

# THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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**HAPPY CAMPERS:** In synod sessions last year, the faithful of Good Shepherd Parish said more needed to be done to engage families. The parish responded in various ways, including hosting a Filipino culture camp for children. In October, everyone is invited to a new round of synod dialogue sessions at parishes and schools.



## Becoming Bishops

Cardinal McElroy to preside at ordination of two auxiliary bishops. **Page 3**



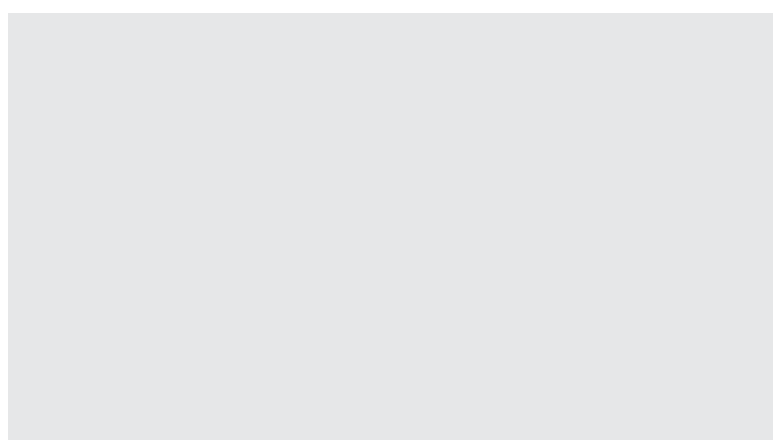
## Focus on Teens

Faith-and-science curriculum addresses middle-schoolers' doubts, questions. **Page 4**



## Church Mice

Sister Seraphina and friends solve mouse-sized mystery in new children's book. **Page 16**



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# THE SOUTHERN CROSS

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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 symbol indicates where readers may go online to obtain more information about the subject at hand, including additional photos, video and other content.



# Parishes to Host Synod Dialogues

By Aida Bustos



**MIRA MESA —**  
The 5-year-olds  
outlining the shape  
of their hand with  
bright blue, yellow and red  
paint are the fruit of the synod.  
So is their young instructor,  
Mirachris Rieta, who moves  
from child to child, coaxing  
them to paint the drawings  
onto white plates.

They were some of the 150 participants of the Filipino Culture Immersion Camp, held for three days in mid-August at Good Shepherd School.

Last year, the parishioners who had participated in synod consultations wanted their parish to do more to engage families, particularly children and teens, and build the parish's community and ultimately the Church.

The parish's leadership listened and responded in a variety of ways. One of them was to organize the camp for Filipinos, a significant community at the parish. The camp brought together children ages 5 to 13 to learn about Filipino culture, which has faith at its heart.

## Fun and Faith with a Purpose

The Filipino community first organized the camp in 2006, and it has been offered every other year at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Rancho Peñasquitos. Some of the children who participated in earlier camps served as volunteers in the camp at Good Shepherd School.

There, the children were divided into six groups, all named after Filipino Marian devotions. The "campers" rotated among six hands-on, age-appropriate activities: dances, games, songs, arts and crafts, language and faith expressions.

The instructors ranged from grandparents to professional teachers, and the volunteers included high school



**NOT BORED:** A volunteer at the Filipino Culture Immersion Camp taught the youngsters to play "sungka," a traditional Filipino board game, on Aug. 10 at Good Shepherd School.

and college students. The children learned to refer to them as "kuyas" and "ates," older brothers and sisters in the Filipino language.

"Values such as respect for your elders and responsibility are woven into the activities," said Charlotte Fajardo, the camp's coordinator.

The youngsters had a lot of fun — along with learning seamlessly about the Philippines' history, culture, language and faith.

Joe Mazares, chair of the Council of Filipino-American Organizations, served as one of the chaperones. He envisioned other parishes and cultural communities organizing similar camps.

"It's important to understand your identity, and that begins at a young age," he said.

The camp ended where it began: with families and faith. They prayed the rosary together and enjoyed a Bayanihan potluck soup dinner followed by kids' performances of the songs and dances they had learned.



**NEW ROLE:** Mirachris Rieta led a painting exercise on Aug. 10 during the Filipino Culture Immersion Camp. She had taken that camp as a child and now wanted to return as a volunteer.

## Your Parish Invites You to a Synod Session

Throughout the month of October, parishes and schools across the diocese will once more ask their members to come together and listen to one another as part of the synod. They will be invited to participate in dialogue sessions centered on the theme of the Eucharist.

Like last year, small groups of individuals will sit around a circle and share their experiences anonymously. The sessions will again be held in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

A designated individual at each group will take notes, and the information will be compiled and submitted to the diocese. As he has done with previous synod consultations, Cardinal McElroy will share the findings with the community and the parishes. And the parishes, in turn, will explore ways to address the concerns raised, working with their communities.

Last year, many people who participated in the small-group sessions said that they had enjoyed the experience and wished their parish held these sessions more often.

The fruits of last year's sessions can be seen across the diocese, as parishes introduce new events or programs, or update existing ones.

Over time, as envisioned by Pope Francis, this synodal process will help renew not only the individual parishes but the Church itself.

More information:  
[sdccatholic.org/synod](http://sdccatholic.org/synod)  
and [sdccatholic.org/sinodo](http://sdccatholic.org/sinodo)





# Joyous Mass to Ordain Two Bishops Sept. 28

By Denis Grasska



The long-awaited celebration is just around the corner.

Almost four months after Fathers Michael Pham and Felipe Pulido were named auxiliary bishops of the Diocese of San Diego, they will finally become bishops on Thursday, Sept. 28.

At their episcopal ordination Mass, the mandate from Pope Francis appointing them will be read publicly and then presented to the two men, who will show it to Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, the other bishops and priests in attendance, and the assembly.

The two men also will publicly pledge to guard the Catholic faith and to discharge their duties as bishops. After the laying on of hands and the prayer of ordination, their heads will be anointed with sacred chrism, a perfumed oil consecrated at the annual chrism Mass, and they will receive the Book of Gospels and the insignia of the episcopal office: the mitre, the crozier and the bishop's ring.

Cardinal McElroy will be the principal ordaining bishop. The principal co-ordinating bishops will be Bishop Joseph J. Tyson of Yakima, Wash., and Bishop John P. Dolan of Phoenix, Ariz., who served as auxiliary bishop of San Diego from 2017 to 2022. Among the other concelebrants will be Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano of San Diego and Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles.

The ordination Mass will be preceded by other significant liturgies.

On Sunday, Sept. 10, Cardinal McElroy will celebrate a Mass for Bishop-elect Pulido in his home Diocese of Yakima, during which the bishop-elect will make his Profession of Faith and Oath of Fidelity.

The cardinal will celebrate a similar Mass for Bishop-elect Pham on Sunday, Sept. 17, at Good Shepherd Parish in Mira Mesa, where the bishop-elect had been serving as pastor when he was appointed auxiliary bishop.

"It's lovely that their communities get to witness that," Noreen McInnes, director of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality, said of the Profession of Faith, which is essentially the Nicene Creed recited at Sunday Mass, and the Oath of Fidelity, in which the bishop-elect promises to "always be faithful" to the Church and the pope.

At a vesper service on Wednesday, Sept. 27, in the presence of the diocese's priests, who will be gathered for their annual convocation, Cardinal McElroy will bless the mitres, croziers and rings that Bishops-elect Pham and Pulido will receive at their ordination Mass the following day.

Pope Francis announced the appointment of Bishops-elect Pham and Pulido as auxiliary bishops for San



**MOMENT OF JOY:** Cardinal Robert W. McElroy speaks at then Father John P. Dolan's episcopal ordination as auxiliary bishop in 2017. At the same location, St. Therese of Carmel Parish, the cardinal will preside over the ordination of two auxiliary bishops — Michael Pham and Felipe Pulido — on Sept. 28.

Diego on June 6. Upon their episcopal ordination, they will assist Cardinal McElroy and join Auxiliary Bishop Bejarano in ministering to the almost 1.4 million Catholics of San Diego and Imperial counties.

Bishop-elect Pham, 56, was born in Da Nang, Vietnam. He and his family fled their homeland as refugees to the United States, settling first in Minnesota and then in San Diego.

Ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of San Diego in 1999, he was serving as pastor of Good Shepherd Parish, vicar for ethnic and intercultural communities and vicar general at the time of his appointment as auxiliary bishop.

Bishop-elect Pulido, 53, was born in Dos Aguas, Michoacán, a small town west of Mexico City, and moved to the Yakima Valley in Washington State with his family while he was in high school.

He was ordained to the priesthood in 2002 in Yakima. Just prior to being appointed as one of San Diego's auxiliary bishops, he was vicar for clergy and vocations director for the Diocese of Yakima, as well as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Kennewick, Wash.

The episcopal ordination Mass on Sept. 28 will be a ticketed event and not open to the public, but Catholics throughout the diocese are invited to watch the livestreamed liturgy.

The diocese has made this a ticketed event given the large number of people expected to turn out for the ordination Mass, including the friends and family members for each bishop-elect, plus priests, bishops and members of Church organizations.

McInnes said it is "a tremendous blessing for our diocese" that Pope Francis has appointed two auxiliary bishops and that the ordination liturgy will be "a wonderful celebration."



## Bishop Michael Pham

Bishop Pham's coat of arms depicts a red boat on a blue ocean, which is crisscrossed by diagonal lines suggesting a fisherman's net. This symbolizes his ministry as a "fisher of men," as well as how his own father had been a fisherman.

The boat is also a symbol of the Church, which is often referred to as the "barque of Peter." At the center of the sail is a red beehive (a symbol of the bishop's baptismal patron saint, St. John Chrysostom, who was known as a "honey-tongued" preacher). The beehive is surrounded by two green palm branches (an ancient symbol of martyrdom; the bishop's ancestors were among Vietnam's first martyrs).

The eight red tongues of fire around the boat are a symbol of the Holy Spirit and a representation of the diversity of ethnic and cultural communities.

The red of the boat, the beehive and the tongues of fire allude to the blood of the martyrs.



## Bishop Felipe Pulido

Bishop Pulido's coat of arms is divided into four quarters with wavy horizontal lines from top to bottom.

The blue and white lines represent the Blessed Virgin Mary. They also suggest water, which alludes to Jesus washing the feet of His disciples and to the waters of baptism.

The red and gold lines represent the Holy Spirit and fire. The colors also can be seen as referring to the Blood that (along with water) poured from Jesus' side at His crucifixion, as well as to the bread (gold) and wine (red) transformed into the Eucharist.

At the center is a roundel featuring a symbolic representation of the "mandatum" (washing of the feet), which he believes exemplifies service to all humanity. The roundel's outer edge is a line composed of small humps; it is borrowed from the coat of arms of the Diocese of Yakima, where Bishop Pulido served as a priest before being named a bishop.

## You Can See Ordination

The episcopal ordination will be livestreamed Sept. 28 at 2 p.m. at [sdcatholic.org](http://sdcatholic.org).



# 'Unleashing the Creativity' to Engage Teenagers

By Denis Grasska



CHULA VISTA —  
Two years ago, the  
Diocese of San

Diego adopted an educational curriculum designed to counter a leading cause of young people leaving their faith: the myth that faith and science are incompatible.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy required that it be taught at Catholic schools and in parish religious-education classes throughout the diocese at the middle-school level.

Jesuit Father Robert Spitzer, who created the Credible Catholic curriculum through his nonprofit The Magis Center, recently returned to the diocese to lead his third conference for local catechists and Catholic school educators in as many years.

In 2021, he introduced "Evidence of God's Existence from Science," the second of Credible Catholic's "seven essential modules."

In 2022, he returned to present on Module 6, "True Happiness," which identifies four levels of happiness that range from pleasure to the transcendent level; the latter is associated with one's relationship with God.

Father Spitzer's most recent conference, held Aug. 11 at St. Pius X Parish in Chula Vista, was intended to provide a refresher on both modules and an opportunity for educators to share best practices on implementation.

The conference, like the previous ones, was a joint project of the diocesan offices for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry and for Schools. About 135 people attended.

Father Spitzer had high praise for the diocese's implementation of the curriculum, which consists of a series of online video modules. They were developed in response to a study showing that 42% of young Catholics will stop believing in God before age 25, and half of them will do so because they mistakenly think that science disproves religion.

"Nobody could have been more collaborative and cooperative than the San Diego Diocese," he told *The Southern Cross*.

He praised the teachers and catechists who attended the recent conference, saying that they "care enough to learn something new."

"What I love about San Diego," he said, "is there's enough love of the students in this diocese (to learn to teach this material). ... They're not experts in this area, but they're willing to give something new a try."

Along with Father Spitzer's presentations on Modules 2 and 6, this year's workshop included a "Faith and Science Fair," with tables staffed by catechists and teachers who have been leaders in implementing the curriculum locally.

Access to the fair, which was held in the parish parking lot, was via a tent



**REFRESHER:** Teachers and catechists received a refresher course in Jesuit Father Robert Spitzer's faith-and-science curriculum during an Aug. 11 conference at St. Pius X Parish in Chula Vista. The curriculum is entering its third year of implementation in the diocese.

decorated to represent a "wormhole" through space. Participants received a "passport" to make their interstellar journey and, in doing so, experienced firsthand an example of the type of fun activities that they can use to bring this curriculum to life for their students.

Marioly Galván, diocesan chancellor and director of the Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry, said that the event equipped participants to take what might be considered "a dense topic" and "unleash the creativity," presenting it in such a way that "it's fun and it's exciting for students."

Leticia Oseguera, diocesan superintendent of schools, said that participation in the Father Spitzer-led workshops has "increased dramatically" since the first one in 2021.

"Leaders and educators feel more confident in delivering the two modules, Module 2 and Module 6, especially after the last two conferences," she said. "Therefore, the number of schools implementing both modules has increased every year."

Isela Arrona, director of catechetical ministry at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in National City, has been "very impressed" by Credible Catholic's curriculum, finding it "eye-opening ... to see what a role the Church has had in the sciences."

She recounted an experience last year when her pastor and another priest attended one of the lessons and remarked that even they had "never heard of a lot of this stuff."

Gaby Peña, a catechist at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, showcased some of the activities that her parish uses to teach the curriculum, including having the students create pop-up books and "squash" cards filled with summaries of their lessons.

Rachel Miller, a teacher at St. Dacatus School, admitted to feeling "a little overwhelmed" two years ago when Module 2 was first presented by Father Spitzer.

She was concerned that the science involved was "beyond" her, let alone her students.

"But it's presented in such a simple way ... that the kids have a blast," she said.

Miller said she knows the curriculum has been making an impact because she hears from parents whose children have told them what they've learned.

"My reaction was skepticism," said Molly Bennett, a teacher at St. Katharine Drexel Academy, recalling her first take on the curriculum two years ago.

Bennett said that she had grown up content with a "blind faith" and without feeling the need to "justify" what she believed.

"With today's kids, though," she acknowledged, "some of those kids do need that justification, that proof."

Bennett said that only about half of her school's students are Catholic. The other half includes members of other religions as well as those without any religious affiliation.

She said some of her middle-school students have identified themselves as agnostic and see their religion classes as "just another subject to just get an 'A' in." But, with the curriculum, she said, most of these students leave her classroom realizing that they aren't atheists after all, that they are "at least agnostic, on the way to believing."

Diocesan Commission for Filipino Catholics and  
Saint Columba Parish invite you to the celebration of  
**THE FEAST OF SAN LORENZO RUIZ**  
First Filipino Saint and Martyr



"If I have a thousand lives... I will still give them to God."

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2023**  
**SAINT COLUMBA CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**3327 GLENCOLUM DR., SAN DIEGO, CA 92123**

#### PROGRAM OF EVENTS

8:30 AM – Assembly in the Church Parking Lot  
9:00 AM – Procession of the San Lorenzo Ruiz Image  
9:30 AM – Rosary in the Church  
9:50 AM – Welcome: Fr. Rolando Gabutera,  
Pastor of St. Columba Parish

**10:00 AM – EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION**  
**MAIN CELEBRANT/HOMILIST: Most Reverend Ramon Bejarano**  
**CONCELEBRANTS: Filipino and Diocesan Clergy**  
**RECEPTION & ENTERTAINMENT FOLLOWING THE MASS**

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# Think Multiverses Disprove God? Think Again!

By Denis Grasska



CHULA VISTA —  
Jesuit Father  
Robert Spitzer

said that many young people have heard about “multiverses” and have come to believe incorrectly that the proposed existence of multiple universes is “a substitute” for the traditional belief that there was a single moment when God created the world from nothing.

“But, in point of fact, there’s more than enough evidence out there to show every multiverse needs a beginning, every string universe needs a beginning, every oscillating universe needs a beginning, and our universe needs a beginning,” Father Spitzer said.

“Prior to that beginning, physical reality was nothing,” he said, “and if physical reality was nothing, it could only do nothing. And if physical reality could only do nothing, it could not have moved itself from nothing to something ... Therefore, something else had to do it, and that ‘something else’ has to be a transcendent Creator.”

Father Spitzer developed Credible Catholic, a free educational curriculum for middle school and high school, through his nonprofit The Magis Center, in response to young people leaving the Church. The curriculum, which includes a series of online video modules, has been embraced by the San Diego Diocese.

Father Spitzer said the “fine-tuning” of the universe also points to God. He



**NOT AT ODDS:** Jesuit Father Robert Spitzer speaks at an Aug. 11 conference about his Credible Catholic curriculum, which shows that faith and science are compatible.

explained that there are about 20 constants, including gravity and the speed of light, that control all of the laws of physics. If the values of these constants had been “ever so slightly higher or lower” than they were at the Big Bang, he said, “life would have been impossible in our universe.”

There is more scientific evidence for faith today than ever before, he said.

“We’ve just got to get the word out there because they’re leaving for no good reason,” he said of those young people who abandon their faith over the faith-vs.-science issue.

Credible Catholic’s “True Happiness” module identifies four levels of happiness: pleasure; ego-comparative,

which comes from feeling or appearing superior to others; contributive, which involves having a positive impact on others; and transcendent, which is associated with a connection to God.

Father Spitzer cited studies that show increasing levels of depression and anxiety.

“There was a 63% increase in depression (and) anxiety for the 10 years prior to COVID and a 56% increase in suicidal contemplation and suicides prior to COVID,” he said. “Today, post-COVID, double it.”

He said his “True Happiness” module provides an explanation for this disturbing trend: There has been “a huge increase” in ego-comparative happiness,

with young people comparing themselves with others on social media, coupled with “a huge decrease” in transcendent happiness, with a decline in religious affiliation among young people.

“You look at that ‘bifecta,’ it’s literally killing them,” said Father Spitzer. “You can trace about 70% of the suicides and the suicidal contemplation, depression, anxiety, just to these two things. And all I can say is, you don’t need a drug to get over this. What you need is God.”

Father Spitzer recalled the beginning of Credible Catholic. A 2012 survey by the Pew Research Center showed that some 42% of young Catholics would leave the Church and lose their faith in God before age 25, and half of them would do so because they falsely believed that faith and science are incompatible.

Father Spitzer struck back by developing Credible Catholic, a curriculum made up of “seven essential modules.”

In the San Diego Diocese, teachers and catechists are teaching Module 2, “Evidence of God’s Existence from Science,” and Module 6, “True Happiness.”

Reflecting on the content of Module 2, Father Spitzer said his “number-one message” is that, contrary to what is commonly believed, the majority of scientists are not atheists — and he has the numbers to back up this claim.

Fifty-one percent of scientists overall and 66% of those under age 35 identify as believers, he said. Some 76% of doctors believe in God, and 74% of them believe in miracles.

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**A LOT OF LOVE:** Nearly 1,200 Catholic school teachers and principals gathered Aug. 7 at Cathedral Catholic High School for the annual Religion Convocation. The theme was "Educating Is an Act of Love."

## Pope: 'Educating Is an Act of Love'

The Southern Cross



Almost 1,200 local Catholic school educators attended the diocesan Office for Schools' annual Religion Convocation.

This year's event, which was held Aug. 7 at Cathedral Catholic High School, was historic.

"For the very first time in our history, high schools joined us for this special event to kick off the new school year," said Leticia Oseguera, diocesan superintendent of schools.

Teachers and principals from 43 Catholic elementary schools were joined by their counterparts at five

Catholic high schools.

"It's exciting to have all Catholic school educators together to celebrate the start of the new school year," said Oseguera. "We are all united in our faith, in our calling to Catholic education and our commitment to our Catholic schools."

This year's convocation theme was "Educating Is an Act of Love," a quote from Pope Francis.

The keynote address was given by Jesuit Father Greg Boyle, founder and director of Homeboy Industries, a Los Angeles-based gang intervention and reintegration program.

Later, Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano celebrated a Mass with one of Cathedral Catholic's chaplains, Father Paul de Soza.

In her welcoming remarks at the convocation, Oseguera expressed gratitude "for everyone that works in our Catholic schools."

To those in attendance, she said, "All of you give of yourselves selflessly, you walk alongside your students and your colleagues, you meet students where they're at, you care for them and support them on their spiritual and academic journey. ... By choosing to work in our Catholic schools, you are making a difference in the lives of our students every single day."

"You make a difference in your classrooms, in your schools and in your school communities," she said. "I see you, I value you, and I salute you."

## SF Archdiocese Files for Bankruptcy

The Southern Cross



San Francisco's Catholic archdiocese filed for bankruptcy Aug. 21, saying the action is needed to manage more than 500 lawsuits alleging child sexual abuse by Church officials.

The archdiocese is the third Catholic diocese in California to file for bankruptcy this year. The dioceses of Oakland and Santa Rosa filed for bankruptcy in May and March, respectively. The Diocese of Stockton filed in 2014.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy announced in February that the San Diego Diocese was considering filing for Chapter 11 reorganization bankruptcy to ensure that its assets were used to equitably compensate survivors. In court, the diocese said it plans to file in November of this year.

Bankruptcy provides a pathway for ensuring that the assets of the diocese will be used fairly to compensate all victims of sexual abuse. It is a transparent and public process, meaning that all diocesan assets are disclosed and nothing can be hidden from claimants and the court.

The California Legislature approved a law in 2019 that opened a three-year window to file a lawsuit for sexual abuse regardless of when it occurred. By the time the window closed, on Dec. 31, 2022, the 12 California dioceses were collectively facing more than 3,000 lawsuits.

Cardinal McElroy has said that the San Diego Diocese faces more than 400 lawsuits, two-thirds of which concern allegations that took place roughly 50 to 75 years ago.

None of the accused priests are currently in ministry.

OFICINA DE LITURGIA  
Y ESPIRITUALIDAD

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Capacitación de Ministros Extraordinarios de la Sagrada Comunión  
que ministran enfermos en hospitales y en casa para ministros  
nuevos y para quienes actualmente ejercen el ministerio.

Este taller será solamente en Español

Presentador Principal: Monseñor Ramón Bejarano

sábado 21 de octubre del 2023

9:00AM-3:30PM

Lugar: Centro Pastoral  
3888 Paducah Drive  
San Diego, CA. 92117

Pre-registración requerida:  
\$25 incluye, almuerzo y certificado de asistencia

CONTÁCTENOS:

Brian Avey  
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bavey@sd catholic.org

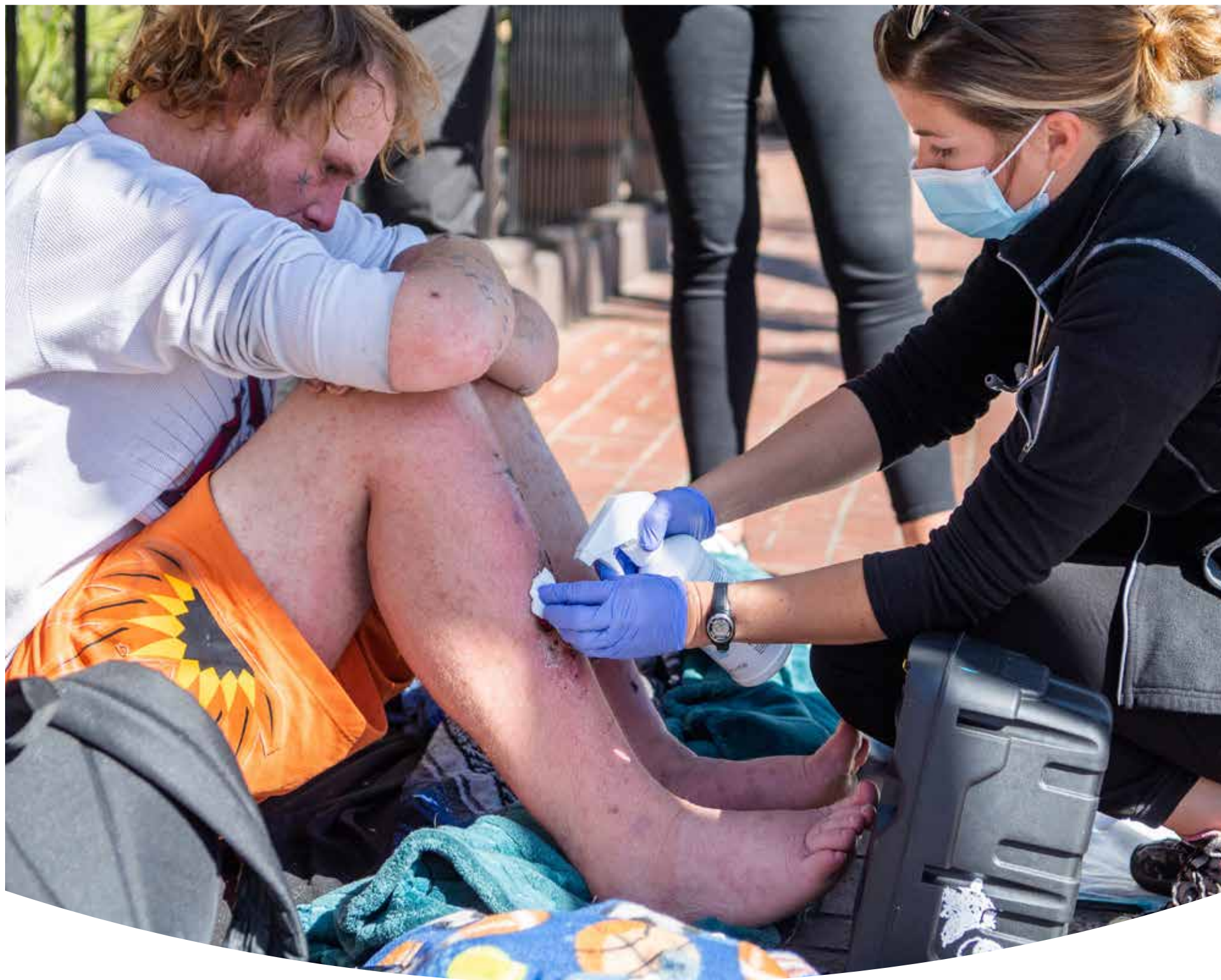
Costo: \$25

Escanea para registrarse

[www.sdcatholic.org/talleres](http://www.sdcatholic.org/talleres)



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# Office Receives Grant to Strengthen Marriages

The Southern Cross



"Healthy marriages are critical to a healthy society and a healthy Church," said John Prust, director of the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality.

That's why he is so "tremendously grateful" that his office has received a \$15,000 grant to develop programs that will strengthen marriages.

"Studies have shown that churches that focus on marriage and relationship ministry not only strengthen their local communities, but also expand their reach as parish communities," said Prust. "Nevertheless, only 18 percent of churches report having anything budgeted for marriage ministry. Our goal, at least in our diocese here in San Diego and Imperial counties, is to change that."

The grant was awarded by the Catholic Marriage Initiatives (CMI) Fund, a donor advised fund with the National Christian Foundation, which describes its mission as "Investing in Marriage." The fund seeks to increase the number of high-quality Catholic marriage ministries nationwide.

The \$15,000 is contingent on the Family Life and Spirituality Office providing an equal match. With the \$30,000 to be spread over a period of



three years, the office needs to raise a minimum of \$5,000 to get started.

Prust's grant proposal focused on meeting the needs of couples in their early years of marriage.

"We know how important the first five years of marriage are," he said, noting that the average age of couples who get divorced after their first marriage is 30 years old.

He added, "It is critical for these couples to find in the Church a place where they can build a network of support, a place where they can continue to develop the skills necessary for a strong and healthy marriage, and a place where they can continue to lean into the Church's beautiful vision

for marriage and family life."

In a letter to Prust, informing him that his grant proposal had been accepted, CMI Fund founder Dennis Stoica expressed confidence that, "by fulfilling the efforts as outlined in your Grant proposal, marriages will be strengthened, renewed and restored, giving children the important benefits of an intact family life in which to grow up and thrive in."

Prust underscored that healthy marriages have ripple effects. Among them, he noted that married Americans are 51% more likely to describe their mental health as "excellent," and Catholic children who grow up in an intact family with a mom and a

dad are far more likely to continue as Catholic adults.

He said that, with the grant, his office will be able to pilot new initiatives for engaged and newly married couples in local parishes. The grant will "give us a nice little boost in this area," he said, particularly by making it possible to provide materials to those pilot parishes that otherwise would be beyond the office's budget.

"We believe this project presents us with an incredible opportunity and responsibility to build relationship ministries in our parishes that speak to the needs of singles, couples and families, while also growing their churches and transforming their communities," he said.

To potential donors, he said, "Your support to help us get this project off the ground will lead to stronger parishes and might even save a marriage or two. The critical importance of keeping just one marriage from sliding into divorce — to their children, extended families and wider community — is difficult to calculate, but impossible to understate."

To learn about how you can help the Office for Family Life and Spirituality raise its required \$15,000 in matching funds, contact John Prust at (858) 490-8256 or [jprust@sdccatholic.org](mailto:jprust@sdccatholic.org).

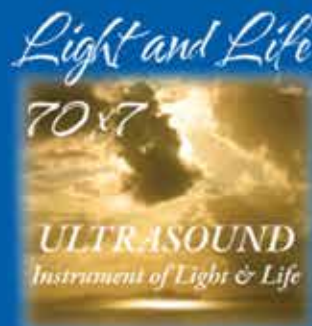
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**GRAND ENTRANCE:** Pope Francis greets young people as he arrives in the popemobile for the World Youth Day welcome ceremony at Eduardo VII Park in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug. 3.

## Pope Tells Pilgrims: Build Church Open to All

By Justin McLellan

**LISBON, Portugal —** Pope Francis asked the 1.5 million young people who attended World Youth Day to take “what God has sown into your hearts” back to their home countries and build a joyful Church that is open to all.

More than 100 from the San Diego region traveled to Lisbon, including a diocesan delegation of 25.

Young pilgrims interviewed during World Youth Day constantly returned to the pope’s main point during the official welcome ceremony for World Youth Day on Aug. 3: In the Church, there is room for “everyone, everyone, everyone.”

He asked the jubilant crowd of flag-waving young people to repeat the refrain with him in Lisbon’s Eduardo VII Park, and shouts of “todos, todos,

todos” — “everyone” in Spanish and Portuguese — spread throughout the crowd.

As he did often during the trip, the pope engaged the crowd, asking the throngs to repeat after him or consider in silence a question he posed.

Yet it was during his meeting Aug. 2 with Portuguese bishops, priests, religious and pastoral workers that the pope first issued his “todos” message.

“Please, let us not convert the Church into a customs office” where only the “just,” “good,” and “properly married” can enter while leaving everyone else outside, he said. “No. The Church is not that,” he said, rather it is a place for “righteous and sinners, good and bad, everyone, everyone, everyone.”

Asked during his in-flight news conference Aug. 6 how the Church can be for everyone when women and gay people are excluded from some sacraments, Pope Francis said that “the Church is open to all, but then there is legislation

that regulates life inside the Church.”

“This does not mean that (the Church) is closed. Each person encounters God by their own way, inside the Church, and the Church is mother and guides each one by their own path,” he responded.

At 86 years old, Pope Francis showed no sign of slowing down for the 42nd international trip of his pontificate, which he jokingly told journalists on the flight to Lisbon will “make me young again.”

**Journey** Continued on Page 11



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## Journey *Continued from Page 10*

The pope's packed agenda had three to four official events per day, and he added private meetings with several groups and individuals at the Vatican nunciature in Lisbon where he stayed. Among them was a group of abuse survivors who met with the pope for over an hour Aug. 2, during which they "dialogued about this plague" of abuse, the pope said.

In addition to listening to the testimonies of young people and fielding questions from some of them during public events, Pope Francis had a chance for more direct interactions with several young people during the trip. He heard the confessions of three pilgrims and ate lunch with a group of 10 young people Aug. 4.

The pope later shared that he spoke to one young man who had previously considered taking his own life and said youth suicide is a problem today, noting the challenge is especially prevalent in

places where universities and the job market are very demanding.

On Aug. 5, many of the 1.5 million young people gathered in Lisbon's Tejo Park and waited for hours in near 100-degree weather to participate in the World Youth Day vigil with the pope.

He asked them, "Have you ever been tired?" Even when tempted to "throw in the towel" or stop along the journey of life, the pope said, the young people must pick themselves up and walk toward joy.

"Joy is not hidden, it's not kept under key, we have to look for it," he said, "and that is tiring."

Yet, Pope Francis urged them to "rise up" when they fall along the path toward joy.

The next day, at the closing Mass, Pope Francis told the weary-eyed and sleep-deprived young people not to let their "great dreams" of changing the world be "stopped by fear."

In his homily, the pope asked for "a bit of silence" from the pilgrims who,



**HOME SUPPORT:** Cardinal Robert W. McElroy celebrated Mass at Igreja da Portela da Azóia in Lisbon on Aug. 2 for the San Diego pilgrims to World Youth Day.



**STAYING POWER:** Members of the San Diego delegation waited for hours at Campo de Graça on Aug. 5, awaiting the World Youth Day vigil with the pope.

stayed overnight in the park following the previous night's vigil.

"Let's all repeat this phrase in our hearts: 'Don't be afraid,'" he told the hushed crowd. "Jesus knows the hearts of each one of you, the successes and the failures; He knows your hearts. And today, He tells you, here in Lisbon for this World Youth Day: 'Don't be afraid.'"

After the closing Mass, the pope announced that Seoul, South Korea, would be the location for the next World Youth Day in 2027, drawing great applause

from the South Korean delegations scattered throughout the crowd.

The previous morning, Pope Francis visited the Shrine of Our Lady of Fátima. In the shrine's Chapel of the Apparitions, marking the exact spot where the three Portuguese children claimed to see Mary in 1917, he said the open-air chapel "is like a beautiful image of the Church, welcoming, without doors, so that all can enter."

*Catholic News Service*

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# Young Adults Invited to Live 'Deep' Encounter

By Denis Grasska

**JULIAN** — About 140 Catholics ages 18 to 39 are expected to attend the annual Diocesan Young Adult Retreat, to be held Sept. 15 to 17 at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center.

Among them will be Renzo Elias, 29, and his wife, Fabia.

The couple had a life-changing experience at last year's retreat, during Saturday night's Eucharistic adoration.

"Before that night," he said, "I always believed the Eucharist was (only) a symbol ... but, that night, my wife and I felt His presence while we were kneeling during adoration and couldn't hold back the tears from running down our faces."

He added, "There was a sort of warmth and calming that radiated from the monstrance; it's hard to find the right words to describe it. It was truly such a beautiful and vulnerable experience."

Since then, he's become a regular participant in Eucharistic adoration, having come to believe that "it is there where Jesus is waiting for us to spend time with Him."

The theme of this year's retreat is "Deep Calls to Deep," which is taken from Psalm 42.

Brilema Perez, associate director of the diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, said that psalm speaks to the experience of one who has known the love of God, is going through "a pe-



UNSPLASH/CHANG DUONG

riod of desolation" and is "crying out for help," yet remains confident in God.

She said that retreat organizers recognize that many young adults are experiencing "burnout" as they struggle to balance faith, work and relationships. This year's keynote speakers, Father Tim Grumbach and Laurie Medina, were selected with that in mind.

Perez said that Father Grumbach, a priest of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles who serves as chaplain and retreat director at Bishop Alemany High School in Mission Hills, Calif., will focus on the spiritual side. Medina, a young adult from St. Brigid Parish who is completing her studies to become a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, will bring mental health into the equation.

Along with keynotes and breakout sessions, the retreat schedule will include two Masses, Eucharistic adoration, silent reflection, small-group discussion and more.

Praise-and-worship music will be

provided by Nomadic Worship, a band based out of Orange County that ministers to young adult communities throughout Southern California.

Evelyn Beale, associate director of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, said she hopes that participants will come back from the retreat "feeling refreshed, and inspired, and optimistic" and "more equipped to handle (it) when life throws them curveballs."

Maricruz Flores, the office's director, expressed hope that her fellow introverts might "find a community" through their participation in this year's retreat.

"That's what I found," said Flores, who attended as a participant two years ago. "I found community, I found new friends, I found people that I could go to Mass with and not feel alone in those moments of ... desolation."

Flores' experience is one that is shared by other past participants.

María Fernanda Marmolejo Rubio, 24, has attended twice and is returning for

her third year.

"I went into the retreat in 2021 not knowing anybody, but I felt a strong call to go ... and it was one of the best decisions ever," she said, adding that she met her boyfriend as well as "wonderful people that I know will be in my life for a long, long time."

"Being able to pray with like-minded peers is great," shared 30-year-old Brandon Hamilton, who will be attending for a fifth time this year.

When he first dipped his feet into the local young adult scene in 2018, he said, he "did not know anybody" and identified as "a loner."

"Now, I have many friends within the Catholic young adult community and always see familiar faces every time there is a young adult event," said Hamilton, who is excited to serve as a young adult leader this time around.

What is Elias most looking forward to at the upcoming retreat?

"I hope I will fall even more in love with Jesus," he said. "These sorts of retreats take you away from the noise of the world and help put into perspective what is truly important, and that is our relationship with the Lord. I hope I will learn how to prioritize Him even more in my daily life."

For information or to register, visit [sdcatholic.org/youngadult](http://sdcatholic.org/youngadult).



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# Augustinians Honor Priest for 50-Year Friendship



On receiving an email from Augustinian

provincial Father Gary Sanders that he had been formally made an “affiliate” of the Order of St. Augustine, Msgr. Mark Campbell responded, “I am honored and deeply grateful to formally accept this special affiliation with my much-loved Augustinian brothers. Words cannot express my gratitude adequately. I look forward to being with all of you at all of your special gatherings moving forward!”

“Affiliation to the Augustinian Order is a special honor,” says the provincial. “It is granted by the Augustinian Prior General in Rome.”

“Father Mark,” as he is known, has been a friend of the Augustinians in San Diego for over 50 years. He is the first priest of the Diocese of San Diego to be so honored. Father Sanders is quick to point out that while “Father Mark’s affiliation is already official, it is important to understand that Father Mark remains a priest of the Diocese of San Diego and the Augustinians have no jurisdictional authority over him.”

Nonetheless, his ties with the local Augustinians have been extraordinary.

Father Sanders is delighted to comment that his personal relationship with Father Mark spans 40 years — for 14 years he celebrated weekend



**HONORED:** Msgr. Mark Campbell (second from left) has been named an “affiliate” of the Order of St. Augustine; his longtime friend Augustinian Father Gary Sanders (third from right) broke the news to him. They are pictured at a celebration of Msgr. Campbell’s 50th ordination anniversary in 2021 with, from left, Father Joseph Masar, Deacon Jim Vargas, Father Gerry O’Donnell, Columban Father Tom Mahoney and Father Pat Mulcahy.

Masses at two of the parishes (Immaculate Conception and Our Mother of Confidence) where Father Mark was pastor.

“Father Mark is a support to all of the Augustinians in the San Diego area,” the provincial said.

An example of this was when Father Adnan Ghani, OSA, was ordained a transitional deacon in San Diego, he asked Father Mark if he could serve his diaconate at his church. Father Mark welcomed him. When Father Ghani was going to be ordained a priest, he asked Father Mark if his first Mass could be celebrated in the same

church — Our Mother of Confidence — where Father Mark was pastor.

“Not only did Father Mark welcome him, but he paid for the reception,” said the provincial.

Father Mark was a friend of older Augustinians, as well. When they were retired and too feeble to preside at Mass, Father Mark invited Fathers Harry Neely and Tom Behan to major liturgies even though they physically could not assist.

While Father Mark has been a friend to the Augustinians during his entire San Diego priesthood, the fact that it was the request of two of the young-

est brothers that Father Mark be affiliated to the Order is not lost on the provincial.

“Mark has always been a great supporter of the local OSA community as well as St. Augustine High School in San Diego. Mark Campbell loves and supports the Augustinians. We have a mutual loyalty to him and wholeheartedly celebrate his affiliation to the Augustinians.”

The recognition was celebrated at a private ceremony on St. Augustine’s Day, Aug. 28, at St. Augustine’s Chapel.

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# 30 Years of 'Serving God by Saving Lives'

By Marissa Romero



The Association for Life is celebrating 30 years of

becoming "better together" at saving unborn lives, helping moms in need, and supporting women's healing after abortion. It's made up of 20 life-affirming organizations in San Diego and Imperial counties.

Representatives of the association's member organizations, which include pregnancy resource centers and clinics, gathered Aug. 9 for a 30th anniversary celebration at the Clairemont Emmanuel Baptist Church in San Diego. The ecumenical event included remarks by pioneer members of the association, a prayer session, lunch, and lively Christian music.

Thirty years ago, most pro-life, pregnancy-support organizations worked in "silos," making them susceptible to vandalism and at risk of being shut down.

At that time, Dr. Michaelene Fredenburg, currently president and CEO of the Institute of Reproductive Grief Care in San Diego, approached the diocesan Office for Social Ministry with the idea of arranging a meeting of all pregnancy centers in San Diego County.

These organizations discovered that they became "stronger together," Fredenburg said, explaining the origins of the Association for Life.

Now a united front, most of the pregnancy support centers not only survived but flourished. In fact, some became accredited medical clinics.

"When we transitioned from a center to a clinic, people who had already walked that road helped us and shared what they learned," said Sharon Pearce, one of the association's pioneer members. She is the executive director of Silent Voices, a pro-life pregnancy support clinic in



**UNITED FRONT:** Life-affirming organizations come together annually for the San Diego Walk for Life, which will be held Jan. 13, 2024.

Chula Vista.

"Those interactions have been invaluable over the years," she added.

Through cross-functional training and shared activities, the association helps the pro-life organizations.

This is a place where experienced directors enjoy mentoring and collaborating with the emerging ones, "making everyone stronger," Fredenburg said.

Anita Krisik, another pioneer member and the executive director of the Ramona Pregnancy Clinic, agreed.

Without much experience 30 years ago, Krisik said she benefited from the training she received through the Association for Life's meetings. On a personal level, she said, they also helped her daughter endure the loss of her terminal child back in 2000.

"To be able to walk into a room full of 'friends of life' is a blessing," Pearce added.

Josh McClure, executive director of the Pregnancy Care Clinic in Santee, led the 30th anniversary celebration's

prayer and reminded attendees to stay vigilant in the public policy arena.

First, there is AB-602, a California Assembly bill that relates to false advertising involving pregnancy-related services. McClure said the bill could allow abortion advocates to target pro-life pregnancy centers based on their own interpretations of what constitutes false information.

Second, AB-1720, involving prenatal screenings, limits the provision of ultrasounds, which is "a key part of what we do to help women understand what is going on with their pregnancy, to remove the veil, to remove the lies they are being told," McClure added.

Hannah Oliver is executive director of Alternatives Medical Clinic in Escondido, which provides free, confidential educational and medical services to empower pregnant women to make life-affirming choices.

"I'm so encouraged by the community in San Diego County that has pro-life warriors. We are not alone," she said.

"Women that walk through our door are always surprised to know that there is a community of people that walk along their side ... to equip them not just to choose life but as moms," she said. "Not just one clinic, but there is a whole community of believers that want to see them thrive."

"The benefit of being in the Association for Life is the cohesiveness of different pregnancy resource centers and pro-life organizations helping one another," said Michael Brault, a board member of Silent Voices and a member of the Knights of Columbus' San Diego Diocese Chapter. "That is not the case everywhere ... (but) here in San Diego, we are unified in helping to serve God by saving lives."

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By Christina Bagaglio Slentz



The Season of Creation is the annual Christian celebration to pray and respond together to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor, as Pope Francis calls us to do in his encyclical, "Laudato Si'." This ecumenical celebration was first recognized in 1989 when Patriarch Dimitrios I proclaimed Sept. 1 as the "Orthodox Day of Prayer for Creation." Subsequently, the World Council of Churches extended the celebration to Oct. 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, and in turn, Pope Francis made this season official for the Catholic Church in 2015 — the same year he published "Laudato Si'."

This year, we unite around the theme "Let Justice and Peace Flow," contemplating the words of the prophet Amos (5:24), "Let justice flow on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream." Seeking environmental justice means working to restore creation and a return to a right relationship with our Creator. This includes ensuring fair access to the world's resources, protecting creatures and habitats vital to a functioning, sustainable earth system for future generations, and spiritually honoring the gift of God's creation with reverence and gratitude.

### When Is the Season of Creation?

Today, the Church celebrates this season from Sept. 1, now the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, through Oct. 4, the Feast of St. Francis, our patron saint of ecology.

We invite all to join in our SD Catholic Creation Care Ministry events and take advantage of the "Laudato Si'" resources we have compiled. Key diocesan events include:

- Youth & Young Adult Art Contest — now thru Sept. 24 (submission deadline)
- Creation Care Workshop, Mission San Luis Rey — Sept. 16
- Friends of the Poor Walk (St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Francis of Assisi Parish) — Sept. 23
- Season of Creation Mass (Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as celebrant) and reception at St. James Parish — Sept. 24
- Feast of St. Francis Tree Festival at the diocesan Pastoral Center — Oct. 8 (Please scan QR codes below to access more information and register.)

#### Art Contest



#### Season of Creation Mass



#### St. Francis Tree Festival



#### "The Letter"



We encourage all parishes and schools to hold events of their own, as well. The first five parishes or schools that notify Creation Care Ministry of plans to host a screening of "The Letter," a Vatican film about the concerns of "Laudato Si'," will receive \$100 toward movie snacks! Additional information on these events and more is available at [sdcatholic.org/event/seasonofcreation23](https://sdcatholic.org/event/seasonofcreation23), or reach out to Christina Slentz, Creation Care Ministry director, at [cslentz@sdcatholic.org](mailto:cslentz@sdcatholic.org).

#### MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS

### WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF CREATION

"The evocative image used by Amos speaks to us of what God desires. God wants justice to reign; it is as essential to our life as God's children made in His likeness as water is essential

for our physical survival. This justice must flow forth wherever it is needed, neither remaining hidden deep beneath the ground nor vanishing like water that evaporates before it can bring sustenance. God wants everyone to strive to be just in every situation, to live according to His laws and thus to enable life to flourish. When we "seek first the kingdom of God" (Matt 6:33), maintaining a right relationship with God, humanity and nature, then justice and peace can flow like a never-failing stream of pure water, nourishing humanity and all creatures."



### How Can Your Family Celebrate This Season?

Our Season of Creation Mass will feature a children's procession at the end of our musical prelude. Please arrive by 11 a.m. to participate.

We encourage all children, grades 4 to 12 to participate in our "For the Beauty of the Earth" art contest. Cash prizes will be awarded at the Feast of St. Francis Tree Festival.

Families might also try "Meatless Mondays" to curb their carbon footprint; recipes are available, courtesy of the Sisters of Mercy, at <https://bit.ly/SOMMEATLESS>.

Consider creating a Family "Laudato Si'" Action Plan. Learn more at [laudatosiplatform.org](https://laudatosiplatform.org).

Teach your children to love nature by getting outside together on the weekends. September is a beautiful month!

#### [sdcatholic.org/creation](https://sdcatholic.org/creation)

Send pictures of your family or parish illustrating Care for Creation to [cslentz@sdcatholic.org](mailto:cslentz@sdcatholic.org).

We will post them on our Facebook and Instagram accounts.





# New Mouse Tale Weaves Faith and Fun for Kids

By Denis Grasska

It's no mystery where Haley Stewart got the idea for her children's book series.

"It sounds unbelievable, but I actually had a dream about mouse nuns who lived under G.K. Chesterton's house," the author said during a June 6 telephone interview with *The Southern Cross*.

That dream became reality with the publication of her three "Sister Seraphina Mysteries" books. The most recent installment, titled "The Strange Sound by the Sea," was published in early June.

Published by Pauline Books & Media, the series represents Stewart's first foray into the world of children's fiction-writing, which was "a totally new adventure" for the Catholic blogger, podcaster and author of two non-fiction books for adults.

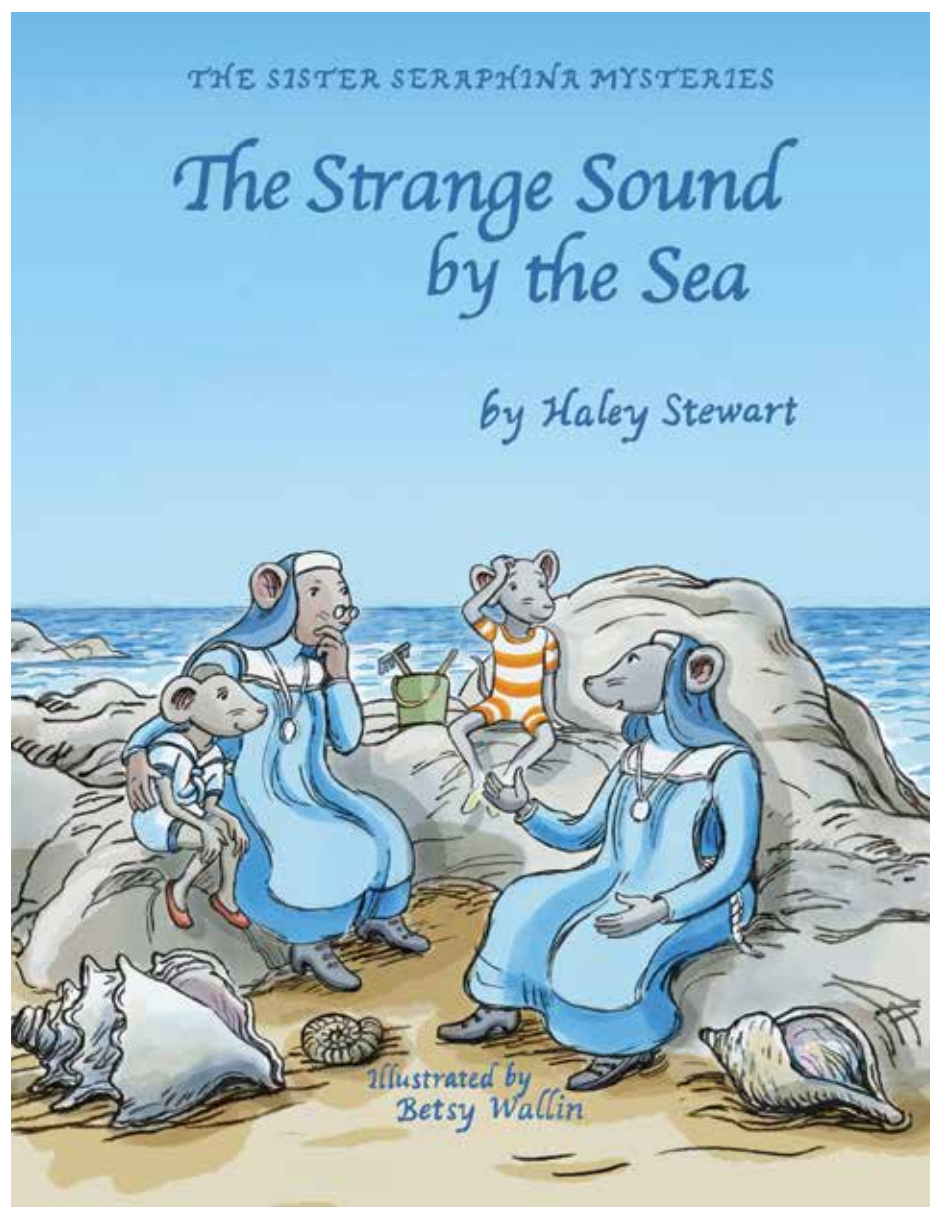
She feels that the idea for the children's books was "gifted" to her and, during the COVID-19 lockdown, presented her with "a fun project to escape to."

The books' central conceit is that, under the floorboards of English writer and Catholic apologist G.K. Chesterton's home, one will find the miniature world of St. Wulfhilda's Abbey and School. Sister Seraphina, her fellow Sisters of Our Lady Star of the Sea, and their young students are anthropomorphic mice.

Stewart, who grew up enjoying animal fiction like Brian Jacques' "Redwall" series, which centers on an abbey founded and populated by woodland creatures, imagined what might happen if the religious rodents of St. Wulfhilda's were inspired by Chesterton's famous "Father Brown" stories to try their hand — er, paw — at solving mysteries of their own.

Chesterton's Father Brown was a simple parish priest who proved to be a capable detective thanks to the insights on human nature that he acquired in the course of his ministry.

Though the premise for her "Sister Seraphina Mysteries" came while she was sleeping, it was during Stewart's



hours of wakefulness that she fleshed out the idea. Among her challenges was coming up with mysteries that would be "exciting, but not terrifying" for young readers.

The first book, "The Pursuit of the Pilfered Cheese," deals with efforts to recover a prized cheese that was to be auctioned off to raise funds for needed repairs to the school. Its first follow-up, "The Curious Christmas Trail," focuses on the search for an elderly nun who has gone missing on Christmas Eve. The most recent book takes place during a summer holiday at the beach, where an unexplained, shriek-like sound is repeatedly heard in the night.

To give the stories a child's perspective and characters relatable to young

readers, Stewart decided that the abbey would have a school attached to it and that two of its students, Marigold "Goldie" Mouseweather and Dominic "Dom" Whiskerbright, would assist Sister Seraphina as co-detectives.

The resulting books consist of just a few short chapters each, and the text is accompanied by Betsy Wallin's color illustrations. Stewart sees the books as appropriate for reading aloud to children age 4 and older, and for children to begin reading independently around age 7.

Stewart, a mother of four as well as the managing editor of Word on Fire Spark, an imprint for young readers, was able to turn to her own children for feedback and suggestions as she wrote



Author Haley Stewart

her mystery stories.

In addition to presenting young readers with age-appropriate mysteries to solve, Stewart also hopes that her books "offer a picture of religious life" to children who are "starting to imagine their future and think about their vocation."

Without being preachy, the books depict the characters' Catholicism as a natural part of their daily lives. For example, Stewart noted that the books include moments where characters might have to cut a conversation short after realizing that it's time for vespers. Such things are "woven into the story" and show that the sisters' faith is "the center of their world and their mission."

With the most recent book completing a trilogy, are there any mysteries left for Sister Seraphina to solve?

Stewart said she "would love to do at least one more."

"I've almost settled on a plot (for another installment), so hopefully there'll be a fourth one. And then, after that, who knows?"

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There are looks that wound, looks that illuminate and give strength, looks that are compassionate or humiliate. The way we look at someone has emotional power. What does our gaze communicate? How do we look at people we encounter?

In life, people easily forget what we said or did, but they never forget how we made them feel.

I recall vividly an experience when I was part of a group of volunteers visiting inmates at a federal prison. At the end of the day of sharing, we formed a circle where the visitors were on the inside and the residents on the outside. It was a final ritual after having shared reflections, games and songs.

Columnist  
**Ricardo Márquez**



Those of us on the interior of the circle rotated slowly, gazing at the inmate in front of us, who remained standing still. Thus, each of the visitors could make visual contact with each of the inmates. It was a silent exercise; we had been instructed to express with our eyes what we wanted to say.

We all know how hard it is at times to sustain a look into someone's eyes. That day, the inmates responded in various ways: Some lowered their heads almost immediately, others laughed, some let the tears flow. I'll never forget something that occurred at the end.

An inmate approached me, put his hands gently on my shoulder and, looking in my eyes, said: "Thank you. It has been so long since someone made me feel like you did with the way you looked at me." We embraced and cried together, for a few moments relishing the sacred moment of freedom we felt.

On the way home, I relived the encounter and his words: "Thank you. It has been so long since someone made me feel like you did with the way you looked at me."

I recall asking the Lord for the grace to be able to look at each person like He would have done, with His spirit of acceptance and love, with a gaze that invites, embraces, heals and forgives. That's the internal language that consciously accompanied each of the visual encounters I had in the circle. I was simply an instrument of that loving source that comes from above and quenches our thirst for love and acceptance.

What did the inmate give me with his look, embrace and tears? He made me feel like his brother. We had never seen each other before, but a look was all we needed to feel this communion.

He allowed me to experience that mystery of God, which we struggle to understand in its totality, but which at once makes itself visible in a simple look. It was a preview of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Eyes are a mirror to the soul. Our gazes reflect what we're carrying and cultivating inside; they contain within them the power to build or to destroy, to darken or to illuminate. We can consciously choose how we gaze at others.

*Ricardo Márquez can be reached at marquez\_muskus@yahoo.com.*

IN LOVING  
*Memory*

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

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The 36th annual diocesan celebration of the Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint and martyr, will be held on Saturday, Sept. 9, at St. Columba Parish.

It will begin with a procession and prayers at 9 a.m., followed at 10 a.m. by a Mass celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano. A reception will follow.

St. Lorenzo Ruiz was born in Manila in 1594 and grew up in a Catholic family. He became a missionary and sailed to Okinawa in 1636, along with three Dominican priests. In Japan, he refused to renounce his faith and died after two days of torture at the age of 42.

"I am a Christian, this I profess until the hour of my death and, if I had a thousand lives, I would give them all to the Lord," he is said to have declared before dying.

For more information, call (858) 490-8306 or email [adiaz@sdccatholic.org](mailto:adiaz@sdccatholic.org).

## News Briefs

### Mass to Be Offered for Survivors of Suicide Loss

A special Mass will be celebrated for families whose loved ones have taken their own lives.

The liturgy, which will be celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano, will be held at 9 a.m., Sunday, Sept. 10, at Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

Family and friends are invited to honor their loved one and experience healing and support. For more information, call (858) 490-8324 or email [msmith@sdccatholic.org](mailto:msmith@sdccatholic.org).

September is traditionally observed as Suicide Prevention Month. Anyone experiencing a mental health crisis can call or text 988, which provides 24/7, confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress.

### Cardinal to Celebrate Mass for Filipino Community

The veneration of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is one of the oldest and largest Filipino Marian celebrations in San Diego.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will celebrate a Mass in her honor at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16, at St. Michael's Church in Paradise Hills.

This year's theme is "Journeying with Mary in deepening our relationship with God in these challenging times."

The Mass will be preceded by a rosary novena held at the church, ending on Sept. 9.

The church is located at 2643 Homedale St., San Diego 92139.

For more information, contact Chum Marasigan at (858) 722-8294 or [chummarasigan7@gmail.com](mailto:chummarasigan7@gmail.com).

### Oktoberfest to Support Trafficking Victims

Children of the Immaculate Heart, a San Diego-based nonprofit that is marking its 10th anniversary of serving survivors of sex trafficking, is holding an Oktoberfest fundraiser.

The event will be held from 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 16, at St. Mary Parish in Escondido.

There will be a live Oompah band, an art workshop for children, traditional German food and drinks, a silent auction, and Children of the Im-

maculate Heart speakers on the fight against trafficking.

Tickets are \$35 for adults and \$10 for ages 3 to 12. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [childrenoftheimmaculateheart.org/oktoberfest-2023.html](http://childrenoftheimmaculateheart.org/oktoberfest-2023.html).

### Chaldean Festival to Be Held Sept. 16-17

EL CAJON — The Knights of Columbus Mar Toma Council 10981 will host the 11th annual Chaldean American Festival during the Sept. 16-17 weekend.

It will take place from 4 to 10 p.m. at Hillsdale Middle School, located at 1301 Brabham St. in El Cajon.

The two days of fun will include carnival games, rides, music, dancing, raffles and authentic Chaldean food.

Admission is \$5, and the festival is open to all ages. All proceeds will help fund future projects at the church.

### Cardinal to Celebrate Annual Mass for Indian Community

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will celebrate the Indian Catholic community's annual Mass on Saturday, Sept. 23, at 10:30 a.m. at San Rafael Church.

Everyone is invited to the Mass, which honors the life of St. Teresa of Calcutta, the legendary founder of the Missionaries of Charity.

The church is located at 17252 Bernardo Center Drive, San Diego 92128.

For more information, email Paul Prince at [paulprince\\_us@yahoo.com](mailto:paulprince_us@yahoo.com).

### Holy Family Parish Holding Fall Festival

Holy Family Church in Linda Vista is hosting its annual fall festival on Saturday, Oct. 7, and Sunday, Oct. 8.

The theme for the two-day festival is "One Holy Family: All Are Welcome." Festival hours will run from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. There is no cost to attend.

The fall festival will include live entertainment and Mexican, Filipino, Vietnamese and American food booths. There will also be carnival games, a bounce house, and raffle prizes up to \$3,000. Raffle winners need not be present.

### 'Jamulfest' Set for Oct. 8

JAMUL — St. Pius X Parish is hosting its annual "Jamulfest" on Sunday, Oct. 8.

It will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the parish, which is located at 14107 Lyons Valley Road in Jamul. It will feature a wood-pit BBQ, craft booths, beer garden and live entertainment.

For more information, call (619) 669-0085.

### Guardian Angels Holding Fall Festival

SANTEE — Guardian Angels Parish will hold its annual fall festival Oct. 13 to 15.

It will include multicultural food booths, games, "Crafters' Row," a beer garden, a book booth, a plant booth, live entertainment, a virtual auction and a drawing for a chance to win \$3,000.

Festival hours are from 5 to 9 p.m., Friday; noon to 9 p.m., Saturday; and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday. Admission is free, and all are welcome.

For more information, visit [guardianangelssantee.org](http://guardianangelssantee.org) or call (619) 448-1213.



### 'Save the Storks' Celebrates New Resource Center

ESCONDIDO — Save the Storks joined Alternatives Medical Clinic on Aug. 4 to celebrate the opening of its new resource center in North San Diego County.

Founded in 2012, Save the Storks is a nonprofit that equips, educates and trains pregnancy clinics and churches across the United States to help them empower women to choose life.

The new center, called Alternatives Resource Center, is focused on equipping women and men with practical resources to support mothers and families during the pregnan-

cy and after the birth of the baby. The organization's goal is to help build a community in North County where abortion is no longer perceived as necessary and where families are equipped to thrive.

### Five-Week Series to Focus on 'Nature and God'

The Spiritual Ministry Center, a retreat house operated by the Society of the Sacred Heart, will be offering a five-week program called "Nature and God."

The program will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays, Oct. 11 to Nov. 8. The topics include: Spirituality in the Face of Global Extinction; A New Theology of Creation; A Nature-Based Pneumatology and Christology; Integrating a Theology of Creation in the Service of Liturgy; and Latin American Environmental Defenders: Eco-Martyrdom.

There is a suggested offering of \$100 to attend.

For more information, visit [spiritmin.org](http://spiritmin.org), email [spiritmin@rscj.org](mailto:spiritmin@rscj.org) or call (619) 224-9444.

### Retreat to Offer After-Abortion Healing

Rachel's Hope is offering an after-abortion healing retreat for Catholic (and Catholic-friendly) women.

The professionally led retreat will be held from Friday, Oct. 13, to Sunday, Oct. 15, at the diocesan Pastoral Center. It will include a closing Mass.

Group size is limited. The cost to attend is \$60; partial scholarships and housing are available if needed.

For information or to register, call (858) 581-3022, text (858) 752-9378, email [rachels\\_hope@juno.com](mailto:rachels_hope@juno.com) or visit [RachelsHope.org](http://RachelsHope.org).

### Widowed, Divorced Invited to Healing Weekend

OCEANSIDE — Beginning Experience, an international ministry that helps the widowed, divorced and separated move beyond grief, will hold its next weekend retreat Oct. 13 to 15.





## On Mission

LEONARDO ENRIQUE FONSECA

Around 700 faithful turned out Aug. 19 for a catechetical conference for Hispanic faithful, “Profetas en Misión,” at Good Shepherd School. The goal of the day-long event was to promote the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Conference-goers came from across San Diego and Imperial counties and included families, parish groups and “movimientos,” or ecclesial groups. In the school’s gym, they listened to the popular featured speaker, Father José Ramón Flecha, who traveled from León, Spain. And they enjoyed a concert by Mario Alberto Pérez, a Los Angeles-based Catholic speaker and singer-songwriter (pictured above), who frequently had them on their feet.

Father Bernardo Lara, from the Catholic Communities of Brawley & Westmorland, emceed the Spanish-language event.

The day opened with praise-and-worship, included a Holy Hour, and closed with a Mass celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano. In between sessions, conference-goers stopped at tables for exhibitors and sponsors.

The diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry organized the conference, in collaboration with the diocesan Hispanic Commission. The commission is made up of representatives of parishes with Latino communities.

### Briefs *Continued from Page 18*

It will be held at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, where a trained team will lead participants through a healing and growth program.

Those who feel ready to move through their feelings of grief toward a new beginning are encouraged to consider attending.

The cost is \$300, which covers lodging, meals and retreat materials. A \$100 deposit is required at registration, with the balance due on the weekend.

For more information or to register, email [beginningexperiencesd@gmail.com](mailto:beginningexperiencesd@gmail.com) or call (858) 748-2273.

### Women’s Retreat to Be Held at Mission San Luis Rey

OCEANSIDE — St. Francis of Assisi Parish will hold its 31st annual women’s retreat from Friday, Oct. 13, to Sunday, Oct. 15, at Mission San Luis Rey.

This year’s theme is “You Are the Light of the World.” Organizers promise a weekend of sisterhood and spiritual growth.

Space is limited. For a registration form, call (760) 500-3201 or email [sonraetoo@gmail.com](mailto:sonraetoo@gmail.com).

### Concert to Celebrate All Saints, All Souls

OCEANSIDE — A concert in honor of All Saints and All Souls Days will be held at 2:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 29, at St. Margaret Church in Oceanside.

Presented by the Greater San Diego Music Coterie, the concert will be a joint performance of the Greater San Diego Chamber Orchestra and Chorus and the United Methodist Church of Vista’s Chancel Choir.

The concert will include performances of J.S. Bach’s “Komm, süßer Tod” (Come, sweet death, come, blessed rest, BWV 478), César Franck’s “Panis Angelicus,” and selections from Requiems by Gabriel Fauré, Maurice Duruflé and Johannes Brahms.

Featured soloists include soprano Irene Marie Patton and baritone Frank Hallock. The joint chorus will be conducted by Frank Hallock, and the orchestra by Dr. Angela Yeung.

There is no cost to attend, but free-will donations will be accepted at the door.

For more information, visit [gsdmusicoterie.org/all-events](http://gsdmusicoterie.org/all-events).

## Obituary

### Father Ronald J. Buchmiller

Father Ronald J. Buchmiller, a retired priest of the Diocese of San Diego, died Aug. 16 at the age of 78.

Born on Nov. 14, 1944, he was ordained to the priesthood on Dec. 20, 1969.

Father Buchmiller served as an associate pastor in a succession of parishes, including St. Martin of Tours in La Mesa (1970-1973), St. Vincent de Paul in San Diego (1973), St. Francis de Sales in Riverside (1973-1976), St. Charles Borromeo in San Diego (1976-1978) and St. Rose of Lima in Chula Vista (1978-1979).

For 22 years, from 1979 to 2002, he served as a U.S. Navy chaplain, based in San Diego.

He was pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Lakeside for 18 years until his retirement on July 1, 2021.

The funeral vigil will be held at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 5, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Lakeside. The funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. the following day, also at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. A reception will follow the Mass.



## Working for the Church

### Looking for a job where you can put your faith into action?

There are many employment opportunities available at the diocesan Pastoral Center, local parishes and Catholic schools, and other Catholic organizations.

For a list of open positions, visit [sdcatholic.org/human-resources/employment](http://sdcatholic.org/human-resources/employment).



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