

'Do Not Cast Me Off In My Old Age'

(Psalm 71:9)



ANDY HAYT

MAKING MEMORIES: Mary Kapalla, a resident of Nazareth House San Diego, reads a children's book to St. Didacus School third-graders during their April 23 visit to the assisted living facility.

This special supplement is sponsored by:

P.O. Box 12831, San Diego, CA 92112-1831

CCDSD.org



**Catholic
Charities**

DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



RESPECTING ELDERLY: Pope Francis greets 100-year-old Lucilla Macelli before celebrating Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, marking World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on July 23, 2023.

Don't Scapegoat the Elderly, Pope Says

By Justin McLellan

VATICAN CITY —
The elderly must
not be accused

of saddling younger generations with their medical expenses and pensions — a notion which foments intergenerational conflict and drives older people into isolation, Pope Francis said.

“The accusation that the elderly ‘rob the young of their future’ is nowadays present everywhere,” the pope wrote in his message for World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly, a Church celebration that will take place July 28.

Even in the most advanced and modern societies, “there is now a widespread conviction that the elderly are burdening the young with the high cost of the social services that they require, and in this way are diverting resources from the development of the community and thus from the young,” he wrote in the message released May 14.

Such a mentality “assumes that the survival of the elderly puts that of the young at risk, that to favor the young it is necessary to neglect or even suppress the elderly,” he wrote.

Yet the pope stressed that “intergenerational conflict is a fallacy and the poisoned fruit of conflict.”

“To set the young against the old is an unacceptable form of manipulation,” he wrote.

The pope’s message expanded on



OUTREACH: Pope Francis greets Italian grandparents with their children and grandchildren April 27, 2024, in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican.

the theme chosen for this year’s World Day, which was taken from the Book of Psalms: “Do not cast me off in my old age.”

The 2024 celebration marks the fourth edition of World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. In 2021, Pope Francis instituted the World Day to be observed each year on the fourth Sunday of July, close to the liturgical memorial of Sts. Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus.

In his message for this year’s celebration, the pope emphasized that “God never abandons His children,” even as they grow weak and “can risk appearing useless.” But today, a “conspiracy surrounding the life of the elderly” often results in their abandonment by those close to them.

“The loneliness and abandonment of the elderly is not by chance or inevitable, but the fruit of decisions — political, economic, social and

personal decisions — that fail to acknowledge the infinite dignity of each person,” he wrote.

The pope explained that such a phenomenon occurs “once we lose sight of the value of each individual and people are then judged in terms of their cost, which is in some cases considered too high to pay.”

Unfortunately, he said, the elderly themselves can succumb to this cost-benefit mindset; “they are made to consider themselves a burden and to feel that they should be the first to step aside.”

Pope Francis identified the decline of communal structures in society and the widespread celebration of individualism as other factors behind the isolation of the elderly, “yet once we grow old and our powers begin to decline, the illusion of individualism, that we need no one and can live without social bonds, is revealed for

what it is.”

The pope then recounted the Bible story in which the elderly Naomi encourages her two daughters-in-law to return to their hometowns after the death of her husband and children since she sees herself as a burden to them. “Her words reflect the rigid social and religious conventions of her day, which apparently seal her own fate,” the pope wrote.

While Orpah returns home, grateful for the encouragement, Ruth “is not afraid to challenge customs and inbred patterns of thought” and “courageously remains at her side,” he wrote.

The pope encouraged all people to “express our gratitude to all those people who, often at great sacrifice, follow in practice the example of Ruth, as they care for an older person or simply demonstrate daily closeness to relatives or acquaintances who no longer have anyone else.”


Pope Francis pointed out how in poorer countries elderly people are often left alone because their children are forced to emigrate, and in regions ravaged by conflict young men are called into conflict while women and children flee for safety, leaving elderly people alone in areas “where abandonment and death seem to reign.”

A statement from Cardinal Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, said that to involve the elderly in the day, “older people can be asked to offer special prayers for young people and for peace.”

“The ministry of intercession is a real vocation of the elderly,” it said.

Keeping 'Grandparents Day' All Year Long

By Father Charles Fuld

 The Vatican is inviting us to celebrate World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on July 28 this year.



But that doesn't mean that we have to limit our celebration to one 24-hour period.

In the United States, we also have National Grandparents Day. The U.S. Congress in 1978 gave this designation to the first Sunday after Labor Day, which falls on Sept. 8 this year. So, save the date!

Additionally, as grandparents of Catholic school students have come to learn, various schools hold Grandparents Day celebrations on dates of their own choosing.

For example, St. Didacus School marked Grandparents Day on March



Celebrate Grandparents

HERE ARE JUST A FEW IDEAS:

- Invite your grandparents over for a family dinner.
- Attend Mass together as a family.
- Watch a favorite movie together.
- Send Grandma and Grandpa a letter or greeting card regularly to keep in touch.
- Have everyone write a story featuring their grandparents.
- Take your grandparents to visit their childhood homes.
- Ask your grandparents about their favorite songs, hobbies and memories.
- Create a "Why I Love You, Grandma & Grandpa" album.

20 with a Mass, followed by a reception and student performances.

Meanwhile, St. Patrick School in Carlsbad observed it on May 3 with a continental breakfast, student performances, classroom visits and Mass.

Beyond that, there are countless ways to keep the spirit of Grandparents Day alive throughout the year.

Children can also pray and offer sacrifices for their grandparents, whether they are still living or have passed away. They can even extend this kindness to other elderly people, including neighbors or those who reside in nursing homes.

Father Charles "Chuck" Fuld is editor emeritus of The Southern Cross.



ANNUAL SUMMER RETREAT

Connect with a welcoming retreat community in the beautiful setting of Mission San Luis Rey.

Sun - Fri, Aug 11 - 16


Time for prayer, reflection, and a plethora of activities.

Please
Join Us!

(760) 757 - 3659 | www.sanluisrey.org

You Seniors Are Needed to Chart the Course

By Father Charles Fuld

 I was truly amazed by the number of people who attended the Easter morning Mass that I celebrated at St. Gabriel Church in Poway. The place was packed! It was “standing-room-only,” both inside and out.

After the Mass concluded, I had an opportunity to chat with some of the people who had flown in from Florida and New York or driven in from distant towns to be there with Mom and Dad and/or Grandma and Grandpa.

When I brought this up at my Priest Support Group meeting a few days later, I was delighted to find that our situation at St. Gabriel Church was not unique. There were goodly crowds, including out-of-towners, at my brother priests’ churches, too.

There’s a message here for Catholics of advanced age.

In today’s world, there’s a strong temptation to shirk our religious obligations, to sleep in on Sundays, and to prioritize the things of this world over the things of the next, to accumulate useless trinkets instead of storing up treasure in Heaven.

But through the example that they set and the encouragement that they



give, seniors can be a counterweight to this downward pull. Seniors, you can be the instrument that God uses to keep your loved ones within the Church as practicing Catholics.

When I recall the high turnout on Easter Sunday, I give a lot of credit to the seniors in attendance. Had it not been for them, for the witness they gave to the importance of attending Mass, and the invitation that they personally extended to their loved ones, it’s quite possible that some of the youngsters wouldn’t have “bothered” to attend. And they would’ve missed out on everything that our loving God has to offer on Easter Sunday and on all of the mini-Easters (a.k.a., every other Sunday) of the year.

A while ago, an elderly widow told me that she decided that she was too old to live alone and planned to move out of the area to live with one of her kids and his family.

When she shared that they weren’t regular church-goers anymore, I noted that this could be an opportunity to lead them back. I suggested that she could begin by asking them to provide her with transportation to the nearby Catholic church on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Hopefully, she did that and made those days special for her new housemates.

One final point: Now that I’m 90-plus years old, I’ve decided that I can no longer drive safely and have turned in my California Driver’s License to

the local DMV office. And yes, I have turned to my family members to drive me to St. Gabriel Church, so I can celebrate Mass on Sundays. I also have been offered rides by lots of friends and church people, including the Knights of Columbus.

I’ve learned to be humble and very grateful for all their help. They value what I do and seem always ready to lend me a hand. Sure, I can say, “I’m old and don’t want to be a burden on my family and friends,” but the truth is that we can chart the course, and there are those who will lovingly help us along the way.

Father Charles “Chuck” Fuld is editor emeritus of The Southern Cross.



NAZARETH HOUSE

SAN DIEGO

Nazareth House offers seniors Independent Living and Assisted Living, as well as higher levels of care.

Our 8 acre park-like community is filled with beautiful walking paths and outdoor areas. Each studio features patio access overlooking peaceful courtyards and scenic city views.

Whether you are planning ahead or need to move in immediately, we are here to help!

For information and to schedule a tour contact:
Amber Zendejas
DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS
Amber@NazarethHouseSD.org
619-563-0480

Assisted Living Community Serving the San Diego Area Since 1974

Newly Remodeled!

- Onsite licensed nursing staff 24 hours a day
- Beautiful chapel with daily Mass & Rosary
- Full service dining experience
- Live shows, exercise classes, and engaging activity programs
- Quality care with an emphasis on mental, physical, spiritual and psychological well-being

Scan for a Virtual Tour 

NazarethHouseSD.org
6333 Rancho Mission Rd., San Diego, CA 92108
Lic # 372000400



How a New Smile Rebuilt a Homeless Life

After life on the streets, Lister needed significant dental work to restore his confidence. The Health Center at Father Joe's Villages provides free life-changing dental care to our neighbors in need. And Lister left homelessness behind. With a smile.

Donate at Neighbor.org

Father Joe's Villages
Rebuilding Lives





By Denis Grasska



“For me, it’s a blessing.”

That’s how Edelmira Zamudio, 85, describes the home-delivered meals that she receives on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays through Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego’s Senior Nutrition Program.

“Every meal they bring me — 100% delicious,” she said.

Zamudio, who lives in a rented room in her hometown of Calexico, doesn’t have any family members nearby.

“They’re already in Heaven,” she said. “I’m the only one here now in this Earth.”

Zamudio, who served as a volunteer for many years through Catholic Charities’ Foster Grandparent Program, now receives invaluable assistance from the very nonprofit that she once supported.

She said that she and others in similar situations depend on the Senior Nutrition Program, and it would be “very hard and very sad” were the program not available.

Through the program, eligible senior citizens in the Imperial Valley can sign up to receive home-delivered meals or to reserve a seat at one of the nine congregate dining sites throughout Imperial County.

The program manager, Apolinar Salazar, acknowledged that the home-delivered meal and congregate

dining programs are a godsend for seniors, who must be at least 60 years old, unable to prepare meals for themselves and without a caretaker available to assume that responsibility.

The two meal programs are offered through the California Department of Aging and managed in Imperial County by Catholic Charities, with funding from the Imperial County Area Agency on Aging.

To give a sense of the project’s scale, Salazar shared that the Senior Nutrition Program served 9,713 meals in the month of April alone. This included 5,768 home-delivered meals and 3,945 meals served at congregate dining sites.

These meals aren’t slapdash affairs either.

Salazar noted that, through the Imperial County Area Agency on Aging, Catholic Charities contracts with a dietician to approve the nutritional content of each meal.

And clients are unlikely to be bored by the menu.

“We ensure that it’s not repetitive,” said Salazar, who explained that one day’s meal might be a flavorful chile relleno, and the next might be a sumptuous chicken Alfredo or a chicken cordon bleu.

Home-delivered meals might be provided two, three or as frequently as five days a week.

Salazar said that the program has enabled seniors, some of whom might



Seniors Nourished with Food and Fellowship

A GODSEND: A collection of photos illustrates the work of Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego’s Senior Nutrition Program. *Left, a staff member delivered food to a program participant. Above, seniors find community at one of nine congregate dining sites. Below, 85-year-old Edelmira Zamudio prepares to eat a home-delivered meal; below at right, seniors socialize at a congregate dining site.*

have mild dementia and be inclined to forget to eat regularly, to continue living at home instead of moving into an assisted living facility.

Catholic Charities staffers begin their meal preparation around 5 a.m. The packaged meals are delivered between 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Salazar explained that Catholic Charities’ drivers do more than drop off meals. They also provide invaluable human interaction and perform wellness checks.

“We have seniors that look forward to the visit of the driver,” he said,

“because that’s going to be the only person that they’re going to see probably (during) the day or the week, especially (in) the remote areas of Imperial County.”

The drivers are mandated reporters for Adult Protective Services and, on more than one occasion, they have provided potentially life-saving intervention. For example, Salazar said that there have been times when drivers have requested ambulances for the meal clients.

The same drivers also deliver the meals to the congregate dining sites.



HOME AND AWAY: A Catholic Charities staffer makes a home assessment after delivering meals to a client. Seniors at a congregate dining site in Calexico take part in an Easter egg hunt.



COURTESY CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

with
o

Senior Nutrition Program in the Imperial Valley. Pictured at top are participants at a congregating dining site in Imperial Valley. At right, 85-year-old participant at a home-delivered site.

For seniors, the appeal of congregating dining is that it represents “a way to meet new people (and) socialize,” explained Salazar. Along with a meal, participants might also enjoy fun activities, like bingo games or presentations, and live music.

Salazar said that the congregating dining program observes holidays, such as Halloween, when the seniors are invited to attend in costumes.

Zamudio participated in the congregating dining program prior to 2020. After the COVID-19 pandemic and personal health challenges, she be-

gan receiving home-delivered meals instead.

In some locations, Salazar said, free transportation to and from the dining sites is provided for seniors who otherwise would be unable to attend.

These sites are typically open from 10 a.m. until around 1 p.m., with meals served between 11:30 a.m. and noon, said Salazar. Of the nine sites, four of them offer meals from Monday through Friday, but others in more remote areas of Imperial County might only serve meals between one and four days a week.

Salazar said that many seniors have told him that the congregating dining program is “the closest thing” to eating out at a restaurant, something that has become unaffordable for many of them in recent years.

The congregating dining sites also help seniors to save on their electricity bills, said Salazar. He noted how, especially in the hotter summer months, seniors will arrive early, taking advantage of the air-conditioning.

There is no cost to participate in either the home-delivered or congregating dining programs, but there is a suggested donation.

For the home-delivered meal clients, a donation envelope is sent out with the newsletter and menu schedule, said Salazar. At the congregating dining sites, it is a requirement of the California Department of Aging that there be a donation box at the entrance.

“If they’re able to donate, they’ll donate,” said Salazar. “And if they’re not, nobody’s going to call them or ask for a donation.”

Zamudio has high praise not only for the quality of the meals, but for the Catholic Charities staffers who prepare and deliver them.

“What can I say? A hundred percent for the meals and a hundred percent for all my little sweethearts.”

For more information about Catholic Charities and its programs, visit ccdsd.org.



JOYFUL: Senior Nutrition Program Manager Apolinar Salazar gives two thumbs up, surrounded by senior participants in the congregating dining program.

A Final Mission

By Noreen McInnes

I received the phone call that everyone dreads: "Your father is dying. You need to come quickly."

I left San Diego on the next plane to Pennsylvania, hoping to make it to the hospital before the Lord took him home.

Surprisingly, from the moment I arrived at his bedside and peered into his deep blue eyes, he began to take a turn for the better. Was it my fervent prayer? Was it a miracle? Thank You, Lord!

Early the next morning, right after Mass, I walked into dad's hospital room to find him sitting up in a chair, finishing his breakfast.

The nurse popped her head into the room and asked, "Frank, are you ready to go back down to rehab today?"

"Sure, I'll give it a try."

I was speechless. Yesterday, he was dying; today, he is all full of optimism, ready to go to rehabilitation to get back on his feet.

"Dad, do you mind if I go to rehab with you?"

"No, that would be great. You can take me down there."

After he got cleaned up from breakfast, I pushed Dad in his wheelchair down to the large rehab room in the hospital basement. As I walked in, my knees started to buckle from under me.

I looked from face to face at all the blank stares on the patients parked around the room. Not one of them seemed to know where they were, let alone who they were. I wanted to turn my dad right around and run out of

there, afraid that my squeamish nature might get the best of me.

The rehab therapist pointed to an empty spot along the wall where she wanted Dad to go.

Oh, no, not there! That was right next to the scariest one of them all. Positioned uncomfortably in a wheelchair, his opened hospital gown exposed all kinds of tubes and wires attached to him. His urine bag hung on one side of his chair and an IV pole with a drip into his arm on the other.

Though seemingly much younger than all the other patients, he appeared worse off than the rest. He sat still, staring into space.

I was nervous, scared and uncomfortable. I tried not to look. But I did as I was told and backed Frank into the spot next to the urine bag, when the young man screamed out with great energy and fervor, "Frrrrraaaaannnk!!!!!"

Frank gently turned to him, smiled and, in a sing-song voice, called out, "Well hello, Ronald."

Ronald yelled even louder, "Frrrrraaaaannnk!!!!!"

The rehab therapist leaned in towards me and whispered, "Ronald has been here for three months now and, in that time, he has only said one word — 'Frank!'"

What? I gasped! I tried to look around the room with new eyes, but I was still traumatized.

My gaze stopped at a woman, drooling and hunched over in her chair. Before I knew it, Frank looked right at her and said in a flirtatious voice, "Hi there, Maureen."

The drooling face turned toward



EMBRACE: Noreen McInnes embraces the lessons that her father, Frank, taught her in his final years.

Frank, ever so slightly, and I caught a glimpse of the slow, sexy wink aimed right at Frank. The whole place erupted in laughter.

Was Frank really here for treatment for himself? Was he the patient, or was he sent here to heal those around him? Obviously, God was in control.

I could no longer look with aversion or fear, but only with love and compassion for these children of God. My father taught me so much in those five minutes. He taught me to see the face of Jesus in the sick and the suffering.

Jesus, as He hung upon the cross, in the last minutes of His life, continued to minister to those around Him. He begged for mercy upon the soldiers that crucified Him, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Jesus pardoned the criminal that hung beside Him: "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

We are also called to minister to others, even when we are suffering and dying; to remain in Him, doing His work, until our last breath. "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in Me and I in him will bear much fruit because, without Me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Let us look upon our last days, not as though we are finished, but as if we are on a final mission to bring the love of God to others. It is not just a time when we need to receive care, but a time when we can still care for others.

Christ offered Himself in a bloody sacrifice of love for us and our salvation. In gratitude, let us offer ourselves in an unbloody sacrifice of love. As St. Teresa of Avila said, "Christ has no body now but yours."

Noreen McInnes is director of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality and the author of "Keep at It, Riley!" The book is subtitled "Accompanying my Father through Death into Life."

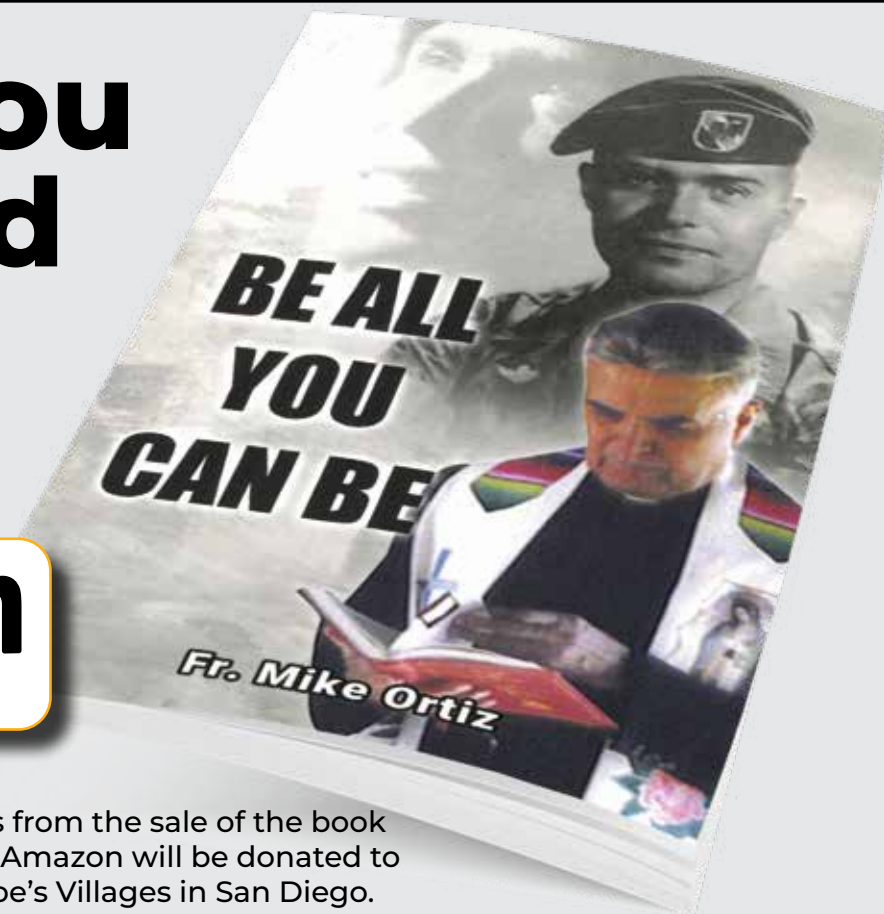
Dare You To Read This!!!

FIND ON:



\$10.10

Royalties from the sale of the book through Amazon will be donated to Father Joe's Villages in San Diego.



Father Mike Ortiz is now retired from both the army chaplaincy, and the active priesthood. After several attempts to become a military chaplain he was finally accepted and volunteered for the Green Berets and served with the 1st, the 3rd, the 5th and the 10th Groups. He underwent SCUBA and HALO training and is a graduate of the Command & General Staff College as well as the War College in Pennsylvania. After retirement from the military, he returned to "active duty" as a diocesan priest in San Diego. Father Mike is now a full-time consultant to others in his retirement home, whether they want his advice or not. He is still enjoying life there at 95.

Students, Seniors Create Meaningful Bonds

By Denis Grasska



Thanks to a recent field trip to Nazareth House

San Diego, an assisted living facility run by the Sisters of Nazareth, 9-year-old Elizabeth Holmes has a new friend who is about 10 times her age.

Elizabeth was one of about 10 third-graders from St. Didacus School who visited the elderly residents of Nazareth House on April 23, accompanied by their principal and three chaperones.

During their visit, which lasted more than an hour, the students and the approximately 20 residents each took time to introduce themselves. The students also sang, danced and played games with the seniors.

“The residents were excited and happy to see our students and to hear about what they like about school,” said Principal Kim James. “They also shared their own experiences; some of them were former teachers themselves.”

James said that the students were “so surprised” to learn that some of the residents were in their 90s.

Among those residents was the one whom Elizabeth now refers to as “my friend.”

Within days of the school visit, Elizabeth returned to Nazareth House to drop off a letter and an art project as a gift for her newfound friend. The latter reciprocated by mailing her a thank-you card and a holy card of St. Therese of Lisieux.

“I felt really happy, and I wrote her a letter back,” Elizabeth said, recalling her reaction to the surprise that she



PERFORMERS: Third-graders from St. Didacus School, including Elizabeth Holmes and Gavri Shue, sang and danced April 23 for the senior residents at Nazareth House San Diego.

received in the mail.

“Now, we’re pen pals,” she said.

Accompanied by one of her parents, Elizabeth has returned to Nazareth House three times since the official school trip, most recently on June 2.

The initial visit in April was organized by St. Didacus School’s Catholic Action Program, which is run by school parents and provides service opportunities throughout the year for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

James told *The Southern Cross* that her hope for events like these is for participating students “to feel the value of bringing joy to others.”

“Our students enjoy these connections,” she said, “and it also helps to guide them on how to be respectful and helpful.”

Of the recent visit to Nazareth House, James said, “I believe the interaction between generations is so powerful ... It’s another opportunity to create bonds for both our students and the residents.”

Ariana Bagramova, activities director at Nazareth House, also sees such events are mutually enriching for participants at both ends of the age spectrum.

“The residents get the lively energy that the students have to offer. ... This energy lifts up their spirits and stays with them,” she said.

At the same time, she said, “These visits are beneficial for the students because the seniors have so much wisdom to pass on to them, and their collaboration can result in strong, meaningful bonds.”

Amber Zendejas, director of admissions for Nazareth House, said, “Our seniors find joy listening, observing and interacting with the children to get to know each of their individual and energetic personalities.”

“Whether they are playing a ball game with the children, watching them perform, or immersed in a one-on-one conversation, the residents are completely captivated and living in that present moment,” said Zendejas. “For those 60 minutes, they forget about their aches and pains or any worries they might have and just soak in the love and joy that children bring to this world.”

For more information, visit nazarethhousesd.org.



LET’S PLAY: Third-grader Luna Gonzales and her classmates played games with seniors during their visit to Nazareth House.



ENTERTAINED: The third-graders’ visit drew smiles and applause from Nazareth House residents, like Margaret Cammall, age 90.

By **preplanning**
your arrangements,
you will spare your
loved ones
unnecessary
financial and
emotional burden.



For a free family record book
and more information,

Call (619) 264-3127

We Offer Interest-Free "Pre-Need" Plans.



HOLY CROSS

Catholic Cemetery and Mausoleum

4470 Hilltop Drive • San Diego 92102

619 264 3127

FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

Would you like to help mentor future generations?

Join our program today!



Benefits Include:

- \$4.00/hr. tax-free stipend
- Meal/Transportation Reimbursement
- Pre-service Training
- Personal Leave

What is the Foster Grandparent Program?

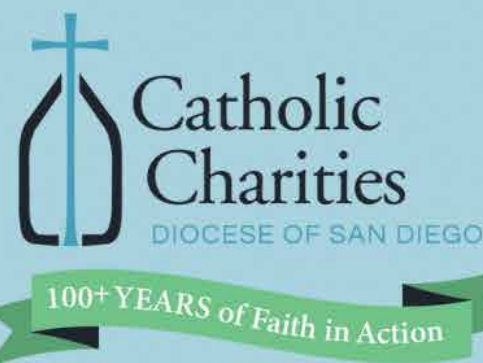
Provides an opportunity for seniors 55 years of age or older, who are on a limited income, to volunteer and make an impact in their community.



Senior Volunteers provide one-to-one assistance for children with special and exceptional needs.

Services:

- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Skill Building
- Enhance Self Reliance
- Opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child



For more information
please contact:

San Diego
(619) 901-1660

Imperial Valley
(619) 901-1660

Connect with Us!



www.ccdsd.org
619.323.2841

#YouandMeCCDSD