

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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Maintaining Momentum



RUNNING THE RACE: Students at Nazareth School participate in their 2022 Turkey Trot on Nov. 19. A recent national report on education showed that, while test scores declined amidst the COVID pandemic, Catholic school students outperformed their peers at public and charter schools. Local Catholic educators are committed to building upon their schools' pandemic era successes.



Not Here

Barrio Logan parish against proposed cement warehouse. **Page 2**



Ready to Serve

Four seminarians ordained to diaconate on path to priesthood. **Page 4**



Faith Traditions

Filipino Catholics prepare for Christmas with Simbang Gabi celebration. **Page 17**

'Changing Hearts, Saving Lives'

Jan. 14, 2023

[sdcatholic.org/walk for life](https://sdcatholic.org/walk-for-life)



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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.



Parish Fights Warehouse Project

By Aida Bustos



As the new year begins, the fate of a proposed cement warehouse that would significantly increase diesel truck traffic through Barrio Logan is uncertain.

What is certain is that a coalition of neighborhood residents, people of faith and health activists will have their voices heard by the corporation that wants to build the facility and the public agency that has to approve it, the San Diego Port Commission.

"No decisions about us without us!" declared Jesuit Father Scott Santarosa, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

He was the last speaker at a prayer vigil the parish organized on the night of Dec. 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, outside the port's headquarters on Pacific Highway. About 75 people attended the candlelit event, held on a damp night with temperatures in the high 40s, including parishioners and Jesuit Fathers Brad Mills and Neal José Wilkinson, and members of the diocese's Creation Care Team Network.

"Our Lady of Guadalupe is not just a beautiful woman whose picture we hang on our wall," Father Santarosa said. "She sends us forth, like she did with Juan Diego, to put our faith in action. That is why we're here tonight. We're not finished."

A group of parishioners attended the Port Commission's meeting the



FAITH IN ACTION: Jesuit Father Scott Santarosa, of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, rallied participants at a prayer vigil outside of San Diego Port headquarters on Dec. 12.

following day, when a public hearing on the warehouse had been scheduled. The company that wants to build it, however, asked for the hearing to be postponed to "take additional time to engage with the community more directly and in a more substantive way."

The company, Mitsubishi Corp., is proposing to build the warehouse at the 10th Avenue Marine Terminal. The warehouse would create about 24,000 new diesel truck trips per year rumbling through Barrio Logan.

Neighborhood residents already suffer some of the highest rates of asthma and cancer in the state, according to health authorities.

Father Santarosa acknowledged that the new warehouse would bring

permanent jobs, a welcome development in the city. His parish, however, is urging the Port Commissioners to vote "no" on the warehouse until the company is required to use zero-emission trucks.

At the prayer vigil, the pastor said that between 1,400 and 1,800 people attend Mass on Sunday at his parish, which includes people who live in the neighborhood and those who come to the area to go to church.

"Everyone who passes our doors is breathing our air," which is already contaminated, he said. "And that is not acceptable. We want cleaner air."

"That is what we're praying for, that is why we're putting our faith in action."

Santa Rosa to File for Bankruptcy

Catholic News Service



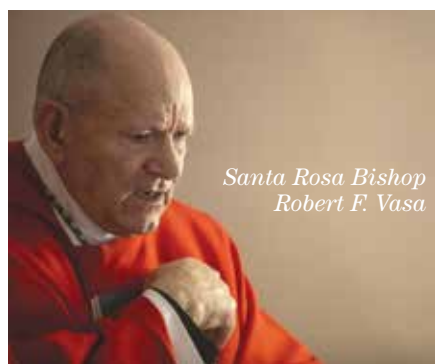
SANTA ROSA —
Bishop Robert F.
Vasa of Santa Rosa

announced that the diocese expects to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection because it faces more than 130 new claims of sex abuse dating from 1962 to the present, with "a vast majority of the cases" dating to the 1970s and 1980s.

The diocesan attorneys are expected to file Chapter 11 after Dec. 31 and before March 1, he said in a statement.

"After months of careful and prayerful consideration" and consultation with the priests of the diocese, the Diocesan Finance Council and professionals retained by the diocese," Bishop Vasa said, "it has become clear to me that it is necessary" for the diocese to take this action.

"This decision was made necessary due to the overwhelming number of sexual abuse lawsuits filed against the diocese after the statute of limitations was lifted for a three-year 'window,'" he said.



*Santa Rosa Bishop
Robert F. Vasa*

In 2019, state legislators passed the California Child Victims Act. It took effect Jan. 1, 2020, opening a three-year "look back window" to allow survivors of sexual abuse or assault to bring both civil and criminal lawsuits at any age and no matter when the abuse happened, even if it happened decades ago. The window ended Dec. 31.

According to the website of The Catholic Project at The Catholic University of America in Washington, 11 dioceses are currently in the bankruptcy process and 16 have emerged from bankruptcy, including the California dioceses of Stockton and San Diego. The project's website is catholicproject.catholic.edu/bankruptcy-information.

Filing for Chapter 11 will freeze the

new claims of abuse the Santa Rosa Diocese is facing.

Bishop Vasa said he is convinced "that choosing this path will allow us to achieve two very important goals."

"First, it will provide a process to carefully evaluate and compensate, as fairly as possible, those who have come forward with allegations of sexual abuse," he said.

Chapter 11 "is a process designed to bring all parties together in one place to resolve difficult claims fairly and finally, with the supervision of the bankruptcy court," he explained.

Second, the process "will provide a way for the diocese to continue the various charitable ministries in which it is engaged," the bishop said.

"The parishes and Catholic schools within our diocese are separate civil corporations or separate ecclesial entities and should not be parties to this filing," Bishop Vasa explained.

The diocese has 41 parishes and 22 missions. There are five diocesan high schools and 10 elementary schools.

According to the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* daily newspaper, the Santa Rosa Diocese has already paid about \$33 million in settlements related to the clergy abuse scandal.

Meals Packed in SD Reaching Needy Families



SUSTENANCE: Staff from Casa de los Pobres distributed boxes of meal packets to families on Nov. 19 in Colonia El Niño, a neighborhood of improvised housing in far eastern Tijuana.

By Aida Bustos



Some of the food packed by volunteers last June in the Million Meal Event is being distributed to the poorest families in Tijuana and elsewhere in Baja California.

Meanwhile, the deacons of the San Diego Diocese are organizing this year's charitable event, which will be held June 10 and 11 once more at Cathedral Catholic High School.

Their goal is to build on the successful inaugural event. They have set their sights on surpassing the more than 1 million meals they packed in 2022, and to raising more than \$250,000, the amount needed to make that a reality.

"We had more good people turn out than we dreamed of last June," said Deacon Mike Daniels, who heads the organizing committee. "That inspired us to aim higher."

The nutritious meals packed last June, in partnership with the nonprofit organization Kids Around the World, were distributed to children and families living in extreme poverty in Zambia, the Philippines and Mexico.

Save the Date

The deacons of the San Diego Diocese will hold the Million Meal Event on June 9 to 11 at Cathedral Catholic High School. They will seek 3,000 volunteers and donations.

More information:
[sdcatholic.org/
millionmeal2023](http://sdcatholic.org/millionmeal2023)

In Mexico, the painstaking inspection process the federal government required took months to complete to be able to bring the meal packets into the country, said Guillermo Gomez, the exporter who facilitated the transportation of two trailers' worth of food packets.

The meals finally started arriving in late October at Casa de los Pobres, an organization operated by the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady, Queen of Peace that serves those living in extreme poverty in Tijuana.

Sister Armida Andrade, who manages the Casa, said in a phone interview that the food is gradually being dis-

tributed in a number of ways.

The house hands out the meal packets every other Thursday to the families that converge in their facility for a variety of services, arriving by foot and bus.

Two sisters go out several times a month to far-flung neighborhoods where families live in improvised housing, struggling to survive day to day. The delay in receiving the meal packets has complicated that task.

"The rain makes it impossible for us to take our vehicles to these *colonias*," said Sister Andrade. "The roads turn into mud that carries nails, screws and other debris that make it hard to drive there. We have to wait until they dry out."

Families converge on the Casa's trucks, from where the sisters distribute boxes of the meals to the *colonia's* residents, mostly women and children.

The sisters also give some of the packets to Haitian refugees who have set up tents in a Tijuana lot. They are awaiting an opportunity to apply for asylum in the U.S. The 120 or so men, women and children live in tough outdoor conditions, made all the more punishing as the temperatures drop in the winter. She said the sisters are allowing a newborn baby and his mother

and father to live temporarily in their facility to keep them safe and warm.

"It's great having a baby around."

A mission run by Franciscans also receives meal packets and distributes them to agricultural workers in the town of San Quintín.

Sister Andrade and several of the sisters who run Casa de los Pobres traveled to Cathedral Catholic High School last June during the Million Meal Event. She addressed the hundreds of volunteers during one of the packing shifts, telling them what impact receiving food makes, particularly on a child going to bed hungry.

What would she say now?

"The poor grow poorer by the day. They face a very difficult economy. Many struggled to survive COVID and find any kind of work. The need has not changed."

Casa de los Pobres, a nonprofit organization, seeks donations to help the poorest families in Tijuana. Checks and money orders may be sent to P.O. Box 432256, San Ysidro, CA 92143. Information: casadelospobresusa.com.



JOURNEY: Families haul boxes of donated food to their homes, at times walking long distances.



RESPIRE: Children enjoy a light moment at their house



JOYFUL: Deacons Christopher Bongato, Evan Bui, Matthew Vasquez and Marc Gandolfo process out of Mater Dei Church on Dec. 17 following their ordination into the transitional diaconate.

Diocese Celebrates Four Transitional Deacons

The Southern Cross



CHULA VISTA —
Cardinal Robert W.
McElroy ordained

four diocesan seminarians to the transitional diaconate and its “wondrous opportunities to be palpable instruments of the grace of God.”

The four were Christopher Bongato, Evan Bui, Marc Gandolfo and Matthew Vasquez, who each spent years preparing themselves to enter ordained life.

They were ordained on Dec. 17 at Mater Dei Catholic Church, virtually packed with family members, friends and dozens of clergy members from across the region.

“As the deacons and priests who are gathered here today can attest,” the cardinal said in his homily, “the joy of ordained ministry, the core of ordained ministry and the ultimate meaning of ordained ministry lie in the relationship to the community.

“In giving yourself so completely to God’s service today, you render back to God all of the talents and gifts that God has originally given to you.

“But the Lord will amaze you with the ways in which those talents and gifts can be magnified when joined in loving service to the specific communities of faith that will be entrusted to your pastoral care.

“You will discover wondrous opportunities to be palpable instruments of the grace of God and, in turn, will experience wondrous moments of truly feeling touched by God through the life of the community.”

The four will serve for at least six months as deacons before being ordained to the priesthood in June.



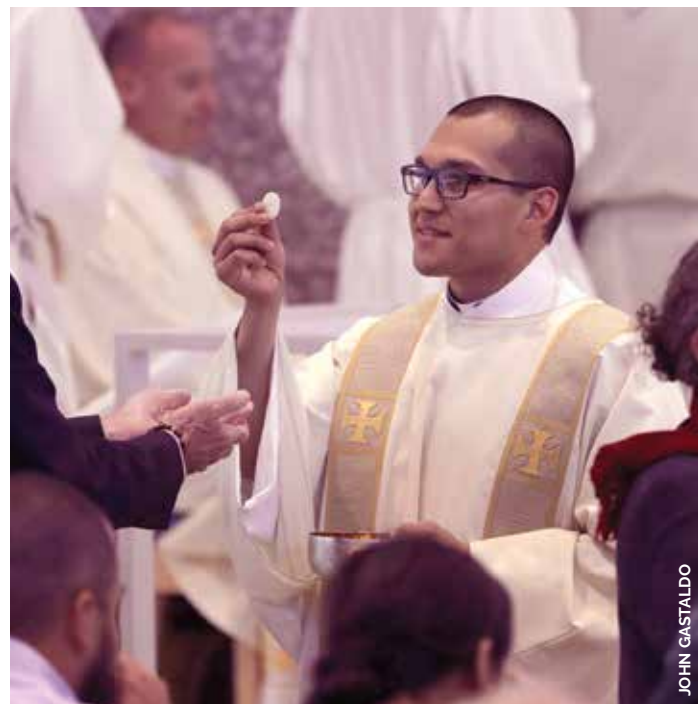
Marc Gandolfo



Evan Bui



Christopher Bongato



Matthew Vasquez

San Diego Walk for Life Aims to 'Change Hearts'

By Denis Grasska



When the local pro-life community gathers on

Saturday, Jan. 14, for the 11th annual San Diego Walk for Life, it will be in a much different political and cultural landscape than last year's event.

The Walk for Life will take place from 8:30 a.m. to noon at Waterfront Park in downtown San Diego, where the event was first held as a COVID-friendly "car caravan" in 2021 and then in its traditional format in 2022.

This year's event comes about seven months after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling overturned the controversial 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which created a right to abortion nationwide, once again returning the issue of abortion's legality to individual states.

By the date of the walk, more than two months also will have passed since an election in which California doubled-down on its support for abortion, with almost 67 percent of the state's voters backing Proposition 1, which enshrined a right to abortion in the state constitution.

"Overturning *Roe v. Wade* was a huge victory for our country. However, California is a different story, right?" said Maria Valencia, who oversees culture of life ministry in the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, and serves as coordinator of the San Diego Walk for Life.



UNDETERRED: Participants in the San Diego Walk for Life brave a winter rainstorm in this file photo. Pro-life advocates will once again walk for life on Jan. 14.

"We know that we have to continue working together to change legislation and also to change the hearts and minds of our people," she said.

This year's theme, "Changing Hearts, Saving Lives," is an acknowledgement that key to saving the lives of unborn children in California is persuading women in crisis pregnancies that they are not alone and that life-affirming resources are readily available.

Through her office, Valencia has been promoting "We Were Born Ready," a campaign launched by the Catholic bishops of California to encourage the state's Catholics to do more for pregnant mothers and their children.

As in past years, the centerpiece of the Walk for Life will be a half-mile walk with pro-life signs and banners along city sidewalks, including heavily traveled Harbor Drive.

The keynote speaker will be the nationally known pro-life advocate Star Parker. There will also be remarks by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy and Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano; testimonials from two women who chose life for their babies; live music; and about 50 exhibitor booths representing pro-life and pro-family organizations, such as Culture of Life Family Services, Rachel's Hope, and Lamb of God Maternity Home.

Reflecting on this year's keynote speaker, Valencia said that Parker is "very pro-life, and we hope that she is going to provide a great example of how to change hearts and save lives." She expressed hope that Parker's involvement also might draw more Protestants into "the effort to educate, inspire, unify, and engage the community on the sanctity of life."

In a letter last November, Cardinal McElroy sought to console culture of life coordinators and pro-life advocates who were disappointed that Proposition 1 had been approved by voters.

"The most important parable in the Gospels, in my view, is the parable of the sower and the seeds," the cardinal wrote. "It is a parable given as a consolation to the Apostles. Most of what the sower plants in the soil fails to take root."

"California is incredibly rocky and thorny soil regarding the moral reality of abortion; we knew that before a single vote had been cast in this election," he said. "But through your proclamation of the Gospel of life in these days, you have planted seeds that will grow abundantly in the future — seeds illuminating for our people the sacredness of life, seeds cementing the relationship of our commitment to human life with our commitment to pregnant women in need, seeds which will grow in God's time, not ours."

More information is available at sandiegowalkforlife.org.



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New Faith Home for Navy Families

By Denis Grasska



Several U.S. Navy families will be celebrating the New Year for the first time at their new parish, Sacred Heart Church in Coronado.

When it was announced that Catholic Masses would no longer be celebrated in the chapel at Naval Air Station North Island, beginning Oct. 1, those families received a personal invitation to consider Sacred Heart Parish as their new spiritual home.

"We are ready to welcome you with open arms to Sacred Heart," Father Michael Murphy, pastor, wrote in a letter that was read at the base chapel's final weekend Masses. And he invited them to attend his parish's 5 p.m. Mass on Oct. 8, which would be followed by a welcome reception held in their honor.

Father Murphy estimates that about 150 to 200 people who had formerly worshipped on base have begun attending Mass at Sacred Heart. And that's not all.

"They're jumping right in," he said.

Father Murphy shared that his new parishioners are also coming to social events, like the parish's Oktoberfest; enrolling their children in religious education and sacramental preparation classes; and getting involved in parish ministries, such as singing in the choir or serving as lectors and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.



NEW HOME: Sacred Heart Parish in Coronado recently welcomed individuals serving in the U.S. Navy and their families who are no longer able to attend Mass at the nearby Naval base.

"We recognize that they are a unique community and that they've had to make a shift in their community life," he said. "But we just want to be here to serve them and to integrate them into our community."

He added, "We welcome the charisms that they bring to us."

Father Murphy described the decision to cut Catholic services on base as "sad" and "short-sighted."

"It does affect the morale of the active-duty people when they don't have a place to go on base," he said. "A lot of these young sailors ... have

no cars. So, where are they going to go to Mass?"

"At a time when we're trying to get more and more young people to return to church," he said, "it's just unfortunate that this had to happen."

But Sacred Heart Parish has plenty of experience when it comes to meeting the sacramental and spiritual needs of military families.

It has been doing so for more than a century, Father Murphy said. And, even before the recent influx, he estimates that active-duty and retired Navy families made up more than 50% of his flock.

Liturgy Director to Speak on Care for Aging, Dying

ESCONDIDO — Noreen McInnes, director of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality, will speak on the subject of pastoral care for the aging and dying, and sign copies of her book "Keep at It, Riley!"



The event will take place at 10 a.m., Sunday, Jan. 15, in the patio room at Resurrection Parish in Escondido.

Published by New City Press, McInnes' book is subtitled "Accompanying my Father through Death into Life."

The book's title comes from McInnes' unofficial family motto, a motivational phrase used by her father and grandfather to encourage perseverance in the midst of trials.

McInnes, who holds a master's in Theology from the University of Notre Dame and a Doctor of Ministry from The Catholic University of America, describes her book as the "story of how Catholic faith accompanied my family through the sickness and death of my elderly parents."

She uses her own experiences to reflect on the Catholic Church's teachings about the dignity of life, the pastoral care of the sick, and the power of the sacraments. She also weaves in stories about the challenges faced by previous generations of her Irish family, along with prayers and accounts from the lives of Irish saints.

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Joyfully Responding to Parishioners' Needs

By Aida Bustos

 "What are two or three things that would allow your family to participate more in our church?"

"What would work for you and your family?" "What makes you happy about our church and what do you struggle with?"

Staff, ministry members and volunteers at Guardian Angels Parish in Santee are reaching out to families that register for religious education through phone calls or the platform Flocknote and asking for their input. Their goal is to connect with the families on a personal level, welcoming them to the parish, and to respond to their concerns to the extent possible.

That listening is at the heart of the process the Catholic Church is fostering through a four-year, worldwide initiative called a synod.

At the San Diego Diocese, parishes are working in a variety of ways to respond to the concerns their community members have expressed through this process.

Meanwhile, the Universal Church is conducting another round of listening sessions, this time on a continental level. Several members of the local Church are participating in those virtual sessions, which will conclude in January.

Tammy Mansir, the director of faith formation at Guardian Angels Church, explained how her parish is respond-



PLAN OF ACTION: Guardian Angels Church is responding in concrete ways to the concerns expressed by parishioners during the synod.

ing to what their parishioners said in small-group sessions held last spring as part of the synod. One of the overwhelming concerns they expressed was that the parish was not engaging young adults enough, including young families.

Led by the pastor, Father Andres Ramos, the parish is responding in several ways. It began a monthly Children and Youth Sunday Mass, where youth serve as lectors, ushers, bring gifts to altar, and sing in the choir.

"The children really enjoy this opportunity," Mansir said, "and it's slow-

ly bringing more families to Mass."

The faith formation team started inviting parents to participate in service activities while their children are in religious education classes. The service time can help reduce the cost of these classes, helping many who are experiencing financial hardships.

The parish recently hired a new youth and young adult coordinator, who is working to revitalize the young adults group. And it's offering a meeting space for teens, where they can socialize, at the newly opened Blessed Carlos Acutis Hall.

Mansir that the parents have told

them that it's tough to make religious education classes since both are working. So, the parish now offers a distance learning opportunity and encourages parents to come to a family event.

And the parish changed the Thursday Mass from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so working parishioners can attend at least one daily Mass a week.

A parish must be intentional in this approach, she said, and must involve every member of the church team: catechists, ministry members, even advisory council members.

The team invited young families to help work the booths at the parish's annual festival in October, for instance.

"We had nearly every shift full," she said. "In the past, we were searching for anyone to help."

She recommends that parishes form a team and start reaching out to parishioners through calls or emails.

"Find out who they are and what they need."

She said this process is gradually resulting in more individuals participating in the parish in one way or another.

"They are feeling more and more connected to Jesus, to their faith, and know that Guardian Angels is their home parish."

More information at
sdcatholic.org/synod



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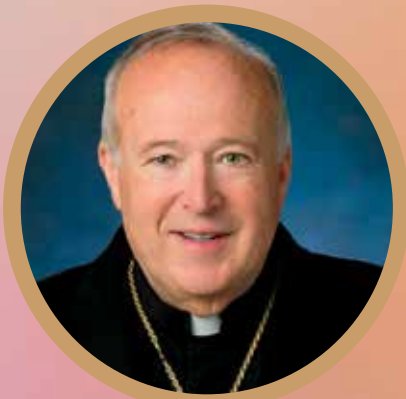
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Fun App Helps to Develop Faith-Filled Families

By Denis Grasska



Want a stronger, more faith-filled family? There's an app for that!

CatholicHOM, which stands for “Catholic Households on Mission,” is the brainchild of Dr. Greg Popcak, a professional pastoral counselor, and his wife, Lisa, a certified family life coach. They launched it last July.

“Catholicism has such a beautiful and rich vision for family life. ... We developed the CatholicHOM app to put faithful, effective help and resources — literally — in the back pocket of every Catholic parent who is looking for help in creating a happier, healthier, holier family life,” Greg Popcak said.

Through the app, which is free to download at the Apple App Store and Google Play, families can take a Domestic Church Blueprint Quiz that identifies their strengths and areas for growth and recommends a series of action steps. They will also gain access to a variety of resources, including downloadable games, activities and discussion questions.

The Popcaks, who are co-directors of the Peyton Institute for Domestic Church Life, have three major goals with their app.

Despite the existence of different types of households, Greg Popcak said, “there are certain practices that help all families flourish.”

“We would argue that God built



these practices into His design of the human family at the beginning of creation,” he said, explaining that these serve as the basis for the CatholicHOM framework.

The second goal is to offer an approach to Catholic spirituality that's compatible with family life.

“Most of what we think of as ‘Catholic spirituality’ is drawn from the clerical and monastic traditions,” said Lisa Popcak, who explained that these approaches are “beautiful” but busy families don't have the time to put them into practice.

“The CatholicHOM app promotes an authentic model of Catholic spirituality that is firmly rooted in the lived experience of families,” she said. “We show families how to encounter Christ more meaningfully in the way they relate to each other; in the way they work, play, talk and pray together; and in the ways they care for each other and the people they interact with in their communities.”

The third goal is to correct the mistaken belief that it's the parish that's the center of Catholic life.

“That's actually the exact opposite of what the Catholic theology of the Church says it's supposed to be,” said Greg. “In reality, parishes are supposed to exist to form ‘domestic Churches’ — Catholic families who are capable of being outposts of grace in a hurting world.”

Lisa pointed out a link between family life and evangelization.

“We don't evangelize people by quoting Bible verses and lines from the Catechism, and we don't evangelize people just by going to Church on Sunday,” she said. “Those things are an important part of the Christian walk, but people's hearts are won for Christ because they see His love and grace making a practical difference in the quality of our relationships — especially our marriage and family lives.”

John Prust, director of the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality, became familiar with the Popcaks' work about two years ago, when the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered parish churches and gave his office renewed

motivation to promote the concept of the domestic Church. He attended a series of webinars led by the Popcaks for directors of family life ministry, and he has been a fan of CatholicHOM since its recent debut.

Prust explained that those who don't have “the traditional nuclear family” often have the sense that “family life (ministry) doesn't apply to us.” But that's simply not true.

He said he loves the Popcaks' “very inclusive” definition of “domestic Church” as “a household of persons united to God and each other through the sacramental life of the Church and committed to living out the Christian, Trinitarian vision of love in their relationships with each other and the world.”

“There are so many wonderful resources out there to help families grow as domestic Churches, and I think (CatholicHOM) is a great one,” said Prust. “Just the way it breaks down what we should be striving for can be really helpful. It helps families ... become aware of their strengths, challenge areas, and how they can grow.”

The CatholicHOM app is free to download at the Apple App Store and Google Play.



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The Southern Cross



An original icon of the Finding of Jesus in the Temple will be dedicated during the 10 a.m. Sunday Mass Jan. 1 at All Hallows Parish in La Jolla.

The 5-foot-tall triptych is the work of iconographer Father Anthony Salzman, a Greek Orthodox priest. It has been installed inside the church's Holy Family Shrine, where it replaced a statue of the Holy Family.

The icon and the shrine will be dedicated "in memory of the unborn and all our lost children," said Father Joe Masar, pastor of All Hallows Parish, who commissioned the icon last June.

"I've already had a number of people tell me that how meaningful it is to have a dedicated space where they can come and pray and lay their burdens of their lost children," he said.

The icon's central panel depicts the scene from Luke's Gospel where the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph find the 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple after three days of searching for Him. The two side panels each feature an image of an angel.

In the central panel, Father Masar said, one can still see traces of distress on the Blessed Mother's face even after she and St. Joseph have been reunited with their Son.



WORK OF ART: Iconographer Father Anthony Salzman, right, and his woodworker pose with an icon of the Finding of Jesus in the Temple, shortly before it was shipped to San Diego for installation at All Hallows Church in La Jolla.

"That sorrow on the face reminds us of what it must be like on a human level to lose a child ... I really wanted to capture that, and (Father Salzman) did a beautiful job," he said.

The icon arrived at the church on Dec. 19 and was installed between Dec. 21 and Dec. 23.

Father Masar noted that the creation of an icon is a deeply spiritual process. Through it all, he said, the iconographer prays about his work and for the "the community of faith where this piece of art now will become part of the fabric of parish life."

"(Father Salzman has) been praying for us as a community as he's been creating this, and we have been praying for him as he has been creating it," said Father Masar. "There's a tremendous amount of anticipation on the part of the people."



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U.S. Report Reveals Strength of Catholic Schools

The Southern Cross



The results of a recent national report on education were great news for Catholic schools.

The U.S. Department of Education's biennial report on test scores showed that fourth- and eighth-grade students at Catholic schools outperformed their peers at public and charter schools nationwide.

The report, which reviewed national test scores before and after the COVID pandemic, showed an overall decline in test scores in math and reading, but found that Catholic school students showed higher achievement in those subjects compared to public and charter schools across the country.

In fact, the report showed Catholic school students beat the average scores of public and charter school students in all 50 states.

Kathleen Porter-Magee, an adjunct fellow at the Manhattan Institute, tweeted, "If Catholic schools were a state, they would be the highest performing in the nation on all four (National Assessment of Educational Progress) tests."

"I was elated! I'm very proud of the work we've been doing in Catholic schools to support our students throughout the pandemic," said Leticia Oseguera, superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of San Diego. "This validates the hard work, the dedication, the flexibility and resiliency that our Catholic school teachers and principals displayed through a very difficult time."

Oseguera pointed to the fact that Catholic schools in the diocese had been prepared and were able to shift over to distance-learning in just a few days when the pandemic began, and then were able to open for in-person



FOCUSED: The 7th- and 8th-grade students at St. James Academy worked in groups in December to build and program a robot in their robotic class.

instruction a full year before most public schools were able to do so.

"The effort that our families, teachers, staff and administrators put into reopening our schools was heroic," she said. "They poured everything they could into creating a safe environment where students could learn and be socially supported — and it paid off."

Nationally, Catholic schools and Catholic school students weren't immune to the effects of the pandemic. Eighth-grade math and fourth-grade reading scores dropped slightly from 2019 to 2022, but they dropped less than public and charter schools. Conversely, fourth-grade math scores were unchanged from 2019 to 2022, but eighth-grade reading scores showed a small improvement.

In all cases, however, Catholic school students showed higher scores across the board.

Local Catholic schools aren't content to rest on their laurels, but rather are committed to keeping the momentum going.

Through the experience of the pandemic, Oseguera said, local Catholic

schools "learned to be flexible, to be adaptable, and to be collaborative." She said they "leaned into each other for support, knowing that we are stronger together." That, along with a greater use of technology in the educational process, "will continue to serve schools well beyond the pandemic."

"It is gratifying for Catholic schools to be recognized nationally for their hard work and dedication," said Analisa Burgos, principal of Sacred Heart School in Brawley.

"Our teachers are motivated to continue to provide a high-quality education," she said.

"We have school-wide goals, discuss best practices, and work together to support the high achievement of all students," she added. "We participate in as many professional learning opportunities as possible and work collaboratively with the Diocese of San Diego to ensure we are moving forward and on track."

Kelly Bonde, principal of St. Katharine Drexel Academy said the recent results "bring me a lot of pride."

"Schools planned, pivoted and exe-

cuted miraculous things to allow our students to return to school safely in the fall of 2020, and clearly our hard work paid off," she said. "Not only is it gratifying to see our students perform well nationwide, but knowing that we created a safe place and continue to foster their social, emotional and spiritual development."

Bonde said the biggest lesson her staff learned during the pandemic was the importance of being flexible — "not just with planning, but with ourselves, our students and each other."

Building on what they've achieved, she said, "We have tried to continue the momentum that COVID-19 brought us through our teaching strategies. COVID-19 reminded us of the inequity present in education and forced us to break down barriers so that all students were successful."

"Our school's policies have continued to strengthen in this area so that every single student has as much equitable access as possible to technology, curriculum and resources."



TEAMWORK: Kindergarten students at Our Lady of Grace School study wind speed and temperature Oct. 26 while learning about the weather.

Open Houses on Tap

The Southern Cross

The annual weeklong celebration of Catholic education in the United States will be observed from Sunday, Jan. 29, through Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023.

The current National Catholic Schools Week theme is "Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service."

The week helps to showcase what makes Catholic schools the right choice for parents, including families exploring this education for their children.

"The purpose (of National Catholic Schools Week) is to celebrate and honor all the wonderful contributions our Catholic schools make to their communities, the larger community and the world," explained Leticia Oseguera, superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of San Diego. "We want to recognize the different members of the Catholic school community that make this possible and

celebrate the wonderful work taking place at each school."

Schools typically observe the week with Masses, open houses, assemblies and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. Schools often also invite special guests, go out into the community to serve, and find ways to express gratitude to their families for their commitment to Catholic education.

Those interested in finding out more about a particular campus' activities may phone the school or visit its website.

Applications for Catholic school are accepted year-round and financial aid is available for qualifying families. More information is available from the Office for Schools at sdcatholic schools.org. The office also will be sharing images from Catholic Schools Week activities on its social media.

Foundation's Support Boosts Elementary School

By Aida Bustos



Financial support from the St. Augustine Foundation has strengthened Our Lady's School, particularly in math and science instruction.

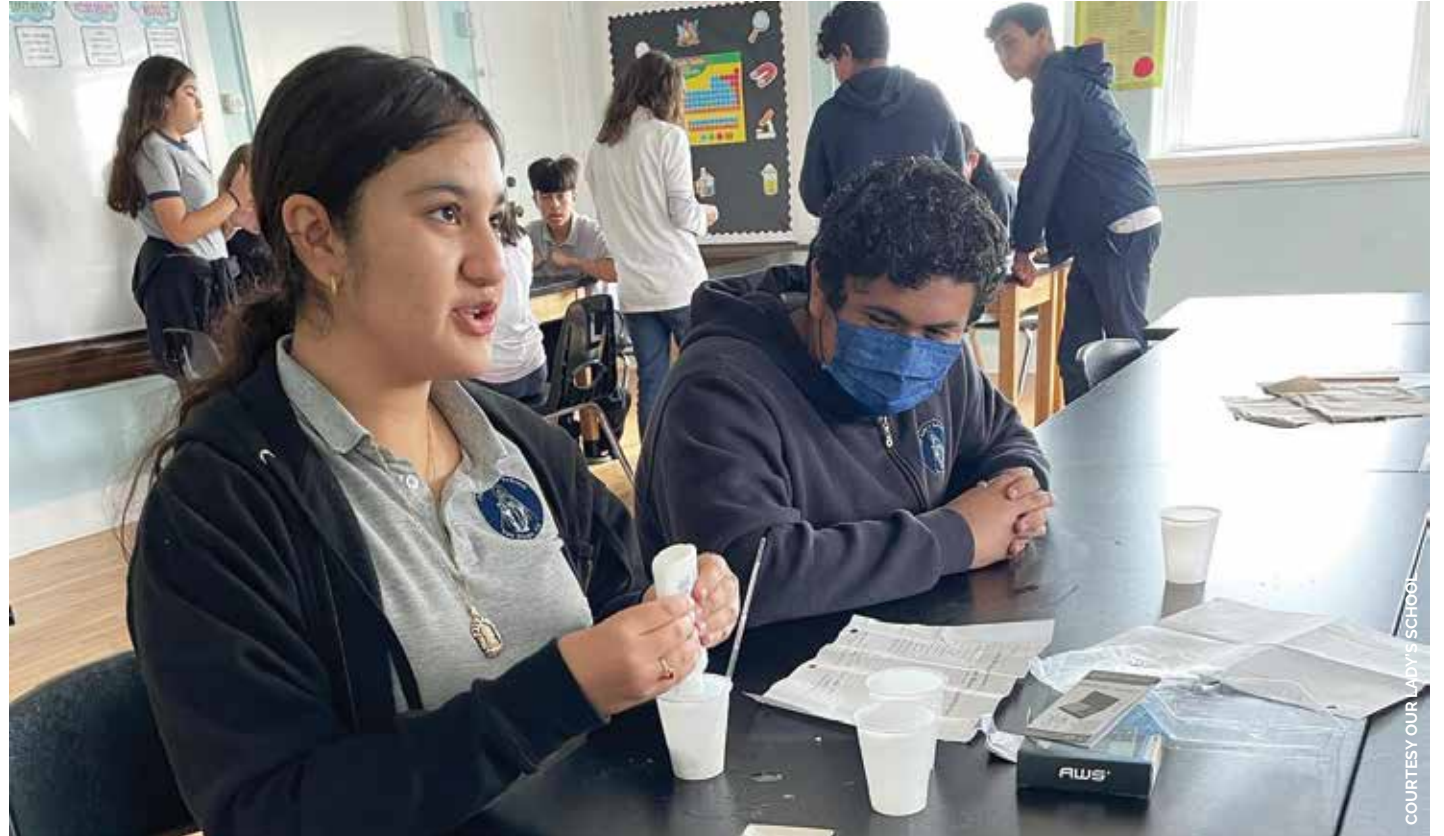
Such bonds benefit Catholic schools across the diocese, enriching academic and extracurricular activities for the students.

Jesuit Father Mike Lee is the principal at Our Lady's School, which has two campuses in San Diego. One is located in Barrio Logan, adjacent to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, and serves kindergarten to fifth grades. And the other is located in Golden Hill, adjacent to Our Lady of Angels Church, and serves sixth to eighth grade.

Father Lee said the St. Augustine Foundation awarded the school two \$54,000 grants. The first, given in 2021, allowed the school to buy top-of-the-line math curriculum for kindergarten to eighth grade, and science curriculum for sixth- to eighth-graders.

The other grant, awarded last summer, allowed the school to buy new Chromebooks for all sixth- to eighth-graders, and 11 laptops, one for each teacher. The teachers often used their own aged computers for classwork.

The foundation also financially contributed to the remodeling of an aged, spare room at Our Lady's School, a project championed by its alumni association. The association converted the room into a modern math and science lab and named it after the



COLLABORATION: Eighth-grade students worked in the new math and science lab at Our Lady's School on Dec. 9.

late Jesuit Father Richard Brown, a legendary advocate for the school and Catholic education. Sixth- to eighth-grade students have been using the lab since it opened Nov. 3.

Mariam Guirguis teaches math and science to the school's sixth- to eighth-graders.

"The new lab means a lot of amazing opportunities for our students to be able to grow more academically, to really put them in a trajectory toward a Catholic high school and college,"

she said at the lab's inauguration.

Our Lady's School also has a partnership with a retired attorney who buys books in English and Spanish for the school, said Father Lee, who declined to identify him.

He said that the attorney told him that his mother was a librarian and that he had naturally grown up reading books. The attorney is convinced that reading helped him to get into a top university and to become a successful lawyer — and he now wants

to help students by making sure they have access to books.

The school's students have benefited not only from the recent grants, but also from the hours of tutoring from a retired educator.

All of the members of the school's 2022 graduating class were able to enter local Catholic high schools, the principal said, some of them receiving scholarships to be able to attend.

"It's the first time in memory that's happened," Father Lee said.



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That's a Wrap

Mater Dei Catholic High School students and community members volunteered their time in December to help package 4,000 gifts for foster, orphaned, hospitalized and homeless children through the nonprofit organization @heyoperation. The gift packages were distributed to children across Southern California and Baja California. According to the school, alumni Diane Zoura and her cousin, Brandon Zoura, founded the organization in 2020 to support children during the holidays.

Support to Help Us Hear Voice of God in Our Life



Whether we're referring to spiritual direction in its more formal sense or more broadly as informal faith-based accompaniment, spiritual direction is about helping us to listen for and follow God's voice to find that place where, as Presbyterian minister Frederick Buechner said, "Our deep gladness meets the world's deep hunger."

Many assume that a spiritual director must be a member of the clergy or a religious order, and, while most priests and nuns would make excellent spiritual directors, at the end of the day a good spiritual director is someone "seasoned" enough in the life of faith to help others discern the "wheat among the weeds." A spiritual director listens well and helps us to find that "still, small voice" of God in our own lives whispering beneath the din.

The word "direction" can be a bit misleading. Many prefer a term like "spiritual friend" or "spiritual accompanier" because, while a good spiritual director may convince you into thinking that they are "directing" you, they are really just helping you find the voice of God within. Jesus Christ is the true spiritual director, and the "spiritual director" points the way to Jesus, like John the Baptist.

**Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality**

John Prust



God leads all of us to fulfill the greatest commandment, "to love God and neighbor," but He calls each of us to do so in different ways and at different times in our lives, depending on the gifts that we have received. Whether married, single or ordained, how is God calling you to live out His mission to bring love and life to the world today? And who is walking with you right now to help you answer that question?

But finding a spiritual director isn't as easy as looking at reviews on Yelp. Just like the connection between a mental health therapist and client, so much of a successful outcome depends on the quality of the relationship between the director and the individual he or she is directing. When choosing a spiritual director, you will want to ask questions like, "Do I admire this person as a human being, disciple and mentor?" "Do we share a sense of humor?" "Do I trust that they truly desire the best for me?"

It's also important to discern what you're looking for. Are you seeking a trained spiritual director with a professional background in theology and pastoral care, perhaps someone who can guide you through a modified version of the Ignatian Spiritual



Exercises? Or are you seeking more of a spiritual friend or mentor? In the case of the former, you will want to find someone with credentials, maybe even with training in professional spiritual direction. The spiritual director may even expect to receive a stipend for his or her services because this is how he/she makes a living.

On the other hand, perhaps it is more of a spiritual friend or mentor that you're looking for, someone you can meet with for coffee from time to time to chat about things spiritual and religious, or a peer who can help you stay accountable in your Bible reading or prayer life.

Whatever the case may be, pray to God for the right spiritual mentor or director for you, and don't forget about people who may already be in your life right now, perhaps a priest, deacon or lay leader whom you especially admire and feel drawn to. Someone who reflects qualities you would like to have and learn from.

Each one of us, from Pope Francis on down to the most recent catechumen, need accompaniment, someone who can personally support us and cheer us on in our walk of faith. And as we are accompanied, so we too are empowered to accompany others.



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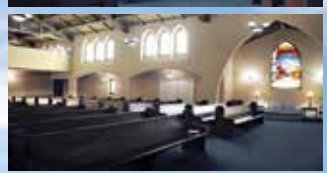
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INTO THY HANDS, O Lord, we commend the spirits of these beloved ones who are gone before us into the realm of thy eternal happiness and peace. *AMEN*





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Storms Don't Have To Wreck Your Family



I see signs of powerful storms all around me:

When I hear about the high rate of depression among adolescents; when I read about the exploding rate of suicide among young people; when I see a domestic partner responding to tensions with violence; when calls seeking therapists, counselors and spiritual coaches just keep coming. These are signs that a Category 5 hurricane is churning through our families.

For many, the holidays were moments intensely charged with emotions. A longing to see each other, to embrace, to share, to renew the faith and to strengthen bonds; moments of joy and happiness. Others lived far different experiences, enduring lone-

**Associate Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality**

Ricardo Márquez



liness caused by family fractures, by the absence of someone who decided to leave or died, by the excessive consumption of alcohol or drugs that stoked violence, by wars, by poverty or by the desperate need to immigrate.

How do we approach these complicated and varied realities?

A tendency to judge, label and criticize is not helpful; it deepens the wounds and the distances. Indifference, complacency, escape and isolation don't help, either.

Then, how do we react? With magnanimity, with a soul that is big, open and generous, with a heart that grows as one begins to learn how to manage interior tensions, that is sensitive to suffering, compassionate and thus

vulnerable; that cries with the one who is crying and sings with the one who is joyful and grateful.

But that heart is developed; it's not improvised from one day to the next, it's the fruit of grace, of asking and wishing for something, in combination with the discipline of silence and prayer. It's the result of the constant work of looking inward, of listening to the interior voice of the conscience that guides us with wisdom and compassion.

We can only build in the exterior what we have built inside; we cannot give what we don't have; if we want to harvest, we must plant, water, fertilize and nurture the seedling.

That's conversion, the invitation to transform ourselves from within, of insisting constantly: "Lord, help me to see, to listen, to be able to walk on the path to the common good, justice and peace."

This invitation may sound like another voice clamoring in the desert. We're surrounded by so much noise, worry and distractions, that it's hard to hear it. But we have to continue

to shout it from the mountain tops, like the prophets, wishing to learn through our conscience and not from experiencing the tragic consequences of the storm that's at our door.

We are more than what we believe we are, we have alternatives and a great potential to explore new possibilities. Great changes begin with small steps. We are called to live life, and "a life in abundance." We can begin today, freeing ourselves from the power we give our past, from guilt and shame, accepting and embracing our lights and our shadows, giving all that we are, putting it in His hands, asking for His love and grace to serve, console and to be able discover the ultimate purpose in our lives: To be one with everyone in Him.

If the signs of the times announce storms, may this new year be the opportunity to grow, to learn and to transform our lives; may it be a year of deep conversion for our good, and that of our families and all of humanity.



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Priest Serves as Faith Anchor for Seafarers

By Denis Grasska



Father James Boyd, 86, has been chaplain of the Stella Maris Seafarer's Center since 2002.

Chaplain, Stella Maris Seafarer's Center

Father James Boyd



Located at the 10th Avenue Marine Terminal, the center represents the local Church's participation in the Apostleship of the Sea, an international ministry of pastoral care to those who make their livelihoods on the world's oceans.

Originally from Brooklyn, N.Y., Father Boyd was ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 1963. He served as a U.S. Navy chaplain, from 1970 to 1996. With his bishop's permission, he relocated to San Diego in 1997 to be closer to his family, which had moved to the Burbank area.

Father Boyd is also actively involved with Engaged Encounter, which prepares couples for marriage; Marriage Encounter, which is for couples seeking to make good marriages even better; and Retrouvaille, which works to heal deeply troubled marriages.

Question: What role did the Catholic faith play in your life when you were growing up?

Answer: My two brothers, sister and I all attended Catholic grammar school and high school.

The three of us boys were altar servers, and that experience had a big

effect on me.

Eventually, both of my brothers and I would begin studying for the priesthood. My older brother changed his mind, left the seminary and became a lawyer; my other brother had heart trouble and died during his second year in the Jesuit novitiate. So, I was the only one of us to be ordained.

It was a very different time in those days. The churches were filled, and it was very popular for young people to go to church. We had wonderful parish priests, who would take us altar servers to baseball and football games. The nuns who ran the Catholic schools were also actively involved in encouraging religious vocations.

When did you first feel a call to the priesthood?

I think it came from being an altar boy, attending Catholic school, and the influence of the nuns and priests. I'd say that it was during my high school days that I started thinking seriously that this was what I wanted to do with my life. The appeal is that you're helping people to get to Heaven. What could be better than that, helping them to be happy forever?

What is the mission of the Stella Maris Seafarer's Center?

Like similar centers throughout the world, the Stella Maris Seafarer's Center exists to provide for the spiritual welfare of Catholic seafarers, those who make their livelihoods on the crews of commercial ships that transport various products to ports across the globe. These include three Dole ships, one of which arrives every week at the Port of San Diego with its cargo of fresh fruit; many other ships come in on a less regular schedule.

What does the center do for these seafarers?

Huge numbers of them are Catholic. They're Filipinos and Eastern Europeans who, because of their work, have very little chance to go to Mass. So, traditionally, I have celebrated Mass for them and heard confessions on-board their ships.

The center's volunteers also help to take care of their non-spiritual needs. Because of security measures put in place after 9/11, the seafarers are no longer permitted to walk more than 15 feet from their ships without an escort. So, the center got TWIC (Transportation Worker Identification Credential) cards for its volunteers and purchased vans, so that the volunteers could escort the seafarers, driving them to the port's front gate and then to and from local shopping centers.

We also provide donated magazines,

like *National Geographic* and religious publications, to the seafarers.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our ministry. We aren't allowed on many of the ships yet, out of concern that someone might bring the virus onboard.

You're also actively involved in marriage ministry, including Retrouvaille. What have you found rewarding about that?

Retrouvaille is for people whose marriages are in very bad shape, and it works miracles.

I've met couples who already had divorce papers prepared, but tore them up after attending the weekend. I'm in contact with people who made a Retrouvaille weekend 20 years ago and, today, they're doing fine.

What message do you have about being open to where God might be calling a person?

Being a priest is a very happy life. Think of all the good things you're doing. You can celebrate Mass; you bring God's forgiveness to people in confession. It's absolutely marvelous to be able to be called by God to do this. What a privilege! You help people be happy here and happy hereafter.

You may reach the Stella Maris Seafarer's Center at (619) 726-4982.



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By Christina Bagaglio Slentz



Turn, turn, turn: "For everything, there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

As the earth, our common home planet, completes its annual trip around the sun, many of us are reminded of the passage of time. Like the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes, writing around the third or fourth century B.C., we may sometimes find ourselves struggling with the meaning to be found in these cycles of life. Like him, we might question, is there anything new under the sun? Are we simply chasing after wind?

It's easy to get comfortable in familiar faith structures, revolving around the "same old" ministries. As cradle Catholics especially, but also for the converted, we may carry a subconscious sense of spiritual completion, risking boredom. St. Augustine reminds us, however, that we are called to become what we are not yet, a proposition that dangles wildly with anticipation and promise if we only continue to nudge ourselves in God's direction. Luckily, each New Year comes with Epiphany and a chance to pivot to something new in our lives.

Is 2023 the year of your ecological conversion, shaking you from the same-old-same-old pattern and illuminating a new path to relationship with the Risen Christ, visible in all things?



Hard Habits to Break

Becoming more and escaping spiritual stagnation requires that we begin with an honest examination of where we are. The Ignatian daily examen invites us to establish a habit of prayerful reflection at the end of each day to help us see God's presence in our day-to-day lives and discern God's direction for us. Adding an ecological lens to this spiritual reflection, embracing an "ecological examen," enriches our awareness of God's presence in all of creation and sheds light upon our daily interactions with the created world, revealing our (dis)harmony with the Creator. In this way, creation offers us a "cheat sheet," a tangible reminder of our relationship with God throughout our day.

To change your environmental habits, consider committing to the ecological daily examen included here on this page.

Rosary of
Creation by the
Sisters of Mercy



Ecological Conversion

To "convert" means to "turn." Like the earth's rotations and revolutions, and the spinning of our galaxy and universe, we are called to turn constantly to our God. Our conversion is never finished.

Rather, ecological conversion offers us the continuous opportunity to be reminded of this call in the simple song of a bird, a gust of wind, the smile of a loved one. We are also reminded of this call and our shortcomings when we hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

Many set resolutions at this time of year, but more than 80% typically falter. To put your ecological conversion in motion:

- Seek one or two ecological practices to add to your normal faith life, like meatless Mondays and/or fish Fridays — don't aim for radical change right away.
- Embrace a new ritual, not results. Look for new eco-spiritual practices; prayerfully choose daily environmentally-friendly behaviors.
- Do easy things such as praying a decade of the rosary every time you are pumping your gas!
- Steer clear of old temptations, such as a favorite food item that comes in excessive packaging.
- Subscribe to an eco-spiritual newsletter such as the Catholic Climate Covenant monthly, catholicclimatecovenant.org/newsletter.

And, of course, the Diocese of San Diego ministry of Creation Care is here to help you! Follow us on Facebook (*San Diego Creation Care Ministry*) and Instagram (*@lpjsandiego*). Reach out to Christina Bagaglio Slentz at cslentz@sdccatholic.org at any time with questions!

Who you are is God's most intimate gift of creation to you. What you become is your gift to God.

'An Ecological Examen'

A tool to reflect on gratitude, awareness, understanding, conversion and reconciliation:

- I give thanks to God for creation and for being wonderfully made. Where did I feel God's presence in creation today?
- I ask for the grace to see creation as God does — in all its splendor and suffering. Do I see the beauty of creation and hear the cries of the earth and the poor?
- I ask for the grace to look closely to see how my life choices affect creation and the poor and vulnerable. What challenges or joys do I experience as I recall my care for creation? How can I turn away from a throw-away culture and instead stand in solidarity with creation and the poor?
- I ask for the grace of conversion towards ecological justice and reconciliation. Where have I fallen short in caring for creation and my brothers and sisters? How do I ask for a conversion of heart?
- I ask for the grace to reconcile my relationship with God, creation and humanity, and to stand in solidarity through my actions. How can I repair my relationship with creation and make choices consistent with my desire for reconciliation with creation?
- I offer a closing prayer for the earth and the vulnerable in our society.

From ecojesuit.com/reconciling-god-creation-and-humanity-an-ecological-examen.

Parish Dedicates Year to 'a Saint for Our Times'

By Roman Flores



EL CENTRO — Running parallel to the U.S. Conference of Bishops' three-year call to Eucharistic Revival, the pastors of Our Lady of the Valley (OLOV) Parish have dedicated a year of their pastoral ministry to the patronage of St. Catherine of Siena.

Since Aug. 7, Father Mark Edney, pastor of Our Lady of the Valley, and associate pastor Father Ed Horning have been teaching the life of St. Catherine, her written works, spirituality, closing each weekend homily with "St. Catherine of Siena, pray for us."

They began giving classes on the life of St. Catherine for the faithful every Wednesday evening, in English at St. Mary and in Spanish at Our Lady of



PRAYER: Father Mark Edney leads Our Lady of the Valley parishioners in a prayer after Mass for the intercession of St. Catherine of Siena, at Capilla Cristo Rey on Sept. 20.

Guadalupe, the two churches that comprise the parish.

Father Edney suggested the parish dedicate the year to St. Catherine and study her life, including reading her book, "The Dialogue."

"It came to be because we live in a pretty difficult time for our people," the pastor said. "We struggle with the pandemic, political and social divisions, and even divisions in the Church."

He said that St. Catherine lived in the 14th century and, "in many ways, her times were like ours."

"She was born during the Black Plague. She faced divisions in her society, civil wars, corruption in society,

laxity in the Church, and suffering in great poverty because of all the conflict, and half of the population of Europe destroyed by the plague."

He said that St. Catharine not only wrote her book, but 380-plus letters to popes, bishops, kings, queens, paupers; correspondence covers every aspect of life.

"The way I presented it to the parish — in the midst of that world — the one authentic voice that resounded was the voice of a saint," Father Edney said.

He hopes his parishioners will be filled with a desire for holiness, as St. Catherine had.

"It's not just another devotion, it's

seeking knowledge of God," he said. "Nobody had a greater devotion to the Eucharist than St. Catherine."

Father Horning said he was bit reluctant to embrace St. Catherine initially.

"Well, I've always been afraid of her, honestly," said Father Horning. "I've tried to avoid her as much as I can just because of her intensity. She's fiery, in deep union with the Lord, and it can be a little bit intimidating."

He's glad he's come to know her life and work.

"It's been a blessing to put ourselves under her intercession and under her patronage, and also to study her life and her writings."

Father Horning said that an average of 30 to 35 people attend classes on St. Catherine in Spanish each Wednesday.

"Even before Father Mark wanted us to study her, I already felt drawn to her because of what she went through and the relationship she had with God," said Margie Madueño, a parishioner. "People listened to her because they could see her holiness."

"She's the saint for our times too," Madueño said, "to hopefully draw people back to Mass, back to church, to defend our faith, and learn about how to be holy and speak truth. She did it through trusting in God and realizing that, without God, she can do nothing."

"I think, right now, we really need to know more about our saints, about the Eucharist, and all of this coming together is very exciting," Madueño said. "Where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. God always provides."



DEVOTED: Angelica Gonzalez, right, and Maria Martinez studied St. Catherine of Sienna at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church on Oct. 26.



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From candles to beautifully decorated "parols," the Simbang

Gabi Mass at St. Gregory the Great Church in Scripps Ranch was a feast of light and color.

The Diocesan Commission for Filipino Catholics organized the third annual Mass, held on Dec. 14. A total of 20 parishes and groups participated, five more than in 2021.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy celebrated the Mass. He blessed the

candles and star-shaped lanterns that were symbolically lighting the way to Christ as they accompanied Mary awaiting the birth of her Son.

The Mass serves as a commissioning for the faithful, who then returned to their parishes for their own Simbang Gabi celebrations.

At one point, the Mass-goers raised their hands to bless Chris Bongato, a seminarian who was to be ordained to the transitional diaconate three days later. A Filipino-American, he has served the commission in different capacities since 2016.



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News Briefs

Bishop Dolan to Speak on Accompaniment

Bishop John Dolan of Phoenix, former auxiliary bishop of San Diego, will deliver the first talk in a four-part speaker series offered through the University of San Diego's Center for Christian Spirituality in 2023.

The bishop's presentation, titled "A Spirituality of Accompaniment," will be held at 5 p.m., Monday, Jan. 30, in the USD Ministry Center. It will also be livestreamed.

Subsequent talks in the series will include: "A Spirituality of Aging," April; "A Spirituality of the Border" ("Una Espiritualidad de la Frontera"), September; and "A Spirituality of Inclusion," November. Additional details, including the names of the speakers, are forthcoming.

There is no cost to attend. Register at sandiego.edu/ccs. For more information about Bishop Dolan's presentation, including a link to the livestream, email ccs@sandiego.edu.

Parish Cancer Ministry Hosts 'Mass of Hope'

The 13th annual Mass of Hope, organized by the Family Cancer Support Ministry at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch, will be celebrated at 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 4.

The sacrament of anointing of the sick will be administered during the Mass, which will be followed by a reception in the parish hall.

Those who attend the Mass are invited to honor a loved one affected by cancer or another serious illness by setting a candle by the altar; writing a prayer petition on a 3" x 5" card, which can be placed in a basket at the back of the church before the Mass; or submitting a photo to be displayed during Mass. Photos must be dropped off at the parish office by Friday, Feb. 3.

St. Gregory the Great Church is located at 11451 Blue Cypress Dr., San Diego 92131.

For more information, contact the parish office at (858) 653-3540.

Donated Halloween Candy Becomes Christmas Treats

Fifty-three local Catholic parishes and schools donated some of the Halloween candy their youth received to make Christmas merrier for poor children in Tijuana.

The candy was to be included in the annual Christmas food distribution that benefits about 1,700 impoverished families at Casa de los Pobres in Tijuana.

This year's candy collection yielded 3,550 quart-size bags, or 1.78 tons of candy. Along with additional boxes of candy, the collection also resulted in 16 boxes of dental supplies, 11 boxes of food items, a box of toys, and a box of new blankets.

Since 2006, the Notre Dame Club of San Diego has helped St. Brigid parishioner Caroline Kelner with the annual candy collection.

About 70 volunteers gathered in the



Border Tradition

"Opening doors and hearts." That was the 2022 theme of the traditional celebration of faith that straddles the U.S.-Mexico border fence. Christian faith and rights organizations on both sides of the divide presented the annual "La Posada Without Borders" on Dec. 10. The event commemorates the journey that Joseph and Mary made to Bethlehem in search of safe lodging where Mary could give birth to the baby Jesus. On the U.S. side, about 40 people walked about 1.5 miles to the most southwestern corner of Border Field State Park. They sang traditional posada songs, prayed and remembered those migrants who died trying to cross north. The speakers included Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano, who was accompanied by pastors Edmundo Zárate and Brad Mills, SJ, among other San Diego faithful.

backyard at Kelner's home Nov. 20, working in shifts to sort and package the candy. The donations were transported to Casa de los Pobres on Nov. 22 and 23.

Retreat to Offer Post-Abortion Healing

"A Time for Mercy," a post-abortion healing retreat offered by the Rachel's Vineyard ministry, will be held from Friday, March 10, to Sunday, March 12.

Open to women and men, the retreat offers a safe place to renew, rebuild and redeem hearts broken by abortion. Rachel's Vineyard retreats

are confidential and non-judgmental, offered in the Catholic tradition. Early registration is recommended as space is limited.

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

Widowed, Divorced Invited to Healing Weekend

OCEANSIDE — Beginning Experience, an almost 50-year-old international ministry that helps the widowed, divorced and separated move beyond grief, will hold its next weekend retreat April 28 to 30.

It will be held at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, where organizers promise a supportive and caring environment with others who are going through or have gone through the same experiences.

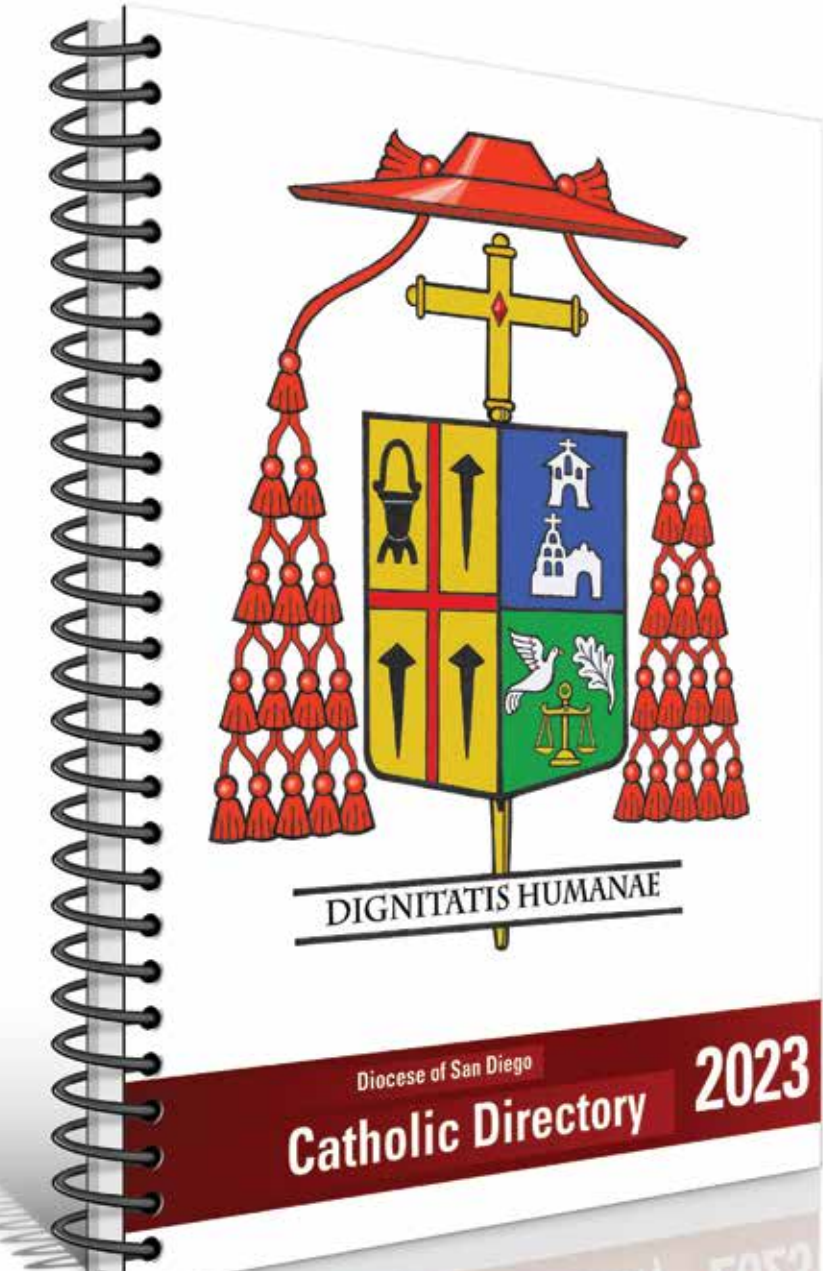
The cost is \$300, which covers individual rooms, food and materials. Scholarships are available for those in need.

For more information, email beginningexperiencesd@gmail.com or call (858) 748-2273 in English or (330) 607-8774 in Spanish.



Sacred Space

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano blessed a space at Christ the King Catholic Church in San Diego dedicated to the six African American candidates for sainthood, accompanied by Deacon Marvin Threatt. The Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics, which organized the dedication on Nov. 20, is participating in a national campaign petitioning the Holy See to consider canonizing all six collectively as one body.



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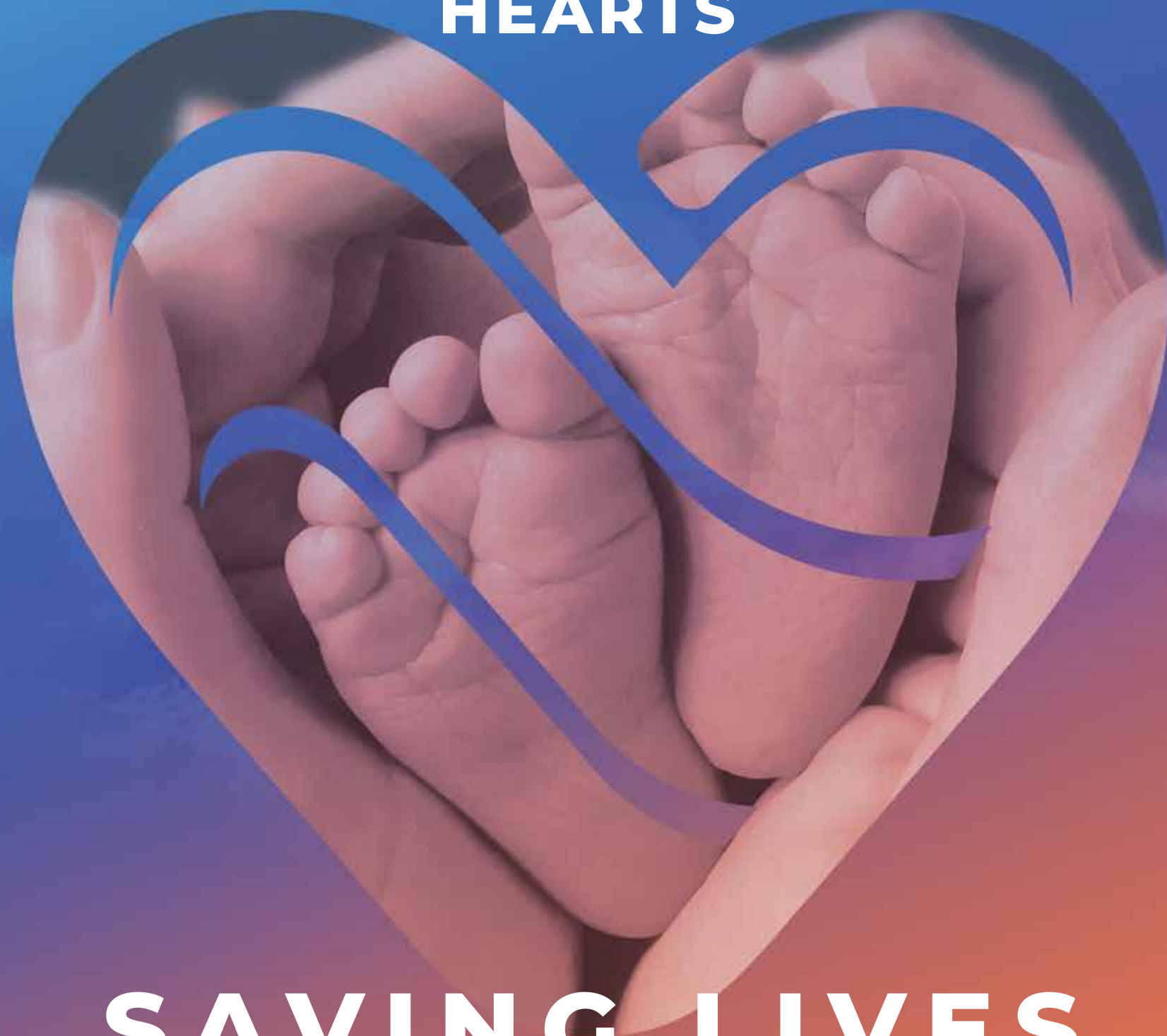
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