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A Thousand Reasons to Celebrate



Pages 10-11

HERE I AM: Catechumens and candidates, who are to become fully initiated Catholics at the Easter Vigil, are presented to Cardinal Robert W. McElroy at the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion in this photo from last year. Inside, meet four of the more than 1,160 individuals on the path to join the Church at this year's Rite of Election, to be held Feb. 25 and 26 in four ceremonies.



Making Strides

About 1,700 participate in first post-Roe San Diego Walk for Life. **Pages 4-5**



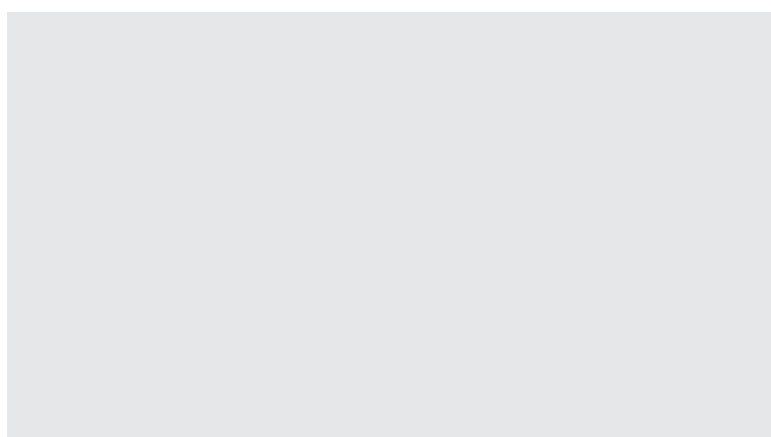
Kiss for Life

Diocese offers ways to celebrate and nourish marriages at all stages. **Pages 6-7**



Vatican News

Pope discusses wide-ranging topics in recent interviews and audiences. **Pages 18-19**



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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.



Seeks Unity

Vatican News, Pages 18-19

Ukraine cannot be divided among faiths but must be united as one nation, Pope Francis told members of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religions during a meeting at the Vatican. "Jewish Ukraine, Christian Ukraine, Orthodox Ukraine" are not as important as Ukraine as a whole," he told them. Metropolitan Epiphanius of Kyiv, head of the independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church, left, and Ukrainian Catholic Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych, right, showed the pope a gift during a meeting with members of the delegation on Jan. 25.

Results of Survey Coming in February

The Southern Cross



The diocese will release a report in February of the results of the electronic survey taken by more than 27,500 people last fall. The survey was a part of the listening phase of a consultation the Catholic Church is conducting of faithful worldwide, called a synod.

A University of San Diego professor with expertise in survey analysis, Fred

Galloway, presented an overview of the results on Jan. 23 to members of a commission advising the synod process.

He shared that 27,670 had participated in the survey, including about 100 incarcerated and homeless individuals. The demographic highlights he shared included: 60.1% of respondents were female, 37.3% male and 2.6% preferred not to answer; the average age hovered around 50 years; 38.3% identified as white, 33.6% Hispanic, 11.1% Filipino, 3.1% Vietnamese, and 1% African American; and 59.1% were married, 22.2% never married, 7.2% were divorced or separated, and 6.2% were widowed.

They answered questions that focused on eight themes that emerged from the 1,100 small-group sessions held a year ago at parishes, schools, and with the marginalized in the first part of the listening phase. The synod is now in a discernment phase at the diocese. The goal of the synod is to make the Church more inclusive and welcoming to faithful at all levels.

In February, the diocese will share the bilingual report on the survey with parishes and on its website (sdccatholic.org). sdccatholic.org/synodo and sdccatholic.org/sinodo.

Mass to Mark World Day of the Sick

The Southern Cross



The Order of Malta and the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice invite the community to celebrate the World Day of the Sick Mass, in observance of the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The Mass, with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as the celebrant, will be held at 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 11, at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa. It will be bilingual in English and Spanish and will include the anointing of the sick, a blessing of the hands of caregivers, and a blessing with Lourdes water. Everybody is welcome, especially those in need of mental, psychological, physical and spiritual healing

and comfort.

There will also be a celebration of the third anniversary of the Caring for the Whole Person Initiative, a statewide initiative of California's bishops and the Catholic healthcare system that equips parishes to serve the sick and dying with support and referrals to community resources. The initiative launched in the parishes three years ago.

The World Day of the Sick Mass will also be livestreamed at sdccatholic.org/event/world-day-of-the-sick-mass.

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

Additional information about the Caring for the Whole Person Initiative is available at wholeperson.care.



Annual Fundraising Highlights 'Living Our Faith'

By Denis Grasska



The 2023 Annual Catholic Appeal will kick off during the weekend of Feb. 18 to 19.

By the end of the year, the Diocese of San Diego hopes to raise \$3.5 million, which will provide essential funding for Catholic education, clergy formation and support, faith formation, and Catholic Charities.

Though this year's theme is "Living Our Faith," it could just as easily have been "Many Hands Make Light Work." The appeal supports ministries that benefit all parishes, but which would be impractical and inefficient for individual parishes to provide on their own.

"No parish can do this alone, and we wouldn't want them to, because it's too much of an effort to have every parish do everything," said Manny Aguilar, director of the diocesan Office for Stewardship.

"It's a lot easier for all of us to do it together."

Each of the diocese's almost 100 parishes has been given a financial goal to meet. If parishes surpass their goals, the surplus can be retained for their own needs.

Aguilar said that the appeal normally surpasses its \$3.5-million goal. In pre-pandemic years, he said, the appeal typically took in about \$5.5 million overall, with surpluses returned to the parishes. In 2020 and 2021, it fell short at about \$4.8 mil-



FULLY-FORMED: Fathers Guillermo Hernandez, left, and Bradley Easterbrooks, right, were ordained last June. The seminary formation of new priests is funded by the Annual Catholic Appeal.

lion and \$4.9 million, respectively. But the 2022 campaign raised about \$5.2 million.

"We are very heartened and grateful for the donors living their faith by sharing their time, talent and treasure," Aguilar said of those who contributed to last year's appeal, acknowledging the hardships associated with the pandemic.

Of the \$3.5-million goal for this

year's campaign, \$1 million each is earmarked for Catholic schools, formation for seminarians and support for retired priests, and faith formation. The remaining \$500,000 will go to Catholic Charities.

More than 14,000 students attend one of the Diocese of San Diego's 41 elementary and three high schools. Those educational institutions distinguished themselves in the last

academic year by re-opening for in-person instruction after COVID-19 a full year before most public schools.

Last year, the diocese ordained two men to the priesthood and four to the transitional diaconate. Financial support for their formation came from the Appeal. In addition to investing in future priests, it helps the diocese to sustain dozens of retired priests.

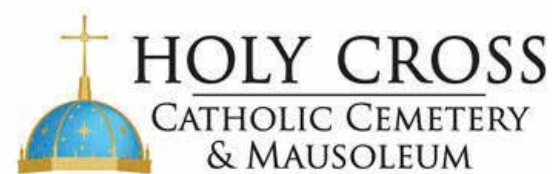
About 1,000 people from San Diego and Imperial counties joined the Catholic Church at last year's Easter Vigil, after having attended faith-formation classes in preparation for this life-changing step.

Last year, Catholic Charities provided around 317,000 pounds of food through its Emergency Food Distribution Network, opened a new shelter for homeless women in San Diego, and has continued to assist asylum-seekers and refugees, among its many other initiatives and programs.

Aguilar described these statistics as "concrete results in living our faith."

In a letter to his flock about this year's Annual Catholic Appeal, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy wrote, "We are called to live our faith in so many ways. I ask you to prayerfully consider supporting this splendid work of the Lord."

Donations to the Annual Catholic Appeal can be made by cash, check, credit card, stocks, or IRA. For more information or to donate, visit sdcatholic.org/giving/annual-catholic-appeal.



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ASSEMBLED: Cardinal Robert W. McElroy and Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano presided over a joyous San Diego Walk for Life, held Jan. 14 at Waterfront Park.

Cardinal Points Way to Victory for Unborn

By Aida Bustos



Addressing the San Diego Walk for Life, Cardinal Robert W.

McElroy recognized the historic victory achieved on behalf of the unborn but stressed, “We have a lot of work to do.”

Around 1,700 turned out for the bilingual event, the largest gathering of the pro-life community in the San Diego region, held at Waterfront Park on Jan. 14. Families, members of parishes, ministries, schools and clergy came bundled up for the rain, which was forecast but never materialized.

The cardinal acknowledged the momentous ruling last year by the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned *Roe v. Wade* and returned the question of abortion to the states. As he spoke, participants cheered joyously, lifting signs and banners.

The cardinal pointed to the other reality the pro-life community faced last year in California: The overwhelming approval by voters of Proposition 1, which added the right to abortion to the state constitution.

He spoke about the lesson the pro-life community could draw from Proposition 1 to continue to advocate for the unborn.

“I believe the way (the campaign) succeeded was by simply excluding from consideration the unborn child,”



LIFE STORY: From left, Elisa and Ryan Thomas are seen with Brylee Green, the biological mother of the child they adopted. Green shared her story as a speaker at the San Diego Walk for Life.

the cardinal said. “It really annihilated the moral identity of children in the womb by ignoring them. And we cannot let that happen.”

He urged people of faith to talk to family members and friends about how unborn children are human beings deserving of protection.

“Once we get into a conversation with people about the moral reality of the unborn child, that these are human beings, then the pro-life cause will be victorious,” the cardinal said.

He was the last of four speakers who addressed the participants of the Walk for Life, which in its 11th year had as a

theme “Changing Hearts, Saving Lives.” The others were Greg Butler, from Your Life Began at Conception; Brylee Green, a teenage mother who opted to place her baby for adoption instead of getting an abortion; and Star Parker, a nationally recognized pro-life advocate.

The walk had a festive vibe from the beginning. Composer-singer Santiago Fernández provided the musical entertainment during the event, emceed by María Olivia “Marioly” Galván, chancellor of the Catholic Diocese of San Diego, and Pastor Jack McDonnell, of The Tribe Church. Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano led the opening prayer.

The Walk for Life was organized by the diocese in collaboration with many organizations, including clinics, pregnancy resource centers, adoption agencies, ministries, and Orthodox and Protestant churches. Around 50 organizations had informational tables at the event.

Cardinal McElroy and Auxiliary Bishop Bejarano led the walk on the heavily transited streets around the County Administration Building. The participants joyously hoisted signs. Among the ones seen year after year was one that read: “I Am the Post-Roe Generation.”

Bilingual information
is available at
sdcatholic.org/lpj.



Cardinal's Message at Walk for Life

The following is the text of Cardinal Robert W. McElroy's remarks at the 11th annual San Diego Walk for Life on Jan. 14:

"You know, last year, when we were all gathered here together, we were waiting in great hopefulness that *Roe v. Wade* would be overturned. And we saw that happen, when the *Dobbs* decision came down, which allows states to regulate to protect human life in the womb.

"And yet, amidst that hopefulness, we also went through the campaign in California, Proposition 1.

"I want to affirm all that the pro-life community has been doing to emphasize that its mission in defense of human life is also a mission in defense of women, and women who are pregnant. That has been such a hopeful theme in the pro-life movement in the last decade, and I congratulate you on that, and I pray that all of you will work and continue that theme because it's so important in building bridges with the wider society and in witnessing to the real needs that women have.

"But I also want to point out something that we need to work on that came from the Proposition 1 campaign and our experience in it. I believe the way it succeeded was by simply excluding from consideration the unborn child. It really annihilated the moral identity of children in the womb by ignoring them. And we cannot let that happen.

"I believe that's the focus we need to have going forward — to speak with our families and friends and witness in our communities to the reality of the moral identity of unborn children as children of God. And really, once we do this, once we get into a conversation with people about the moral reality of the unborn child, that these are human beings, then the pro-life cause will be victorious. ... So, I thank you for all that you are doing.

"This is a wonderful turnout. It's all people, all ages, all cultures, all faiths



coming together to witness to life from conception to natural death.

"We have a lot of work to do.

"But again, I hope and pray that all of us can begin by focusing on our relationships, talking with others about what is the moral reality of the unborn child and focusing on that image and that truth in the light of our faith, in the light of God, who is the author of all life."



'40 Days for Life' Spring Campaign to Begin Feb. 22

The spring campaign of 40 Days for Life will take place from Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, to Palm Sunday, April 2.

Catholics in the Diocese of San Diego will join millions of people around the world in prayer and fasting over the same 40-day period.

The centerpiece of the campaign is continuous, peaceful prayer vigils in front of abortion facilities. Vigils will be held at eight locations in San Diego and Imperial counties, including the San Diego College Area, downtown San Diego, Chula Vista, El Cajon, Escondido, Mira Mesa, Vista and El Centro; to find the nearest location or sign up for hours, visit 40daysforlife.com.

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will celebrate 40 Days for Life commissioning Masses at 10 a.m., Sunday, Feb. 12, at Holy Trinity Parish in El Cajon and at noon, Sunday, Feb. 19, at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa.

As a result of 40 Days for Life's work, more than 22,800 babies have been saved and over 130 abortion facilities have closed since 2007, when it was founded.

For more information and to sign up:
sdccatholic.org/40daysforlife



Not Just Flowers: Focus on Nurturing Marriage

By John Prust



Love is in the air in February! Just like Lent is an annual opportunity for all Catholics to assess our relationship with Christ and how we can do better, February is the perfect time for married couples to assess the quality of their relationship, with all its inherent joys and challenges.

Each year, priests have the opportunity to renew their commitment to the priesthood at the Chrism Mass, traditionally held on Holy Thursday. To provide those who received the *other* sacrament of vocation with a similar opportunity for renewal, three years ago the diocese started hosting an annual Diocesan Marriage Anniversary Mass.

The first one took place outdoors at Good Shepherd Parish, celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan, and about 800 people showed up in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic to renew their vows and celebrate marriage.

This year's Mass will take place in the South Bay, at Corpus Christi Parish, on Saturday, Feb. 18, at 11 a.m. All married couples are invited to renew their commitment (in one of three languages) and stay for the reception, which hopefully will remind them of their own wedding celebration. Couples celebrating a special anniversary or jubilee — 20, 40, 50, or even 60 years of marriage — are especially invited.

Every year, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops observes Feb. 7 to 14 as National Marriage Week, an opportunity to focus on building a culture of life and love that begins with supporting and promoting marriage and family.

This year's theme is "Marriage ... one flesh, given and received." According to the USCCB, it "highlights the one-flesh union of husband and wife that



CELEBRATION: Married couples of all ages come together at the diocese's Marriage Anniversary Mass to celebrate their union. Last year, it was held at The Immaculata Church on Feb. 12.

is willed by God. It also indicates the personal self-gift of each spouse, one to the other. These concepts point to Christ who gives Himself under the appearance of bread and wine — as real flesh and blood."

Additional opportunities for renewal this month include our "Building a Better Marriage" enrichment series, held on consecutive Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. (Jan. 11 to Feb. 15) at the diocesan Pastoral Center in English and on consecutive Thursday evenings (Feb. 9 to March 9) in Spanish. All are welcome and there is no cost to attend. The series will explore themes such as healthy communication, cultivating the virtues, personality styles/love languages, and rebuilding trust. Speakers are mainly Catholic marriage and family therapists in San Diego.

It's also important to note opportunities for growth and renewal that aren't just in February, but year-round. Worldwide Marriage Encounter

(wwme-sandiego.org) is an incredible ministry that hosts weekend marriage retreats throughout the year focused on building healthy and holy communication between husband and wife. In addition, the Office for Family Life and Spirituality maintains a network of Catholic therapists, many of whom specialize in working with couples.

Marriage therapy isn't just for couples who are "struggling." Dr. Lee Williams, director of the Marital and Family Therapy program at the University of San Diego, compares cou-

ples therapy to car maintenance. Just like you wouldn't want to wait until your car broke down in the middle of the road to do necessary repairs, why would you wait until a major disaster to work on your marriage? Changing the oil, filling the tires, replacing air filters are all part of standard auto maintenance. As a couple, what is your standard relationship maintenance? What do you do every week or month to strengthen your relationship? What do you do every five years or 10 years?

Marriage *Continued on Page 7*



GIFT: The Mass is a day to recognize the extraordinary love between partners.

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REMEMBERING: Couples are encouraged to wear clothes that recall their wedding day.

Marriage *Continued from Page 6*

At the same time, couples that are struggling also have plenty of resources, one of which is attending a local Retrouvaille weekend (helpourmarriage-sandiego.org), which has helped couples through the years save their marriages and put them on a path towards renewal.

Couples are encouraged to visit the Marriage Enrichment landing page (sdcatholic.org/marriage) to explore a variety of resources that they can use on their own to strengthen their marriage.

Many parishes also host events in February and throughout the year,

such as date nights, marriage enrichment talks, and faith-sharing small groups, such as CFM (cfm.org).

No matter how long you've been married or how you would describe the state of your relationship, this month presents many opportunities to take stock of your marriage and discern where and how you are called to grow. The simple decision to do something — anything — to strengthen your marriage is in itself an act of love, a reminder to your spouse of how much he or she matters to you.

John Prust is the director of the diocese's Office for Family Life and Spirituality.



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RECEPTION: After the Mass, couples and their families are invited to share wedding cake and stop at tables with information about enriching married life.



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After shopping with one of my grown sons, we arrived home and, after putting away the bags, we sat in the living room and each of us instinctively reached for our cell phones to review emails and messages. We had had a previous conversation about the impact electronic devices have on our relationships, their advantages and their risks.

We had acknowledged that cell phones, in particular, have transformed our lives. The greatest impact we recognized was the subconscious addiction we have developed to continually review our texts and messages, and how difficult it is to set the phone aside for a while.

Human beings are not wired to process constant electromagnetic

**Associate Director,
Family Life &
Spirituality**

Ricardo Márquez



stimuli; we're receiving much more information than our capacity to process it. This creates a breeding ground for confusion, anxiety and tension, all of which we experience. Without the stimulus of curiosity that the phone sparks, we feel a void that we fill by impulsively picking up the phone.

After a couple of minutes on our phones, we suddenly looked at each other, instantly recalled our conversation, recognized the incongruence of what we were doing, and almost simultaneously put down our phones.

"The truth is that we lose this moment, the 'here and now' that we have to talk to one another, to come together," my son said.

We spend months without seeing

each other and, when we're together, we get distracted to read or send messages to those not present. This awareness led us spontaneously to ask simple questions, to begin to connect: What are your plans? How is work going? How are you feeling?

We began to talk in another frequency, the one that connects hearts, and shares the tensions that we are experiencing, the dreams that move us, the doubts that follow us, and the faith and hope that inspire us.

Time flew by and we craved more; along the way, we shared words, "pearls" that came from the heart, gems of life and intimacy.

"It was good for me to talk; it helped me clear up some things that I believed I couldn't talk to you about. Thank you for sharing. I feel closer to you ..."

At the end of our lives, we will be asked about love. I will talk about this moment. You don't forget these moments because our emotional memory endures, it's like an advance on eterni-

ty. Moments of closeness and intimacy are simple, deep, enjoyable. What else can you ask for? They are a blessing and a grace, but you also have to cultivate them, you have to ask for them.

You can have comforts and material goods, you can have degrees and titles, but these types of moments can't be bought or sold. They simply are and they are a gift, a gift from the God of life, who reminds us in Jesus' words: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

When individuals encounter one another, they will recognize the immensity of the mystery in the other, feel in communion, and experience the origin of everything created, and worth living for.

Experiencing human communion and nourishing the intimacy of family relationships today occurs, paradoxically, when we set aside a small electronic device. It's in your hands; try it, and let the encounter amaze you.

Am I Called?

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

Does the idea come to me often?

Does the idea scare me?

I SHOULD CONTACT

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'Lent 101': A Season of Preparation Explained

By Noreen McInnes



Our 40-day Lenten journey is a time of prayer, fasting and almsgiving to prepare ourselves to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord more fully.

This holy season begins with Ash Wednesday, which falls on Feb. 22, and ends at sundown on Holy Thursday, April 6.

Throughout Lent, we are called to deepen our relationship with God through prayer and with our neighbor through charity, evidenced by almsgiving and mercy. Through these corporal and spiritual practices, the entire Church joins in solidarity with the catechumens who are preparing to renounce Satan and embrace Christ when they receive the Easter sacraments.

Lent is a reminder of our own baptism, when we died to sin and rose to new life in Christ. The ashes we receive in the sign of a cross on Ash Wednesday are made from burning last year's palm branches. The connection between the cross and the Resurrection symbolizes that our self-denial leads us to Easter joy.

Prayer

The chief activity of Lent is a renewal of our daily practice of prayer in anticipation of the celebration of Easter and, ultimately, when we are called home to the Lord. If one's cal-



DUST TO DUST: A priest prepares to distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent.

endar permits, attending daily Mass, Stations of the Cross, and Scripture study can lead to an inner conversion of our hearts to Christ's. There are many online prayer resources; for example, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' website offers the daily Mass readings in print and in a podcast at bible.usccb.org/daily-bible-reading.

Fasting and Abstinence

Members of the Latin Catholic

Church (as opposed to Eastern Catholics, who have their own Lenten observances), from age 18 until age 59, are obligated to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. They are permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The obligation to fast is dispensed, however, for those that are ill or pregnant.

From age 14 onwards, members

of the Latin Catholic Church must refrain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all Fridays during Lent.

Fasting and abstinence are not just about eating less, but are a way that we share in the suffering of Christ through self-denial. The Lenten season is a time when we focus on becoming more Christ-like and give up something that might keep us from a closer relationship with Christ. For that reason, many go beyond fasting and abstinence and also add a voluntary sacrifice or two.

Almsgiving

Giving alms draws us out of a focus on ourselves, so that we will reach out to our neighbor in generous, selfless charity. We should not be limited to monetary gifts, but to share our lives in service and corporal works of mercy. Ask your parish, a local crisis pregnancy center, or an organization like Catholic Charities what volunteer opportunities are available.

What Else Should You Expect?

Other signs of Lent you will notice during Mass are the purple vestments and the omission of the joyful singing of the "Gloria" and "Alleluia." The more somber Lenten music, the lack of flowers, and the simplicity of liturgical environments all signal a fasting of sensory pleasures.

Noreen McInnes is director of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality.



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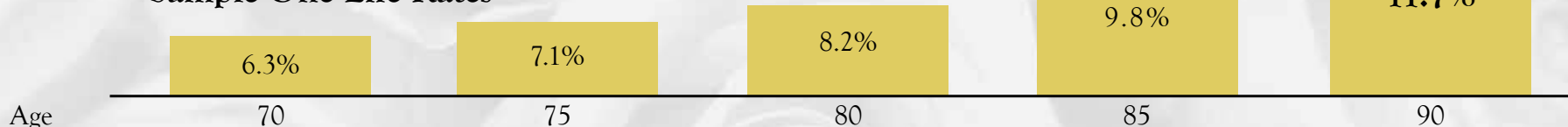
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'The Feeling Like You're Entering Into a Community Is Wonderful'

PROCESSION: Catechists carrying their parish's Book of the Elect, containing the names of those who will be baptized at the Easter Vigil, processed toward the altar during last year's Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion at Good Shepherd Church.

By Denis Grasska



A large and diverse group will enter the Catholic Church this Easter.

This includes 398 catechumens, those who have never been baptized, and 770 candidates, those who are baptized but have yet to receive their First Communion or confirmation, from about 74 parishes and other Catholic communities.



Among them will be **John Raymond**, who had been "nothing, as far as religion went," when he married his cradle Catholic wife, Sharen,

at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Vista back in 1965. At that same parish, almost six decades later, the 75-year-old is preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation: baptism, First Communion and confirmation.

Raymond, who is the owner of Raymond Property Management and has worked in the real estate industry for about two decades, has followed a circuitous route to Catholicism. After his wife turned away from her Catholic faith, he followed her into "born-again" Christianity and went on to become a Protestant pastor.

Later, after the death of the couple's youngest son in 2003, Raymond came to see Christianity as "just one of many ways to God" and turned to Eastern religion for life's answers.

But, last summer, everything changed.

Raymond, who dedicates time every morning to studying topics that interest him, felt a strange urging one day to delve into the "Catechism of the Catholic Church." (A friend's son had been ordained to the Catholic priesthood the previous day.) He watched three online videos about the Catechism, which "connected all the dots" for him, leaving him convinced that the Catholic Church was the Church

that Jesus founded.

Raymond said he had been saddened by the disunity he had encountered in the Protestant world.

"Every (Protestant) church believes something different," he said, contrasting this with the "solidity" of Catholic doctrine.

"With the Catholic Church, there's no guessing," he said. "It's been the truth ... since the time of Jesus, when the Apostles walked with Him and they talked with Him."

Because no proof could be shown that he had been baptized with a valid formula, Raymond entered the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) process as a catechumen. His wife has been attending classes alongside him, having decided to return to the Church of her youth.

In his new spiritual home, Raymond said he hopes to be "a vessel" of the Holy Spirit to help bring others into the Church.



Morgan Arguello, a 44-year-old wedding planner, is also a catechumen at St. Francis of Assisi Parish. She was raised by Methodist

parents, but never baptized. As a teenager, she was an active member of a nondenominational youth group.

Arguello first felt drawn to the Catholic Church about four years ago in the midst of a conversation with her then fiancé, now husband, Wayne, who is Catholic. He had mentioned matter-of-factly that the Catholic Church dates back to the first century.

For Arguello, who had gone her whole life thinking of Catholicism as "an offshoot from Christianity," rather than the original Christian faith, this was an eye-opener.

"As soon as I heard that, I knew I had to convert," she said.

In these final days of preparation for becoming Catholic, Arguello said it's "so wonderful to feel something that I haven't felt my whole life." She explained that she feels she had

been "missing out on a huge portion of love."

Describing the RCIA process as "significantly more fun" than she had anticipated, Arguello said one of the highlights has been the bonds she formed with her godparent and classmates.

"The feeling like you're entering into a community is just so wonderful," she said, "and I feel like, if you don't have that, you don't even know what you're missing out on."



Tara Garza, a 33-year-old stay-at-home mom, was baptized in the Episcopal Church. Currently attending RCIA classes at St.

Patrick Parish in Carlsbad, she will receive the sacrament of confirmation at the upcoming Easter Vigil; at the same Mass, her 3-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter will be baptized, and her 14-year-old daughter will receive her First Communion.

Garza describes her religious background as "a little bit all over the place." She attended both Episcopal services and Catholic Masses in her youth, as well as nondenominational churches during her teenage years. However, if asked, she always identified as Catholic.

As a married mother with three children and a fourth who has passed away, there came a point when Garza began to feel "guilty" and "ashamed" about not attending Mass and not raising her children in "a more God-based home."

In 2020, during a "really dark time" for her family, she turned to the Church for solace. She attended Mass for the first time in many years with her husband, who is a baptized Catholic, and their children.

"I realized that it's something I had been missing for so long," said Garza, who shared that the entire family "loved it."

Later, an invitation to serve as godmother to her nephew provided "the

push I needed" to sign up for RCIA. Only after receiving the sacrament of confirmation will she be eligible to serve as a godparent.

Before she began attending RCIA, Garza said she hadn't realized how much she "craved" her faith and how much she wanted to deepen her knowledge of it.

"I look forward to continuing to learn. ... I just want to grow and become closer to God, in the hope that I can also bring my children closer (to Him)."



Max Sonnier, a catechumen at St. Joseph Cathedral Parish, developed an interest in the Bible during his college years.

"I was searching for reality and meaning in life, and it became very clear the more I studied the Bible that I could find it within," said Sonnier, a 27-year-old software engineer who had been agnostic for about a decade.

Around Christmas of 2021, he looked out of his window and, seeing a beautiful Catholic church nearby, decided to "give it a try" and "see what was inside."

Curiosity led to conversion.

"The first day I was in the church, I felt God and I felt light," he said. "I did not need to second-guess or question the situation — I knew He was present — and, from there, I realized God was present in Catholicism. This led to my decision to convert and join an RCIA program."

Today, Sonnier finds himself at a crossroads on his faith journey. Desiring to dedicate his life as much as possible to serving God, he is considering whether he might be called to the priesthood.

"Whatever God has planned for me," he said, "I have a lot of love for Him."

For more information:
sdcatholic.org/roe





PHOTO OP: Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano posed for photos with catechumens and candidates at last year's Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

1,160 at Rite of Election on Path to Join Faith

By Denis Grasska



In late February, the Diocese of San Diego's catechumens and candidates will mark a major milestone on the path toward full communion with the Church.

The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion is the annual liturgy at which those enrolled in the RCIA process are presented to the diocesan bishop and chosen to receive

the sacraments of initiation at Easter.

"It is a beautiful time of celebrating their journey to Christ and the sacraments," said Joseph Horejs, associate director of the diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry, "as well as a reminder to the wider Christian community of our own daily conversion and life in Christ."

Because of the large number of catechumens and candidates, the diocese will be hosting four Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion ceremonies. The first, with Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano presiding,

will be held at 10 a.m., Saturday, Feb. 25, at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Imperial. Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will preside over another ceremony at 2 p.m. that same day at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa, as well as two additional ceremonies at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. the following day, also at Good Shepherd.

Horejs said that, from December through the beginning of Lent, his office is "consumed with the planning and logistics of this huge and wonderful event."

"We all do it for the glory of God and

our brothers and sisters that are joining the family of God, the Church," he said. "The joy and excitement on their faces makes it all worthwhile, and we look forward with joyful anticipation to join with them at the table of the Eucharist as one body in Christ."

Tickets are required to attend the three ceremonies celebrated by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy. Others are invited to watch the livestream at sdcatholic.org/roe.



Do You Know the 'Rite' Words?

The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion has several terms associated with it that may be unfamiliar to the Catholic in the pews. Here are a few of them defined:

Book of the Elect

A book containing the names of a parish's catechumens. Each faith community presents such a book to the diocesan bishop for his signature on the day of the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion.

Candidate

One who has already been baptized and seeks full communion with the Catholic Church. Some were baptized into a Protestant denomination; others are baptized Catholics who never received their First Communion and/or confirmation.

Catechumen

An unbaptized person seeking to enter the Catholic Church.

Elect

Catechumens become "the Elect," during the Rite of Election. Their new moniker reflects the fact that they have been "elected," or chosen, to receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil.

Godparent

A fully initiated Catholic who accompanies a catechumen through the RCIA process.

Mystagogy

The final period of RCIA, running from Easter to Pentecost, is a time for post-baptismal catechesis, or "mystagogy." The recently baptized/initiated reflect on the mystery of the sacraments that they have received and on the sacramental life of the Church.

Neophyte

One who has recently received the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil.

RCIA

Acronym for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, the formal process for becoming Catholic. The U.S. bishops recently voted to change its name to Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA).

Sacraments of Initiation

A collective term for the sacraments of baptism, First Communion and confirmation.

Sponsor

A fully initiated Catholic who accompanies a candidate through the RCIA process.



SIGN HERE: Cardinal Robert W. McElroy signs a parish's Book of the Elect, containing the names of that parish's catechumens.

Bishop Urges Faithful to Continue Dr. King's Call

By Aida Bustos



The Civil Rights Movement continues today, and each

person of faith has to continue to work to make its basic call to love one another — and reject hate — a reality.

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano delivered that message at the third annual Mass commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King's call to service on Jan. 15 at The Immaculata Church. The Mass was moved there after the rain damaged Christ the King Church, where it was scheduled.

The Diocesan Commission for African American Catholics organized the Mass, presided over by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy. Deacon Marvin Thre-att proclaimed the Gospel reading.

The U.S. Catholic Church denounces racial discrimination in all its forms as a sin and works to advance racial justice. Under the leadership of Cardinal McElroy, the diocese has held events and forums to explore racism and identify potential solutions, and to stand with its victims.

In his opening remarks, Cardinal McElroy referred to the day's Gospel (John 1:29-34), in which John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God.

"John the Baptist is great because, when they come to acclaim him, he does not point toward himself ... He points to Christ. He points to the



UNITED: Members of the Commission for African American Catholics and the Knights and Ladies of St. Peter Claver joined Cardinal Robert W. McElroy and Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano at a Mass Jan. 15 at The Immaculata Church.

Gospel of Jesus Christ. And Martin Luther King did the same thing. The greatness of Martin Luther King is that he took the horrendous situation of discrimination which had existed since slavery, and put it within the context of Christian faith, so we could recognize how incompatible racism in any form is with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"The African American community, even through the slave period, brought their suffering to Christ and interpreted it in the light of their faith in Jesus Christ and in the Church. And that's what we celebrate this day," the cardinal said.

In the homily, Bishop Bejarano said that Christ came to show us how "to reject evil, and the only way to do that is the way of Jesus, the way of love." He said that Dr. King embraced this mission.

"Dr. King had a personal relationship with Jesus, and that's why the Lord chose him to be a prophet of our times," the bishop said. "However, it's not enough that we know what the Lord did through him, it is necessary that we continue the call and mission that he received."

The bishop noted that the encyclopedia says that the Civil Rights Movement ended in 1968.

"The Civil Rights Movement has not ended; it continues in our midst now ... because as long as there is sin in the world, there will be need to continue the (work) of the Civil Rights Movement."

He urged the faithful to act.

"Live the Gospel of Christ to its fullest, and let love transform your life and transform the life of others. ... If you cannot fly, run. If you cannot run, walk. And if you can't walk, crawl. But by all means, keep moving in your love and in your faith."

For more information:
sdcatholic.org/
culturaldiversity



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'Sisters Are True Blessing for Our Diocese'

RECOGNITION: The Annual Sisters Appreciation and Jubilee Celebration, held Feb. 18 this year, expresses gratitude for the ministry of religious sisters and honors those celebrating milestone anniversaries.

The Southern Cross



Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will honor five religious sisters who are celebrating milestone anniversaries (jubilees) of consecrated life this year.

This will take place during the 23rd Annual Sisters Appreciation and Jubilee Celebration, which will be held Feb. 18 at the diocesan Pastoral Center. The annual event, which includes a Mass and luncheon, recognizes the presence and ministry of the more than 180 consecrated women currently living in the Diocese of San Diego.

The following are this year's jubilarians.

75 Years



Sister Joyce Anne Thomas was born in Jamestown, N.Y., in 1930.

She first encountered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange during her freshman year at Cathedral Girls High School in San Diego. By the end of her sophomore year, she was already determined to join them after high school.

In June of 1948, she graduated from St. Anthony's High School in Long Beach and, on July 5, entered the convent as a postulant. She made her final vows in 1956.

"I happily embraced the mission to 'serve the Dear Neighbor, without distinction,'" Sister Joyce said, referencing the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

She taught for 27 years in Catholic schools in California. After San Diego's Rosary High School closed in 1977, she went on to teach for 25 years at a local public school.

Among the highlights of her teaching career, Sister Joyce recalls an eighth-grade student named Edward Clark, whom she taught at a Buena Park school. After graduating from high school, he entered the seminary and was ordained to the priesthood. He later served as auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles for two decades until his retirement early last year.

"We have kept in touch all these years," Sister Joyce said of her former pupil.

She currently lives in the North Park area with her cat, Cuddles, and is a member of the folk group at St. Patrick Parish's 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass.

60 Years

Sister Elizabeth Ann Waldron-Felix, a Franciscan Missionary of the Immaculate Conception, is celebrating 60 years in religious life. Her biography and photo were unavailable at press time.

50 Years



Sister Susan DeGuide describes herself as "99% San Diegan." Born in Chicago, her family relocated to San Diego in 1951, when she was only 2 years old.

She attended the since-closed Holy Spirit School, which was administered by the Sisters of Mercy from Sligo, Ireland, and it was there that seeds were planted for a religious vocation.

She entered the Sisters of Mercy on Oct. 11, 1970, and made her first profession of vows on Sept. 9, 1973, in Sligo.

Over the past 50 years, Sister Susan's ministry generally has fallen into three categories: education, pastoral work and leadership.

She served as teacher and administrator in the dioceses of San Diego and San Bernardino at both elementary and high schools. For four years, she traveled throughout the country giving workshops to high school religion teachers for the Veritas Credo program.

Pastorally, she served in a parish in Lima, Peru, working as part of a team of Mercy Sisters and Columban Fathers. It was there that she learned the value of Small Christian Communities.

She also served as a chaplain at Scripps Mercy Hospital, Chula Vista.

Over the last 22 years, Sister Susan has been a member of provincial and regional leadership teams for the Mercy Sisters in the United States and served on the congregational leadership team in Dublin. She currently serves as assistant to the regional superior and as regional treasurer.

"My profession motto is 'I rejoice in God my Savior,' and my life has been about the many joys and challenges that I have had ... and how God always comes through," said Sister Susan, who is a member of Mission San Diego de Alcalá Parish. "Aging is its own challenge. I thank people from so many cultures who have enriched my life and helped me to grow and experience the Divine Presence among us."

40 Years



Sister M. Tukuza Mpangara was born in the Ruvuma Region of Tanzania, which is now located in the Mbinga Diocese.

She joined the African Benedictine Sisters of St. Agnes of Chipole in 1977 and made her first vows in 1983, followed by final vows in 1992.

From 2000 to 2005, Sister Tukuza served as chief accountant and in administration for the motherhouse in Chipole.

In 2005, she came to the United States, where her ministry was in the health-care field. For six years, she served in Florida with the Sisters of St. Agnes, then continued that ministry in Indiana for the next six years.

In 2017, Sister Tukuza moved to California, where she cares for patients in the memory care unit in a care center in Vista and is a member of nearby St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

"It is a special joy for me to see the face of Jesus Christ when helping the people I care for — both spiritually and physically," she said. "My ministry/job is my call."

25 Years



"My family taught me strong values and faith about the importance of Jesus in our lives," recalled **Sister Maria de Lourdes Barboza Camarena**, who was born in Mexicali and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Those values and faith ultimately led her to the Religious of the Incarnate Word. She entered the congregation's convent in Mexico City in 1995, making her first vows in 1998 and perpetual vows on Aug. 30, 2013.

Her years in ministry have sent her to different missions in Mexico, Argentina and the United States, where she has ministered in education and evangelization at various schools and parishes.

"I have tried to follow and serve Jesus, the Incarnate Word," said Sister Maria de Lourdes, who this year celebrates the 25th anniversary of her profession of first vows.

"My heart is deeply grateful for His fidelity, love and tenderness that have been great toward me in every moment of my life."

School's Art Project Lifts Ukrainian Children

The Southern Cross



Student artists
from Cathedral
Catholic High

School recently brought smiles to the faces of Ukrainian child refugees living in Poland.

The students did this in collaboration with the Memory Project, a non-profit that invites students to create portraits for youth who have experienced war, extreme poverty or other serious difficulties.

This is the sixth time that Cathedral Catholic students have participated in the Memory Project, having previously made portraits of children in the Philippines (fall 2019), Pakistan (spring 2019), Malaysia (2020), India (2021) and Nigeria (2022).

"It is one of my favorite projects I do with my National Art Honor Society students at Cathedral Catholic," said Kristin Brandeberry, the visual art teacher.

The Memory Project sent photos of the children, along with such information as their first name, favorite color and what they want to be when they grow up. The students then had creative freedom to paint or draw their child in whatever style they wanted.

Leeann Remiker, a senior, was among the 10 Cathedral Catholic students who participated in the Memory Project this year.



COURTESY CATHEDRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



COURTESY CATHEDRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

PICTURE-PERFECT: Art students at Cathedral Catholic High School recently collaborated with the Memory Project to create portraits for Ukrainian refugee children. From left, examples include these artworks by Leeann Remiker and Jenny Kim.

"I've been doing the Memory Project for the last three years, and it has been one of the most fulfilling artistic experiences of my life," she said. "The project shows our ability as artists to make people smile, even in tough times, and allows me to use my talents for good."

A Jan. 11 post on the school's Facebook page had a link to a video of the Memory Project delivering the finished portraits to the Ukrainian children and their parents.

"These portraits will remind us that in the world, in addition to bad people,

there are still good, sensitive, kind and compassionate people!" one Ukrainian parent wrote, in a message shown in the video. "All the best and God's blessings to you!"

Another wrote, "Thank you so much, you made a wonderful gift for my son. He liked it very much. Now the portrait will hang in the apartment, and we will talk about your kind hearts. May God bless you all."

"I am so proud of our students using their gifts to lift the spirits of the Ukrainian people," Brandeberry said.

"When watching the video of the portrait delivery, it is clear how much the portraits are cherished."

The experience was also a rewarding one for the young artists.

"This project allowed me to connect with the children of Ukraine, and give back in any way I could," said Kaelin Manzoni, a junior at the school. "It was a privilege to be able to illustrate (my portrait subject's) happiness."

Rylee Parker, a senior, said, "I love how creating a portrait can help bring people together all over the world."



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By Christina Bagaglio Slentz



In February, popular culture bombards us with superficial messages about how to express our love. We can take a different path as people of faith.

The Greatest Commandment

We recognize that the most important love we are called to give is a Christly love of our brothers and sisters, but how does this love for our neighbor connect to caring for creation?

In fact, questions of environmental protection can sometimes come into confrontation with humanity. Loggers in the Pacific Northwest have found their work at odds with preservation of the endangered Northern Spotted Owl's habitat. Workers in the fossil fuel industry face uncertainty as energy sourcing increasingly shifts toward a range of renewable and clean energy options. Arriving to just solutions in such situations is not easy.

Scripture tells us, however, the first responsibility we were given by our Creator is "dominion" over the earth (Gen 1:28-29), further characterized as the "tilling and keeping" of the land (Gen 2:15). In this light, we understand our right relationship with the earth to be two-fold: We are meant to use the earth and to protect it.



Loving Our Neighbor: Justice

Acknowledging creation as a shared gift illuminates the importance of our just use of the earth's resources — not only shared with our brothers and sisters living on our common home today, what we call "environmental justice," but also with those who will live here in the future, known as "intergenerational solidarity."

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) gives witness to the plight of people living where global overuse of the earth's resources is resulting in life-threatening climate impacts. In Bangladesh, for example, extreme precipitation and sea level rise erode property and increase the salinity of the rivers, such that fishing and farming are becoming impossible. The poor are most vulnerable, lacking the means to adapt to these new circumstances. As agricultural livelihoods fail, many are forced to move to urban areas in search of work.

Revealing this dynamic, CRS features the story of Mohammad Mannan's family, pictured on this page. You can learn more about them if you scan the QR code or go to crs.org/stories/climate-refugees-bangladesh-chad.

Recent storms in San Diego have churned up massive amounts of trash in the ocean and our waterways, dumping what has been hidden from our view onto the shore. Speaking to the environmental challenges of protecting our seas, oceans

and coastal areas in 2019, Pope Francis describes intergenerational solidarity as a "moral imperative in responding to the problems of our time," referencing his encyclical "Laudato Si'" (159-162). The Holy Father argues, "By placing the needs of ... especially young people, and also of generations yet to come, at the heart of efforts to care for creation, then the common good of all may be promoted and protected, 'since the world we have received also belongs to those who will follow us.'"

Love of our children and grandchildren therefore calls us to take action to care for creation, using the earth's resources sustainably and preserving our common home for the generations to come.

Creation Care During Lent

While creation care is an ancient part of our faith, recognized in Scripture and emphasized in the works of the saints, our modern lifestyles have steered us into a state of disharmony with the earth. As a result, today we hear a cry of the earth and a cry of the poor and vulnerable.

By taking action to care for creation, you are therefore demonstrating love for the poorest and most vulnerable of your "neighbors."

The season of Lent offers us a powerful moment to reflect on our lives and discern the path forward to journey closer to God. Creation care is one Lenten intention option you might explore. Here are some ways to take action:

- Attend the free diocesan "Introductory Creation Care Workshop for Parishes and Families" to learn more about this Catholic teaching: Feb. 6 at the Pastoral Center, 6 to 8 p.m., with check-in and pizza beginning at 5:30. Register at forms.gle/htuA9uyPDGmZqHVX6.
- The Catholic organization Greener Lent, in partnership with CRS, offers a program by which you can prayerfully commit to varying degrees to abstaining from meat to reduce your carbon footprint, curbing the effects of climate change. The money saved is then donated to CRS for distribution to those in need. In this way, the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving are combined. Go to greenerlent.org to learn more.
- Consider "Meatless Mondays" as promoted by The Sisters of Mercy. Read here, ncronline.org/earthbeat/faith/spirituality/mercy-sisters-cook-recipes-less-meat-lent-and-not-just-Fridays, or scan the QR code on this page.

sdcatholic.org/creation



Catholic Relief Services



Meatless Mondays Recipes



News Briefs

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.

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

'Lourdes' in Theaters for Two Nights Only

The documentary "Lourdes" is coming to more than 700 theaters nationwide, including four in the San Diego area, for two nights only: Wednesday, Feb. 8, and Thursday, Feb. 9.

There will be 7 p.m. screenings both nights at AMC La Jolla 12, AMC Mission Valley 20, AMC Plaza Bonita 14 and AMC Otay Ranch 12.

On Feb. 8, the film will be shown

in its original language, French, with subtitles in English. The following evening, it will be shown in Spanish, with subtitles in English.

"Lourdes," which was nominated for Best Documentary in two international film competitions, tells the true stories of six pilgrims seeking miraculous healings at the Lourdes grotto in southern France, where the Blessed Mother appeared 165 years ago to St. Bernadette Soubirous.

For more information, visit fathomevents.com/events/Lourdes or lourdesthemovement.com.

Gala to Benefit Trafficking Survivors

Children of the Immaculate Heart, a San Diego-based nonprofit that serves survivors of sex trafficking in San Diego, will hold its 10th Annual Gala on Saturday, Feb. 18.

The event, which will run from 6 to 9 p.m. at St. Thérèse of Carmel Parish in Carmel Valley, will include appetizers, dinner, dessert, wine/beer, a live band and a silent auction.

Cy Kellett, host of the "Catholic Answers Live" radio program, will serve as master of ceremonies. Deacon Marvin Threatt, of Christ the King Parish, will deliver a talk on the theme "Awakening in the Holy Spirit." Attendees will also hear updates on the work of Children of the Immaculate Heart from its president, Grace Williams-



Cardinal Robert W. McElroy celebrated an all-school Mass Jan. 20 at Cristo Rey San Diego High School. During his visit, the students presented him with his own Cristo Rey San Diego jacket, and the students and staff hosted a small reception for him and other guests. This was Cardinal McElroy's first time on campus since June 2021, when he celebrated Mass at the end of the school's inaugural academic year.

Cristo Rey San Diego High School exclusively serves students of limited economic means. For more information about the school, its college-preparatory academics, and its unique work-study program, visit cristoreysandiego.org.

Lionello; staff; and clients.

Tickets are \$75 per person and will benefit Children of the Immaculate Heart's two programs: the St. Bakhita Adult Program for women and their children and The Refuge, a residential treatment center for teenage girls.

Reservations are required. RSVP at childrenoftheimmaculateheart.org/events or (619) 431-5537.

Ladies Guild Hosts Fundraiser for Father Joe's

The Father Joe's Villages Ladies Guild, which supports the work of Father Joe's Villages, will present "Around the World in 80 Days."

The fundraising event will be held on Monday, Feb. 20, at the San Diego Mission Valley Hilton. It will begin at 10:30 a.m. with a silent auction, preview, and social hour. It will continue at noon with entertainment, lunch, a drawing, and completion of the silent auction.

The cost to attend is \$65 per person. All proceeds benefit the children at Father Joe's Villages. Parking at the hotel is \$3 per car.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Jane Hargrove at janehargrove67@gmail.com.

St. Thérèse of Carmel to Hold Spring Concert

The St. Thérèse of Carmel Parish (Carmel Valley) Choir invites you to its highly anticipated spring concert.


The choir will perform Fauré's Requiem in D Minor, Op. 48, at 3 p.m., Palm Sunday, April 2, inside the parish church. A reception will follow in the plaza.

The St. Thérèse of Carmel Parish Choir, now under the direction of Catherine Marshall, includes 35 voices. They will be supported by a 12-member chamber orchestra, as well as guest organist Emma Whitten.

Admission to the concert is free. For more information, contact the parish at (858) 481-3232.

Briefs Continued on Page 17

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Evening of Gratitude

Sunday, March 26, 2023

St. Catherine Labouré Parish

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The Ignatian Volunteer Corps - San Diego cordially invites you to attend our annual Evening of Gratitude in recognition of the work of our IVC volunteers and to express special thanks to this year's award recipients.

Honoring the Recipients of the Madonna Della Strada & Sheila O'Malley Vision and Dedication Awards

Fr. Gregory Boyle, S.J. – best-selling author and founder of Homeboy Industries as recipient of the Madonna Della Strada Award.


All attendees will receive an autographed copy of Fr. Greg's latest book, *"The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness."*





Lucy Howell – long-standing member of IVC San Diego as recipient of the Sheila O'Malley Vision and Dedication Award.

Lucy has been a dedicated member of IVC San Diego for 10 years. She truly envisions the growth of IVC to serve people in need, deepen Ignatian spirituality, and spread the Kingdom of God on earth.



Complete registration details and payment options are available online at: www.ivicusa.org/SanDiegoEOG2023.

Briefs *Continued from Page 16*

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.

Catholics Can ‘Encounter’ Jesus in Rancho Peñasquitos

Encounter, a Spirit-filled evening of inspiring music, prayer and Eucharistic adoration, is held on the second Friday of each month at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Rancho Peñasquitos.

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

For more information, contact Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish at (858) 324-0490.

Obituary

Father George Byrne

Father George Byrne, a retired priest of the Diocese of San Diego, died Jan. 8. He was 87. Born in New Rochelle, N.Y., he began his studies for the priesthood in 1960 at St. Francis Seminary in San Diego. He continued them at Immaculate Heart Seminary, also in San Diego, and at St. Patrick Seminary in Menlo Park, Calif.

He was ordained to the priesthood on June 7, 1969.

From 1969 through 1974, Father Byrne served as assistant or associate pastor at a succession of parishes, including St. Joseph’s in Upland; Our Lady of Assumption in San Bernardino; and St. Francis of Assisi in Vista.

For three years, beginning in 1974, he worked for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Division of Film and Broadcasting and, in 1977, began a three-year stint with Catholic Relief Services in New York.

He served as director of the Newman Center at San Diego State University from July 1978 to August 1980.

Father Byrne later served as associate pastor of Mary Star of the Sea Parish in La Jolla and as director of the Diocese of San Diego’s Office for Communication before accepting his first assignment as a parish pastor.

He was the founding pastor of St. William of York Parish, which would later become St. Thérèse of Carmel Parish, ministering there from 1985 through 1988. In 1999, he had a brief, two-month assignment as pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in San Diego. This was followed by almost 16 months as chaplain of Nazareth House San Diego, a senior living community, where he served until his retirement from active ministry on Dec. 31, 2000.

A funeral Mass was celebrated Jan. 13 at St. Thérèse of Carmel Parish, followed by interment at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery and Mausoleum.



Working for the Church

Employment opportunities with the Diocese of San Diego are posted throughout the year. Here is a sampling of current job openings:

Associate Director, Youth and Young Adult Ministry

The associate director works alongside the director of the diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, which supports parish youth and young adult ministry programs and leadership as they strive to meet the needs of youth (ages 14 to 17) and young adults (ages 18 to 39). Requirements include a bachelor’s degree in Theology, Religious Studies or equivalent (master’s preferred), and three to five years’ experience in youth, young adult, or campus ministry.

Associate Director, Family Life and Spirituality

The associate director of the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality collaborates with parishes and provides leadership in the development of parish-based programs in support of family spiritual life, especially with Spanish-speaking communities. Applicants should have a master’s (preferred) or bachelor’s degree in Theology or Ministry, and at least five years’ experience working for a Catholic organization. Verbal and written fluency in Spanish is a must.

For a more detailed description of these positions at the diocesan Pastoral Center, as well as other open positions at local parishes and schools, visit sdcatholic.org/diocesan/administration/human-resources/employment.

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Long Homilies 'a Disaster,' Keep It Under 10 Min.

By Justin McLellan



VATICAN CITY — Lengthy, abstract homilies are “a disaster,” so

preaching should be limited to 10 minutes, Pope Francis said.

Speaking off the cuff to diocesan liturgical directors Jan. 20, the pope said homilies are not academic conferences. “I sometimes hear people say, ‘I went to this parish, and yes it was a good philosophy lesson, 40, 45 minutes,’” he said.

Pope Francis encouraged priests to keep their homilies to “no more than eight to 10 minutes” and always include in them “a thought, a feeling and an image,” so that “the people may bring something home with them.”

Homilies are “sacramentals” to be “prepared in prayer” and “with an apostolic spirit,” he said.

But, in the Catholic Church, he said, “in general, the homilies are a disaster.”

The liturgical directors were in Rome to participate in a formation course on liturgy, “Living Liturgical Action Fully,” at the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy.

Pope Francis also warned against the liturgical master of ceremonies assuming too central a role during Mass. “The more hidden a master of ceremonies is, the better,” he said. “It is Christ that makes the heart vibrate, it is the meeting with Him that draws



PEP TALK: Pope Francis speaks to participants who attended his meeting with diocesan liturgy directors at the Vatican Jan. 20. He encouraged brevity in homilies.

in the spirit.”

Beyond a “deep knowledge” of religious celebrations, the pope said that experts on liturgy must have a strong pastoral sense to improve a community’s liturgical life, and that religious celebrations must foster the “fruitful

participation of the people of God” and not just of the clergy.

A pastoral approach to the liturgy allows religious celebrations to “lead the people to Christ, and Christ to the people,” which the pope said is the “principal objective” of liturgy and an

essential principle of the Second Vatican Council.

“If we neglect this, we will have beautiful rituals, but without vigor, without flavor, without sense, because they do not touch the heart and the existence of the people of God,” said Pope Francis.

The pope encouraged them to spend time in parishes, observe liturgical celebrations and help pastors reflect on how they prepare liturgy with their communities.

If teachers of liturgy are “in the midst of the people, they will immediately understand and know how to accompany their brothers and sisters, how to suggest what is suitable and feasible to communities, and what the necessary steps are to rediscover the beauty of the liturgy and celebrating together,” he said.

The job of a diocesan liturgical director, said Pope Francis, is to offer parishes a liturgy “that is imitable, with adaptations that the community can take to grow in liturgical life.”

A liturgical director should not care about a parish’s liturgy only when the bishop comes to visit and then let the liturgy go back to how it was after he leaves, the pope said.

“To go to parishes and not say anything when faced with somewhat sloppy, neglected, poorly prepared liturgies means not helping the community, not accompanying them,” he added.

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Pope Opens Up As Year Begins

By Cindy Wooden



VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis said he is “in good health,” at least normal for his age, which is 86. His knee has healed, he said, but he told the *Associated Press* that he again is suffering from diverticulosis, or bulges in his intestinal wall, a condition for which he underwent surgery in 2021.

The *AP* interview also covered topics ranging from the ongoing clerical sexual abuse crisis and from homosexuality to potential policies for regulating the retirement of a pope who renounces his office.

Pope Francis said he had no role in lifting the excommunication in 2020 of Jesuit Father Marko Rupnik, a Slovenian priest and artist, who continues to have restrictions on his ministry after additional accusations of abusing women in a religious order he helped begin.

And while he said he always orders the lifting of the statute of limitations when a case involves someone who was a child at the time of the abuse, he does not when survivors were adults because justice demands respect for the idea that a person is innocent until proven guilty and that crimes must be prosecuted within a certain time limit.

In the discussion about homosexuality, Pope Francis said that “being homosexual is not a crime.” And he defined as “unjust” laws that criminalize homosexuality or homosexual activity.

According to Church teaching, homosexual activity is sinful, the pope said, but, as the “Catechism of the



JOYFUL: Pope Francis accepted a gift from a seminarian from the Pontifical Urban College, a seminary in Rome for priests from the Church's traditional mission territories, at the Vatican Jan. 21.

Catholic Church” teaches, gay people must be respected and welcomed and not marginalized or discriminated against.

“We are all children of God, and God loves us as we are,” the pope said.

Being gay “is not a crime,” he stressed. One could say, “Yes, but it’s a sin.’ Fine, but first let’s distinguish between a sin and a crime. It’s also a sin to lack charity with one another.”

Pope Francis objected to the idea that criticism has increased since Pope Benedict died and that somehow it is related to the late pope no longer

being around to quiet the critics.

Instead, he said, it seems to be a natural part of “the wear-and-tear” of his papacy, which is nearing its 10th anniversary. In the early years, he said, everything was new and exciting, but the criticism began “when they started to see my flaws and didn’t like them.”

The pope also told *AP* that he had no plans to issue norms for how a retired pope should live and dress and what he should be called.

Catholic News Service

News from U.S. Catholic Church

U.S. Church Marks 20 Years Since Release of ‘Strangers No Longer’

WASHINGTON — The Catholic Church in the United States celebrated in January the 20th anniversary of the pastoral letter “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope.” This landmark document, issued jointly by the bishops of the United States and Mexico, addressed the need to manage migration between the two countries more humanely and emphasized the importance of providing pastoral care to newcomers.

The need for a systemic reform of the immigration system has only become more apparent, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said in a statement.

“While much about our social and political landscape has changed during the past 20 years, the Church is unwavering in its commitment to walk with newcomers, especially the most vulnerable. We see this in the work of Catholic organizations along our border with Mexico and throughout the country — visible signs of Christ’s love, expressed through the virtue of hospitality,” the statement said.

U.S. Bishops’ Collection Brings Hope to Ukraine and Beyond

WASHINGTON — When the first bombs struck Ukraine a year ago, aid was already coming in from Catholics in the United States through the U.S. bishops’ Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe.

On Ash Wednesday, Feb. 22, Catholics are again encouraged to give to this annual collection, which for three decades has helped churches in 28 nations to recover from communist oppression. Some dioceses will take the collection on a different date. #iGiveCatholicTogether also accepts donations.

The faithful of the Diocese of San Diego had contributed \$660,000 to assist with the humanitarian crisis that followed Russia’s invasion of Ukraine as of last June.

Bishops Denounces FDA Action on Chemical Abortion Pill

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced in January the loosening of safety requirements to allow retail pharmacies, through a simple certification process, to distribute the chemical abortion drug, mifepristone, by prescription. Bishop Michael Burbidge of Arlington, of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities, issued this statement in response:

“The Catholic Church is consistent in its teaching on upholding the dignity of all life, and that must include care for both women and their children. We decry the continuing push for the destruction of innocent human lives and the loosening of vital safety standards for vulnerable women. This action by the FDA not only advances the obvious tragedy of taking the lives of the preborn but is also harmful to women in need.”

Women Are ‘a Path Toward Peace’

By Cindy Wooden



VATICAN CITY — The world’s religious traditions and their followers are called to offer wisdom to the world and to “infuse it with a spirit of warmth, healing and fraternity,” which requires the participation of women as well as men, Pope Francis said.

“It is not a common occurrence for followers of 12 religions — 12! — from around the globe to come together and discuss important questions concerning encounter and dialogue for promoting peace and understanding in our wounded world,” the pope said Jan. 26 during an audience with women attending a conference in Rome on women and interreligious dialogue.

The conference, “Women Building a Culture of Encounter Interreligiously,” was taking place Jan. 24 to 27 and was sponsored by the Dicastero for Interreligious Dialogue and



SHARING: Pope Francis received a gift from a participant at the conference “Women Building a Culture of Encounter Interreligiously,” during an audience at the Vatican Jan. 26.

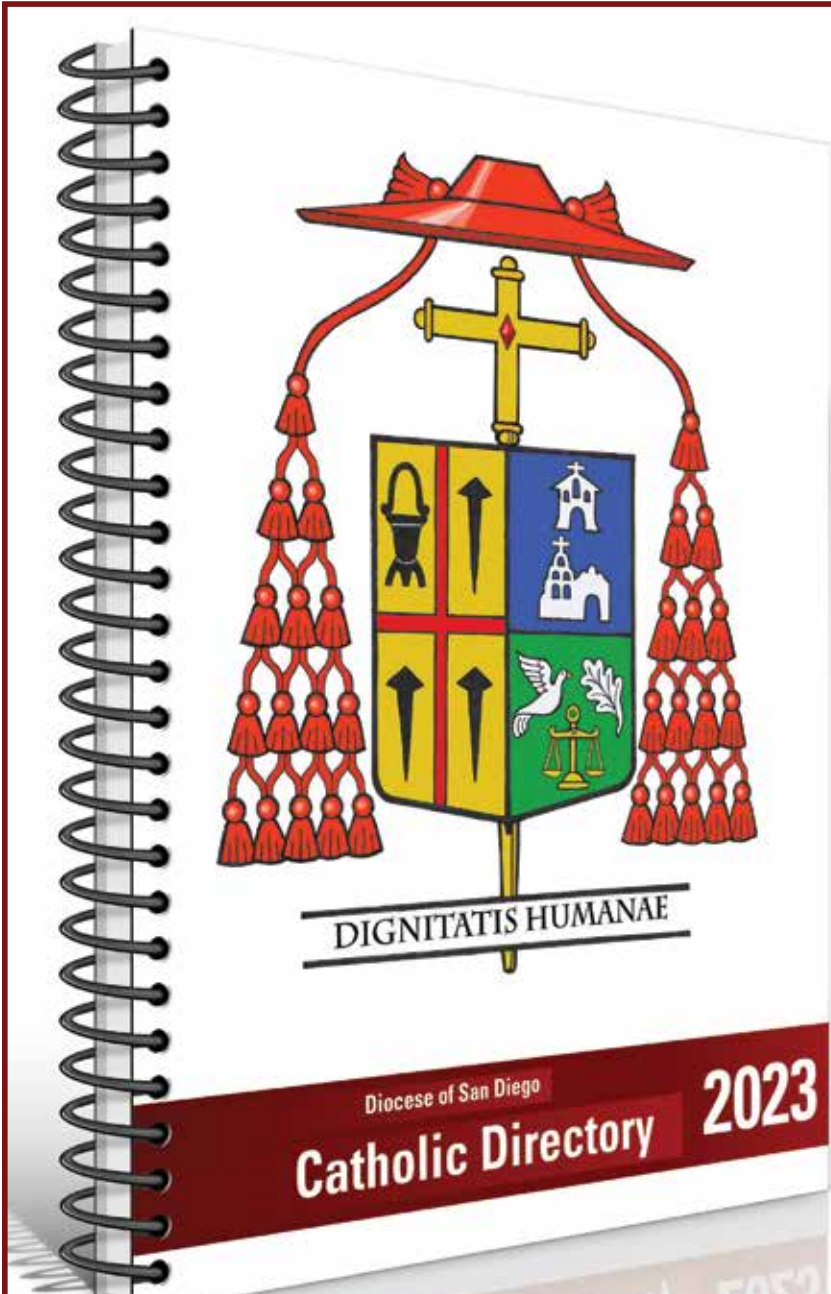
the World Union of Catholic Women’s Organizations.

Participants shared their experiences as members of the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Sikh, Zoroastrian, Confucian, Taoist, Jain, Hindu, Shinto and African Traditional Religion communities. They also looked at depictions of women in their sacred texts and highlighted the women saints and sages of their traditions.

“The fact that your conference is

devoted to listening to the experiences and perspectives of women is all the more valuable, since ‘our quest for peace must increasingly involve women. Because women bestow care and life upon the world, they are themselves a path toward peace,’” he said, quoting from the final declaration of the interreligious meeting he attended in Kazakhstan in September.

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