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Elevated to Cardinal

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HISTORIC: Cardinal-designate Robert McElroy will become a member of the College of Cardinals on Aug. 27 in Rome. He's pictured at the fifth annual Pentecost Mass for All Peoples on June 4 at Cathedral Catholic High School, where more than 2,000 gave him a joyous welcome.



Bound for Phoenix

Pope names Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan to lead growing Arizona diocese. **Page 2**



Tops in Their Class

Diocese honors the work of 63 educators at Catholic Educators' Awards Presentation. **Page 6**



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Getting old offers new world of opportunities and blessings for everyone. **Pages 13-15**

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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.

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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.



Bishop to Lead Phoenix Diocese

By Denis Grasska



Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan of San Diego turned 60 years old on June 8.

But arguably the best birthday present he received this year arrived three days earlier, on Pentecost Sunday, when the papal nuncio called him with important news: Pope Francis wanted to make him the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix.

"On that feast of Pentecost, I said yes," Bishop Dolan said during a press conference June 10 in Phoenix. "And now, relying on the breath and strength of the same Holy Spirit who came down upon the Apostles, I ask Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patroness of the Diocese of Phoenix, to help me to continue to say yes to the Lord as your new bishop."

A lifelong San Diegan, Bishop Dolan noted that the people of his home diocese "will always have a place in my heart." Noting the change of scenery from coastal California to the Arizona desert, he acknowledged that he will "have to make some adjustments." Among them, he joked, he will probably get rid of his coats and take to wearing shorts.

Bishop Dolan served as auxiliary bishop of San Diego for five years. In Phoenix, he succeeds Bishop Thomas Olmsted, 75, who led that diocese for more than 18 years and has reached the age at which bishops submit their resignations to the pope.

Phoenix is the fifth-largest city in the United States and, under Bishop Olmsted's leadership, has been a growing diocese.

At the press conference, Bishop Olmsted described his successor as "one of the most respected priests of the Diocese of San Diego" and one who "brings with him many years of dedicated service and pastoral leadership."

Bishop Dolan will be installed as the next bishop of Phoenix on Aug. 2.

News of Bishop Dolan's appointment came less than two weeks after the pope's announcement that San Diego's bishop, Robert McElroy, would be elevated to a cardinal in late August.

"The Catholic community of Phoenix is receiving a true shepherd of



EMBRACE: Bishop John Dolan, left, embraces retiring Bishop Thomas Olmsted at a June 10 press conference in Phoenix, where Dolan was introduced as Olmsted's successor.

Jesus Christ as their leader," Cardinal-designate McElroy said in a statement.

"For the Church of San Diego and for me personally, Bishop Dolan's departure will be a great loss," he said. "I thank him for all of the sacrifices he has made for our local Church, for the personal talents that have distinguished him in every facet of the ministries he has undertaken and for the enduring priestly identity to which he has constantly witnessed."

As auxiliary bishop, he demonstrated a passion for mental health ministry. He appointed a new director for the diocese's Mental Health Ministry Network, celebrated diocesan Masses for survivors of suicide loss, and co-edited two award-winning books about suicide.

The two books — "Responding to Suicide: A Pastoral Handbook for Catholic Leaders" and "When a Loved One Dies by Suicide" — were among the winners in the Association of Catholic Publishers' 2021 Excellence in Publishing Awards. "Responding to Suicide" was also named the Association of Catholic Publishers' 2021 "Resource of the Year."

At the Phoenix press conference, Bishop Dolan noted that his episcopal motto is the Scriptural verse "Abide in My Love."

"I'm confident that, as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Phoenix, I will have joy as long as I abide in His love," he said, just before taking questions from the media. "So, please, I ask you to pray for me."

SD Parishes Donate \$660,000 to Ukrainians

The Southern Cross



San Diego Catholics have responded generously to the needs of Ukrainian refugees.

The faithful of the diocese have contributed \$660,000 so far to assist with the humanitarian crisis that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February.

The diocese held a collection earlier this year at parishes and split the proceeds evenly between the U.S.

Catholic Bishops' Church in Central and Eastern Europe collection and Catholic Relief Services.

A total of \$202,000 was sent to each cause shortly after the collection and \$88,000 was sent to each later when more parishes sent in their proceeds.

Separate from that, donors gave \$18,000 directly to CRS through the diocesan website link. That adds up to \$598,000.

In recent days, more parishes have sent in their proceeds, a total of \$62,000, which will be split between the Church in Central and Eastern

Europe collection and CRS.

The latter organization continues to seek donations to help the estimated 8 million Ukrainians who fled to neighboring countries to escape the war. They need shelter, food and other basics. Meanwhile, inside the country, supplies of food and other necessities are running scarce.

On June 5, Pope Francis appealed to world leaders to start "real negotiations" to end the war in Ukraine. "I renew my appeal to the leaders of nations: Please do not bring humanity to ruin!"

Pope Elevates San Diego Bishop to Cardinal

By Denis Grasska



A cardinal has never served as bishop of San Diego.

But on Aug. 27 in an assembly at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy will join 19 other men from 17 countries and five continents to become a member of the College of Cardinals. Bishop McElroy was the only American named by Pope Francis. He will also serve as a cardinal-elect and be eligible to vote for the next pontiff in the event of Pope Francis' death or resignation.

With Bishop McElroy's elevation, there will be 10 American cardinals eligible to vote in the next conclave.

The pope's announcement on May 29 that he would elevate Bishop McElroy to a cardinal took most people by surprise. At a news conference with reporters two days later, the bishop himself said he was "stunned and shocked" by the pope's announcement.

"There was no notice whatsoever," he said. "It was announced in Rome, and (I had) not a clue that this was being contemplated or even possible."

Why did the pope decide to make San Diego's bishop a cardinal? What did he see in Cardinal-designate McElroy, specifically, that inspired him to take this historic step? What does it all mean for the Diocese of San Diego?

Cardinal-designate McElroy has his own take on these questions.

At the diocese's fifth annual Pentecost Mass for All Peoples on June 4, he jokingly credited his selection to the fact that San Diego is the U.S. city "closest to having the climate of heaven."

However, four days earlier, during a press conference at the diocesan Pastoral Center, he offered a more substantive reflection on the pope's possible rationale.

He said he believes that the Holy Father wanted there to be a cardinal on the West Coast of the United States. He noted that there are currently no cardinals west of Houston.

Another reason, he suggested, is that San Diego is a border diocese with a large immigrant population — something that Pope Francis, given his well-known focus on the plight of immigrants and refugees, would find significant.

As a final explanation for the appointment, Cardinal-designate McElroy acknowledged that the pope also might view him as an ally on various issues.

"I do think it says that Pope Francis has a series of initiatives that he's trying to bring to the life of the Church and that I have tried to take those initiatives and plant them here in the Diocese of San Diego," he said. "So, I think it's a positive statement that he wants to nurture those."

These initiatives include the promotion of environmental stewardship, as



WARM WELCOME: Pope Francis greeted Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego during a meeting with the bishops from California, Hawaii and Nevada on a visit to the Vatican on Jan. 27, 2020.

well as "a more pastoral orientation rather than a strict doctrinal orientation within the life of the Church as a whole," the cardinal-designate explained.

Under his leadership, the diocese has answered Pope Francis' call in "Laudato Si (On Care for Our Common Home)," his environmental-themed encyclical published in June of 2015. Parishes and schools throughout the diocese were strongly encouraged to install solar power systems on their campuses to reduce greenhouse emissions like carbon dioxide.

He called for the establishment of a Creation Care Ministry to raise awareness of climate change, coordinating with a network of parish-based ministries to promote sustainability.

In late 2021, around the same time the Vatican unveiled a worldwide, seven-year Laudato Si Action Platform designed to provide a roadmap to protecting the environment, the San Diego Diocese released its own 55-page action plan with concrete steps that local families, parishes, schools and other organizations could take to better care for creation.

Cardinal-designate McElroy has supported Pope Francis' worldwide

synods, or consultative gatherings of bishops, by holding diocesan synods. At these, local Catholics, including young adults, reflected on the challenges in question and recommended ways to address them.

Cardinal-designate McElroy said his service as a cardinal may re-

quire him to travel more frequently to the Vatican but that he's happy to be able to continue to serve in San Diego.

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, who serves as president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, issued a statement about the appointment.

"By naming Bishop Robert McElroy as a cardinal, Pope Francis has shown his pastoral care for the Church in the United States," he said. "His strong faith and the pastoral concern for the faithful he has shown in his diocese will serve the global Church well."

Cardinal Blasé Cupich of Chicago told the *National Catholic Reporter* that Cardinal-designate McElroy is "one of the most gifted bishops in the United States."

"I think that his nomination today is a sign of the esteem that he has in the life of the Church, which is held by the Holy Father," Cardinal Cupich said.

Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro, who serves as editor of the Rome-based *La Civiltà Cattolica* and is considered to be a close advisor to Pope Francis, said the pope's decision to elevate Bishop McElroy to cardinal sends "a strong and clear message for the Church in the United States."

Dr. Victor Carmona, assistant professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of San Diego, was sleeping on May 29 when a fellow theologian on the East Coast called with the news that Bishop McElroy was a cardinal-designate.

"I didn't stop smiling for hours," said Carmona, a consultant of the commissions guiding a synod currently under way in the diocese.

"His appointment confirms the need for us all to be attentive to the borders of our world and the margins of our societies because they keep us grounded in our service to the Good News of God's compassionate love," he said. "Bishop McElroy's episcopal ministry in San Diego has demonstrated a commitment to nurturing that challenging practice here."

That ministry "has demonstrated a commitment to nurturing a Church that is grounded and focused on healing (our communities') wounds," said Carmona. "May his appointment help us come nearer to being a Church that breaks free from the politics of polarization."



Catholics Urged to Step Up Support of Moms

By Denis Grasska



The California Catholic Conference, led by Cardinal-designate Robert McElroy, has launched the “We Were Born Ready” campaign, which it dubs “a new vision for post-Roe California.”

The campaign is an effort to mobilize Catholics to step up their support of women, children and families in the state, addressing the challenging situations and root causes that lead women to consider getting an abortion. The initiative’s name suggests that the Church is ready for a world in which Roe v. Wade is no longer the law of the land and life-affirming solutions can be offered in place of abortion.

As of press time, the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the case in which the fate of Roe v. Wade hangs, was yet to be released. But whatever the ruling says, pro-life Californians will still have their work cut out for them.

Like some other states, California has responded to the leaked opinion suggesting the U.S. Supreme Court was going to overturn Roe v. Wade by doubling down on abortion. Because such a ruling would allow each individual state to make its own determination about the legality of abortion, Gov. Gavin Newsom and Democratic state legislators have declared their intention to enshrine abortion as a right in the state constitution.

Maria Valencia, who oversees the Culture of Life ministry in the San Diego Diocese’s Office for Life,



GIFT: Birthline Program Director Jeanne Hansen-Drasco, RN, gives an expectant mother a baby shower gift bag containing clothing and essential care items for her baby. Birthline of San Diego provides life-affirming support and resources to pregnant women and families with children age 6 and younger.

Peace and Justice, said that the long-awaited overturning of Roe v. Wade is cause for celebration, but pro-life Californians “have to continue fighting with more energy and praying with more enthusiasm” to bring an end to abortion in their own state.

She noted that the state may further incentivize abortion in the near future. One proposed bill would pay for the travel, lodging and childcare costs of out-of-state women seeking abortions in California.

“How about those women who want to have the baby?” Valencia

asked rhetorically. Through the new campaign, Catholics are “offering the other things that the state is not offering.”

In a certain sense, Valencia said, the campaign isn’t something new: Throughout its history, the Church has been committed to serving the most vulnerable, including providing essential support for mothers and babies.

What the campaign seeks to do is to raise awareness of the existing safety-net resources available to women and families, including food, housing, healthcare, child-

care, education, employment, economic assistance and intervention in partner violence.

California’s bishops are working to create a statewide network of pro-life pregnancy centers and are promoting Options United’s helpline, (877) 398-7734, to connect women with community resources and life-affirming alternatives to abortion, such as adoption.

Catholics are encouraged to support the campaign through prayer, education, advocacy, raising awareness or acts of service. Many examples are provided at wewerebornready.com.

For instance, Catholics might consider watching informational webinars about “We Were Born Ready.”

Other suggestions include sharing pregnancy resources in parish bulletins and social media, creating a parish MealTrain for new moms, making a financial contribution to a local pregnancy resource center and even doing such simple things as always saying “congratulations” upon hearing news that a woman is pregnant.

By signing up for the Catholic Legislative Network (cacatholic.org/legislation), they will receive a weekly e-newsletter and periodic “action alerts” on public policy issues — pro-life as well as social justice — in California.

“Everyone is called to do something in their own capacity to save babies and support their mothers,” Valencia said.



SKILLS: Jeanne Hansen-Drasco, a registered nurse and trained breastfeeding consultant, shows a first-time mother how to hold her baby while nursing. This specialized consultation is offered to all new mothers at Birthline.

More information is available at wewerebornready.com.



Young Adults Invited to Summertime Bonfires

By Denis Grasska

When you're young and Catholic, and it's summertime, there's nothing quite like a bonfire.

The diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry has collaborated with the young adult ministries in each of the deaneries, or geographical clusters of parishes, in San Diego County to organize weekly bonfires at La Jolla Shores.

The seven-week series of bonfires, which began June 9, will continue to be held every Thursday, from 7 to 9 p.m., until July 21. The events are open to all young adult Catholics, ages 18 to 39, regardless of parish affiliation.

The Youth and Young Adult Ministry Office is expecting between 50 and 100 young adults at each week's installment.

Maricruz Flores, director of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, said each bonfire is hosted by a different deanery, which is responsible for securing the firepit location and providing the graham crackers, chocolate and marshmallows for making s'mores.

Six of the diocese's seven deaneries — Mission, Oceanside, South Bay, El Cajon, Escondido and Cathedral — will take turns hosting a bonfire. (Geographic distance prevents the El Centro Deanery from doing so.)

The final bonfire will be hosted by Pastoral Juvenil, the diocese's Spanish-speaking young adult min-



ALWAYS ROOM FOR S'MORE: Young adults enjoy s'mores and fellowship June 9 at La Jolla Shores, for the first in a seven-week series of summer bonfires.

istry. Both English- and Spanish-speakers are welcome at the event, which will have a different feel from the previous bonfires. It will take the form of a praise-and-worship night, followed by a bonfire social.

The diocese is letting the individual deaneries take charge of the bonfires, while pledging to provide whatever support they need.

"We want this to be an effort of the deaneries, to help strengthen the relationships between the young adults within their deaneries," said Flores, who explained that many young adults aren't even aware of the existence of deaneries and that there is an intermediary level of young adult community

between parish and diocese.

She hopes that the bonfires also will help to spread the word about upcoming events, such as the diocese's annual Young Adult Adoration and Mass, which will be held Aug. 14 at The Immaculata Church, and the Diocesan Young Adult Retreat, set to take place from Sept. 16 to 18 at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp in the Cuyamaca Mountains.

The bonfire series was the brainchild of Pamela Poe, associate director of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, who saw it was a way to expand the office's outreach and promote collaboration among the diocese's young adult groups.

"We were planning to kick off these bonfires for 2020, but then COVID changed our plans," said Poe, who reintroduced the idea early this year. When she pitched it to young adult leaders, they were "more than enthusiastic."

"The collaborative aspect of the bonfire gave our newly revived Deanery Young Adult Leadership team a new project to work on together," she said, "and it is really exciting to see the many young adult groups collaborating."

In addition to San Diego's enviable weather and the opportunity to make new friends, Flores said bonfire attendees should also expect a "moment of prayer." She said that the bonfire experience will include "praying together ... and breaking bread — which, in this instance, will be s'mores."

"It doesn't have to be the entirety of the event," she said, "but at least, it sets the tone," she said.

Poe echoed that sentiment.

"Our events are always centered on our faith," she said, "and so it is most appropriate that we take a moment to pause together as a community of young adults to be in the presence of God, to remind us of His love for us and that He is the reason we are all gathered together."

For locations and updates or last-minute changes, check out the Instagram page @sdcatholic.



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Educators Joyfully Rejoice at Awards Together

By Denis Grasska



The annual Catholic Educators' Awards Presentation,

held in person for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, saw record-breaking attendance this year.

Nearly 300 Catholic school teachers and administrators gathered May 19 in the chapel courtyard at Cathedral Catholic High School, making it "the biggest one we've had" since the event was first held eight years ago, said John Galvan, director of the diocesan Office for Schools.

"The sheer joy ... was palpable," he said. "People were just so happy to be together, to celebrate one another, to celebrate their colleagues and their various milestones."

The event, which is organized by the Office for Schools, had been held virtually for the past two years.

Some 63 educators received recognition for their 10, 20 or 30 years in Catholic education, along with Principal Sylvia Benning, of St. Charles School in Imperial Beach, for her 40 years of service and 10 educators who are retiring at the end of this school year.

"They're not looking to get awards," Galvan said of the teachers recognized. "They're trying to help our Catholic schools and help our kids. And I just have so much respect for that."

The Schools Office also presented various "Awards of Distinction," including:



SHEPHERD: Father Patrick Mulcahy receives the Good Shepherd Award, given to a member of the clergy who models discipleship, truth and courage, at the Catholic Educators' Awards Presentation.

The Good Shepherd Award, for a member of the clergy who models discipleship, truth and courage. This year's recipient was Father Patrick Mulcahy, pastor of Mary Star of the Sea Parish in La Jolla.

The Distinguished Principal Award, presented to Amanda Johnston of St. Mary's School in Escondido.

The Catholic Teacher of the Year Award, which went to both an

elementary school teacher, Amanda Ahearn of St. Pius X School in Chula Vista, and a high school teacher, Christine LaPorte of Cathedral Catholic High School in Carmel Valley.

The Re-Imagine Catholic Schools Award, which goes to a school that recognizes the needs of 21st-century students. It was presented this year to St. Columba School, which is the first school in the diocese to implement departmentalization across all grade levels and has adopted restorative justice principles in its approach to discipline.

The "All Are Welcome" Inclusive Education Award, presented to St. Francis of Assisi School in Vista, where more than 50% of students are multiracial. The school invests in faculty and staff members' professional development, especially in the area of English Language Development, and operates a learning support program for students with special needs.

The Sr. Breege Boyle Award, for a preschool program or director who has made a difference, to Desiree Faiota of Good Shepherd School.

The ACT Fellow Award, which recognizes an Academy of Catholic Teaching fellow who has demonstrated the three pillars of the University Consortium of Catholic Education — service through teaching, community involvement, and spiritual development — while working through their academic program at the University of

Educators Continued on Page 7

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SCHOOL FAMILY: Members of the St. Charles School community come together to celebrate Sylvia Benning, fourth from left in back row, and Norma Villalobos, third from left in back row, at the annual Catholic Educators' Awards Presentation. Benning, the school's principal, is celebrating 40 years in education; Villalobos, the school's office manager, is celebrating 30 years.

Educators *Continued from Page 6*

San Diego. This year's recipient was Kailee Norris from St. Michael's School.

The Philanthropist of the Year Award, presented to investor Fred Clark and attorney Jim Mittermiller for their support of St. Rita's School. They have built a network of philanthropy over the past five years that has provided more than \$5 million in tuition-assistance and operational support to the school.

The Sr. Claire Patrice Lifetime Achievement Award, which is granted for major contributions over many years of educational leadership in the diocese. It was presented this year to Susan Hause, who served as the first lay principal of Our Lady of Grace School in El Cajon from 2000 until her retirement in 2019.

The 2022 Catholic Educators' Awards Presentation was luau-themed and featured Hawaiian dancers as the evening's entertainment. It was an

appropriate theme, considering that the local Catholic school community will soon be saying "aloha" (goodbye) to Galvan, who is stepping down after eight years as head of the Schools Office, and "aloha" (hello) to Leticia Oseguera, who will succeed him as superintendent of diocesan schools on July 1.

Galvan said that his own Schools Office staff "kind of hijacked the end of the ceremony" to acknowledge his upcoming departure. Dr. Kevin Calkins,

president of Cathedral Catholic High School and a friend of Galvan's, was invited to share a few words about him.

Galvan hopes that the educators left this year's awards presentation with "pride in their work and their call to ministry."

"I hope it reaffirms that same call and their continued commitment to serve Catholic schools," he said, "because I believe that Catholic schools are really part of the answer to what the world needs right now."

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Santa Sophia Ministry Takes a Dramatic Turn

By Denis Grasska



SPRING VALLEY —
In early 2020, the Santa Sophia Drama Ministry was about a month into rehearsals for its inaugural production.

“But this thing called COVID closed us down,” said Steve Browne, the parish’s youth minister, who also serves the drama ministry as the producer.

Still, the show must go on.

Two years later, the drama ministry is once again in rehearsals for “Meet Me in St. Louis,” based on the 1944 film musical starring Judy Garland and centering on a family in St. Louis, Mo., at the turn of the 20th century.

Since late March, the cast and crew have been rehearsing for eight hours every weekend to prepare for opening night.

Performances will take place during the July 8-10 and July 15-17 weekends in the parish hall. Showtimes are 7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students, and can be purchased in advance at the parish office or at the door on the night of the performance.

Once the drama ministry has recouped the costs associated with the production, including theatrical licensing, set design, costumes, props and other expenses, all proceeds will benefit the youth group, which is raising money to attend World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal, next year.

Though drama ministry is fairly new to Santa Sophia Parish, it isn’t to Browne, who has been involved with it for about 25 years.

In 1995, he founded a drama ministry at St. John of the Cross Parish in Lemon Grove after a friend expressed the desire to direct a show.

He was expecting “this little thing” like a school play. But the parish’s first production, the musical “Li’l Abner,” became something of a phenomenon, with many parishioners — and even the parish secretary and associate pastor — joining the cast.

The production fostered a sense of community among its cast and crew and led some of them toward greater engagement in parish life. Among the many young people who signed up for the production, Browne found new recruits for his youth group. He also saw teens who weren’t regular churchgoers accept their castmates’ invitation to join them at Mass after rehearsal.

Suzanne Kennedy-Ballon is the music director at Santa Sophia Parish. Like Browne, she previously served at St. John of the Cross Parish, where she too had been involved with its now defunct drama ministry. Today, she oversees the musical aspects of the Santa Sophia Drama Ministry.

She shared that, through participating in the drama ministry, some people have discovered vocal talents and have gone on to join the parish choir



DRESS THE PART: Kathy Kazules, left, and Pam Hutchinson, right, work on the costume that Valeria Ramirez, center, will be wearing in “Meet Me in St. Louis.”

and to serve as cantors at Mass.

Though it doesn’t actively seek participants from outside the parish, the drama ministry isn’t restricted to parishioners, nor even to Catholics, but is open to the wider community.

Browne said the drama ministry doesn’t turn anyone away. Kennedy-Ballon said that those who want to be involved can also contribute by helping with costumes, set design, lighting or sound.

The Santa Sophia Drama Ministry is a ministry in more than name. Its rehearsals begin and end with prayer. And when unexpected challenges arise, like needing to find a new cast member only a month before the play was set to open, the drama ministry prays about them.

“We couldn’t do it without prayer,” Browne said.

It’s Browne’s hope that “Meet Me in St. Louis” is just the beginning and that a new production is held every spring and fall.

If previous productions at St. John of the Cross Parish are any indication, audiences at Santa Sophia’s upcoming performances are in for a treat.

“You just wouldn’t believe it how a community can come together and put on such a great show,” Kennedy-Ballon said, reflecting on the productions at her former parish.

Browne recalled a production of “The Wizard of Oz,” for which a friend donated professional stage-rigging equipment that allowed them to include flying effects.

“The audience about fell out of their chairs at this little church play when (the actors) were flying,” said Browne,

who later learned that his friend typically charges about \$10,000 to set up a single rig, but set up four at St. John of the Cross Parish in exchange for a six-pack of beer.

“That was a heck of a donation!” Kennedy-Ballon said.

Eric Rubalcava, a 33-year-old member of the parish choir, will be playing the role of Mr. Smith, the father, in “Meet Me in St. Louis.”

A professional voice actor who specializes in radio and TV station promos, Rubalcava said, “I’ve been behind a microphone, but I’ve never been in front of people as an actual role.”

He saw the play as a “good way ... to give back and help build the community.”

Izzy Newman, 16, is playing Rose Smith, the eldest of the family’s four daughters.

For Newman, a lifelong parishioner of Santa Sophia Parish, participating in the drama ministry is a case of “going back to my roots.”

Newman has about eight years of professional acting experience under her belt, including a guest-starring role on the Disney Channel series “Bunk’d” and appearances in various shows on Peacock Jr., including “Izzy the Answer Girl.” But she got her first taste of acting in first grade, after unexpectedly landing the lead in a production of “Annie” at Santa Sophia Academy.

She hopes that theatregoers leave with “a sense of what community truly looks and feels like: people of all ages connected through their faith, and doing what they love, and working hard towards an end goal, which for us is putting on a fun and enjoyable production.”

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Enthusiastic volunteers arrived early to their shift and stayed late, undeterred by the heat. They came from nearly all parishes in San Diego County and from Catholic high schools.

They joyfully packed the meals, working at 120 tables that lined the campus' central courtyard, most under tents.

They packed 800,000 meals in two, 2-hour shifts on Saturday and the remaining 200,000 in Sunday's shift.

About 500,000 of the meals are bound for Casa de los Pobres, an organization that feeds the neediest families in Tijuana. The rest will be headed to Ukraine and Ecuador.

The deacons are already beginning to plan next year's edition.

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JUNE 2022 | SYNTHESIS SMALL-GROUP SYNOD SESSIONS

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Diocese of San Diego is consulting its faithful in a synod. In March, parishes and organizations held small-group sessions to listen to their communities. The following is the report the diocese submitted to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops that synthesized the themes that emerged in those 1,100 sessions. The synod continues with a survey of the faithful this fall.*

The synodal process for the Diocese of San Diego began with the opening Mass on Oct. 17, 2021, in which Bishop Robert McElroy announced the appointment of a 15-member commission that would oversee the synodal process and design its framework. This commission included three pastors, two theologians and 10 lay leaders drawn from the leadership of the parishes, agencies and movements.

During its initial meetings, the commission, in concert with Bishop McElroy and in consultation with the Presbyteral Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, determined that the synodal framework for San Diego would be a three-year process based upon the "See-Judge-Act" model for ecclesial action.

The first stage of six months would include a series of listening sessions in English, Spanish and Vietnamese using the template of synodality to discern the response of the People of God to the three foundational synodal questions: What are the joys of the faithful in the life of the Church? What are their sorrows in the Church? What hopes do they have for the Church? From these sessions, a synthesis would be developed by June 30 to submit to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

After this initial phase of listening, the commission would undertake a process of discernment to evaluate the findings of the listening sessions. Then the commission would create, in light of the small-group conclusions, an instrument for large-scale con-



LEADERS: Two commissions meet regularly to guide the synod in San Diego and Imperial counties.

sultation of the People of God that would be sent to more than 150,000 Catholics for their input on the key issues confronting the Church at this moment. The results of this process should be finalized in October.

The second year of the synodal process was planned to be devoted to a period of discernment as to the realities and opinions revealed in the small-group processes and the large-scale questionnaire. The commission will seek to outline what changes need to be accomplished at the parish and diocesan levels, and to form an action plan specifying the goals for change. Just as importantly, the plan will speak to the synodal culture that must be reflected in this change. It is particularly important that, in this stage of the synodal process, all participants keep in mind that we are seeking to accomplish a genuine conversion of dialogue, decision-making and pastoral life in the Church. Thus, how we undertake action is as important as the specified goals that we are seeking to achieve.



ENCOUNTER: Good Shepherd Parish hosted the first of 10 small-circle sessions on March 10.

The third year of the synodal process in San Diego will be devoted to implementing the action plan at the diocesan and parochial levels.

The commission struggled with the dramatic differences in culture and realities between San Diego County and Imperial County. San Diego is a largely urban and suburban county with more than 3 million people that is demographically diverse, containing a vibrant technology-centered economy. Imperial County is an agrarian region of approximately 200,000 residents, of whom 85 percent are Hispanic. As a consequence, the synodal participants decided to establish two commissions for the synodal process in the diocese, one for each county. This allows for synodal frameworks tailored to the specific needs of each county.

A great deal of time has been devoted by the commissions to designing a small-group dialogue process that could reflect and build an ethos of synodality. Faculty from San Diego State University attended our commission meetings and designed a framework for meaningful small-group interactions that fosters respectful listening, invites concise sharing of personal experiences, and provides for the gradual building of understanding amidst diverse backgrounds, cultures and ideologies. They also helped design a note-taking process that would capture the central elements of what was being said in each group.

During March, each of the parishes of the diocese held a series of three-hour meetings in which men and women sat together in random small groups of eight people to reflect upon the joys, the sorrows and the hopes which they have found in the Church. More than 10,000 people participated in these meetings. One of the most interesting outcomes was

that overwhelmingly the participants found these dialogues spiritually and pastorally very nourishing. Several small groups decided to form ongoing prayer or Bible study groups with one another on the basis of their sharing, even though they were virtually strangers before the sessions. The positivity of the experience was remarkable because the notes taken in these small groups reveal that participants shared immensely different viewpoints on the major issues they were discussing. This prayerfulness and respect of the dialogue constituted a glimpse of what a synodal culture might be.

The commissions established particular synodal small-group sessions for the diocesan priests, the religious men, the religious women and the permanent deacons and their wives. These meetings were designed to capture the distinctive perspectives of these leadership groups in the life of the Church.

In addition, the commissions discussed at length the question of how to elicit contributions from our marginalized communities. Because approximately 200,000 Catholics in the diocese are immigrants, the parish dialogues would capture their input. The commissions, however, designed a specific process to ascertain the experiences of our many refugees and migrant workers. In addition, specific outreach mechanisms were established to elicit the input of the incarcerated and their families, as well as homeless men and women. The interpretive lens established through the University of San Diego to analyze the small-group meeting data included a process to amplify the input of these marginalized communities in formulating our conclusions for this synthesis being sent to Washington, and ultimately to Rome.

A parallel process of consultation was developed for the teenagers in our schools and religious education programs.

During the 1,100 small-group meetings, a note-taker was assigned to each group to record as accurately as possible individuals' responses to the three foundational questions of the joys, the sorrows and the hopes that people found in the Church. In the subsequent process of analyzing the fruits of these small-group dialogues, four individuals read through a representative sample of recorder notes and collaboratively generated coding categories that were applicable to what they had read. The codes were used to analyze the meeting notes from sample parishes using a multiple-variation sampling strategy. Then all 1,100 sets of notes were examined. From this analysis, eight central

Synod Continued on Page 11

Synod *Continued from Page 10*

themes emerged. Four of them centered upon the joys participants found in the Church. Four of them focused on the challenges participants found in the life of our local Church.

JOYS

1. The Sacramental Life of the Church: The principal joy that emerged in the synodal sessions was participation in the sacramental life of the Church. The declaration of one participant that “experiencing the beauty of our Church/Mass with our families is what brings us hope” was emblematic of comments in virtually every small-group sharing. Participants rejoiced in the fundamental nature of the Eucharist, pointing out that “you can attend Mass anywhere in the world and it’s the same.” A very large number of participants mentioned how the music in the liturgy brought great emotion and spiritual depth into their lives. One participant’s comment summarized this joy in the Eucharist: “I love the peace I feel when I go to Mass. It’s a chance to really speak to God and find rest.”

The other sacraments were frequently mentioned as a source of joy as well. In these comments, participants frequently referred to specific sacramental moments that had been meaningful in their lives, rather than a generalized sense of sacramentality. Baptisms constitute a time of deep grace in the life of the faithful, as do celebrations of First Eucharist and weddings. One individual expressed this reality: “Experiencing these sacraments in our lives and the lives of our children brings a lot of joy.” Many comments pointed to the kindness and pastoral devotion of the priests and deacons that celebrate these sacraments.

The rosary is seen as a quasi-sacramental reality of great importance in the life of the People of God in San Diego and Imperial counties.

2. Community Life: The presence of enduring community life within parishes and the movements is also a source of immense joy for the faithful in our diocese. Men and women pointed frequently to the sense of belonging that they have experienced



JOY: Mass-goers at the Pentecost Mass for All Peoples lined up to receive the Eucharist on June 4.

in the life of the Church. These bonds of community exist on a variety of levels — spiritual ties, friendships that have been formed within the life of the community, service actions and recreational and social events. During the period of COVID, the vibrancy of parish life and the movements diminished appreciably, but it is returning to full vitality at this moment. It cannot be stressed how strongly the synodal dialogues reflected a joy in and hunger for the web of communities that are formed in the life of the Church.

3. Priestly Ministry: There is widespread support for and admiration of their parish priests. “The priests at the local level are the lifeblood of the Church.” The pastoral service of celebrating the Eucharist and the other sacraments, forming parish community, guiding individuals in distress and teaching the faith form strong bonds between the parish community and the priest. The comments of the dialogue participants also show an understanding that the limited number of priests creates great hardships and limitations in effective ministry.

4. The Church as a Pathway to God: Those who participated in the 1,100 dialogue groups held within the diocese continually pointed to the Church as their primary pathway to God. They spoke of Scripture study

groups that revealed to them the beauty of the Bible. They discussed their experiences in Cursillo, respect life groups, *matrimonios*, and cultural devotional groups which have provided engagement with God and God’s action in the world. They spoke of simply visiting the church in prayer and encountering the face of God, as well as adoration of the Eucharist. They spoke of the many ways in which the parish community as a whole, priests, deacons and lay leaders in the parish point them toward the Lord. There was a broad concern to retain the popular religious traditions that reinforce cultural ties to faith. On so many levels, the participants testified to the reality of Church as the pilgrim people of God journeying toward the Kingdom.

Many comments in the dialogues spoke of a desire to bring more people into the life of the Church. There was an emphasis on creating a culture of welcoming and hospitality in the life of the diocese and the parishes. At the same time, there was very little organized sense of evangelization among participants.

CHALLENGES

While the four sources of joy listed above constitute an affirmation of the life of the Church in the Diocese of San Diego, four major challenges to the faith and the vibrancy of the Church in San Diego and Imperial counties also surfaced in the dialogues.

1. Issues of Youth and Young Families: The overwhelmingly dominant sadness expressed in the synodal dialogues was the failure of the Church to engage with children, teens and young adults. There is widespread belief that the Church has not taken sufficient steps to develop pastoral outreaches that are meaningful to the new generation. This sadness is almost a sense of despondency, of the inevitability of continuing decline in the participation

of young people in all elements of Catholic life. “The Church does not modernize the Gospel for children and young adults.” “The Church does not do a good job of communication and connecting to young people.”

Many participants pointed to the greater success that many Protestant churches have in engaging with the young. Participants suggested practices the Catholic Church could adopt to engage children and adolescents without necessarily embracing some of the more intensive pop-culture-influenced forms of worship embraced by certain evangelical churches. Many people pointed to strategies that have been initiated in isolated pockets of the diocese: Masses for teens and young adults followed by dinners and other social gatherings. Many suggested more strenuous efforts to modernize the Gospel while respecting its integrity. The suggestion of one participant captures this widespread vantage point: “Fellowship activities, youth retreats, praise nights, youth Bible studies of sharing sessions to get the young kids to come to Church, to make friends, to make those connections with mentors so they stay in the Church and eventually serve in the future.”

Not all participants who spoke on the outflow of teens and young adults blame the Church for this trend. Many took responsibility for failing to sufficiently witness to and support their own children in the faith. “I was an altar server as a boy, but as an adult I did not attend regular Mass or participate. I realize now that, because I did not do that, my children do not have that tradition and faith life. I have found a new life of faith and pray the rosary, but I do feel regret for my lapsed past.”

There were also joys participants expressed about witnessing and participating in the Church’s meaningful efforts to engage teens, young adults and young families. Significant numbers of parents spoke of the tremendous support that Catholic schools provide for the faith of the young. At the same time, there were many comments about the significant class inequalities caused by the high cost of tuitions, and many parents noted that Catholic schools have generally been unable to assist special-needs students. The sacrifices of religious education teachers were also noted in many small groups.

2. Anger at the Clergy Sexual Abuse Scandals: The intensity of the emotions expressed on the topic of clergy sexual abuse of minors was profound and widespread. “Sexual abuse was allowed to get so big and destroy the Church and people who love the Church.” “The priest scandals make it difficult to attract people to the faith and, at the same time, require having to defend the faith.” Participants specifically noted that “it was the cover-up conducted by the bishops, rather than individual cases that disappointed them, and



COMMUNITY: Connecting after the Young Adult Mass at The Immaculata Church on Aug. 18, 2019.

Synod *Continued on Page 12*

Synod *Continued from Page 11*

then seeing the same level of cover-up exposed not just in one diocese, or in one country, but rather across the globe — that was particularly disappointing.” There is a nearly universal perception that bishops were the core of the patterns of abuse and reassignment because bishops sided with guilty priests against the imperative to safeguard children and young people.

3. Inclusiveness and Acceptance vs. Doctrinal Strength: The synodal dialogues revealed a profound split within the Catholic community about the issues of acceptance versus conformity with rules. This split reflects elements of the cultural and political divides that plague our society. But it takes on a specific form within the life of the Church.

Those seeking greater acceptance of diversity in background and lifestyles generally pointed to the suffering and scandal that have been generated by the exclusion of particular groups in the life of the Church. The role of women was frequently discussed as an example of unchristian exclusion. Many men and women spoke of their disagreement with the idea that the Church will not ordain women or married priests, and these participants pointed to a history and culture of according only a secondary status to the group that forms the majority of the believers and volunteers in the Church.

The LGBT community got even more attention than women from those advocating for making a greater effort to include marginalized groups and individuals in the Church. At times, the support for inclusion exhibited a litany of past incidents of exclusion, bigotry and suffering because of Church teaching and practice. There were significant expressions of support for the Church’s efforts to invite LGBT Catholics into the heart of the Church at the present moment, but a sadness that these efforts are not more widely and deeply embedded.

Typical of those pressing for broader acceptance in the Church was the comment of one participant: “I hope for our Church to be accepting of anybody and not just say or indicate ‘you are not part of the group.’ I want our Church to be accepting of each person for who they are. I hope for our Church not to be judgmental of anyone, as we don’t know the shoes they are wearing, but instead be accepting and make them feel they belong.”

The counterpoint to this widespread call for greater inclusion in the life of the Church is a belief by many that Catholic teaching has compromised too much in the current secular moment and has grown too lenient. “The Church does not seem to have a clear message on how they view people who have same-sex attraction or LGBT,” one participant said. “There does not seem to be a clear guidance on that issue.”



JOHN GASTALDO

Many participants expressed the view that Church doctrine is quite clear on debated issues, but the Church’s current leadership has intentionally obscured that teaching on LGBT issues and other topics, including abortion. These Catholics raise concerns that Pope Francis has introduced a corrosive ambiguity into the heart of Catholic moral doctrine. They are highly critical of Bishop McElroy for this same reason.

Participants who share this viewpoint worry that Catholic doctrine lies on a slippery slope in these days, and propose that sharpening the line between the Church and secular society would have a reinvigorating effect for the Catholic community.

4. Pastoral Problems: At the same time, a significant number of men and women in the synodal sessions pointed to painful experiences of pastoral insensitivity or refusal of sacraments by priests. Many of these experiences revolve around individuals undergoing great grief or suffering in their own lives or those of their families. Moments of unavailability for sick calls or funerals, priests who are curt at weddings, or who place too much stress on the payment of money for services, all detract from the witness of priesthood that the Church values. The synod sessions surfaced many calls for better homilies which are pastoral and uplifting. A number of participants raised the issue that different priests give conflicting pastoral

advice on moral questions.

As to the comments of the synodal dialogues on the bishops of the United States, participants were highly negative. Many blame the bishops for the egregious errors of the clergy sexual abuse crisis. They think that the episcopacy has contributed enormously to a culture of clericalism.

At the same time, the dialogues pointed to patterns of marginalization within the community life of the Church. The homeless and incarcerated participants reflected a belief that they are judged and excluded on many levels within the Church. The issue of favoritism within the parish communities and within the presbyterate is a source of friction. Economic status, legal status and race are perceived by many as a foundation for second-class treatment by some at all levels within the Church. Religious women pointed to both historic and contemporary situations in which they have been marginalized by clergy. Priests are burdened by the stigma of the sexual abuse crisis, which they feel casts a pall on every priest.

The ideological divisions of the current moment are tragically present in parish communities, leaving individuals ranging from proponents of “Laudato Si” to home-school families with the sense that they are suspect by significant elements of the parish community. Even though Catholic social teaching calls for a dedication to the wide spectrum of issues that

are morally compelling in the present moment, there is dramatic disagreement about what this means. Many participants believe that the preeminence of abortion as a moral evil in our society constitutes an overriding claim upon the Catholic conscience; these men and women see fighting for legal protections for the unborn as purely a moral issue, not a political one. The countervailing group in the parishes see poverty, race, immigration and the environment as an equally important set of issues to be addressed in society.

NEXT STEPS

Immediately after the completion of the synodal dialogues, the commissions recognized that there had to be timely follow-up to major issues which had surfaced in our parishes and at the diocesan level. During the dialogues, many participants expressed the fear that the conclusions of the listening sessions would simply be put on the shelf; that no substantive follow-up would occur. The commissions felt that there was a great danger of this happening, especially because the global process points to the culmination of the synod and an Apostolic exhortation in 2024. The commission members concluded that there should be rapid action on key local issues that had been raised in each parish and throughout the diocese. For this reason, each parish will be asked to identify two substantive issues that had been raised at its parish dialogues, with the aim of addressing them in the fall of this year. And the Diocesan Pastoral Council will draw from the dialogue mandates to establish concrete goals for immediate action.

This will not only provide substantive reforms to distinct elements of our parochial and diocesan life; it will also provide additional opportunities to bring the hallmarks of synodality to the processes of parish and diocesan pastoral planning and decision-making. In addition, it will provide a direct feedback loop to the synodal small-group dialogues.

Finally, we call upon the Universal Church to address in the synodal process key questions that divide our local Church: the inclusion of LGBT communities as well as the status of women. We must press for the deepening of a commitment to Catholic social teaching so that abortion, care for creation, race, economic inequity and immigration are addressed meaningfully. We must globally bridge the perceived division between inclusion and doctrinal fidelity that has surfaced in the Church. We must bring a truly pastoral perspective that renews our practices regarding marriage and family life and sacramental participation. We must strengthen adult faith formation. And we must forge new networks for evangelization of the culture and the world.



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Pope: 'We Must Lead Revolution of Tenderness'

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis said he is convinced God is calling his peers — older Catholics — to become “artisans of the revolution of tenderness.”

Through their gifts, wisdom, relationships and power of prayer, “together we can set the world free from the specter of loneliness and the demon of war,” the pope wrote in his message for the Catholic Church’s celebration of the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.

The message was released at the Vatican in anticipation of the celebration July 24, the fourth Sunday of July and the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne, Jesus’ grandparents.

“Old age is no time to give up and lower the sails, but a season of enduring fruitfulness; a new mission awaits us and bids us look to the future,” the pope wrote in his message, whose theme for 2022 is “In old age they will still bear fruit” from the Book of Psalms.

In addition to taking care of themselves and remaining active, “we ought to cultivate our interior life through the assiduous reading of the word of God, daily prayer, reception of the sacraments and participation in the liturgy” as well as “cultivate our relationships with others.”

Older people need to show “affectionate concern for our families, our children and grandchildren, but also for the poor and those who suffer, by drawing near to them with practical assistance and our prayers,” he wrote.

But the entire world is also “passing through a time of trial and testing, beginning with the sudden, violent



GREAT DUTY: The Catholic Church will celebrate the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on July 24. Pope Francis says grandparents have a role to play in promoting happiness and peace in society. This family was photographed in March 2020 in Cheshire, England, during the pandemic.

outbreak of the pandemic, and then by a war that is harming peace and development on a global scale” as well as a war in Europe “at a time when the generation that experienced it in the last century is dying out,” he wrote.

“These great crises risk anesthetizing us to the reality of other ‘epidemics’ and other widespread forms of violence that menace the human family and our common home,” he wrote, which is why older people have an important role to play in promoting “profound change” starting in people’s hearts.

“We grandparents and elderly people have a great responsibility: to teach the women and men of our time

to regard others with the same understanding and loving gaze with which we regard our own grandchildren.

“We ourselves have grown in humanity by caring for others, and now we can be teachers of a way of life that is peaceful and attentive to those in greatest need” and thereby help protect the world, he wrote.

The pope appealed to older people to extend their prayers and attention to all children of the world, especially those fleeing from war or suffering its effects. “Let us hold in our hearts — like St. Joseph, who was a loving and attentive father — the little ones of Ukraine, of Afghanistan, of South Sudan.”

“Dear grandparents, dear elderly persons, we are called to be artisans of the revolution of tenderness in our world” and “poets of prayers” by making “more frequent and better use of the most valuable instrument at our disposal,” that is, prayer.

The World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly is also an opportunity for young people and the Church to celebrate together with older people, by seeking out those who feel most alone.

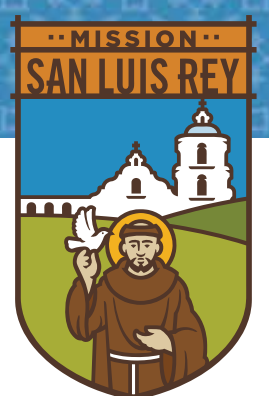
“Expecting a visit can transform those days when we think we have nothing to look forward to. Visiting the elderly who live alone is a work of mercy in our time!”

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Perspective: My 'Resurrection' Began with a Loss

By Father Charles "Chuck" Fuld

A few weeks ago, I was invited to give a presentation at a men's retreat sponsored by the Knights of Columbus of St. Gabriel Church in Poway to be held at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside.

The theme was "Resurrection: Our New Lives of Faith, Family and Friendship in the Post-COVID World." In the process of preparing my talk, I found new elements of the "resurrection" I had gone through years before — only I never thought of them in such terms.

I recognized that this pandemic was not as unusual in our history as we have made it out to be. I discovered a list of previous plagues that somehow we had overcome, including smallpox, typhoid, flu, polio, measles, whooping cough and AIDS/HIV. All of them took countless lives and shook our way of life.

My story was also one of shock and hurt due to a great loss.

In September of 1969, I was a career U.S. Navy officer. I was the Executive Officer of the USS Dubuque, an amphibious assault ship and flagship for the Amphibious Forces of the Pacific Fleet, home-ported in San Diego. The Vietnam War was still going on and that ship was getting ready to deploy there in a few weeks.

About that time, my wife suddenly became ill and despite all the visits to hospitals and doctors, the illness could not be identified. My ship's medical officer concluded that it was probably a case of "pre-deployment anxiety," common among Navy wives when their



CHAPTERS: Each stage of Father Charles "Chuck" Fuld's life propelled and inspired him to the next one.

husbands were about to leave on an extended assignment. What could I do? I seriously considered asking for a reassignment, but that would have been a significant blow to the ship's staff.

Then, one night, she died.

Yes, my 35-year-old wife, the love of my life and the mother of our three young children was suddenly gone. What happened? What was I to do? How was I to deal with all the hurt, anger and confusion I felt? What would be the lasting effect on my children?

I don't remember the next few days very well as I went through the mo-



tions of preparing for my wife's funeral and answering all the questions. My kids, for example, had never heard of "a mom dying." And my mother-in-law seemed to think that I was keeping some dark secret from her.

So I decided to deploy with my ship. First, I took my kids to live with their aunt and uncle and grandparents in New York City while I was gone.

On board ship, I did my Navy job as best I could. I didn't sleep much. I wrote to my kids just about every day. Meanwhile, I could tell that my skipper was going out of his way to help me. He was my boss, but also my mentor and dear friend.

And then, another death occurred!

My skipper's dad died. Things suddenly changed. I found myself tending to him and to his hurts and less to mine.

Once the deployment ended and the ship returned to San Diego, I flew back to New York, thanked everyone, picked up my kids and returned to our home in Nestor, in southern San Diego. I got the kids back into St. Charles' School and tried to get things going as "normal" as possible.

About that time, I got myself reassigned to the Naval Amphibious Base at nearby Coronado so that I could spend evenings and weekends with the kids.

It was when my son expressed a desire to become a Boy Scout that I got involved in Scouting with St. Charles' Scout troop. Next thing I knew, I became the Scoutmaster. I had never been a Scout, so I had to read the "Scout Handbook" on what to do. My son eventually became an Eagle Scout.

I found myself working with Father Tim Harnett, the pastor of St. Charles, and Father Joe Carroll, who led Catholic Scouting in San Diego at the time. They were two great guys and exemplary priests. Gradually, I found myself drawn back into the Church I had rejected years before.

Over time, my family dynamics began to change. The kids started dating, getting married and having



a career of their own. And I retired from the Navy. The question came up: What should I do afterward? That's when the idea of becoming a priest first surfaced.

Are there such things as widower priests? Yes. Would the San Diego Diocese consider the possibility? Bishop Leo T. Maher said, "Yes!" In 1982, I entered St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park and, four years later, I was ordained a priest at the age of 52.

By the end of this year, I will have completed 89 years of life, 22 years as a Naval Officer, 63 years as a dad, 53 years as a widower and 36 years as a priest.

So, what's my "resurrection" story?

When my wife died, I thought that my life would end, too. I was hurt and angry at God and His Church. We had done nothing to deserve such a terrible blow. It seemed like the end of so many things. Fortunately, the Navy, my shipmates, my family and friends didn't let go of me. It was priests like Fathers Harnett and Pat Mullarkey, my pastors at St. Charles Church, and "Father Joe" who worked with me (or put me to work) and kept pushing me. They made room for me, cared for me, and were there for God to help me find my way home.

The important thing is that, in my darkest hours, they left the door ajar for me so that the inner light was always there. I kept my contact with the Church (maybe because of my kids). They didn't give up on me, and neither did God.

I honestly believe a "resurrection" is available to all of us, priests and laity alike. Sometimes, it takes something like a commitment to attend to, like a speaking engagement at a retreat, to see the possibilities more clearly.

At the end of my presentation at the retreat, I asked the men to tell their own story of "resurrection." They shared quite a few.

Father Fuld is editor emeritus of The Southern Cross, which he led for 12 years.

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Santa Sophia Parish

DENIS GRASSKA

First-Time Pastor to Build on Foundation

By Denis Grasska



Father Corey Tufford, 33, will be a first-time pastor when he assumes that role July 1 at Santa Sophia Parish in Spring Valley.

The San Diego native was ordained to the priesthood in 2016. He has served as associate pastor of St. Mark's Parish in San Marcos for almost two years and was previously associate pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Chula Vista.

Question: When and how did you feel called to priesthood?

Answer: I didn't grow up with any real faith practice. I didn't receive any sacraments as a child.

During the freshman overnight retreat at St. Augustine High School, I had a powerful encounter with Christ during a time of prayer. I presented Jesus with my sins and I experienced a flood of His mercy and an invitation to a new way of life. I still had a long way to go, but this was a big moment of conversion in my life.

I began thinking about becoming a priest when I attended a confirmation retreat, as I was preparing to receive

**Santa Sophia Parish,
Incoming Pastor**

**Father Corey
Tufford**



baptism, confirmation and First Holy Communion. The priest was quietly purifying the chalice and paten after Communion during the retreat's closing Mass. Deep in my heart, a thought rose up, saying, "What about priesthood?" I didn't know what to do with this gentle question, but I was open to the possibility.

I received the sacraments of initiation at my home parish, Mission San Diego de Alcalá, on Dec. 4, 2004. Throughout high school, I wasn't a model Christian, but I continued to seek God.

Through continued prayer, discernment with the Church, and mentorship, I realized that becoming a priest was most likely God's call for my life. I still needed time for this to come into greater clarity, and to work through the reality of saying no to marriage and family life, but I wanted to give God a chance with the vocation to priesthood.

For my undergraduate studies, I went to Franciscan University of Steubenville and was a member of their pre-theologate program. I graduated as a Philosophy and Theology double-major in May 2011 and, that August, began my formation for priesthood with the Diocese of San Diego.

What have you found most fulfilling about priestly ministry?

The most rewarding part is interacting with people and being a bridge to grace in their lives. I love bringing people the sacraments. For those who aren't Catholic, or who have been away from the practice of their faith, I am humbled to be a part of their decision to come into communion with the Church.

I have also enjoyed getting to work closely with the lay staff of the parishes and schools where I've been assigned. I see them day in and day out, and they have helped to form me as a priest and as a person.

How do you feel about becoming a pastor?

I'm looking forward to it. After five years of being an associate and having really solid mentors, moving into the role of pastor feels familiar. I know I

have a lot to learn, but I feel confident about the new responsibilities that come with being a pastor.

What relationship would you like to have with the parochial school?

I hope to be very present at Santa Sophia Academy. My first assignment at St. Pius taught me that the priest's presence is crucial for the full thriving of parochial schools. The priest also becomes more familiar and approachable for the school community when he is present, which humanizes the priesthood for many people and makes priesthood a more realistic possibility for students with priestly vocations.

What advice do you have for those seeking to grow spiritually?

When it comes to growing in holiness, my counsel is to develop a life of prayer — in particular, silent prayer. Begin by working through rooting out sin and sinful habits. Read the lives of the saints and their writings. Learn and practice "Lectio Divina" (a meditative approach to reading Scripture) each day. Pray the rosary daily, focusing on the mysteries of the lives of the Holy Family. Find a priest you trust who can offer you good counsel along the way.

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To Serve and Profess

Cardinal-designate Robert McElroy ordained nine local men to the permanent diaconate June 18.

The ordination liturgy was held at St. Thérèse of Carmel Church in Carmel Valley, with auxiliary bishops John Dolan and Ramón Bejarano concelebrating.

Those ordained as deacons included: Timothy B. Clark, Santa Sophia Parish, Spring Valley; Victor Garcia, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Vista; David Gonzalez, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, San Ysidro; Wayne Heffner, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Vista; J. Carlos Morales, Christ the King Parish, San Diego; Jaime Roque, St. Michael Parish, San Diego; Ted Rotunda, St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Fallbrook; Daniel Sanchez-Garcia, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Vista; and Gregory Settlemayer, Our Mother of Confidence Parish, San Diego.



IN LOVING
Memory

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



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Cardinal-designate Robert McElroy celebrated Sunday Mass at St. Rita's Church on June 19. Beyond acknowledging the Feast of Corpus Christi, he said the community was marking "three moments of thanks." He expressed thanks for the life of Sister Margaret Castro, who had died in recent days after serving the parish for decades; for all of the fathers on Father's Day; and for Juneteenth, a holiday that marks the end of slavery on June 19, 1865. The diocese's Commission for African American Catholics organized the Mass, which also featured a reflection by Dr. Constance Carroll, former chancellor of the San Diego Community College District and long-time parishioner of St. Rita's.

News Briefs

Teachers to Have Another Round of 'Faith & Science' Training

The Diocese of San Diego began implementing the Credible Catholic Faith & Science Curriculum this past school year.

Developed by Jesuit Father Robert Spitzer through his nonprofit organization, The Magis Center, the free educational curriculum includes "seven essential modules" intended to demonstrate to middle school and high school students that faith and science are not incompatible.

Father Spitzer will lead a training session on Saturday, Aug. 6, for Catholic school teachers and catechists who instruct middle school students. Held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Our Lady of Grace Parish in El Cajon, the session will provide an overview of the curriculum's "True Happiness" module. Attendees will explore how the decision to follow or to reject Jesus' teachings impacts one's ultimate happiness.

Last summer, Father Spitzer led a similar training session, during which participants were introduced to Module 2, "Evidence for God's Existence from Science," which was the first to be implemented in the San Diego Diocese.

The upcoming training is co-sponsored by the diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry and the Office for Schools. There is no cost to attend, but pre-registration is required. For more information, call (858) 490-8234 or visit sdcatholicdisciples.net.

Cristo Rey H.S. Now Part of Torero Promise Program

Qualified students at Cristo Rey San Diego High School will now be able to take advantage of a special admission track opportunity to attend the University of San Diego, with 100 percent of their family's demonstrated financial need met, through USD's Torero Promise program.

Launched in 2017, the Torero Promise provides a pathway to college for graduating seniors at one of the 10 participating high schools who have a 3.7 GPA or higher, have taken at least three honors-level courses and have no disciplinary or academic violations. If a student fulfills these qualifications, they receive automatic admission to USD.

USD will also meet 100 percent of the federally demonstrated financial need of the student with a financial assis-

tance package that may include student loans, work study and financial aid.

"Cristo Rey's unique model allows the school to offer an affordable, Catholic, college-preparatory education to students from traditionally marginalized backgrounds, most of whom will be the first in their family to attend college," stated Robert Nascenzi, the school's founding president. "The opportunity for our students to attend USD is a huge step forward in helping the school fulfill its mission, and we are grateful for being included in such a noble program."

Visit cristoreysandiego.org or phone (619) 432-1899 for more information.

St. Rose of Lima Parish Glee Club Wins at Competition

CHULA VISTA — The St. Rose of Lima Glee Club Program, an

after-school performing arts group composed of a select group of fourth-through eighth-grade students from St. Rose of Lima School, won five awards in the Music in the Parks competition May 18 at Universal Studios Hollywood.

The group took first place in the Mixed Middle Show Choir category, first place in the Elementary School Division Show Choir category, and second place in the Middle School Division Show Choir category.

Individually, fifth-grader Gabby Nieves won in the Outstanding Soloist for Elementary category and sixth-grader Yuri Williams in the Outstanding Soloist for Middle School category.

St. Rose of Lima Glee brings theatrical music and dance, vocal improvisation, and modern pop and classical music stylings to the stage and to local schools and parishes. The recent competition was its first time on the competition stage following a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Do Prison Ministry from Home with Correspondence Course

If you feel called to prison ministry, it's possible to answer that call from the comfort of your own home.

Volunteers are needed for a ministry that involves sharing their life experience anonymously with men and women in California prisons who are seeking to restart their lives. Volunteers guide incarcerated men and women as they are enrolled in correspondence courses on Parenting, Anger Management, and 12-step addiction recovery.

For more information, email eeereichert@gmail.com or call (619) 203-8973.

Panel Discussion Reflects on 'Practical Ecumenism'

The Lutheran/Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue of San Diego held a panel discussion June 8 at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church in La Mesa.

The theme was "Practical Ecumenism: Stories of Spiritual Care from the San Diego Convention Center's Teen Migrant Shelter." The panel was composed of Lutherans, Anglicans and Catholics who ministered to the migrant children at the Convention Center last year. About 24 people attended in person and another 185

Briefs *Continued on Page 19*

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Briefs *Continued from Page 18*

participated online.

Participants included Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano of the Catholic Diocese of San Diego; Bishop Andy Taylor, Pacifica Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; and Bishop Susan B. Snook of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego.

Magis Women Presenting Retreats in California, Arizona

Magis Women, a 501(c)3 women's ministry, will be holding women's weekend retreats from Sept. 23 to 25 at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Los Altos, Calif., and from Oct. 14-16 at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, Ariz.

The "Into His Marvelous Light" retreats will invite participants "to encounter the living Christ through prayer, sacrament and loving fellowship and to move together from the darkness of this world's trials into the marvelous light of God's love and goodness."

Registration for the retreat in Los Altos is \$375 per person. Registration for the Scottsdale retreat ranges from \$350 per person for a double-occupancy room to \$445 per person for a private room. The price includes six meals, all retreat materials, opportunity for reconciliation, Mass, and quiet reflection time.

To register, visit magiswomen.com.

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 Peñasquitos.

Sponsored by the parish's Hearts of Fire Ministry, the event runs from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Upcoming dates in 2022 include: July 8, Aug. 12, Sept. 9, Oct. 14, Nov. 11 and Dec. 9.

For more information, email olmcheartsoffire@gmail.com.



PHOTOS BY HOWARD LIPIN



Pentecost 2022

An estimated 2,000 people gathered at Cathedral Catholic High School on June 4 for the fifth annual Pentecost Mass for All Peoples.

The celebration of the many ethnic and cultural communities that comprise the Diocese of San Diego included a multilingual Mass celebrated by Cardinal-designate Robert McElroy in the school gym. The liturgy commenced with a procession of about 25 cultures, including the Ukrainian community for the first time.

Mass was followed by an outdoor festival, where the various cultural communities shared samples of their traditional cuisine.

Priest Assignments

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

Father Marek Stroba, a member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, will be associate pastor of Most Precious Blood Parish in Chula Vista, effective July 15.

Jesuit Father Brad A. Mills will be associate pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in San Diego, effective Sept. 1.

Obituary

SISTER MARGARET CASTRO

Sister Margaret Castro, a member of the Sisters for Christian Community, died June 8 at Scripps Mercy Hospital.

Sister Castro, 83, served St. Rita Parish in San Diego for more than 40 years as director of religious education and leader of the Hispanic community.

Mary Margaret Castro was born Nov. 12, 1938, in San Diego to James and Anna Castro.

In the mid-1950s, she entered religious life with the Missionaries of Charity, founded by St. Teresa of Calcutta. She attended the School of Tropical Medicine and became a leprosy specialist in Calcutta. After 13 years, she left the Missionaries of Charity in 1968.

She was sent back to the United States from India after having fallen seriously ill, said a longtime friend, Sister Dina Marie Garcia, a member of the Religious of Jesus and Mary who serves as pastoral assistant with the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults at St. Rita's.

Following her return to health, Sister Castro joined the U.S. Peace Corps and was stationed in Malawi, Africa. She later would join two other religious communities

before finding the right fit as a member of the Sisters for Christian Community. She made her lifelong commitment to the Sisters for Christian Community on Nov. 8, 1991, in the presence of the late Auxiliary Bishop Gilbert Chavez.

"(Sister Castro) had a very, very big heart. She loved people," recalled Sister Garcia, who noted that her late friend had a particular love for the poor and "would drop everything and go help them."

Among other positions, Sister Castro served from 1978 to 1984 as director of the Linda Vista Neighborhood House Association in San Diego and in 1987 as a case worker with Catholic Charities' Refugee Resettlement Program, in Washington, D.C.

Sister Garcia described her as "a very fun person" and "very devoted to the Eucharist."

"She was a very beautiful person in all ways," she said.

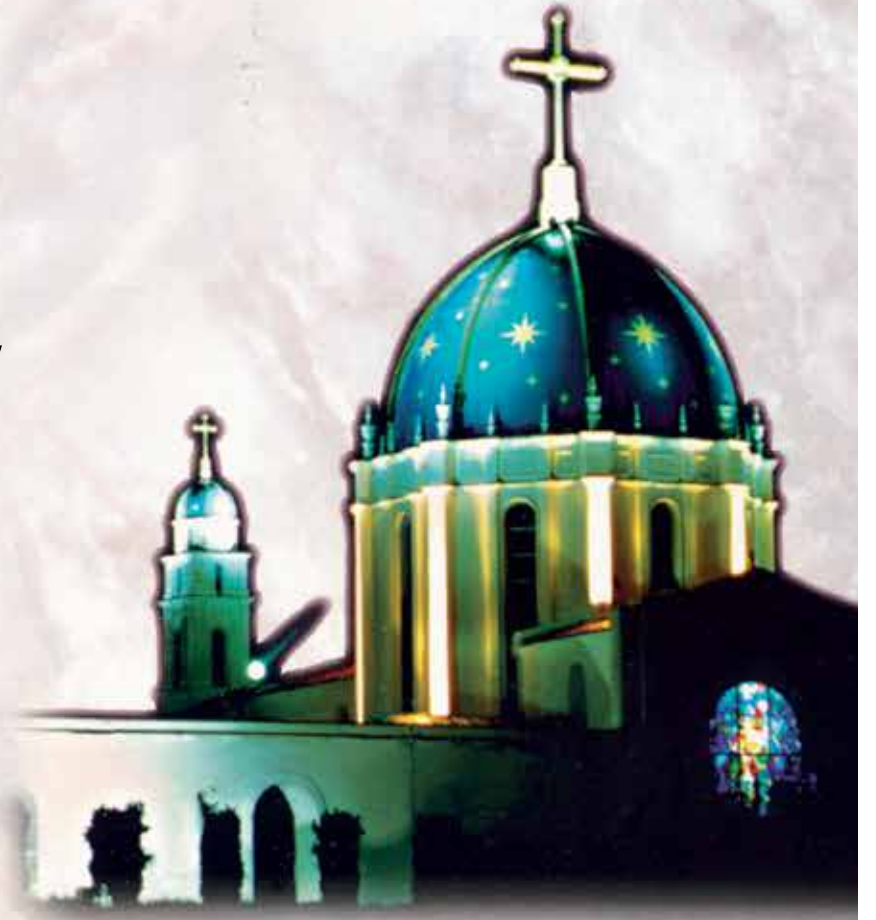
A funeral Mass was celebrated June 15 at St. Rita Church.



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