’s thumb tracing the sign of the cross, without the barrier of the swab.

“Jesus encountered the sick with His healing touch,” said McInnes. “The Catholic Church continues His ministry today through the administration of sacraments and sacramentals, imposed in a hands-on manner.”

Parishes and ministries will host events to mark the Lenten season. The following is a sampling of them.

Lenten Series Features Talks, Exhibits in La Mesa

St. Martin of Tours Parish in La Mesa and Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado will be hosting a Lenten series of free presentations and exhibits.

At St. Martin of Tours, the Faith Based Communications apostolate will present three in-person talks in the parish hall: “Sacred Cloths of the Passion,” “Life After Life” and “Eucharistic Miracles.”

“Sacred Cloths of the Passion” will be offered on Wednesday, March 23, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., and again at 9:15 a.m. the next day. “Life After Life,” on near-death experiences, will be pre-



CNS PHOTO SAN LUCERO, THE COMPASS

sented on Thursday, March 24, from 6:30 to 8 p.m., and again on, Friday, March 25, at 9:15 a.m. “Eucharistic Miracles,” highlighting historical instances when the bread and wine at Mass have physically changed into human flesh and blood, will be presented on Saturday, March 26, from 3 to 4:30 p.m., and repeated twice on Sunday, March 27, from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:15 to 1:30 p.m.

Also, on Thursday, March 24, a relic of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, also known as “Padre Pio,” will be displayed for veneration in the church, from 10:15 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information on the preceding events, email lisaz@saintmartinofstours.cc or call (619) 698-8434.

Sacred Heart Parish will host the “Sacred Cloths” exhibit from 1 to 6 p.m., Friday, April 1; there will be a presentation at 7:15 p.m., after Stations of the Cross.

On Saturday, April 2, there will be three “Eucharistic Miracles” presentations: 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.; the exhibit will be open between presentations. The following day, the exhibit will be open from 8:30 to 11 a.m., with the presentation at 12:15 p.m.

For more information on Sacred Heart’s events, call (619) 435-3167.

Lenten Reflection to Focus on Redemptive Suffering

Whispering Winds Women’s Auxiliary is hosting a Lenten reflection, led

by author Cyndi Peterson.

Peterson’s presentation will focus on the concept of redemptive suffering. It will take place from 7 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, March 9, in Mission San Diego de Alcalá Parish’s St. Francis Chapel. It will be preceded by a social at 6:30 p.m.

There is no cost to attend. All are welcome. RSVP is requested.

For more information, email Judy Lemm at Judylemm@cox.net.

Free Retreat Reflects on ‘Spirituality of Creation Care’

“The Spirituality of Creation Care,” a free retreat in English and Spanish, will be offered as a Lenten spiritual exercise on Saturday, March 26, at St. James Parish in Solana Beach. It can also be attended virtually.

Sponsored by the Creation Care Ministry of the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, the three-hour retreat will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will reflect on the moral and spiritual challenges of our stewardship of the gifts of creation, as presented by Pope Francis in his encyclical “Laudato Si’ (On Care for Our Common Home).” It will be based on Chapters II and VI of the encyclical.

Three short presentations will be offered in-person, virtually and simultaneously in English and Spanish. Robert Gilleskie and Patricia Grace will give presentations in English; Father Emmet Farrell, director of Creation Care Ministry, will deliver the Spanish presentation.

Register at sdcatholic.org/event/the-spirituality-of-creation-care.

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Book Shares Family's 'Upward Journey to God'

By Denis Grasska



Many people mistakenly see aging and dying as “a downward spiral.”

But when viewed through the lens of faith, this process can be seen far differently, said Noreen McInnes, director of the diocese's Office for Liturgy and Spirituality.

“It's instead an upward journey home to God. We are comforted ... when we invite God into our suffering through the sacraments, liturgy and prayer.”

She has written a book that explores this journey, “Keep at It, Riley!,” which will be published by New City Press on St. Patrick's Day, March 17.

She says that hers is not “a dry book on liturgy.”

Instead, “you'll laugh and you'll cry your way through this true-life story.”

The book is subtitled “Accompanying my Father through Death into Life.”

McInnes holds a master's degree in Theology from the University of Notre Dame and a Doctor of Ministry from The Catholic University of America. She has served in the diocese's Liturgy Office for 10 years and has been its director since 2014.

She describes her book as the “story of how Catholic faith accompanied my family through the sickness and death of my elderly parents.”

She uses her own experiences to reflect on the Catholic Church's teachings about the dignity of life, the pastoral care of the sick, and the power of the sacraments.

Drawing from her family's Irish heritage, McInnes also weaves in stories about the challenges previous generations of her family faced in Ireland and as immigrants in Pennsylvania, along with prayers and accounts from the lives of Irish saints like St. Patrick and St. Brigid.

The book's title comes from McInnes' unofficial family motto, a motivational phrase used by her fa-

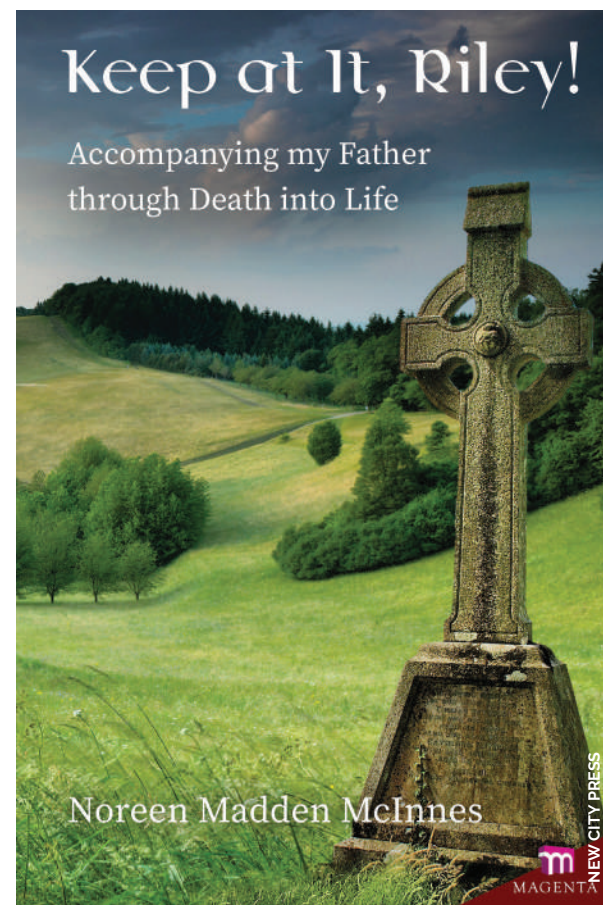


FIRST-TIME AUTHOR: Noreen McInnes, director of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality, is the author of “Keep at It, Riley!” It will be published March 17.

ther and grandfather to encourage perseverance in the midst of trials. It was an attitude that she saw her father live out during his final months.

Bishop Robert McElroy and Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan are among the Church leaders who have written endorsements for the book.

Bishop McElroy wrote that McInnes' “mastery of the Church's liturgical theology is constantly embedded within the profoundly human realities that form



the sacramental nature of our life on this earth.”

Bishop Dolan compared the book to “an Irish sweater woven with sacraments, Irish spirituality, and family stories.”

“McInnes's life experiences shed light on the value of Catholic ritual in real time,” wrote Bishop Dolan. “A great read!”

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Jubilarians Mark Lifetime of Service

COURTESY SISTER M. CZESTOCHOWA KACZOR

A KISS FOR CHRIST: Sister M. Czestochowa Kaczor kisses her mission crucifix, held to her lips by Mother Teresa, on Dec. 12, 1985, when she made her perpetual vows as a Missionary of Charity. The future St. Teresa of Calcutta then tucked in the crucifix at Sister Czestochowa's waist, where she will wear it until death.



Seven religious sisters in the Diocese of San Diego are celebrating significant anniversaries (jubilees) of consecrated life.

Bishop Robert McElroy will honor them during the annual Sisters Appreciation and Jubilee Celebration, which will be held March 12 at the diocesan Pastoral Center. Also recognized will be the 10 jubilarians from last year, when the event was held virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The annual event, which includes a Mass and luncheon, recognizes the presence and ministry of the 184 religious sisters who reside in the Diocese of San Diego.

"It is a true joy to anticipate an in-person celebration this year with our bishops and sisters," said Sister Kathy Warren, OSF, diocesan Vicar for Religious Women. "What a delight to come together to share the gift of presence, joy in our vocation and the faithfulness of God."

The following are profiles of this year's jubilarians.

75 Years



Sister M. Czestochowa Kaczor, MC, was born to Polish parents in Omaha, Neb., the ninth of their 10 children.

By the third grade, she already knew that she would be a nun.

At age 16, she entered the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Help in St. Louis, Mo. Taking the name "Sister Anita," she professed her first vows on Aug. 12, 1947. For the next 38 years, she taught Catholic elementary school students.

In 1982, she read a newspaper article about Mother Teresa of Calcutta and felt an attraction for Mother Teresa's simplicity of life. She wrote to the Missionaries of Charity sisters in the Bronx, N.Y., and attended a "come-and-see" experience to learn more about the community. There, she spoke with Mother Teresa and received permission to join the Missionaries of Charity's contemplative branch.

She entered the Missionaries of Charity in July 1982 and made her perpetual vows on Dec. 12, 1985. Because of her Polish heritage, she was given the name "Sister Czestochowa," after the famous icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland.

Sister Czestochowa has been assigned to various mission houses in the East and West Coast Regions, including in New York, Pennsylvania and California, as well as in Washington, D.C., and Tijuana, Mexico. She has served as a formator for young sisters and twice as a superior of local communities.

She has lived in San Diego since 2012.

As both a Franciscan Sister and a Missionary of Charity, Sister Czestochowa said she has most enjoyed the prayer life as well as recreation time with her community.

Sister Czestochowa, who turned 94 in February, said she "thanks God every morning for my life and all God's gifts" and prays every night that, when this life is over, she will experience eternal life in God's presence.

60 Years



Sister Teresa Gomez, HMSS, is a Mercedarian Sister of the Blessed Sacrament.

Born in Corpus Christi, Texas, she grew up in San Diego. In her youth, she attended Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Barrio Logan, where she witnessed firsthand the needs of her community — the poor, the lonely, migrants and the underprivileged — as well as the sad reality of racism.

Sister Teresa said God used these experiences "to entice me into His Service."

For her senior yearbook, she was asked to share her plans for life after high school graduation. While fellow classmates revealed their intention to attend college or expressed hopes of getting married, she wrote that she was going to be a nun.

"Who would have thought that, 60 years later, I have been living my dream? Who would have thought that this marvelous adventure has not stopped?" she said.

Sister Teresa has served in a wide variety of ministries, including as a Catholic school teacher, in religious education, as a diocesan director of Hispanic ministry, in music ministry, and in various leadership roles in her congregation.

"Would I give any of them up? Are you kidding? This is for life and just seeing so many of our kids, now grown up and serving in so many ministries — even as priests and religious — one cannot but give thanks to Our Lord for having used me as His servant."



Sister Mary Jane Kenney, SMSM, entered the Marist Missionary Sisters on Oct. 7, 1959, in Lowell, Mass., and made her first profession on March 9, 1962, at Bedford, Mass., and her final profession on March 9, 1968, in Sydney, Australia.

Sister Mary Jane is a Family Nurse Practitioner and has a master's degree in Social Work. In addition to serving in formation and leadership within her congregation in the United States, she has also ministered abroad.

From 1968 to 1979, she was assigned to Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, where she served as a nurse at a remote health center. From 1988 to 1992, she served again in Bougainville as a community coordinator of women's training programs and also spent time in the Pacific island nation of Kiribati, where she researched social problems on behalf of the Kiribati government.

From 1981 to 1987 and again from 1994 through 2001, she served in the United States in leadership roles for her congregation. In November 2001, she was elected to the congregation's General Council in Rome.

In 2009, Sister Mary Jane was assigned to California, where she ministered as the chaplain at Martha's Village and Kitchen in Indio. Since March 2020, she has been assigned to Mary's Guest House in Chula Vista, where she ministers with another sister at a shelter for female victims of human trafficking.



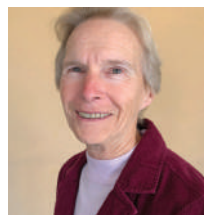
Originally from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, **Sister Christina MacLean, SMSM**, entered the Marist Missionary Sisters on Oct. 7, 1959, in Lowell, Mass.

She took her first vows in Bedford, Mass., in 1962, and her perpetual vows in Callao, Peru, in 1968.

Her six decades in religious life have included ministry in teaching, formation, leadership within her congregation, and accompanying others through retreats and counseling.

She recalls a favorite Scripture passage: "Glory be to Him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20).

"These ministries have taken me to places I had never heard of, and I have encountered the face of God and experienced God's love in a magnificent tapestry of people, places, and circumstances," she said. "For this incredible journey of 60 years, I give thanks and glory to God, my family, community, friends and all who have inspired and supported me through the many graces and challenges of these years."

Jubilarians — *Continued from Page 14***50 Years**

Sister Mary Dietz, SSND, professed her first vows with the School Sisters of Notre Dame on Jan. 9, 1972, in her hometown of St. Louis, Mo.

During the next 40 years, she taught every grade level from kindergarten in Nepal and elementary grades in the Midwest, to high school in West Africa and university classes in California.

Because of her missionary experience, she was assigned to direct the mission development office of her congregation and later worked with the Missionary Childhood Association in the San Diego Diocese's Office for the Missions. She left that position to become director of the Missions Office in the Diocese of Orange. Today, she continues her missionary support through mission appeals each year in the San Diego and Orange dioceses and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Currently residing in San Diego, Sister Mary is establishing a U.S. archives for the Sisters of Nazareth. Having Master Catechist credentials from the Belleville Diocese in Illinois, she also makes herself available for parish speaking engagements, retreats and spiritual direction.



Sister Mary Dietz, SSND

COURTESY OFFICE FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS

After 50 years of vowed life, Sister Mary treasures her future as “this disciple who testifies to these (works of God) and has written them, and we know that (her) testimony is true” (John 21:24).



Sister Guadalupe Valdez, SSND, is a San Diego native. She is an alumna of Our Lady of Guadalupe School, St. Jude Academy, Regina Coeli Academy and the Academy of Our Lady of Peace.

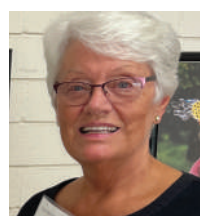
She entered the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1969 and professed first vows in 1972, in St. Louis, Mo.

After receiving a bachelor's degree in American Studies from the former Notre Dame College, St. Louis, in 1973, she returned to San Diego and taught primary grades for seven years at Holy Family School, St. Jude Academy and St. Rita School. She was then missioned to teach in St. Louis for two years before returning to California.

Sister Guadalupe spent the next 30 years in schools in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. There, she taught at the elementary and secondary levels. She also served as an academic counselor at two high schools.

In 2013, she returned to San Diego while serving as co-director of the Associates of the School Sisters of Notre Dame Central Pacific Province.

“I am grateful for my years in SSND, where I have been challenged, stretched, mentored, supported and encouraged to trust in my gifts and abilities,” she said. “The people I have lived, served and ministered with these years have all blessed my life.”



Sister Anne Wentz, RSCJ, has been a member of the Society of the Sacred Heart since 1969.

After teaching in Lake Forest, Ill., Sister Anne earned a Master of Divinity and accepted a position at Loyola University Chicago as a university chaplain and an instructor in Women's Studies and Theology from 1976 to 1983.

After completing her training at the Jesuit Spirituality Center in Ohio, she worked on the staff briefly before enrolling in the Doctor of Ministry program in Pastoral Psychotherapy in Evanston, Ill.

She did her residency at Lutheran General Hospital and joined the Pastoral Counseling Center there from 1984 to 2015, with an outreach office with the churches in the northern suburbs of Chicago.

In 2004, Sister Anne joined the Spiritual Ministry Center in San Diego, offering workshops, retreats, spiritual direction and pastoral counseling.

Since 2015, she has become more active with the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, assisting retired and semi-retired members to share their expertise in a variety of opportunities, to meet monthly for shared reading, reflection, prayer and community.

“I have valued the call to trust the Spirit in my life and our world, to join others in seeking compassion and a better world for all,” said Sister Anne.

See photo gallery of jubilarians at
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By Denis Grasska



Father Cavanaugh Wallace is the pastor of St. Therese Parish in Del Cerro.

Pastor of St. Therese Parish in Del Cerro

Father Cavanaugh Wallace



Born in Antrim, Northern Ireland, he attended seminaries in both Ireland and San Diego.

Father Wallace, 55, was ordained for the Diocese of San Diego on March 19, 1992. Before becoming pastor of St. Therese Parish last July, he had served for 20 years as pastor of St. Margaret Parish in Oceanside.

Question: What was your experience of Catholicism during your formative years?

Answer: My maternal grandparents had a deep spiritual influence upon me. “Granda” was a fireman and bricklayer, the strong and silent type; after a long day’s work, he would always kneel before the picture of the Sacred Heart and pray the rosary in silence. “Granny” would take me to daily Mass and afterwards explain to me the biblical stories depicted in the stained-glass windows.

As a teenager, these images became real when I visited Israel.

Whether it be the Holy Land or County Antrim, I seemed to sense an unbroken continuity between the past and the present. That’s probably why St. Paul’s words echo deeply with me that “Christ is the same yesterday and today” (Hebrews 13:8).

When did you first recognize a call to the priesthood?

From age 10 until 18, I attended a diocesan boarding school run by priests. It was almost like a seminary. The priests were very much like fathers to us — true fathers — because we were separated from our homes.

I often thought of being a priest like them. But what clinched it for me was when my father went to Israel as a contract worker in the mid-1980s and I spent my summers with him. I got to visit all the sites — Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Nazareth — and went backpacking around the Holy Land.

I found work at a hospice in Jerusalem. It was a difficult job for a 17-year-old; death and suffering were all around. The place I ran to in the midst of that was the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built at the site of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. There, I was able to understand that suffering is necessary, but it has to be sacrificial. Through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and through the experiences I had working in hospice, I developed a sense of what priesthood truly was.

I knew that I needed to give my life for something. I needed to make a sacrifice. A vocation isn’t a job or a career; it resonates with who you truly are and why you came into existence. I could never be anything other than a priest of Jesus Christ.

How did you come to serve in San Diego instead of Ireland?

At first, it seemed natural that I would become a priest of my home diocese. There was no thought of becoming a missionary.

But St. Patrick’s College in Maynooth was, at that time, one of the biggest seminaries in the world. I encountered fellow seminarians who

were with religious orders or preparing to be missionaries. The seminary was like an international airport, and I was being exposed to the whole big Church throughout the world.

After a few years in the local seminary, I reached a point where I felt I had to leave Ireland and go as far away as I could. I transferred to St. Francis Seminary in San Diego that next year. I saw the great need for priests in San Diego, while there were already so many priests back at home, so I opted to stay here.

Growing up in Ireland, what did St. Patrick mean to you?

The hill of Slemish in County Antrim was a local landmark, a few miles from home. That’s where the young St. Patrick was abandoned when he was kidnapped from across the Irish Sea. I went to school in the Glens of Antrim, where Patrick’s first converts would cross the narrow channel to Scotland as missionaries. And of course, the local parish was founded by St. Patrick himself in 454 A.D.

All these local associations fired my imagination from an early age.

When you walk among the old sites, there’s something more than history. The stones speak. You’re in tune with what the early saints experienced in the rugged environment around them, because the landscape hasn’t changed in 1,500 years. You’re walking on the same ground, looking at the same sights. Even some of the ancient trees are still there. You get a sense of the eternal.

Here in San Diego, I try to hide during St. Patrick’s Day because, for me, it’s a personal and very spiritual day. It’s one that goes deep in my roots, and I don’t want to turn the flesh-and-blood Patrick into a plastic “Paddy” or an excuse just to have fun

as we do here.

How often do you return home?

The last time was to bury my father, which was about eight years ago. I haven’t visited home regularly. More often, my family has come here instead. Of course, it’s been difficult recently because of COVID-related restrictions on travel, but I hope to get home this summer. It’ll be the first time in quite a while, and I look forward to it.

But, in a certain sense, San Diego is home now. I’ve lived here longer than anywhere else in my life. When I go back to Ireland, they say, “Here comes the Yank.” They even think I speak with an American twang.

How does present-day Ireland compare with the Ireland of your youth?

Of course, the economic and political landscape has changed completely since I first left home when I was 20 years old.

At present, the Church in Ireland as an institution has understandably lost much influence and even relevance in the lives of many. But the natural landscape, untouched except by God, still retains a spiritual language, one in which St. Patrick discovered the divine, his own vocation and mission in life.

The next time I go home and climb the hill of Slemish, I hope that there won’t be any signal on my phone! Maybe then I can sit down and enjoy a good heart-to-heart conversation with my own pilgrim companion, while taking in the power and glory of all of God’s creation around me.

Read Father Wallace’s homilies on his blog, printedaspreaded.blogspot.com





Self-Defense or Exploration: What Road to Take?



"Count to 10 before responding," is a simple, common-sense way to avoid immediate reactions that could have grave consequences in a relationship.

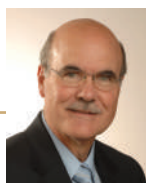
When we respond to some dispute without thinking, it's like throwing fuel on the fire; it's tough to put out and tougher to heal the wounds caused.

In these times of conflicting opinions over vaccines, climate change and immigration, among other issues, it's worth taking stock of our personal reactions to people who don't think or feel like we do. The decision of how we will react to them is in our hands, how we will consciously exercise our personal will. It's not the "other" who provokes our rage; no one has that power unless we give it to him.

Pope Francis is deeply aware of the disagreements between communities, of the threat of war, of the polarization within our society and within our Church. In response, he's inviting us to begin a process of encountering one another in a gathering called a "synod." It's an opportunity to listen to each other and to find common ground on matters important to us.

**Associate Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality**

**Ricardo
Márquez**



(In the Diocese of San Diego, the synod begins in March, with small-group sessions at parishes.)

The pope is inviting us to gather and to "speak from the heart" and "listen from the heart," coming together as one community, as one People of God, to decide what path to take to avoid violence, social inequality, and indeed self-destruction. And, at the same time, he's inviting us to decide what path to take to promote understanding, justice, and care for our common home, our planet.

We can benefit from this "synodal" experience if we do some personal preparation. This ensures that the interactions will flow better.

It's recommended that we spend a few moments before these encounters in silence and prayer, aligning ourselves with the Holy Spirit. We need to recognize that we're not coming together to impose our ideas and opin-

ions, nor debate the views of others, rather to discover what's better and more just for the community, society and our pilgrim Church in the middle of these divisive times.

That's listening to the "voice of the Spirit," which guides us and moves us toward what is important.

In this "synodal" process, we have to be prepared to listen to a wide variety of emotions. Creating a space for trust, confidentiality and respect will enable individuals to express their pain and resentment if they have felt excluded or hurt. Some will demand a return to the past, with its traditions that made them feel safe and protected; others will urge us to leave our comfort zones and take a risk by being open to change.

It will not be an easy dialogue; differences will emerge that divide us; similarly, gifts will emerge that unite us as we pursue the mission entrusted to us: "Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

In this dialogue, we can choose the road that makes us defensive about our opinions, or the road that explores what the other said and why he might have said it. The road to self-defense will deepen our differences, the road to exploration allows us to empathize

and discover common ground over which we can build together.

What road to choose?

It's a personal decision that we can consciously cultivate starting now, like sending oneself an internal message that prepares us for this process: "I didn't come here with the intention of imposing my will or to convince you of anything, rather to explore and discover what's best for the glory of God." This is a way to respond consciously to the love of God we experience in our lives.

This is nothing new; it's a new invitation to return to the fundamentals of Jesus' message. When we get lost on a hike, the recommendation is to return to base camp. That's the intention of all of this synodal process: to invite participants to return to being a community that prays, to listen to and be inspired by Jesus' words and the celebration of the Eucharist, and to serve the community in His name to promote justice and fraternity.

Register at your parish to participate in the synod. The web page sdcatholic.org/synod provides more information about it.



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

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News Briefs

Men Invited to 'Explore' Priestly Vocation

The Diocese of San Diego is hosting an "Explorer Day" for those men who are interested in exploring a possible vocation to the priesthood.

The event will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, March 19. It will be held at St. Francis Center, located on the campus of the University of San Diego.

Registration forms are available at your parish office.

For more information, call Father Lauro Minimo at (619) 291-7446.

Workshop to Help Parishes Foster 'Missionary Discipleship'

An upcoming workshop will focus on how parishes can think of themselves in new ways and better invite, engage and involve Catholics as missionary disciples.

Paulist Father Frank DeSiano will present "Today's Parish: Community of Missionary Disciples" on Saturday, March 26, at St. Michael Parish in Poway. The workshop will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Father DeSiano is the president of Paulist Evangelization Ministries. He served as a consultant for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Evangelization for more than a dozen years. He also frequently travels across the country to give presentations on evangelization topics at national, diocesan and parish gatherings. The cost to attend the workshop is \$20 per person; four or more people from the same parish qualify for the "group discount" rate of \$15 per person. Registration will be open soon.

For more information, call (858) 490-8232 or email CArias@sdccatholic.org.

Upcoming Retreat Offers After-Abortion Healing

Catholic men and women wounded by abortion are invited to an upcoming retreat hosted by A Time for Mercy/Rachel's Vineyard.

The retreat will be held from Friday, March 11, through Sunday, March 13.

For more information or to sign up, visit atimeformercy.org, call (951) 325-7702 or email RVTemecula@verizon.net.

Notre Dame Club Hosts Events Yearlong

The Notre Dame Club of San Diego's history spans as far back as 1948.

Since then, the alumni club has expanded to include alumni, their family, friends, and fans of the University of Notre Dame — all 4,715 of them from San Diego.

Like the other 266 Notre Dame Clubs around the world overseen by their Alumni Association, the San Diego Club's mission revolves around the "6 C's": camaraderie, community service, Catholic mission, current students, continuing education, and career connections.

Every year, the club hosts a slew of events in the local community with the goal of being a "Force for Good." Its whole fall season revolves around its "Season of Service," with community partners such as Nativity Prep Academy, Casa de los Pobres, Father Joe's Villages, Operation Dress Code, and the Camp Pendleton Warrior Warehouse.

More information about the Notre Dame Club and its year-round programming can be found on its website, sandiego.undclub.org, and Facebook page facebook.com/ndsandiego.

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.



The spring campaign for 40 Days for Life will run from March 2 through April 10.

Undertaken on the same dates in communities around the world, the 40 Days for Life campaign is an effort to protect the unborn through prayer and fasting, community outreach, and peaceful all-day vigils in front of abortion clinics.

The centerpiece of the campaign is a 40-day, round-the-clock prayer vigil on the public sidewalk outside of an abortion clinic. Locally, such vigils will be taking place at several locations, including the College Area, downtown San Diego, Mira Mesa, El Cajon, Escondido, Vista, South Bay and the Imperial Valley.

Similar vigils will be happening in hundreds of cities throughout the world, including 50 locations in California this year. More than 20,000 babies have been saved and more than 100 abortion centers closed since 40 Days for Life started in 2007, according to the organization.

Before the start of this year's spring campaign, commissioning Masses were celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano on Feb. 6 at St. Mary Parish in Escondido and Feb. 13 at St. John of the Cross Parish in Lemon Grove.

Learn more about 40 Days for Life and sign up for vigil hours at sdccatholic.org/event/40-days-for-life.

Catholics Can 'Encounter' Jesus Throughout 2022

"Encounter," a Spirit-filled evening of inspiring music, prayer and Eucharistic adoration, is held on the second Friday of each month at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Rancho Penasquitos. Sponsored by the parish's Hearts of Fire Ministry, the event runs from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Upcoming dates in 2022 include: March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, Aug. 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14, Nov. 11 and Dec. 9.

For more information, email olmcheartsoffire@gmail.com.

Are You a Catholic Mom Who Likes Catholic Books?

The Moms' Catholic Book Study, formerly known as the Moms' Bible Study, has been going strong for more than 25 years.

In addition to spiritual reading, the group also offers fellowship and has produced long-lasting friendships.

The group meets at 10 a.m., every Wednesday during the school year, at St. Mary Magdalene Parish.

For more information, visit momscatholicbookstudy.weebly.com.

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For more information or to get involved, visit streetevangelization.com, call (619) 515-3267 or email scb@procopio.com.

Priest Assignments

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

Father Samuel Offurum has been assigned as hospital chaplain at Sharp Chula Vista Medical Center and Paradise Valley Hospital, with assistance at Scripps Mercy Hospitals, in residence at St. Rita Parish, effective March 1.

Father Dominic Obour will serve as hospital chaplain at Tri-City Medical Center and Palomar Hospital, in residence at St. Michael Parish in Poway, effective March 1.

Father Romeo Smith has been assigned as hospital chaplain at UCSD Thornton Hospital, with assistance at Scripps Green and Scripps Memorial hospitals, in residence at All Hallows Parish in La Jolla, effective July 1.



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Parishes Commit to 'Caring for the Whole Person'

MARIA VALENCIA

Among the 400 people who attended a diocesan Mass on Feb. 12 in observance of World Day of the Sick were 40 parish leaders of the Caring for the Whole Person initiative.

Developed in 2017, it's a statewide initiative of California's bishops and Catholic healthcare system that equips parishes to serve the sick and dying with support and referrals to community resources. The Church's response to a societal push for physician-assisted suicide, this initiative is not a new ministry, but rather a way of helping parishes to better carry out their existing ministries to those at the end of life.

In the Diocese of San Diego, more than a dozen local parishes have implemented the initiative, including Mission San Diego de Alcalá, The Immaculata, Sacred Heart (San Diego), San Rafael, St. Francis of Assisi (Vista), Our Lady of Guadalupe (Chula Vista), St. Mark (San Marcos), Ascension, St. Brigid, St. Elizabeth Seton (Carlsbad), St. Vincent de Paul, and Immaculate Heart of Mary (Ramona) parishes.

At the World Day of the Sick Mass, Caring for the Whole Person parish leaders received a special blessing and a pin to recognize their implementation of the program. The Mass, which was held at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa, was celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan, with seven concelebrating priests.

"I am very proud of those active parish leaders for saying 'yes' to God's call, persevering in their beliefs, and being authentic witnesses of life," said Maria Valencia, who oversees Culture of Life ministry in the diocese.

She said that some parishes are already offering information sessions and workshops on Catholic Church teaching on the end of life and advance care directives to educate their communities. Others are directly serving families who face the chronic illnesses of their loved ones.

"For all of these, we give thanks to God and celebrate," she said.

For more information, contact Maria Valencia at (858) 490-8323 or mvalencia@sdccatholic.org.



MARIA VALENCIA



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