

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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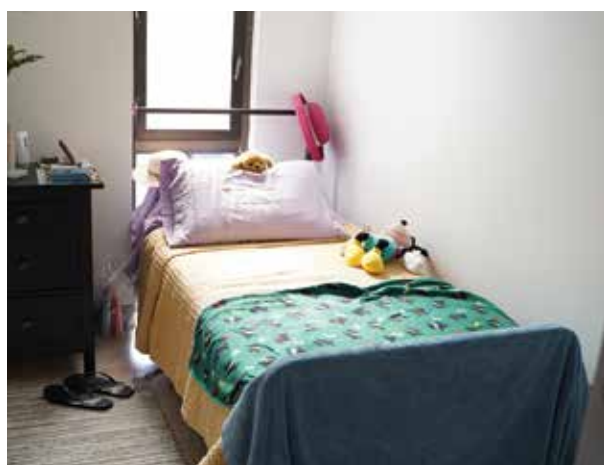
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DECEMBER 2022



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SWEET TIDINGS: Music ministries across the San Diego Diocese are getting ready for Christmas Masses, including the youth musicians and vocalists at The Immaculata Parish.



Promising Shelter

Rachel's Promise takes women off streets, provides path to permanent housing. **Page 2**



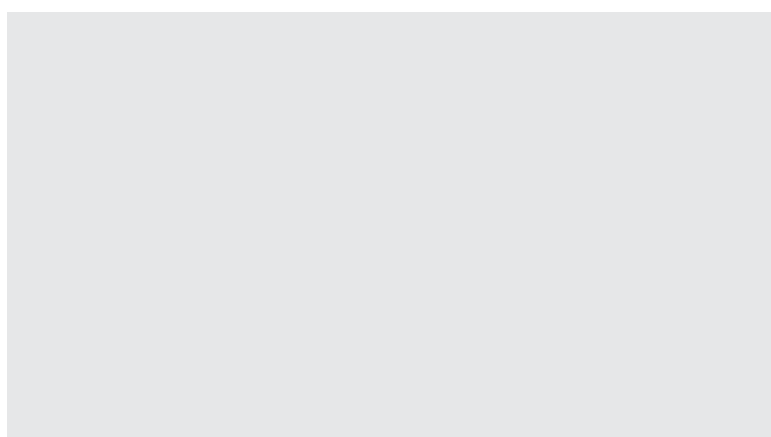
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'Transforming Grace'

A Christmas Message from
Cardinal Robert W. McElroy

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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.



God's Grace Transforms Us

Each year, we celebrate at Christmas the history of salvation that unites the whole of human history with the grace, and the majesty, and the love of our God.

As we are reminded of the prophets whom God sent into the world to announce the message of God's goodness and mercy toward us, we are caught up in the reality that the Jewish people were singularly an instrument of God's action, culminating in the birth of Jesus Christ into homelessness in a barren stable in Bethlehem.

Amidst a world that cries out on so many levels to dramatize those elements of God's salvation of justice, peace and light which still remain far off in our human societies, we can



become preoccupied with all that remains undone in the building of God's Kingdom.

But the transforming grace which entered the world with overwhelm-

Message from
Cardinal Robert W. McElroy

ing power in the birth of our Lord and Savior creates miracles all around us every day in the profound efforts by men and women of faith to bring the light and the spirit of the Gospel into our family life, our friendships and our world as a whole.

Yes, the fullness of the Kingdom of God lies far off in the distance. But the penetrating light of Jesus Christ pierces through every form of human darkness to renew our hope, and faith, and our commitment to ennobling the world into which we have been born.

So, take heart and find joy in these days of Advent and Christmas. For they reveal to us in a unique way that the grace of our God can never be stopped.

'Promise' Offers Path to Housing

By Denis Grasska



Rachel's Promise, a new shelter for homeless women

in downtown San Diego, represents an expansion of Catholic Charities' outreach to this vulnerable population.

For almost 39 years, Catholic Charities has operated two similarly named facilities: Rachel's Women's Center, a day center located at 759 8th Ave., and Rachel's Night Shelter, a 35-bed emergency shelter at 830 9th Ave.

In late July, these facilities were joined by Rachel's Promise (825 7th Ave.), which provides another 40 beds.

The facilities are named after the biblical Rachel, who was the wife of the patriarch Jacob.

Rachel's Promise fills a need that Appaswamy "Vino" Pajanor recognized four years ago when, shortly after becoming executive director of Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego, he took a tour of Rachel's Women's Center and Rachel's Night Shelter.

Pajanor saw more than 100 women at Rachel's Women's Center, but only 35 beds at the night shelter. He learned from the staff that most of the women at the day center would be sleeping on the streets that night. Even if given a referral to another homeless shelter, they wouldn't accept it, because most of them are survivors of trauma and don't feel safe under the same roof as men.

Rachel's Promise differs from Rachel's Night Shelter in a significant way. While residents of the night shelter must vacate the premises during daylight hours, with many of them heading over to the day center until they are ready to sleep, Rachel's Promise is accessible 24 hours a day.

Antoinette Fallon, director of homeless services with Catholic Charities, said Rachel's Promise "really fills a gap in our service-delivery system."

She said that, when Rachel's Promise opened, some residents of the



SHELTERED: Karen, pictured, is among the local women who have found shelter and a path toward permanent housing at Rachel's Promise, a new 40-bed shelter operated by Catholic Charities.

night shelter who are dealing with serious health challenges chose to relocate there.

"It's easier to rest when you're in the same building all day long," she explained.

Fallon said that several women living at Rachel's Promise work at night and have to sleep during the day. The 24/7 nature of the new facility makes that possible, too.

At Rachel's Promise, residents are served breakfast, a light lunch, and dinner every day; they are also able to eat lunch at Rachel's Women's Center, which is only about a one-minute walk away. The women have access to showers and laundry services and are also assigned a case manager, who helps them to set goals for a productive future and provides referrals for such things as physical and mental health treatment, substance-abuse recovery, and employment assistance.

As with all of Catholic Charities' shelters, which include La Posada men's shelter in Carlsbad, she said everything is geared toward preparing homeless individuals to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

Pajanor said the length of a woman's

stay at Rachel's Promise depends on how long it takes her to be ready for permanent housing. This might require as little as a week or two, he said, or perhaps as much as two or three months.

Rachel's Promise is funded by the City of San Diego and the San Diego Housing Commission and is operated by Catholic Charities.

"We're very grateful to the city for the opportunity to do this," Fallon said of operating Rachel's Promise.

But those serving the homeless continue to have their work cut out for them.

"Even with these 40 additional beds," she said, "there's a great unmet need for safe spaces for people who are unhoused."

The City of San Diego's "point-in-time" count of the local homeless community, which was conducted last February, reported 2,494 unsheltered homeless individuals — a 9% increase from 2,283 in 2020.

In its own monthly count, the San Diego Downtown Partnership last September counted 800 people in the East Village neighborhood, where Rachel's Promise is located.

New Synod Phase Engages Parishes, Nations

By Aida Bustos



The Catholic Church has entered the second of four years in a consultation known as the synod.

This year, the synod both returns to where the consultation began — the parishes — and reaches across international borders.

In the San Diego Diocese, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy is asking pastors to take the information their parishioners shared at the small-group sessions they hosted last spring to identify an issue or two they can address early in the year at their parish. They are to use the “synodal” process, which calls for inviting as broad a range of people as possible to discern together the path forward, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

In the fall, the parishes are to host another round of small-group sessions to discern how they can grow as a Eucharistic community. These sessions will support the National Eucharistic Revival, initiated by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops last June, to promote a relationship with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and to nurture the communities of faith to become what they receive.

Meanwhile, the analysis continues of the data from an electronic survey the diocese conducted in September and October in the synod’s initial listening phase. Around 22,000 people completed the survey. The diocese’s synod team plans to release an executive summary of the survey results by February.

Two synod commissions will use the results of the listening phase to de-



MUTUAL SUPPORT: Parishioners of Sacred Heart Church in Coronado shared their experiences at a synod held Nov. 5 at the parish hall, focused on parenting. Cardinal Robert W. McElroy is asking parishes to bring their faithful together to discuss issues of common concern and discern a path forward.

velop proposals to address the main issues that were raised. The cardinal, in turn, has said he will work to implement them, in consultation with pastors.

The synod is a universal undertaking. National bishops’ conferences have collected the findings of the consultations in their dioceses. Now, representatives of the dioceses are going to meet virtually in December and January in international gatherings to discuss the points raised in their national reports.

Cardinal McElroy tapped members of the diocese’s synod team to serve as delegates in these meetings: Marioly Galván and Robert Ehnou, PhD, the diocese’s chancellor and director of the Office for Life, Peace and Justice, respectively, who head the team; Father Michael Pham, vicar general; Victor Carmona, PhD; and Katrina

Albrandt, a member of the San Diego synod commission.

They will be meeting with their counterparts from the United States and Canada, one of the clusters in the Continental Phase of the synod. These discussions will be brought together in the North American continental report that will be submitted to the Vatican by next March.

The bishops from across the world will then meet in two sessions in the Synod of Bishops at the Vatican in October 2023 and 2024 to discuss the continental reports and prepare recommendations for the pope. He is expected to issue a teaching document, or apostolic exhortation, responding to the main issues the faithful raised sometime thereafter.

At the diocese, parishes are beginning to use the synodal process to tackle issues important to their com-

munities. Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado held a Synod for Parents on Nov. 5, in response to concerns expressed by some parents about the problems they were facing in their family life, exacerbated by the pandemic.

“It was wonderful to hear the perspectives of other people,” said one of the participants, Shirley Gauvin, who attended the synod with her husband, Steven. “We have a lot of similarities but we’re all dealing with different challenges. To hear what other people are going through, and maybe share our own experiences, is very helpful. Everybody has something to offer and to learn. I’m so glad our parish organized this.”

Follow the synod process at all levels at sdcatholic.org/synod.



‘Everyone Should Have a Bobby in Their Corner’

By Denis Grasska



And the award goes to ...

Dr. Robert Ehnou, director of the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, is the recipient of Amplify Voices’ 2022 Impact Award.

The award, presented Nov. 19 in Phoenix, recognizes an individual who has advanced the mission of Amplify Voices in a significant way. According to its website, the nonprofit “serves individuals historically oppressed, misunderstood or silenced, who want to use their voice as an instrument of change.”

Last summer, Ehnou partnered with Amplify Voices and the Center for Restorative Justice in the University of San Diego’s School of Leadership and Education Sciences to organize an event where six people shared their firsthand experience with the criminal justice system. Five were paroled after decades in prison; the sixth shared her perspective as the wife and sister of incarcerated men.



Dr. Robert Ehnou

“Restoring Humanity: A Speaker Showcase on Restorative Reintegration” was held June 11 at USD and was also livestreamed. The six speakers went through a 90-day public-speaking training program run by Amplify Voices to help them prepare their talks.

Though “honored” to receive the award, Ehnou said the “Restoring Humanity” event was “truly a team effort.”

“(Ehnou) is an inspiring, gentle and compassionate individual to work with,” said Amanda Schneider, executive director of Amplify Voices, “and it was his commitment to carrying out his vision, in collaboration with Amplify’s programming, that made this (selection of the 2022 Impact Award recipient) a very easy and confident choice.”

Amplify Voices founder Deborah Shapiro said, “Everyone should have a Bobby in their corner. He fights for what he believes in, and he believes in humanity.”

A family commitment prevented Ehnou from attending the Impact Award presentation. His friend, Dr. David Karp, director of USD’s Center for Restorative Justice, accepted the award on his behalf.

“Bobby has profound empathy and concern for people who have been stigmatized and disenfranchised by our criminal legal system,” Karp said.

“This award acknowledges not only his commitment to support their success but how he creates opportunities for justice-impacted people to share their stories in the service of education and change.”

“Restoring Humanity” is just one example of the work that the Office for Life, Peace and Justice is doing in the area of justice, which includes direct ministry, education and advocacy.

The diocese has more than 200 volunteers serving in detention ministry at 24 facilities in San Diego and Imperial counties, where Ehnou estimates about 15,000 baptized Catholics are among the incarcerated. And the ministry is looking for more volunteers.

“If our prison/jail ministry was a parish,” he said, “it would be, if not the largest, one of the largest parishes in our diocese.”

The “Restoring Humanity” event can be viewed online at rb.gy/10azim.



La Posada: Parish to Host Journey of Faith, Joy

By Denis Grasska

Young adults are invited to enter into the biblical story of Mary and Joseph's search for shelter on that first Christmas.

The diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry is partnering with Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Barrio Logan to present its annual La Posada Navideña.

The bilingual event will take place from 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 17, at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

It will begin inside the church with a recitation of the rosary, accompanied by prayer and song. After that, participants will venture outside for an explanation of the posada tradition and a reflection that will connect it to the modern world.

Then, they will walk in procession through the parish grounds, led by a statue of Mary and Joseph depicted as the "Santos Peregrinos" (Holy Pilgrims) on their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

The procession will stop at the doors of various buildings on the parish property. Through the lyrics of the traditional posada song, "Joseph" will request lodging and will be rebuffed. After being turned away at several doors, Joseph and Mary will be welcomed into the parish hall.

"Then, we all go in, and that's where the party's waiting for us," said Maricruz Flores, director of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

Young adults will enjoy a celebration with Mexican food and desserts, such



LEADERS: Father Brad Mills, SJ, of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, and Brilema Perez, from the diocese's Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, met at the church on Nov. 9 to plan La Posada.

as tamales, pan dulce and champurrado, and take part in some "dinámicas," or games. There also will be a piñata.

A beloved Mexican Advent tradition, the posada also serves as a mini-catechism lesson.

Brilema Perez, associate director of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, explained that posada traditions can be traced back more than 400 years to Spanish missionaries' efforts to teach the faith to the native population of Mexico.

She notes that the piñata traditionally has seven spikes, representing the "seven deadly sins" of envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, sloth and wrath. She said breaking the piñata and releasing the candy inside is a reminder of the "goodness" that emerges when we break our attachments to sin.

Even the blindfold that is worn and the stick that is swung when hitting the piñata have symbolic meaning. Flores said the former represents the trust we must have that God will guide us in the

right direction, while the latter symbolizes the courage that God gives us to renounce our sins.

Both the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish have experience hosting posadas. This is their second consecutive year collaborating on this event.

In previous years, the Youth and Young Adult Office held its own posadas at the diocesan Pastoral Center.

At Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, the posada is also an annual tradition—one that is held over nine successive nights. Posadas will be held at the parish every night from Dec. 16 through Dec. 24, with each installment led by a different ministry.

Jesuit Father Brad Mills, parochial vicar at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, said that the posada on Dec. 17 is geared toward young adults, but will be open to everyone. He anticipates that many of his parishioners will be taking part.

Father Mills said that the posada may be a reenactment of Mary and Joseph's journey 2,000 years ago, but it is relevant to our own spiritual journeys.

"The posada, to me, speaks of that welcome that we all seek ... and that invitation to welcome the outsider," he said, "but also the joy that comes with that, the joy that comes with being a welcoming Church and promoting welcoming families and welcoming communities."

For more information, contact Brilema Perez at bperez@sdccatholic.org or (858) 490-8260.



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Young Adult Christmas Gala on Tap for Dec. 10

By Denis Grasska

POWAY — More than 300 people from throughout the diocese are expected to attend the annual Young Adult Christmas Gala.

The event, sponsored by the diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, will be held from 6:30 to 11 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 10, at St. Michael Parish in Poway. Catholics ages 18 to 39, dressed in cocktail attire, will enjoy an evening of dinner and dancing.

Among the attendees will be Emily Sanchez, leader of the young adult group at St. Anne Parish in Logan Heights, who is the recipient of this year's Fiat Award.

The award, which was first presented at the 2015 gala, recognizes a young adult who has served "diligently, prayerfully and with a servant's heart" at the parish, diocesan or regional level. "Fiat" is Latin for "let it be done" and was the Virgin Mary's response when called to be the mother of the Messiah.

Sanchez, 27, has been a St. Anne's parishioner for about 12 years. Her family previously had attended Mission San Diego de Alcalá Parish. But after accepting an invitation to St. Anne's, where Mass is celebrated exclusively in Latin according to the liturgical books of 1962, they "just fell in love with it."

She has been the leader of St. Anne's Young Adults since May of 2019.

The group meets on Wednesdays after the 6:30 p.m. Mass. Its gatherings attract an average of about 65 young adults every week, with attendance evenly divided between young adults



LET'S DANCE: Local Catholics enjoy the dance floor at the 2019 Young Adult Christmas Gala. The popular diocesan event will be held this year on Dec. 10 at St. Michael Parish in Poway.

from St. Anne's and those from other parishes.

"I am humbled to be offered this kind award, but grateful for the opportunity to point all glory towards Christ," said Sanchez. "The graces we've received through this ministry have all come from Him, and He never fails to impress."

In a sense, Sanchez owes her life to young adult ministry. She shared that her parents met as members of the young adult group at Mission San Diego, as did the parents of many of her close friends.

At St. Anne's, Sanchez said, she saw

2022 Fiat Award Winner

Emily Sanchez



the need for a young adult group and "really felt called" to step up and lead it. From there, it took off.

"It went from once a month on Saturdays to every Wednesday," she said, "and the grace was just immediate. We really tried to make it a fun and enjoyable atmosphere and then just provide rich, deep substance."

Maricruz Flores, director of the Of-

fice for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, praised Sanchez for her dedication to young adult ministry at St. Anne's — all of it as an unpaid volunteer — as well as for her "collaborative spirit," expressing gratitude for her assistance with organizing and promoting diocesan young adult events.

"She's very welcoming," Flores said. "She talks to everybody and anybody, she exudes a sense of warmth, and she always has a great big smile."

Brilema Perez, associate director of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, noted that St. Anne's young adult group "has really flourished" and become "a very close-knit community" under Sanchez's watch.

"I think that her leadership really has allowed for that," she said.

As she prepares to take the stage to receive this year's Fiat Award, Sanchez has a message for fellow young adults about their role in the Church.

"Turn your heart toward Christ again and again and be transformed by Him," she said. "Let His love pour through you to everyone you encounter. Our faith is a gem to be treasured, rich in gifts to bring us nearer to His Heart, and deserving of radical commitment. Live for Him and find that ultimate peace."

Tickets to the Young Adult Christmas Gala, \$49 for singles and \$90 for married couples, will be available through Monday, Dec. 5, or until they sell out. Visit sdccatholic.org/youngadult.



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A GIFT FOR GOD: We show our thankfulness and gratitude to God when we care for the world He created.

By Christina Bagaglio Slentz



The days grow dark earlier and earlier, and we long for the light.

God's gift of creation again reflects and repeats the truth of our relationship with our Creator. This anticipation builds during Advent as we wait for Christ, the Light of the World, to be reborn among us. But how do we celebrate this joyous occasion in harmony with this gift? Here are a few ideas for you and yours.

Truly 'Greening' Your Church & Home

Skip the overload of plastic, single-season items and fill your holiday home with the beauty of God's creation. Deck the halls with real boughs — use natural branches, pinecones, dried fruits, nuts and sprigs of berries alongside candles and ribbons. Revitalize family decorations passed down from older generations, search for gently used items in thrift shops, and take good care of the new decorations you purchase, so they will last longer. Consider splurging on a reusable Advent calendar instead of buying plastic-heavy "throw-aways" each year. You'll save money in the long run. Finally, opt for LED Christmas lights, which last longer and use less energy.

Sustainable Gifts

Shopping in advance can be key to avoiding last-minute purchases that don't fit or aren't desired. **WARNING:** Returned clothing will be sent to a landfill as it is less expensive for companies to toss than re-rack items. For your bookworm? Find a signed copy of a (used) book by his/her favorite author. Trying to please grandkids who have it all? Give an experience — tickets to a sport or cultural arts event — in lieu of a physical gift. What about those hard-to-shop-for grandparents? Rally all the cousins and make a video with your favorite app featuring old family gathering images and messages of love. The value will be priceless. Want to put a bow on your green giving endeavor? Save your brown paper grocery bags for wrapping your favorite things and tie them up with string.



Eco-friendly Christmas Activities

If you are crafty, try your hand at making your very own ecological Advent calendar. The Internet abounds with ideas for repurposing decoratively painted paper

rolls to package daily sweets.

Also, try these environmentally-friendly actions that can add meaning to Christmas.

- Make Christmas cards for a retirement community.
- Pick up trash in your neighborhood.
- Decorate your Christmas tree.
- Set out food for the birds.
- Watch a Christmas movie with your family.
- Support a local toy drive.
- Have a Christmas music dance party.
- Go for a walk to look at the Christmas lights.
- Volunteer at a local food bank.
- Have a Christmas baking day.
- Make cards for your teacher, coach, crossing guard, etc.
- Deliver treats to your neighbors.
- Visit or reach out to a distant family member.
- Grocery shop for a food bank.
- Go for a hike.
- Go caroling.
- Call or text a friend with a holiday message.
- Read Christmas books.
- Wrap a present for your pastor.



The Reason for the Season

Catholic Social Teaching calls us to care for creation because the earth, our common home, is God's gift to all humanity. In this season of gift-giving, our response to this gift is our gift to God. Therefore, each intentional, eco-friendly action is like a small prayer, reflecting our gratitude and keeping us mindful of the real reason for the season — Jesus.

Learn about
returned
purchases and
landfills



What Can Children Do While Home from School?

By Denis Grasska



With Christmas just around the corner, many children will soon find themselves with two full weeks of vacation from school.

Little ones will be taking a well-deserved break from their studies, engaging in all sorts of holiday fun, and trying to make the most of their free time.

But where does God fit in?

Lissa Hutcheson, director of catechetical ministry at Our Lady of Grace Parish in El Cajon, has the following tips for parents and grandparents looking for ways to incorporate faith into their family fun during their vacation.

Catechize Organically

Getting your children to think about God and their Catholic faith doesn't have to mean sitting them down for a lesson. God is everywhere, and whatever activity you're engaged in can provide an opportunity to think about Him and His love for us.

On a family road trip, Hutcheson said, parents might consider inviting their children to take notice of the other cars on the highway and to pray that those motorists will arrive safely at their destinations. Whenever the family car crests another San Diego hill, revealing a breathtaking view of the Pacific Ocean, that presents an opportunity to point out that it was God who created this beautiful world



COLLECTION: "Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John the Baptist," painted in 1658 by Francisco de Zurbarán, is part of the "Devotions" collection at the San Diego Museum of Art.

and to express our thanks to Him.

"We lose sight in our minute-to-minute, day-to-day living," said Hutcheson, "and so children don't hear us say enough, 'Oh, thanks to God,' or 'This is because of God,' or 'Let's take a minute and think about Jesus.' We don't do that enough."

Find God at the Museum

San Diego's Balboa Park is home to almost 20 museums.

While none of them are explicitly Catholic, they can still serve as conversation-starters about matters of faith.

Hutcheson noted that exhibits in the Museum of Us, the cultural anthropology museum formerly known as the Museum of Man, can lead to conversations about the human race and how it was created in God's image and likeness.

Meanwhile, similar opportunities are presented by the San Diego Museum

of Art, where various examples of Catholic art are on display.

"Many people are visual learners," Hutcheson said, "and art is a fantastic way to find the joy, the love of Christ in our life."

"Just sit there with your kids. ... Have them choose one piece of art and ask them to find the love, the light of life in that piece of art."

Tips Continued on Page 8

Retirement Fund for Religious

Please give to those who have given a lifetime.



Visit retiredreligious.org/2022photos to meet the religious pictured.

Elderly religious need your help.

Like those pictured, nearly 25,000 senior sisters, brothers, and religious order priests have devoted their lives to prayer and ministry—educating the young, tending the sick, aiding the needy, and more. Yet years of serving for little or no pay have left a profound shortage in retirement savings. Your support of the Retirement Fund for Religious helps furnish care, medicine, and other necessities. Please give generously.

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Make check payable to the
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retiredreligious.org

Tips *Continued from Page 7***Service Opportunities**

"I think (Christmas vacation is) the perfect time for service," Hutcheson said.

Because of age requirements, younger children might not be able to volunteer at nonprofits. But that doesn't mean they can't experience the joy that comes from giving up some of their time to serve those in need.

Hutcheson suggests making an extra batch of Christmas cookies and bringing them to a nearby fire station or delivering them to the neighbors.

Other potential service projects include: preparing bags with granola bars, soap, hand sanitizer and other essentials, and keeping them in the car, ready to hand out to any homeless people the family might encounter; collecting baby supplies for mothers facing unplanned pregnancies and making arrangements to drop them off at a local crisis pregnancy center or other pro-life organization; and picking up trash at your neighborhood park.

"Service doesn't have to be some grandiose thing," Hutcheson said. "I think what people forget is that (it includes) how do I serve in the home? Do I make my bed? Do I pick up my toys? And, if I do, does someone have to ask me or do I see that they need to be picked up?"

Time for Togetherness

"We're so busy and there's so much noise in our life, especially during the holidays," Hutcheson said, that it's important "to just take a deep breath."

Hutcheson recommends setting

**Fiesta for Our Lady of Guadalupe**

The diocese's annual Our Lady of Guadalupe Procession and Mass is a great holiday activity for the entire family, and not just those with roots in Mexico. Pope Pius XII named Our Lady of Guadalupe the "Patroness of all the Americas" in 1945.

The Guadalupana Confederation, with the San Diego Diocese, will hold this year's celebration on Sunday, Dec. 4. The procession begins at noon at the Morley Field Sports Complex at Upas and Texas streets. It will include Aztec dancers, traditional bands, brightly decorated theme cars and parish, movement and ministry groups. The procession will travel east and move through North Park streets, ending around 1:30 p.m. at St. Augustine High School.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will celebrate a bilingual Mass at 2 p.m. at the school gym, with Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano. Afterward, there will be a great fiesta in the school's courtyard featuring samples of Mexican food.

The entire community is invited. There will be plenty of parking at Morley Field. At the school, there will be limited space on residential streets, at a lot on 32nd and Palm streets, and in an underground structure, with entrance at Nutmeg Street. Carpooling is encouraged.

Information will be available at sdcatholic.org/guadalupe2022.

aside 10 to 15 minutes every evening throughout Christmas vacation for "just enjoying each other" as family members. This might involve taking out a favorite board game, but it would also be a good time "to pull out the Bible."

She suggests holding a short prayer service, during which family members read the Mass readings for the day and discuss them, or perhaps praying the rosary together as a family.

More Masses, Please

During the typical two-week Christmas vacation, Catholics might be obligated to attend Mass four times: on two Sundays, as well as on Christmas Day (Dec. 25) and the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1).

This year, both Dec. 25 and Jan. 1 fall on Sundays, reducing to just two the number of Masses that Catholic families are required to attend while on vacation. But that doesn't mean you can't go beyond the minimum, especially with so many days off and with Masses celebrated every day of the week.

"I think that the more we attend Mass, the more fruitful our life is in Christ," said Hutcheson, adding that taking the children to even one additional Mass during each of the two weeks of vacation would be a good thing.

She notes that each daily Mass is the feast of a particular saint. After attending Mass, one possible activity would be to learn more about the saint of the day.

She also recommends making time during vacation to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation.



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DIOCESAN VIGIL AND COMMISSIONING MASS

**Cardinal Robert McElroy, main celebrant,
with Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano**

The third annual diocesan candlelight vigil for Simbang Gabi (Filipino for “Evening Masses”) is the opening to devotions at parishes held the following day through Christmas Eve across the San Diego region.



Everyone is invited to join the Filipino Catholic community for this beautiful celebration that lights the way to the birth of our Savior.

Information: (858) 490 8306 or adiaz@sdccatholic.org

Schedule of Masses at sdccatholic.org/simbanggabi2022



Dear Friends and Family of Catholic Charities:

As we begin this holiday season, we would like to share five stories of selflessness. And, while we are all starting to accept the "new normal" in our world, it is an experience to see humanity persevere. Through these tough times and challenges, it is easy to be selfish, to focus on our needs and what is best for "me to succeed." These are stories of humanity at its best. People work selflessly to support their family, their community, their fur family, and seniors. Each week and through emails, social media, and website, these five new stories will be shared throughout the new year.

I hope that by reading these stories, you will help support Catholic Charities in our mission to provide support and services to those in our community to help them in their hour of need.

As part of your "new normal," will you be selfless in your intention?

For those in need, support feels unimaginable. For those suffering alone, happiness becomes indescribable. Let us open our hearts and learn more about Catholic Charities and the amazing people we help.

Catholic Charities exists to give hope. To welcome the stranger. To be the Good Samaritan. We share our stories to show how being selfless comes back to you tenfold.

Alexis found herself homeless, living in her van. Her only saving grace was ASAP, her German Shepherd. He took care of her, giving her the support she needed to get out of bed in the morning. When Alexis finally decided to ask for help, she was faced with the decision to help herself but leave her pet behind, her fur family, her main support. When she found Rachel's Women's Center, she was not only welcomed but ASAP was too.

Alexis is one of five people we visited with in person, at length, to hear their stories of selflessness and how they are on new paths in their lives with the help of our services, staff, and volunteers.

Dilan also was homeless after losing his job due to COVID. He, too, has a pet, a fur family that he could not imagine being apart from. Staying at La Posada has given him hope to work towards a life he always dreamed of. Carmen and her family receive food from our EFDN+ program. Carmen and her daughters also volunteer twice a week to help with our food distribution program, helping other families receive food too. The Sadri family chose to support their sister and left Afghanistan last year, fleeing from the Taliban. Their story of family, support, and a new existence is inspiring.

Throughout the holidays, we are featuring each powerful story, one at a time, culminating with a heartfelt message from Mariana, an 81-year-old woman who faced and beat death with a stage 4 cancer diagnosis and 3 months to live; her new outlook on life gives hope that we are all here to serve a purpose.

Food. Housing. Employment. Safety. How do we meet the vast and critical needs in our communities? With kindness, compassion, understanding, and generosity. If you have these qualities in you, put your faith into action with us.

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Sincerely,

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Chief Executive Officer





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<p>4</p> <p>Call us at 619.323.2841 and say, "I want to donate."</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Scan our QR code with your phone</p>  <p>SCAN ME</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Transfer appreciated stocks, bonds, or mutual funds.</p> 
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<p>10</p>  <p>Donate your old vehicle Call 855.780.4483</p>	<p>11</p>  <p>Ask your employer about their corporate gift matching program.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Support us through Amazon Smile.</p>  <p>Select Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego.</p>



Simbang Gabi Celebration Begins Dec. 14

The Southern Cross



The diocese's annual Filipino holiday tradition of Simbang

Gabi will begin with a special vigil Mass to be celebrated by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy on Dec. 14 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Gregory the Great Church.

Simbang Gabi (Filipino for "Night Masses") is a novena of Masses to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary as she awaits the birth of her Son. The evening will begin with a procession of "parols," colorful star-shaped lanterns, that remind the faithful that Jesus is the "Light of the World."

Beginning Dec. 15, Simbang Gabi services will be held in parishes across the diocese at varying times.

Locations

Corpus Christi

450 Corral Canyon Road, Bonita 91902
(619) 482-3954; corpuschristicatholic.org
Dec. 15-23, 6:30 a.m., except Dec. 18

Good Shepherd

8200 Gold Coast Drive,
San Diego 92126
(858) 271-0207; goodshepherdparish.net
Dec. 15-23, 5:30 a.m.; except Dec. 18, 5 a.m.

Mater Dei

1571 Magdalena Ave.,
Chula Vista 91913
(619) 656-3735; materdeicv.org
Dec. 15-23, 6 p.m.; except
Dec. 17, 5 p.m., and Dec. 18, 7 a.m.

Mission San Diego de Alcalá

10818 Mission San Diego Road,
San Diego 92108
(619) 283-7319; missionsandiego.org
Dec. 22, 5:30 p.m.

Mission San Luis Rey

4070 Mission Ave., Oceanside 92057
(760) 757-3250; sanluisreyparish.org
Dec. 16-23, 6:30 p.m.

Most Precious Blood

1245 Fourth Ave., Chula Vista 91911
(619) 422-2100; preciousbloodchurch.com
Dec. 15-23, 6:30 a.m.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

13541 Stoney Creek Road,
San Diego 92129
(858) 484-1070;
Olmcfilipinotraditions@gmail.com
Dec. 15-23, 5:30 p.m., except Dec. 17

Resurrection Parish

1445 Conway Drive, Escondido 92027
(760) 747-2322; resurrectionchurch.org
Dec. 15-23, 7 p.m.

St. Charles

990 Saturn Blvd., San Diego 92154
(619) 482-3954; saintcharles.org
Dec. 15-23, 5:30 a.m.

St. John of the Cross

8086 Broadway Ave.,
Lemon Grove 91956
(619) 466-3209; sjcparishlg.org
Dec. 15-23, 6 a.m.

St. Mark

1147 Discovery St., San Marcos 92078
(760) 747-2322;
stmarkscatholicchurch.org
Dec. 16-24, 4:30 a.m.

St. Mary

1170 S. Broadway, Escondido 92025
(760) 745-1611; stmaryp.org
Dec. 15-22, 7:30 p.m.; except
Dec. 17-18, 8:30 p.m.

St. Mary

Parish Center-707 E Ave.,
National City 91950
(619) 474-1501;
liturgy@stmarynationalcity.org
Dec. 15-23, 6 p.m.; except
Dec. 17-18, 5 p.m.

St. Michael

15546 Pomerado Road, Poway 92064
(858) 487-4755; smpoway.org
Dec. 16-24, 6:15 a.m., except Dec. 18

St. Michael

2643 Homedale St., San Diego 92139
(619) 470-1977;
Sm.liturgy@gmail.com
Dec. 15-23, 7 p.m.;
except Dec. 18, 6 p.m.

St. Pius X

36 E. Naples St., Chula Vista 91911
(619) 420-9193; saintpiusx.org
Dec. 15-23, 7 p.m.;
except Dec. 18, 5 p.m.

St. Rita

5124 Churchward St., San Diego 92114
(619) 264-3165; stritasd.weconnect.com
Dec. 15-23, 6:30 p.m.

St. Rose of Lima

293 H St., Chula Vista 91910
(619) 427-0230; strosecv.com
Dec. 16, 6:15 a.m.; Dec. 17, 7:30 a.m.;
Dec. 18, 7 a.m.; Dec. 19-23, 6:15 a.m.;
Dec. 24, 7:30 a.m.

St. Thérèse of Carmel

4355 Del Mar Trails Road,
San Diego 92130
(858) 481-3232; sttheresecarmel.org
Dec. 18, 5:30 a.m.

More information is available at
sdcatholic.org/simbanggabi2022.

Statues for Sale



"Mary, Mother of the Church" depicts the

cultures of the San Diego Diocese and their saints, martyrs and apostles. The diocese unveiled the 4-foot wooden statue at the Pentecost Mass in May 2020.

Now, it's selling a limited number of 16-inch versions that are hand-carved and painted by the artist who created the original in Italy. Each sells for \$2,000.

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Keynote speaker:
Star Parker



MCs: Marioly Galván and Jake McDonnell
Music and entertainment: Santiago Fernandez

Silent Night? Not at Joyous Christmas Masses

By Aida Bustos



Music ministries across the diocese are busy fine-tuning their songs, getting ready for holiday Masses.

One of them, the youth orchestra and choir at The Immaculata Parish, will serve at the Christmas Eve Family Mass at 4:30 p.m.

Their leader, Rose Musico, stresses that they are not “performing” but rather “serving” through their musical gifts. She has led the parish’s Youth Music Ministry for about seven years, ever since her daughter was in the second grade and a choir member; today, she’s in high school.

The ministry is currently composed of 17 vocalists and 11 musicians; of the latter, a few play for the San Diego Youth Symphony. From diverse cultures, they range from second-graders to seniors in high school.

“They are resilient and joyful,” said Musico, “and they get better every year.”

They have been rehearsing together on Sunday afternoons since the end of October for the Christmas Mass. On a recent Sunday, they began by playing and singing “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.” They also will be presenting “Oh Come All Ye Faithful,” “Silent Night,” “The First Noel,” and ending with “Joy to the World.”

The orchestra has five violins, three violas, three harps; and one flute and



JOHN CASTALDO

GIFTS: Musicians and vocalists are preparing for Christmas-time Masses across the diocese. At The Immaculata Parish, the youth orchestra members rehearsed on Nov. 13. They included, from left, Jude Dancel, Petunia Rizo and An-Di Duong.

one clarinet — though not all will be present at the Christmas Mass.

Musico plays the piano to cue the musicians and vocalists and Susanna Han serves as their conductor.

Last year’s Christmas Eve Mass is still fresh in Han’s mind. She had just started mentoring the string musicians when she was tapped to lead the entire ensemble just before the Mass started.

“Oh my gosh, I’m going to faint,” she recalled thinking. “But I did not faint. They sounded great, and it turned out to be one of the most meaningful times of my life.”

The mission of the Youth Music Ministry is “to engage the youth in an integral way in the liturgy and parish community and to nurture and inspire our youth to a lifelong love of music and ministry by building their musical

skills and confidence,” according to the parish website.

Each rehearsal starts and ends with a prayer.

Musico has a simple message for her young charges.

“We’re there to lift the spirits of parishioners and visitors up to heaven. I tell them that the choirs of angels are all singing with us. It’s all for God’s glory.”



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Dr. Tim Hogan is a writer, psychologist and certified Imago Relationship Therapist who directs two counseling centers in the city of Detroit. He has consulted and taught workshops for the Archdiocese of Detroit and contributed to the RCL Benziger Family Life series.



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Students' Mural Lifts School

By Aida Bustos



A phoenix symbolizes hope, renewal and rebirth.

The eighth-grade students of St. Katharine Drexel Academy thought the mythical bird would make a great central figure in a mural they would be creating as their class project on campus. After all, the K-8 school was born four years ago when two neighborhood schools merged into one. And the students had selected the phoenix as the new school mascot, replacing the crusaders.

The academy hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the mural on Nov. 10 attended by students, staff, school volunteers and special guests.

"We thought it would be cool to have a mural on this campus," said Principal Kelly Bonde, introducing the artwork that graces two sides of the main building. "You can see it from the street. This is how we will welcome everybody to campus."

She explained that a former teacher at Blessed Sacrament Parish School, one of the schools that merged into the academy, is a board member of a nonprofit organization that partners with schools to paint murals. She thanked the teacher, Mike Trunzo, for connecting the school to the agency, called ArtReach.

An artist with the organization, Nina Lubarsky, held workshops with the eighth-graders to brainstorm ideas



WONDER WALL: In a special ceremony Nov. 10, Kelly Bonde, the principal of St. Katharine Drexel Academy, introduces the mural painted by the eighth-grade class.

for the mural. She integrated their ideas into a digital design that itself was fine-tuned with input from teachers and staff. Once finalized, they all learned how to paint from the artist, then got busy painting the mural. The project took four to five weeks from start to finish.

The mural shows a bird soaring in front of the sun, its tail feathers trailing below. Native plants, such as poppies and aloe vera, and a busy bee, complete the nature scene, all bathed

in warm reds, yellows and greens.

A representative of San Diego Council District 9, Sean Elo-Rivera, presented the eighth-graders certificates from the city.

In an interview after the ribbon-cutting, one of them, Elaine O'Connor, noted that she painted some of the leaves on the mural.

"It was really fun getting to collaborate with everyone," she said. "And seeing the final product when you're done painting it is really awesome."

Fr. Brown Math, Science Lab Opens at School

The Southern Cross



Our Lady's School has inaugurated the Father Richard

Brown Math and Science Lab on its San Diego campus on 24th Street. The school, which opened in 1912, is the oldest elementary school in the diocese.

The lab is a gift from the Our Lady's School Alumni Association, which sponsors an annual golf tournament named after Father Brown. The legendary priest served Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and the greater Barrio Logan community for 37 years before retiring.

Proceeds from the tournament were used to renovate an old room that had been used for many purposes into one housing modern educational equipment and materials.

Inspired by Father Brown, the alumni association continues supporting Catholic education.

The school hosted a ribbon-cutting for the lab on Nov. 3. Jesuit Father Scott Santarosa, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, blessed the lab, accompanied by Father Mike Lee, who serves as principal of the school, and guests.

Father Brown was an alum of St. Augustine High School, a major supporter of Our Lady's School.



8:30am - 5:00pm

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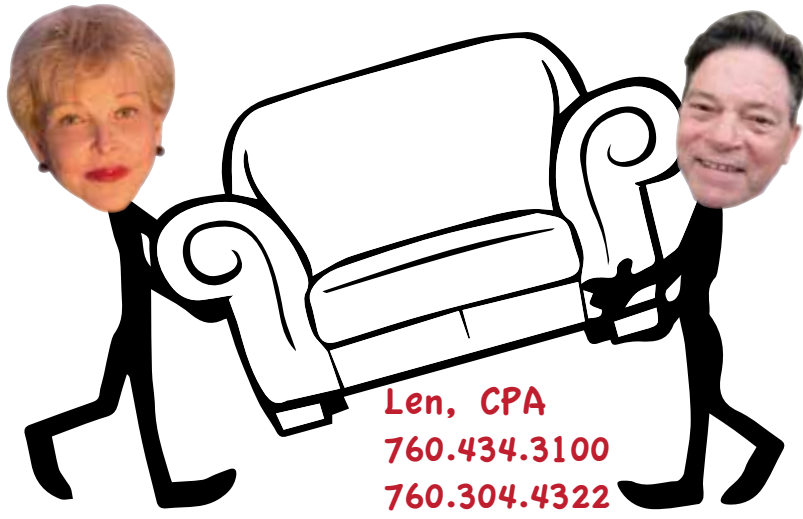
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Will there still be faith on earth at the end of time? Will there still be people who practice compassion and justice? Will there be peace among nations?

Christmas is the right time to explore these questions. Christian tradition reminds us that this is the time to recognize the singular event that was the Incarnation, and the historic presence of “God among us,” made of flesh and bones.

This was something radically new, impossible to imagine. But what is impossible for us is possible for God the Creator, who became human in the womb of Mary, the woman who made the greatest leap of faith in saying yes to that mystery and offering Him to us.

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Associate Director,
Family Life &
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Ricardo Márquez



within countless human beings across the world. It can be obscured, concealed, but never extinguished. There will always be people who have lived and experienced the grace of feeling the love and presence of Jesus, of Emmanuel, of “God with us.”

That’s why the future of the faith and of believers will rest with those who have seen with their own eyes, felt with their own senses, and walked along the Lord’s footprints; those whose experience has been so personal, intimate and profound that no trend, no fame, no money, no one and nothing, can separate them from the experience of feeling loved by God. I don’t just believe because someone told me this

happened; I communicate it, I proclaim it because I have lived it, and the mystery has seduced me.

Scripture tells us: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David, a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: You will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” (Luke 2:10-12).

The sign to recognize Him is simple, humble and routine: an infant wrapped in diapers. It’s so simple that complicated minds get tangled up and don’t see Him. Blessed are the pure in heart, because they will see the spark of God in creation, in all people, everywhere.

We have received the “Good News”: We are here in this life to recognize each other as the image of God, to use our will to do good and to create human fraternity, to feel the joy of loving and being loved, and to remind us that death does not have the final

word, that our final destiny is a life that endures. The road we take will always rest in the decisions we make.

Today, I renew my sense of hope and prepare my “interior manger” in this season of Advent. Today, I celebrate and proclaim with gratitude all of the people that I have met in the different parishes and lay ministries of this diocese, who gather every week to pray and form themselves; people who embrace and spread love, who visit jails and hospitals, and who support just laws and reforms.

All of them are beings of light who sustain and care for the life that has been gifted to us; all of them give “birth” to Jesus in people, homes and the world. All of them have sustained and strengthened my faith and hope. Blessed are those who become a living Christmas, sharing their love and service, proclaiming that God is among us.

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News Briefs

Four to Be Ordained to Transitional Diaconate

CHULA VISTA — Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will ordain Christopher Bongato, Evan Bui, Marc Andrew Gandolfo and Matthew Vasquez to the transitional diaconate.

The ordination liturgy will be celebrated at 10 a.m., Friday, Dec. 17, at Mater Dei Parish in Chula Vista.

Ordination to the transitional diaconate marks the last major step on the path to priesthood. During the Mass, the four men will promise to lead lives of prayer, celibacy, and obedience to their diocesan bishop.

Mental Health Ministers Invited to Day of Reflection

The diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality will hold a Mental Health Ministers Day of Reflection.

It will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, at the diocesan Pastoral Center, beginning with a Mass. There will be time to reconnect with colleagues over a light brunch, and during breaks between the three lectures. The event will conclude with Eucharistic adoration.

The Day of Reflection is for anyone involved in mental health ministry, from those with formal roles in parish-based ministries, to Catholic therapists, to family members caring for loved ones

with mental health challenges.

The event will be led by Father Soney Sebastian, a member of the Society of the Divine Word and director of the diocesan Office for the Missions; Dr. Arthur Brooks, a Catholic writer and Harvard University professor who also teaches courses on mental health and spiritual wellness through the Hallow app; and Lia McGuinness, a certified spiritual director in the Diocese of San Diego and a member of St. Elizabeth Seton Parish in Carlsbad.

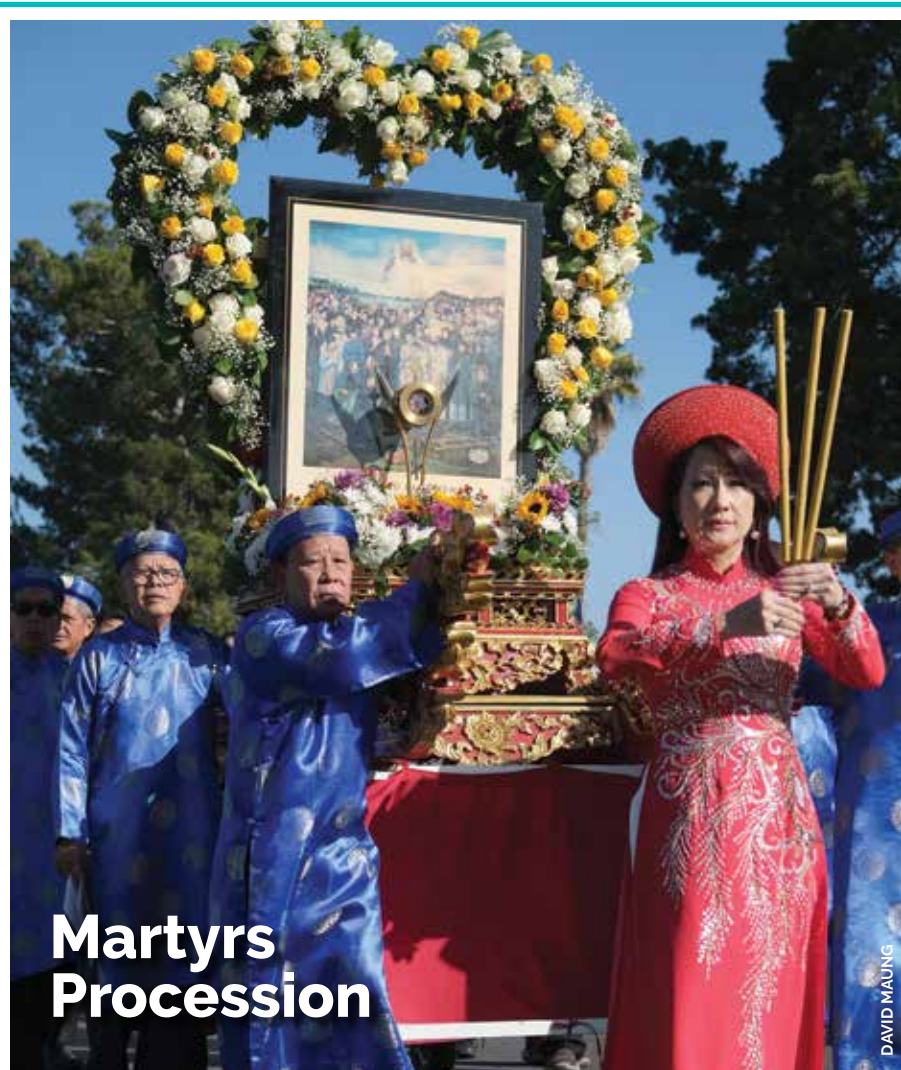
RSVP requested. Email bolivero@sdccatholic.org or call (858) 490-8299.

Bishop Dolan's Sister Dies by Suicide

Bishop John P. Dolan, the former auxiliary bishop of San Diego who has led the Diocese of Phoenix since August, shared via Facebook that his youngest sister had died by suicide. Her body was discovered in her home Oct. 16.

Mary Elizabeth Dolan had suffered from mental depressive disorder since her college years.

Mary is the third of Bishop Dolan's eight siblings to die by suicide. He previously lost a brother and a sister, as well as a brother-in-law, to suicide. These losses inspired his strong advocacy for mental health ministry.



Martyrs Procession

COMMEMORATION: The diocese's Vietnamese community participated in the annual Martyrs Procession and Mass celebrated by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy at Good Shepherd Parish on Nov. 6. They included Đào Kim Ngoc and the Sacred Heart Men's group from Holy Family Church.

Briefs Continued on Page 19

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Briefs *Continued from Page 18***Day of Recollection Offered for Youth/Young Adult Ministers**

Father Greg McGivern will lead an Advent Day of Recollection, geared especially for youth and young adult ministers.

Father McGivern, a chaplain at the University of San Diego, will speak on the theme: "Making the Most of Advent Waiting."

The free event will take place from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 1, at USD. Lunch will be included.

RSVP to equivedo@sdccatholic.org or (858) 490-8260.

'Lessons and Carols' Way to Prepare for Christmas

Lessons and Carols, a festival of readings and songs intended to serve

as a preparation for Christmas, will be presented by the University of San Diego's University Choral Scholars and Concert Choir.

The free event will be offered twice in USD's Founders Chapel: at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 3, and at 2 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 4.

Visit sandiego.edu/cctc, email cctc@sandiego.edu or call (619) 260-7936.

'Music Man' Marching into Poway

POWAY — Students at St. Michael's School in Poway will stage a production of "The Music Man Jr."

Performances will be at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3, and at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 4, at St. Michael's Holy Family Center (15542 Pomerado Rd., Poway 92064).

"The Music Man Jr." is a version of Meredith Willson's Tony Award-winning musical that has been adapted for young performers.

More information is available at (858) 485-1303 and theater@smspoway.org. Purchase tickets at showtix4u.com/event-details/67603.

Shop 'Fair Trade' at Local Parish

LA MESA — A "fair trade" gift faire will be held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 4, in the hall at St. Martin of Tours Parish in La Mesa.

Attendees will be able to shop for home decor, jewelry, accessories, clothes, Christmas ornaments, crafts, cards, coffee, chocolate, tea, and baked goods, as well as enjoy a pan-

cake breakfast hosted by Troop 51.

Purchasing fair trade certified items supports fair wages, healthy working conditions and environmental sustainability in developing countries.

For information, call (619) 466-3241.

Speaker to Reflect on Guadalupe Story

Christopher Check, president of Catholic Answers, will give a talk titled "Vanquishing the Forces of Darkness: From Hernan Cortes to Our Lady of Guadalupe."

The free lecture will begin at 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 16, at St. Therese of Carmel Parish in Carmel Valley.

Visit catholic.com/events, call (858) 481-3232 or email the parish office at parishoffice@stocsd.org.

Mission San Diego to Hold Candlelight Concert

Mission San Diego de Alcalá's 46th annual candlelight presentation, with a theme of Lessons and Carols, will feature traditional and contemporary music set around seasonal Scripture readings.

The concert, which is performed by candlelight, will be held at 7:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 17 and 18, in the historic mission church. A free-will offering will be taken, and a reception will follow in La Sala.

For information, call (619) 283-7319.

Carolers to Gather Outside Planned Parenthood

The annual "Peace in the Womb Christmas Caroling" event will take

place from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., Saturday, Dec. 17, on the public sidewalk outside the Planned Parenthood-El Cajon Health Center (1685 East Main St., El Cajon 92021).

"In the Christmas story, hope enters the world through the birth of a child, even in the midst of difficult circumstances," said the event's organizers. "Join us as we sing carols and share this Christmas hope where it is needed most, (at) one of the darkest places on earth."

For more information, email hansenpat@msn.com.

Young Adults Invited to Online Evening Prayer

The North American Vocation Team of the School Sisters of Notre Dame invites young adults, ages 18 and older, to a monthly communal Evening Prayer service via Zoom. The next one will be at 5 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 20. Visit ssnd.org/events.

Priest Assignments

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

Father Antonio Morales and **Father José Alfredo Moreno** will provide sacramental ministry, and Father Morales will serve as canonical pastor at St. Thomas Indian Mission, Fort Yuma. Steven Taylor has agreed to serve as pastoral life director, effective Nov. 15.

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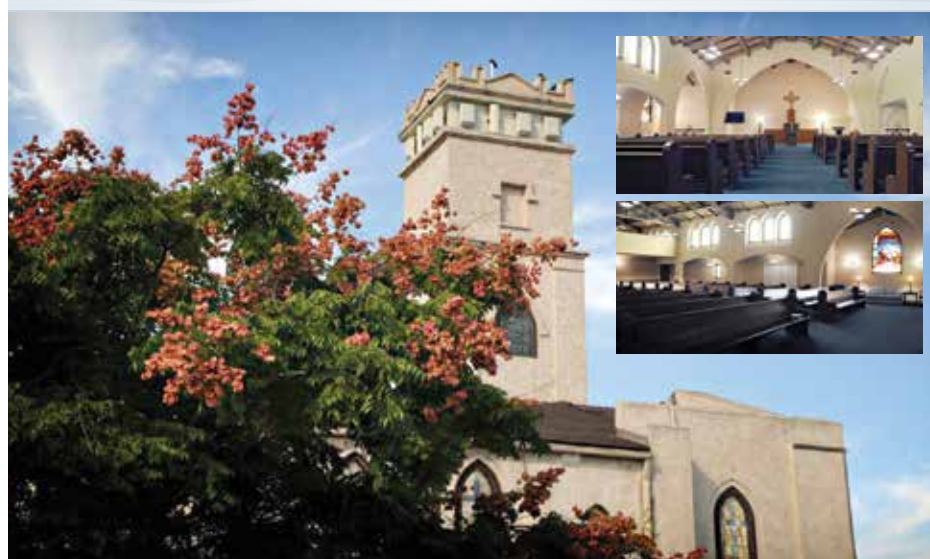
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INTO THY HANDS, O Lord, we commend the spirits of these beloved ones who are gone before us into the realm of thy eternal happiness and peace. AMEN



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