

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



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GOODBYE, SUMMER: Around 16,000 students from local Catholic schools, such as Holy Trinity School, begin the new academic year in mid-August. Students at three schools will find that their campus has been significantly remodeled. And 10 schools will begin the academic year with new principals.



Signs of Hope

Diocese celebrates — and challenges — young adult Catholics at a special Mass. **Page 3**



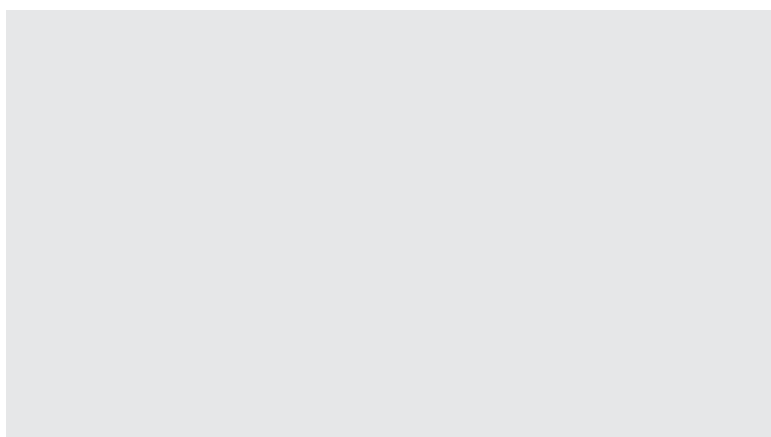
Faith in Action

Classes for Hispanic women promote physical fitness and a whole lot more. **Pages 12-13**



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The Church shows how people of faith can grow in their environmental resilience. **Page 14**



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**DIocese of
SAN DIEGO**

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 96 parishes and 13 missions, 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 can go online to obtain more information about the subject at hand, including additional photos, video and other content.



'Beware of Dictatorship of Doing'

By Carol Glatz



VATICAN NEWS — To be compassionate and respond best to the needs of others, it is necessary to take time out to relax and not be anxious about getting things done, Pope Francis said.

It is also a "social injustice" when working parents hardly see their children because of long hours away from home, he said, before praying the Angelus in St. Peter's Square on July 21. "In families, fathers and mothers should have time to share with their children, to let love grow within their family and in order not to fall into the dictatorship of doing."

The pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading from St. Mark (6:30-34) about Jesus telling the apostles to rest after their return from their mission of preaching and healing. However, when Jesus saw the vast crowd that had gathered, "His heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things," the verse says.

The pope said, "On the one hand, there is an invitation to rest, and on the other, Jesus' compassion for the crowd." Resting and being compassionate "may seem like two incompatible things, while they actually go together."

"Only if we learn how to rest can we have compassion. Indeed, it is only possible to have a compassionate gaze, which knows how to respond to the needs of others, if our heart is not



KIDS ZONE: Pope Francis greets children of Vatican employees attending a summer camp at the Vatican July 18.

consumed by the anxiety of doing, if we know how to stop and how to receive the grace of God, in the silence of adoration," he said.

There is a danger that "can threaten us when, for instance, our enthusiasm in carrying out our mission or our work, as well as the roles and tasks entrusted to us, make us fall victim to a kind of activism which is overly concerned with things to do and with results, and this is a bad thing," he said.

"It then happens that we become agitated and lose sight of what is essential. We risk exhausting our energies and falling into bodily and spiritual fatigue," the pope said.

A person's life, society in general and even the Church in its pastoral work may often be "held prisoner by haste," he said. "Brothers and sisters, let us beware of the dictatorship of doing!"

This can also happen out of necessity in families, he added, when one or both parents have to earn a living and sacrifice time that could have been spent with the family, for example, having to leave before the kids are awake and getting home after they are asleep.

"This is a social injustice," he said. "Let us think about what we can do to help people who are forced to live in this way."

Pope Francis encouraged Catholics to ask themselves: "Am I able to stop during my day? Am I capable of taking a moment to be with myself and with the Lord, or am I always in a hurry, in a constant hurry for things to do?"

He asked the faithful to find an "inner" place of rest even in the midst of a busy day and to be compassionate towards others.

Catholic News Service

U.S. Faithful Give \$10.5 Million

The Southern Cross



WASHINGTON — The bishops that oversee various national collections have awarded 453 grants, totaling over \$10.5 million, to support pastoral care, evangelization, and social ministry here and abroad, made possible through the generosity of U.S. Catholics.

On designated dates, participating dioceses take up these collections, organized by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on

National Collections. Three of the collections underwrite international ministry, while two others have domestic and international reach.

The Catholic Home Missions Appeal assists dioceses and eparchies in the United States and its territories that are too poor or too small to provide ministry without outside help.

The Bishops' Emergency Disaster Fund allows dioceses to take special collections after major crises, such as tornadoes, and directs those gifts to Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities USA, and to repair and rebuild Church properties struck by disasters.

The national collection for the

Church in Central and Eastern Europe helps to rebuild the Church in this region after decades under communist rule. The bishops approved 241 grants totaling more than \$5.8 million for ministries in over 25 countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The national collection for the Church in Latin America awarded 163 grants totaling more than \$3.2 million, which includes assistance to two dioceses with long-term recovery from disasters.

The national collection for the Church in Africa awarded 48 grants totaling \$1,399,100 to support pastoral activities across the continent.

Statement of Cardinal McElroy on Shootings in Pennsylvania

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, the bishop of the Catholic Diocese of San Diego, issued the following statement on July 14.

"Let every man, woman and child join in prayer this day for President Trump, for his family and for our tormented nation. May the God of

healing and consolation enshroud our former president. May the Lord embrace and sustain all of the victims of this terrible shooting and their families.

"And may this day be a moment in which we face clearly the patterns of division that have overwhelmed

our political life and brought violence once again to the center of our electoral stage, so that we might turn away from this pathway which so utterly contradicts the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the aspirations of every generation that has sacrificed to build our great nation."

Young Adults Bring ‘Signs of Hope’

By Denis Grasska

As Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido visits parishes across the region, he sometimes wonders, “Where are the young people?”

He offered an answer at the diocese’s Annual Young Adult Adoration and Mass.

“You are signs of hope that Christ still matters,” he told the estimated 400 young adults in attendance, “that the Church still matters.”

Sponsored by the diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry, the Mass was held July 14 at The Immaculata Church on the campus of the University of San Diego.

The evening began at 5 p.m. with an hour of Eucharistic adoration, during which priests were available for the sacrament of reconciliation. At 6 p.m., Bishop Pulido presided over a Mass, which was followed by a reception in an adjacent courtyard.

In his homily, Bishop Pulido noted that one of the priorities identified through the diocesan synod process had been “making disciples,” or how to “pass on the faith to the next generation.”

“When I celebrate Mass in different parishes, I see the youth in the pews, but I don’t see many,” the bishop lamented.

He noted that he and the other bishops of the diocese recently confirmed about 4,000 youth in the diocese.

“Sometimes, when I visit parishes, I wonder: Where are they?” he said.

Citing Matthew Kelly, founder of Dynamic Catholic, Bishop Pulido said that 85% of Catholic young people will



EMBRACED: Around 400 from across the San Diego-Imperial Valley region turned out for the diocese’s annual Young Adult Adoration and Mass on July 14 at The Immaculata Church.

leave the Church within five years of being confirmed.

“In the midst of all of this data and research, are there any signs of hope?” he asked rhetorically.

He told the young adults, “You are signs of hope that Christ still matters, that the Church still matters, (that) the Holy Eucharist still matters, that loving God and our neighbor is still the message that we are called to pass on to the next generation.”

“You ... might say, ‘I’m not a preacher, I’m not a priest, I’m not a prophet; I’m just a young adult person who is searching, who still has a long way to go,’” said Bishop Pulido. “Well, the

Lord calls you.”

“Our young people are still searching, and we can show them — you can show them — that what they are looking for is found in Jesus and in the sacraments,” he said. “You might say to yourself, ‘I’m not equipped.’ ... Remember that God doesn’t call the qualified; He qualifies the called.”

The liturgical music for the Mass was provided by Ruach, the young adult choir from St. Therese of Carmel Parish in Carmel Valley, which is co-led by young adults Catherine Marshall and Nicky Knuff.

Evelyn Beale, associate director of the Office for Youth and Young Adult

Ministry, said it was exciting to have them lead the music this year.

“They’re an active young adult choir that sings every single Sunday at the 5:30 p.m. Mass” and “they breathe life into that Mass,” she said.

“I think it’s a great testament to show the young adult community what being really involved in a parish could look like,” Beale said of Ruach.

Toward the conclusion of the Mass, all young adults who are leaders in young adult ministry were asked to approach the altar to receive a blessing and commissioning from Bishop Pulido.

Some young adults shared their thoughts during the reception.

First-time attendee Danielle Boggs, 25, is a member of St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch.

“How the young adults were able to fill that large church is super impressive,” she said, adding that young adult events like these provide encouragement “to go out and spread the word and just be that light for everyone.”

She said that having the opportunity to meet other young Catholics, especially in a city the size of San Diego, is “huge.”

Justin Cruz, a 25-year-old member of San Rafael Parish in Rancho Bernardo, is a returning attendee.

He said, “It’s amazing to see a whole bunch of young adults passionate about their faith come together for one large Mass.”

Reflecting on the importance of a community of young adult Catholics, Cruz said, “The Lord doesn’t want us to walk alone. He blessed us with amazing community, and love, and joy from His holy people.”



PHOTO FINISH: Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido celebrated the special Mass and the special moments afterward.

See photo gallery of the Mass at thesoutherncross.org/2024yamass.



Start of School Year 'Always Exciting Time'

By Denis Grasska



Local Catholic schools expect to welcome about

16,000 students to the new academic year, including around 11,000 at the elementary school level and nearly 5,000 high schoolers.

"The beginning of the school year is always an exciting time," said Diocesan Schools Superintendent Leticia Oseguera.

Most of the 42 elementary schools will hold their first day of classes between Aug. 19 and 21. The earliest start date will be Aug. 14, when Mater Dei Elementary, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Charles Borromeo schools are scheduled to re-open. The last to begin will be Our Lady's School, one of three schools where campus renovations are underway; students are set to return on Sept. 4.

For the most part, Catholic high school students will go back earlier than their elementary school counterparts. The first day of class will be Aug. 12 at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace and Mater Dei Catholic High School, Aug. 13 at Cathedral Catholic High School, Aug. 14 at Vincent Memorial Catholic High School, Aug. 15 at St. Augustine High School, and Aug. 19 at Cristo Rey San Diego High School.

At three schools, returning students will see the results of recent campus renovation projects. The most significant will be St. John of the Cross School, which is returning to its Lemon Grove campus for the first day of class Aug. 26; in early 2024, after a day of record rainfall caused extensive flood damage, the school was forced to relocate temporarily to the campus of the former St. Michael Academy.

Our Lady's School and Cristo Rey San Diego High School also underwent renovations this summer, courtesy of grants from the Shea Foundation.

At Our Lady's School, a full renovation of its North Campus (for grades 3 through 8) began at the close of the



NEW LOOK: Students returning to class at Our Lady's School for the new academic year will find a significantly renovated campus.

previous school year and is expected to wrap up around Labor Day.

Judy Ziment, president of Our Lady's School, describes it as "a full renovation, both inside and out," that includes all exterior painting, paving the play area/parking lot, new lighting, and updating of the school's century-old plumbing, among many other upgrades.

Last summer, the Shea Foundation renovated the school's Father Brown Campus (for transitional kindergarten through second grade).

"When (the current renovation) is all done," said Ziment, "we will literally have a new school with two beautiful, new campuses."

Meanwhile, at Cristo Rey San Diego High School, President David Rivera said that a grant has funded "complete renovations, down to the studs," of two restrooms; 57 window coverings for classrooms and offices; and the resealing and restriping of the school's parking lot. This comes a few months after the Shea Foundation provided a new asphalt parking and playground area.

Ten schools will begin the academic year with new principals, including

Annalisa Burgos at St. Mary's School, El Centro; Dr. Amanda LoCoco at Holy Trinity School, El Cajon; Brittany Bateman at The Nativity School, Rancho Santa Fe; James Brandt at Stella Maris Academy, La Jolla; James Davoren at St. Columba School; Larissa Frost, St. Katharine Drexel Academy; Erika Rosas at Sacred Heart School, Coronado; Sister Patricia Rodriguez at Vincent Memorial Catholic High School, Calexico; and John Amann at Cristo Rey San Diego High School.

"We have a large number of ...

new principals," said Oseguera. "I think that's always exciting to have new leaders who are passionate about Catholic education leading our schools."

As in past years, the diocesan Office for Schools will offer professional development opportunities for Catholic school educators before schools reopen.

On July 31 and Aug. 1, the office will host a Leadership Summit for Catholic school principals, featuring sessions on such topics as Catholic identity, leadership, operational vitality, development and accreditation.

On Aug. 2, there will be a New Pastors-Principals Partnership Meeting for those parochial schools where a pastor and principal will be working together for the first time.

Four days later, the Schools Office will hold its annual Religion Convocation, which will include a Mass concelebrated by Auxiliary Bishops Ramón Bejarano, Michael Pham and Felipe Pulido.

"This is our big kick-off event for the school year," said Oseguera, who expects that about 1,200 educators will attend.

The superintendent said the start of the academic year is special.

"It's exciting to see all the students come back from their summertime, ready to meet their new teachers, to see their friends, to get back to learning, and for the school communities to once again reunite for another successful school year."

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School Community 'Finally Coming Home'

By Denis Grasska



LEMON GROVE

— It's "back to school" in more

ways than one for St. John of the Cross School.

A day of record rainfall last January led to severe flooding at the school, making it necessary for it to find a temporary home on the campus of St. Michael Academy, which had closed three years earlier.

Repairs at St. John of the Cross are expected to be completed by mid-August, in time for the first day of school on Aug. 26.

"It's like coming home again," said Greg Krumm, the school's principal. "It's like we've been gone for a long time and we're finally coming home."

Krumm estimated that repairs to the entire St. John of the Cross Parish campus, including the church and parish hall as well as the school, cost around \$2 million. The money was raised through a combination of flood insurance; donations from parishioners, alumni, and other Catholic parishes and schools, he said.

As of July 17, Krumm said that all roofs had been either repaired or replaced and ceilings restored. New flooring and cabinetry will be installed, and new turf may be laid down in the schoolyard, he added.

"Every classroom and office (has) been refurbished, sanitized and painted. It looks like a brand-new school almost," said Krumm, who noted that everyone is "raring to go to start the school year."

In mid-August, he said, the school will begin taking inventory of the items that were quickly placed in stor-



AIDA BUSTOS

CLASS WORK: All classrooms at St. John of the Cross School will have new floors, baseboards, ceilings, interior paint and new cabinets as part of the project to restore the school after the devastating flood in January. The virtually new school plans to greet students back to class on Aug. 26.

age after the flood.

"We don't really know just how much is in storage and how much was discarded or thrown away," he said, noting that this remains "the big question mark."

The school was evacuated on the morning of Jan. 22. It transitioned to distance-learning between Jan. 29 and Feb. 2, before resuming in-person instruction on the former St. Michael Academy campus on Feb. 5.

At the time, Krumm said that the school could finish the year at St. Michael's "if necessary," but that he hoped they would be able to return

earlier. It turned out to be necessary.

The school wrapped up the academic year on its temporary campus, though the eighth-grade graduation was held in St. John of the Cross Parish Church.

Krumm thanked the diocese, especially the Office for Schools, for its support.

He also expressed gratitude for the hospitality of St. Michael Parish and St. Michael Academy Preschool.

"They were just absolutely wonderful. It was hard to say goodbye," he said, adding that he now considers St. Michael Academy Preschool to be

"our sister school."

Reflecting on his community's experience last school year, Krumm saw a silver lining.

"Yes, we were not at our school; yes, our school got decimated by a flood," he said, "but we were able to experience another school, another parish, another faith-based community like ours."

He added, "They took us in like we were family, and ... I think I speak for all our school community — our parents, our kids, our teachers — we cannot thank them enough."

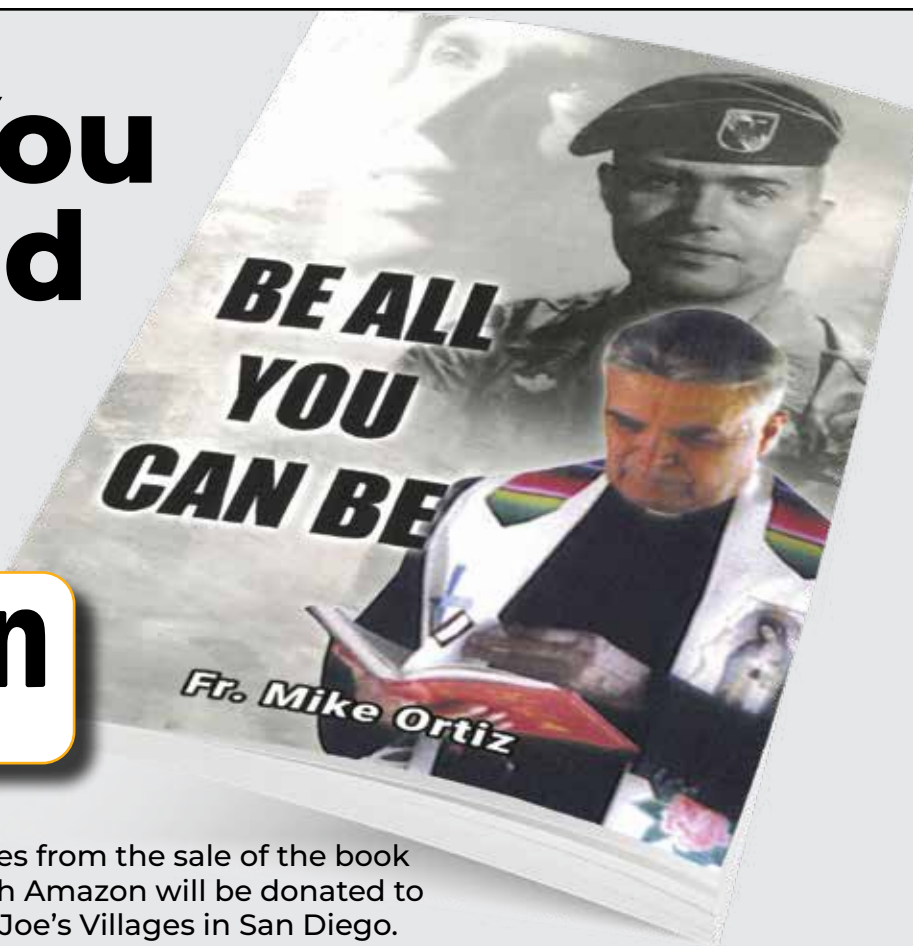
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Father Mike Ortiz is now retired from both the army chaplaincy, and the active priesthood. After several attempts to become a military chaplain he was finally accepted and volunteered for the Green Berets and served with the 1st, the 3rd, the 5th and 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.

Special Monstrance to Travel Across Area

By Denis Grasska



A special monstrance once blessed by Pope St. John Paul II will travel throughout the Diocese of San Diego in August and September, with the goal of fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

It will be used for Eucharistic adoration at local parishes between Aug. 20 and Sept. 27.

The monstrance is one of six that Pope John Paul blessed on Nov. 24, 2004, for use during the special Year of the Eucharist. One monstrance each was sent to North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia.

According to the website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the North American monstrance traveled to more than 45 dioceses in the United States and Canada within one year. It was decided that it would continue to travel among U.S. and Canadian dioceses, even after the Year of the Eucharist concluded in October of 2005.

The USCCB entrusted the mon-



COURTESY SERRA CLUB

WORLD TOUR: This monstrance is one of six that St. John Paul II blessed in 2004.

strance to the care of Serra International, an organization that exists to promote priestly and religious vocations.

Serra Club of San Diego-North

Coast, the local chapter of Serra International, requested that the monstrance come to the San Diego Diocese.

The monstrance is scheduled to spend about five days in each of the diocese's seven deaneries, or geographical clusters of parishes. This includes the Oceanside (Aug. 20-24), Escondido (Aug. 25-29), Mission (Aug. 30-Sept. 3), Cathedral (Sept. 7-11), El Cajon (Sept. 14-18), El Centro (Sept. 19-21) and South Bay (Sept. 22-26) deaneries.

"We're excited that San Diego is going to have this monstrance," said Dianna Pacheco, who serves on the communications committee of the local Serra Club.

The first scheduled stop will be her own parish, St. Patrick Church in Carlsbad, on Aug. 20, from 2 to 6 p.m. In addition to parishes, the monstrance is also expected to make stops at Catholic high schools and at colleges.

"I think, for everyone that is able to spend time in adoration, making holy hours, that there'll always be fruit," Pacheco said, expressing hope that the monstrance's sojourn in San Diego will not only foster vocations, but also

will grow the membership of the local Serra Club and contribute to the spirit of "Eucharistic revival" in the diocese.

Pacheco said that Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano has been "very enthusiastic" about this effort and was instrumental in bringing the monstrance to San Diego.

In a June 21 letter to priests and deacons, Bishop Bejarano described the upcoming tour as part of an ongoing effort "to build a culture of vocations" and of "inviting the faithful to pray for vocations."

"I invite our parishes to consider having the monstrance for solemn exposition and prayer," wrote Bishop Bejarano.

Prior to its arrival in the San Diego Diocese, the monstrance will be present at the Serra International Convention, to be held Aug. 8 to 11 in New Orleans. After San Diego, it will continue on to Mt. Angel, Oregon, where another Serra conference will be taking place.

For information about when the monstrance will be at a nearby parish, contact Dianna Pacheco at diannapach@hotmail.com.

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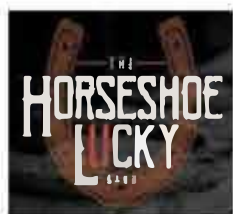
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Building of Ukrainian Church Starts

By Denis Grasska



SANTEE — St. John the Baptizer Ukrainian Catholic

Parish, which currently gathers for worship on Sunday mornings in the monastery chapel at St. Augustine High School, has broken ground for a permanent church.

About 80 people gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony July 7 in Santee, the future home of a 4,200-square-foot parish campus that will consist of a Byzantine-style church and a parish hall.

“Over six years, we were waiting for this moment,” said Father Yuri Sas, pastor, who explained that delays were caused by the pandemic and waiting for approval for a conditional-use permit.

Construction is expected to take between 12 and 18 months, he said.

Established in 1960, St. John the Baptizer Parish isn't part of the Diocese of San Diego. It is one of several Eastern-rite Catholic parishes in the San Diego area, each of which answers to their own bishops and follows their own liturgical traditions, while remaining in full communion with the pope.

The parish, which consists of about 60 families, is part of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which is based in Kyiv. Its diocese is headquartered in Chicago.

Father Sas recalled that, about six years ago, he had been ministering at a parish in North Dakota and was on the cusp of transferring to another parish in Denver, when his bishop asked him to accept a different — and more challenging — assignment in San Diego.

“There is no church, no money, no rectory ... but (the) opportunity to build a church,” he recalls his bishop telling him at the time.

Father Sas describes the effort “to build this church for future generations” as “the biggest project in my life.”

During his years as pastor, he said, he has “passed with those people (in the parish) through many, many difficulties,” including having to celebrate online and outdoor Masses, or “Divine Liturgies” as they are called in Eastern Catholic Churches, during the COVID-era lockdowns.

Father Sas said that both he and his parishioners have welcomed “many, many families” fleeing war-torn Ukraine since the Russian invasion in early 2022.

However, he said, the new church will be “not only for Ukrainians,” but a welcoming place “for all nations.”

St. John the Baptizer Parish will gratefully accept donations to its building fund at stjohnthebaptizer.org/contribution.

Diocese's Synod Process Shared in Europe

By Denis Grasska



Dr. Robert Ehnou, director of the diocesan Office for

Life, Peace and Justice, was among the presenters at the 12th International Conference on Restorative Justice.

The conference, sponsored by the European Forum for Restorative Justice, was held May 28 to 31 in Tallin, Estonia. About 365 people from 44 countries, including more than 20 from the United States, attended.

Endorsed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, restorative justice is an approach to criminal justice that seeks to go beyond punishment and to foster healing and reconciliation among perpetrators, victims and the community.

Ehnou co-presented a session with Tim Chapman, a visiting professor at the University of Sassari in Italy, that explored how institutions can use restorative practices.

Chapman spoke about the use of restorative practices to bring about healing after the clergy sex abuse scandal. For his part, Ehnou reflected



ENCOUNTER: Robert Ehnou, director of the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, spoke at a conference in Estonia on restorative justice.

on how the synodal process of listening and discernment embodied the principles of restorative justice.

Ehnou was appointed by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy to co-lead the Synod on Synodality at the diocesan level. He told the conference-goers that 11,000 people had participated in the initial diocesan synod, which utilized “restorative circles,” and another 12,000 had met in small-group sessions in a second round.

“This large engagement of people ... is unprecedented and has been a model for civil discourse and synodality for the universal Catholic Church,” he said. “Dialogues on the difficult topics of joys, sorrows and hopes in Church life were explored in a restorative framework that produced scores of positive encounters without the usually expected disagreements and further polarization.”



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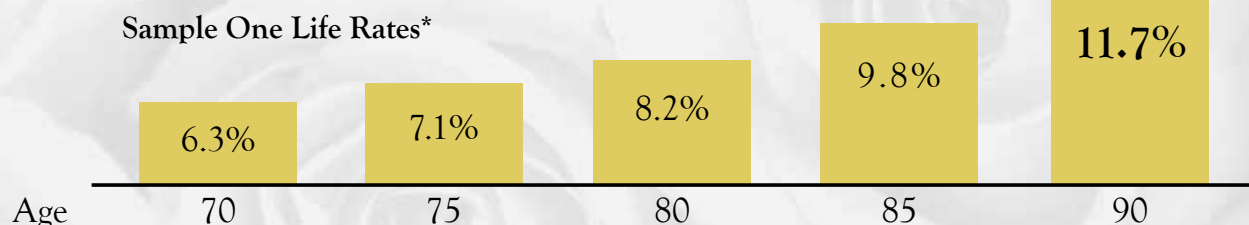
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Center Consecrated as Parish Church

By Denis Grasska

OCEANSIDE — Cardinal Robert W. McElroy has consecrated the Fray Junipero Serra Center at Mission San Luis Rey Parish. The building will now serve as the parish church.

The center was originally constructed in the mid-1990s as a multipurpose space. It was blessed and dedicated in 1996 by the late Bishop Robert H. Brom for that function. Since 2010, it has been enhanced through the addition of a large San Damiano Cross icon, statues, votive candle stands, an adoration chapel and various artworks, among other features.

Franciscan Father Oscar Mendez served as pastor of Mission San Luis Rey Parish until leaving July 28 to begin a new assignment. On June 19, he joined Cardinal McElroy at the consecration Mass “to dedicate this place for worship only.”

Father Mendez described the consecration of the center, which seats about 860 people, as a “special occasion” for the parish.

The Mass included the sprinkling of holy water over the congregation, a special prayer of dedication, and the



TRANSFORMED: On June 19, Cardinal Robert W. McElroy consecrated the Fray Junipero Serra Center, which will now serve as the parish church for Mission San Luis Rey Parish.

anointing of the altar and the walls of the church with sacred chrism, a mixture of olive oil and balsam that was consecrated at the annual diocesan Chrism Mass.

“Just as priests, prophets and kings were anointed throughout the history of the Israelites and Christians, so is the altar, the symbol of Jesus,” explained Noreen McInnes, director

of the diocesan Office for Liturgy and Spirituality.

She said that “an ordinary piece of furniture” became a symbol of Christ when the cardinal anointed the altar with five crosses representing the five wounds of Christ.

“This beautiful building is now, in its essence and its entirety, a house of God, a place of worship, a place of prayer,” Cardinal McElroy said in his homily.

“That’s what we are marking tonight, that you have transformed this parish in a way which demarcates a special sacredness continually ... and entirely as a place of worship,” he said.

The cardinal said that, in a certain sense, the church had been consecrated twice before — first, by the sacrifices, service and preaching of the Franciscan priests and brothers who founded Old Mission San Luis Rey 226 years ago; second, by the community that has gathered in the Serra Center for almost 30 years for Masses and other sacramental celebrations.

“All of these sacraments which have taken place here for all of these years have marked this out already as a holy house of God,” Cardinal McElroy said.

Noting that non-religious, social events have also been held in the Serra Center over the years, he said, “God blesses all of these dimensions of a life of the parish community.”

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By Denis Grasska and
Leonardo Enrique Fonseca



INDIANAPOLIS
— “It was ‘Heaven
on Earth,’ a
taste of the ‘new Jerusalem,’
the ‘countless in number’
worshipping God together.”

That’s how Rose Musico, a member of The Immaculata Parish, described the 10th National Eucharistic Congress, drawing on imagery from the Book of Revelation. It was “an extraordinary, grace-filled experience.”

She was among the 60,000 people from across the United States who gathered in Indianapolis from July 17 to 21 for the Eucharistic Congress, the first national one in nearly a century. Some 70-plus Catholics from the Diocese of San Diego attended, including Auxiliary Bishops Ramón Bejarano, Michael Pham and Felipe Pulido; several clergy; and diocesan and lay leaders. (Illness forced Cardinal Robert W. McElroy to cancel his participation.)

The event, whose major events were held at Lucas Oil Stadium, was the most highly anticipated element of the National Eucharistic Revival, launched two years ago by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to foster greater love and appreciation for Jesus in the Eucharist.

The five-day Congress’ packed schedule included inspiring keynote speakers, breakout sessions, daily Masses, a perpetual Eucharistic adoration chapel, ongoing opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation, concerts, a children’s zone, and an expo hall showcasing many Catholic ministries and other exhibitors.

One of the most dramatic moments from the Congress was a Eucharistic procession through the streets of downtown Indianapolis on the event’s penultimate day.

“It was not only the energy of everyone gathered there and the inspiring keynote speakers, but the beauty of everyone gathered in one faith and purpose,” Bishop Bejarano said, reflecting on what made the Congress so special. “It was powerful to experience the complete, prayerful silence in a place filled with more than 50,000



IN ADORATION: Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens leads about 60,000 Catholics in adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament July 18 at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

people, during the moments of adoration to the Blessed Sacrament.”

The goal for the event was that participants would have a transformative encounter with Jesus that would empower them to share their love of the Eucharist with others.

Estrella Pangilinan, of Corpus Christi Parish in Bonita, attended with her husband, Deacon Alan Pangilinan. She compared the Congress to going on a “honeymoon” with the Lord.

“It was so beautiful and amazing,” she said. “My spirit rejoices and (is) full of gratitude, grace and love. Thanks be to God for bringing me and my husband

to this uplifting spiritual event.”

Diego Rosario, a young adult parishioner from Corpus Christi, said that the biggest highlight for him was the sense of unity that he experienced during the Congress.

For José Pérez, of Our Lady of Angels Parish, it was “a blessing” to attend “this great Congress.”

“I have experienced the presence of Our Lord through the Blessed Sacrament,” he said. “What I’m taking away, more than anything, is to continue to share God’s love in our parish, in our community and ... in all of our Church.”

“Let’s continue to ignite the Cath-

olic Church with the fire of the Holy Spirit!” Pérez urged.

Mychelle Fernandez traveled to Indianapolis from her hometown of San Diego with her husband and their six children.

She said, “It is super important that we are here at the National Eucharistic Congress because we have personally experienced that families and marriages are under attack.”

“I think we were meant to be here for our family to experience the healing power of the Eucharist and to see and hear about all the other Eucharis-

Congress Continued on Page 11



MEN IN BLACK: From left, Auxiliary Bishops Michael Pham, Ramón Bejarano and Felipe Pulido, and Fathers Efraim Bautista, Peter McGuine and Ricardo Juarez, were among the San Diego-area clergy who attended the Congress.



DOWNTOWN-BOUND: San Diego Catholics participated in a Eucharistic procession July 20 through the streets of downtown Indianapolis. Pictured, from left in front row, are Irma Ortiz, José Pérez and Father Ricardo Juarez; pictured, back right, is Julio Hernández.



LEONARDO ENRIQUE FONSECA

It was the second day of the five-day 10th National Eucharistic Congress.

Congress *Continued from Page 10*

tic miracles,” she said.

Angie Rosario, from Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Chula Vista, shared what she found most meaningful about the event.

“What most touched me and filled me with courage is the call to take Jesus with me, to share Him, and invite people to get closer to Him,” she said. “Through the Eucharist, we can be that salt, that love, that God is calling us to be.”

Carlos Ortiz, of St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Imperial, found it difficult to express his feelings about the Eu-

charistic Congress, but said that one word came to mind: “joy.”

His wife, Irma, said, “It was great to see so many youngsters and complete families. Beautiful!”

All three of San Diego’s auxiliary bishops noted the size of the massive crowds.

“The (Eucharistic Congress) was impressive with the amount of people showing up,” said Bishop Pham, who added that this included many young families with children, and many bishops, priests and consecrated religious.

“When you get 50,000 people praising Jesus, something is going to be transformed inside people’s minds



MARIA VALENCIA

PROCESSION: Members of the San Diego delegation are seen in the midst of the Eucharistic procession July 20 in downtown Indianapolis.

and hearts,” Bishop Pulido said. “I pray that the fruits of the Eucharistic Congress (will) be an abundant love for Christ and for His people.”

The National Eucharistic Congress commences the third and final year of the National Eucharistic Revival. At the conclusion of the Congress, participants were commissioned to return home and to evangelize their families, friends and neighbors about the Eucharist.

Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens, who has spearheaded the National Eucharistic Revival, announced that plans are underway for a Eucharistic pilgrimage from Indianapolis to Los Angeles that will take place in spring 2025 to keep the spirit of the Congress alive.

The Congress itself had been preceded by an eight-week Eucharistic pilgrimage whose four routes converged in Indianapolis for the opening Eucharistic procession into Lucas Oil Stadium.

“An event is just an event if it did not have any deep impact in our lives; it is transforming when we allow it to touch our mind and soul,” said Bishop Bejarano, stressing that the value of the Congress will be seen in what participants do with what they have received.

“We were asked to become Eucharistic missionaries,” the bishop said, “and everyone (in) the pews can be one.”

Several participants in the Congress seem ready to accept this challenge.

“The Lord, through His Body and

Blood, always invites us to be a part of this mystical body that is the Church,” said Julio Hernández, a member of Our Lady of Angels Parish. “The Lord is always calling us to evangelize ... to share His message of love to those close to us.”

Estrella Pangilinan said, “In leaving the (Congress), God is calling me to continue the Eucharistic pilgrimage to my family, to my parish community and to all people I meet, to share the foretaste of heaven here in this world.”

Carlos Ortiz plans to put together a summary of all of the insights that he gained from the Congress and “to share with others, as opportunities arise.” He expects to use some of that material in the catechism classes that he teaches.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, from the Philippines, presided over the closing Mass as Pope Francis’ special envoy.

“The presence of Jesus in the Eucharist is a gift and the fulfillment of His mission,” said the cardinal, who serves as pro-prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Evangelization.

“Those who choose to stay with Jesus will be sent by Jesus,” he said. “Let us go to proclaim Jesus zealously and joyfully for the life of the world.”

See photo gallery of the Mass at thesoutherncross.org/congressphotos.



LEONARDO ENRIQUE FONSECA

YOUNG CHURCH: Young adults were well-represented at the National Eucharistic Congress, including during praise-and-worship July 19 at Lucas Oil Stadium.



LEONARDO ENRIQUE FONSECA

ONE BODY: Participants in the National Eucharistic Congress come together for a morning Mass July 18 at Lucas Oil Stadium.

Parishioners Dancing to Better Health

The Southern Cross



Step into the parish hall at Christ the King Church in San Diego three days a week and you will see Hispanic women in red T-shirts exercising, dancing and, most of all, smiling, to upbeat music.

The women are taking part in a program called *Fe en Acción* (Faith in Action), a 13-year collaboration between San Diego State University researchers and the Catholic Diocese of San Diego. The goal is to improve the health and well-being of the women by offering free exercise classes in their churches in Spanish, led by trained fellow parishioners.

Currently, eight parishes across San Diego County offer the program, from Chula Vista to San Marcos, and five plan to start this summer. The researchers are inviting more parishes to participate.

At the heart of this effort is the understanding that faith and community are essential in shaping an individual's health and well-being.

Latinas, the pillars of their families and communities, face unique health challenges due to cultural norms, socio-economic factors, and widespread barriers.

The Faith in Action program takes a holistic approach, focusing on physical health, which can also help improve mental, emotional and spiritual well-being in a trusted environment, said Isela Martínez Sanroman. She is the program's project manager, part of the SDSU Institute of Community and Behavioral Health.

Prayer, Then Dancing

On a recent Wednesday morning at the parish, around 15 women arrived for the 10 a.m. class carrying their mats and water bottles. The women, aged thirties to seventies, greeted each other like old friends.

Their instructor, María Pedroza, started the hour-long class with a prayer as the women held hands.

"Lord, we're grateful for this day, and because You give us life, You give us health, You give us energy. You give us the drive to be here, Lord, to take advantage of this blessing You are giving us, so we can be well for You and for our family."

The participants began by stretching, then moved on to doing sets of exercises, moving their arms and legs to the rhythm of music.

The classes are designed to accommodate diverse fitness levels and preferences, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all participants, said Martínez Sanroman.

The instructors are known as *promotoras*, or community health workers, and are trained to lead cardio dance, strength training, and walking



FITNESS FRIENDS: Ruth López, left, and Guadalupe Herrera participated in an exercise class July 3 at Christ the King Parish in San Diego. They are participants in the Faith in Action program that brings fitness classes for Hispanic women to parishes.



GOING TO THE MAT: The class welcomes women who have varying fitness levels.

Seeking Partners

The program *Fe en Acción* is recruiting parishes and parishioners who may be interested in offering free health and exercise classes for Hispanic women at their parish.

More information is available by emailing ibach.faithinaction@sdsu.edu or calling (619) 594-3059. The program has a Facebook page: [SDSU Faith in Action/Fe en Acción](https://www.facebook.com/SDSU_Faith_in_Action/).

groups at their churches up to six times per week at a variety of times — including evenings and weekends — to accommodate busy schedules, she said.

Moreover, by integrating health education into the classes, participants gain knowledge about nutrition, preventive care and lifestyle habits, equipping them to make informed choices for themselves and their families, she added.

The *promotoras* are taught how faith and physical activity work hand-in-hand to improve a person's health.

"Our Catholic values can be applied to the care of our bodies, which are temples of God," said Pedroza, part of Emmanuel Ministry in San Ysidro, whose members can attend various parishes.

Father Tommie Jennings, pastor of Christ the King Parish, said he likes the program because it gets women involved in their health.

"In this neighborhood, we have a lot of people with heart attacks, cancer and diabetes," he said. "I invited this program with arms wide open."

Big Impact

Since 2011, Dr. Elva Arredondo, a researcher in the Department of Psychology at SDSU, and her team have been working on the *Fe en Acción* program, which has financial support from the National Institutes of Health.

The researchers follow the program participants, conducting surveys, taking measurements and doing interviews. Their findings from previous

Dance *Continued on Page 13*

Dance *Continued from Page 12*

iterations of the program show that, not only does the physical fitness of participants increase, but they experience a profound, positive transformation in their life, said Martínez Sanroman.

Because of this, the researchers hope that each parish can continue the program as a health ministry sustained by *promotoras*.

Listen to the women of the class at Christ the King and you can hear that transformation.

“These classes have had a big impact on me,” said Mireya Ochoa, a parishioner for more than 20 years. “I feel better. I suffer from high blood pressure, and it’s improved. I didn’t know how to move. Now, I can dance.”

Leonor Navarro said that her doctor advised her to walk more, drink more water and to exercise. She saw a notice in the church bulletin promoting the program and decided to join.

“My doctor tells me that my blood pressure has dropped a lot, as has my sugar level,” Navarro said. “I’m thankful to God and the people who sent us this blessing.”

Elisa Ramos signed up for the class and liked how comfortable she felt. So, she invited one sister to join, then two other sisters, then her mother. These days, all five are participating in the same class.

“I have more energy, I feel more awake, ready to do more things,” said Mónica Vazquez, one of the sisters. “I like being empowered to do more.”

Guadalupe Herrera, another sister,



INSTRUCTOR: *María Pedroza, center, says the participants credit her with changing their lives. She says she tells them, “Who shines here is Our Lord. I’m only His instrument.”*

said that she had tried other classes but they were too advanced for her. The one at the parish feels just right. Besides, she’s able to get to know other women, something virtually all participants mentioned as a benefit.

“We just moved to this area, and I did not have any friends,” said Margarita Gómez. “And now, I feel like part of the family.”

The classes develop a sense of community and solidarity among participants. Shared experiences of perseverance and progress create bonds that extend beyond the class, nurturing a social network that can help support individuals through life’s challenges, all within an environment that sustains their spiritual needs as well, said Martínez Sanroman.

María Pedroza, the *promotora*, said

that some participants tell her that they suffer from depression.

“They start to come to the class and begin to feel a change because we not only do exercises, we support each other.”

Yeni Bravo, another participant, encourages women to join the program if it’s available at their parish and recommends that pastors start one if they don’t have it.

“I feel rejuvenated, joyful, with more energy, with a strong will to live,” she said.

A woman can do anything she sets out to do, she said.

“It’s a question of saying, ‘I’m going to get up today, ready to fight for my health. In God’s name, let’s do it!’ God gave us a healthy body. We have to take care of it, so it can last a long time.”

Parishes with Programs

These parishes currently offer free physical activity classes:

- Christ the King (San Diego)
- Corpus Christi (Bonita)
- Holy Spirit (San Diego)
- Most Precious Blood (Chula Vista)
- Our Lady of Guadalupe (Chula Vista)
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (San Diego)
- St. Francis of Assisi (Vista)
- St. Mark (San Marcos)

These plan to open a program this summer:

- St. Anthony of Padua (National City)
- St. Charles (Imperial Beach)
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- St. Jude Shrine of the West (San Diego)
- St. John of the Cross (Lemon Grove)

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ACTIVISM: St. John of the Cross School students demonstrate resilience as they move to a temporary home after their campus was flooded in January. Father Joe's Villages seeks to empower the poor in San Diego. In December 2022, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish empowered the Barrio Logan community to seek environmental justice in the face of increased air pollution.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

By Father Emmet Farrell and Christina Slentz



In recent months, this feature has focused on the Seven Goals of "Laudato Si,"

highlighting the key areas to which our Catholic faith calls us to action amidst today's environmental crisis.

We have discussed how our response to the cry of the earth is interconnected to our response to the cry of the poor — those who are most immediately and intensely affected by environmental degradation. We have described ways to adopt sustainable lifestyles to "live more simply so that others may simply live," as Mother Teresa of Calcutta reportedly said.

We have reviewed the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI that our purchases amount to moral activity and should therefore be carefully discerned, providing powerful context for the goal of ecological economic development, and we have shared stories of ecological education events and opportunities for all ages in our diocese.



Learn about the 7 Goals of "Laudato Si"

Most recently, we have encouraged an embrace of ecological spirituality, a sense of deep gratitude for God's gift of creation from which care for our common home in loving response to this gift must flow.

This month, we tackle the seventh and final goal of "Laudato Si," to build community resilience and empowerment. The Vatican's "Laudato Si" Action Platform explains, "Community resilience and empowerment envisage a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action" to foster "rootedness and a sense of belonging in local communities and neighborhood ecosystems." What do these buzz words mean to us, as people of faith? This article first examines our Catholic understanding of what it means to be community, then delves into resilience and empowerment before concluding with suggested actions to support this "Laudato Si" objective.

Participation and Human Community

St. Pope John Paul II writes, "A community is not simply a society, and a society is not simply a community." This is an important distinction! A society, he explains, is a somewhat accidental grouping of a

multitude of people — a geographical happenstance. A community, on the other hand, is a group of people whose relationships and interactions are rooted in a mutual recognition of the fundamental uniqueness and dignity of each member. Thus, a society is enriched by the extent to which it reflects such "community."

Furthermore, having lived under the oppression of both Nazi and Soviet authoritarian regimes, St. John Paul II strongly emphasizes the importance of our active participation in communal life. He says that free and responsible participation toward the common good is the path by which we fully become who God created us to be. The result for societies, he proposes, is a dynamic that steers clear of both oppressive collectivism as well as extreme individualism — an authentic human community.

"The vocation of humanity is to show forth the image of God and to be transformed into the image of the Father's only Son. This vocation takes a personal form since each of us is called to enter into the divine beatitude; it also concerns the human community as a whole." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed., 1877)

Building Resilience and Empowerment

By Catholic design, the definition of the seventh goal of "Laudato Si" draws upon both community and participation. Foundational to empowerment is the recognition of the uniqueness and dignity of every person — the starting point for developing communal relationships that imbues societies with a true sense of community. Filled with a charitable attitude among neighbors, these communities are more likely to be places of peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

Resilience describes how well a society can recover and/or adapt to environmental or other adverse impacts, such as flooding, extreme heat, or any significant change that disrupts day-to-day life — a pandemic, for instance. Developing plans to ensure resilience is greatly enhanced by high community participation in identifying local strengths and weaknesses because multiple perspectives provide a better picture of the ground truth.

The greater the sense of community in a society, the more likely people are to participate in local decision-making efforts. Therefore, a more empow-

ered population will be better able to prepare for and withstand potential hardships and/or disasters. In this population, people understand their own God-given self-worth and see that in others.

Community Resilience and Empowerment

Actions to foster community empowerment and resilience can include writing letters to our local leaders to share our views on local environmental strengths and weaknesses, speaking at municipal and county events, especially giving voice to the poor and vulnerable struggling to adapt to adverse environmental impacts, or even participating in peaceful demonstration.

We also encourage all parishes, schools and households to enrich our society with our Catholic understanding of community, boldly recognizing the human dignity of each person and actively participating toward the common good.

As the "San Diego diocesan community," we can grow in our environmental resilience by identifying local vulnerabilities and planning "Laudato Si" action steps to reduce the effects of climate change and pollution on our brothers and sisters, often the least capable of adaptation.

We particularly encourage you to consider enrolling in the Vatican's "Laudato Si" Action Platform. To learn more about our pathway to "Laudato Si" Action, visit our creation care webpage at sdcatholic.org/care-for-creation-and-environmental-issues.



Next month, we invite you to be a part of this community, joining the diocesan celebration of the Season of Creation, from Sept. 1 through the Feast of St. Francis on Oct. 4. Our Season of Creation Mass will be celebrated on Sept. 14 at 5 p.m. at St. Gregory the Great Parish, followed by a small reception. All are welcome! See our website for more details and for information on other Season of Creation events.



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Invited to Dream Again



As we know, the global Church has been involved in a synod process that began in 2021. I admit that the word “synod” feels alien, so I like to think about the synod this way: It is the process of teaching us how to be a community by actually doing community.

Why do we need this?

It happens to all institutions. It begins with a small group of people with a dream, and if the dream catches on, it starts growing. From there, structures become more complicated, layers of authority multiply, rules are set up, limits are enforced, exclusion and inclusion are debated, and so on.

When we think of the unfathomable timescale of 2,000 years of Christianity, we can see how the growth and also painful divisions of the faith

Columnist

Cecilia González-Andrieu



spread like wildfire throughout the world. By the time we get to global Catholicism in the 21st century, we have more than a billion people spread across the entire planet and the dream that began it all is often hard to remember and even harder to live.

One of my favorite verses in Scripture is from the prophet Joel, when he exhorts his suffering community to remember who they are and to be filled with hope. He communicates God’s word to them saying, “I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions” (Joel 3:1). It is a truly beautiful image of how a community finds its sense of

self again and begins to build a future together.

What is even more astonishing is that even the first generation of Christians were trying to figure out how and who to be in the world, so Peter quotes this same verse from the prophet Joel to point them back to their religious tradition’s wisdom (Acts 2:17).

During the moment we call Pentecost, when it is becoming clear that the intimacy of a tight-knit community is fading as people from everywhere are now hearing the Spirit proclaimed in their own languages, Peter searches for a way to ground them in what it means to be a community.

What Joel and Peter are both saying is that the Spirit of God is expressing God’s dreams through awakening our own ability to dream and imagine a different world and, in this way, propelling us to a better day together. In this vision, the generations are learning from each other, and all of it

is happening because God is pouring God’s self out on “all flesh,” meaning on everything that lives.

“Doing” the synod is teaching us to dream again and to share those dreams with each other. It is forming us to be unafraid to communicate those dreams and to cultivate the generosity to listen to each other. The synod process has allowed us to speak of the pain of a broken community. It has made it possible for us to see how wounded many of us have been by structures of judgment. It has asked those who felt they had no voice to speak and, most importantly, it has shown us that the only way we can discern the path forward is together.

From Joel’s words spoken 400 years before Peter, to Peter’s spoken 2,000 years before us, the synod calls us together to remember to dream God’s dreams for the world.

Cecilia González-Andrieu is professor of Theology at Loyola Marymount University.

8:30am - 5:00pm

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How to Heal Deepest Pain

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This pain hurts deeply because we carry it inside of us — in our heart, in our mind — and it affects our health.

This pain in our soul tends to be hidden, caused by wounds that we don't want to show in the open because we would be embarrassed if others knew about them; they are our shadows.

The pain in our soul accumulates since the beginning of life, since the first feelings of acceptance, stress or rejection in the mother's womb. As we grow, we live in an environment that will mark us for life, leaving marks of acceptance, emotional security and well-being when affection, care and tenderness prevail. The effects are devastating when they exist in a family context of neglect, verbal or physical violence, and dissatisfaction.

Life, which is a mystery, can't be reduced to theories, metrics and formulas; and it always delivers surpris-

Columnist

Ricardo Márquez



es, lessons and possibilities. Along the way, we experience the loss of loved ones, rifts among siblings, divorce, accidents, economic loss, illness, natural catastrophes and wars ... traumatic events that leave permanent marks in our cerebral circuits. These memories can suddenly and repetitively assault our mind, altering our emotions to rage, anxiety and depression.

In nature, when an animal is wounded, he returns to his cave to recuperate and heal. It's the natural tendency in the face of a wound. The same thing happens to us; that's why we isolate ourselves, protect ourselves, not wanting to talk to anyone, or be seen. This natural defense mechanism works well initially, but it's not enough. Searching for help, sharing

with trusted people willing to listen to us and accompany us — this allows the soul to leave its hiding place, find the light and begin to heal.

The soul emerges when there is trust and acceptance; it hides when there is judgment and rejection. The process of healing leads to the discovery that, behind every wound, there is a frustrated need, a hidden treasure that can be recovered. The wounds in our lives are emotional openings, new spaces to deeply explore our being, to rediscover what we're really searching for, what is essential in our lives; to become aware of what we ignored or have refused to see ... and from that exploration and awakening can emerge a great light that renews and transforms us.

Where we believed we were lost, we are saved. When we hit rock-bottom in the abyss, the pain in our soul binds us to the multitudes, humanizes us and opens us up to compassion. It is in these moments of vulnerability that

the light emerges; a light of acceptance and humility that breeds fraternity. When wounded souls encounter each other, there are no hierarchies.

While I share this reflection, I recall the situations Jesus encountered while walking this earth, when lepers, the blind and those paralyzed drew near Him. I think about my "leprosy" that drives me away from others, my blindness that doesn't allow me to see, and my fear that paralyzes me. I connect to my profound wish for peace and healing and openly clamor: "Lord, I know that You can heal me if You want to." And I listen to the response from the interior of my conscience: "Do you want to heal?" And by responding with the power of faith — "Yes, I want to" — I listen to the voice that connects me to profound hope: "May it be as you wish."

Ricardo Márquez can be reached at marquez_muskus@yahoo.com.

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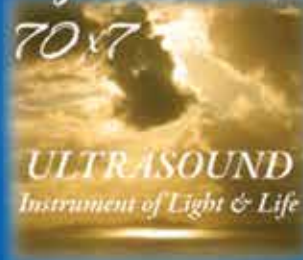


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News Briefs



Sister Marina Hernandez, RSCJ



Ann Marie Krejcarek

USD's Board Welcomes Two New Trustees

Sister Marina Hernandez, RSCJ, and Ann Marie Krejcarek, joined the University of San Diego's Board of Trustees, effective July 1.

"As the university celebrates its 75th anniversary, we are excited to welcome two exceptional individuals to the Board whose dedication and experience will help us achieve our goal of confronting humanity's challenges by fostering peace, working for justice and leading with love," USD President James T. Harris III, DEd., said.

Krejcarek has served as the president of Convent & Stuart Hall since 2012. She is a member of the Conference of Sacred Education and of the Society of the Sacred Heart finance committee.

Sister Hernandez is a member of the Society of the Sacred Heart United States-Canada Province. She is also a member of the provincial team that works with the provincial to live their mission of showing forth God's love in a changing world.

Miles Christi Preaching Silent Retreats

OCEANSIDE — The priests and brothers of Miles Christi are leading silent Ignatian retreats.

These retreats are a unique experience offering spiritual talks, time for private meditation, the holy rosary, daily Mass, adoration and Benediction, and opportunities for confession and spiritual direction.

The next retreats for women will be held from Aug. 16 to 18 and from Nov. 15 to 17 at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside. The next men's retreats will be from Nov. 1 to 3 and from Dec. 13 to 15, also at the abbey.

For more information and to register, call (858) 768-0872, email california@spiritualexercises.net or visit MilesChristi.org/spiritualexercises.

Ignatian Spirituality Project Offering Overnight Retreats

OCEANSIDE — Ignatian Spirituality Project (ISP) San Diego is offering an overnight retreat from Aug. 17 to 18 at Mission San Luis Rey.

The event will welcome men and women experiencing homelessness and recovery from addiction to encounter God's love, and hope and healing through spiritual companionship. The retreat combines quiet reflection time, small-group sharing and other communal activities.

Sixteen women and 16 men will be hosted separately. ISP retreats include four volunteer facilitators, at least one of whom is a project alum also in recovery. The volunteers work closely with partner shelters and transitional housing organizations to refer appropriate candidates to the retreat. Transportation is provided and all costs, including room and meals, are covered by the ISP program.

For more information, visit isp retreats.org.

Deep-Pit BBQ Returning to Descanso Parish

DESCANSO — Our Lady of Light Parish will hold its 87th annual deep-pit BBQ on Sunday, Sept. 1.

The event, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., promises "great food, music and community vibes." BBQ food, peach cobbler dessert, and beverages will be available for cash-only purchase. There will be a beer garden, craft booth, live country music featuring The Horseshoe Lucky Band, a kids zone, live auction items, and raffle drawings.

Our Lady of Light Parish is located at 9136 Riverside Drive, Descanso 91916. This is the small parish's only major fundraiser each year. Proceeds will support its youth programs, religious education, summer camps, student scholarships and parish operating costs.

Fundraiser Dinner to Benefit Mother Antonia's Sisters

SOLANA BEACH — The Eudist Servants of the Eleventh Hour, founded by the late Mother Antonia (Antonia Brenner), will hold its annual fundraiser on Saturday, Sept. 7.

The event begins at 5:30 p.m. and will be at St. James Parish Hall in Solana Beach. It will include a Mexican buffet dinner, a gift card pull, a live auction of vacation items, and more.

Early-bird tickets, available through Aug. 17, are \$55 per person or \$550 per table of 10. After Aug. 17, tickets will be \$65 per person or \$650 per table.

St. James Parish Hall is located at 625 S. Nardo Ave., Solana Beach 92075. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit eudistservants.org.

Christian Initiation Classes Offered in Chinese

The OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) process, formerly known as RCIA, is offered locally in the Chinese language.

Presented by San Diego's Chinese Catholic Community, classes will be held every Sunday from Sept. 8 through April 20 at St. Therese of Carmel Parish in Carmel Valley. Each class will run from 3 to 4:30 p.m.

St. Therese of Carmel Parish is located at 4355 Del Mar Trails Road, San Diego 92130.

For more information, visit sandiegochinesecatholic.org or call (858) 442-3532, (858) 666-5064 or (619) 997-6911.

Diocesan Young Adult Retreat to Be Held Sept. 13-15

JULIAN — The annual Diocesan Young Adult Retreat will be held Sept. 13 to 15 at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center in the mountains of Julian.

The event is open to young adults ages 18 to 39.

This year's theme will be "Hope Arises" (Romans 15:13). The schedule includes Masses, large-group prayer, keynote speakers, breakout sessions, small-group discussions, time for quiet reflection, and more.

The keynote speakers include Bryna Hanan, a Catholic trauma therapist and author of "Befriending Your Inner Child: A Catholic Approach to Healing and Wholeness," and Father John Francis, CSJ, a priest with the Brothers of St. John, who serves as chaplain at Seton Hall University and as lead chaplain of Eagle Eye Ministries.

Registration will open in early August. The cost to attend will range from \$190 (early-bird rate) to \$195.

For more information, visit sdcatholic.org/youngadult.

Creation Care Celebrated with Mass, Awards

The annual "Season of Creation" Mass and "Laudato Si" Awards reception, which recognize the responsibility to care for creation, will be held on Saturday, Sept. 14, at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch.

This year's theme, drawn from Romans 8:19-25, is "To Hope and Act with Creation."

The Mass will be celebrated by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy. The free reception that follows will acknowledge parishes, schools and standout individuals who have taken "Laudato Si" Action Plans for the coming year also will be blessed.

Attendees are asked to bring gently used clothing and hygiene products that will be donated to Sharia's Closet to help local families experiencing financial crisis.

Register for the event at bit.ly/SOC24MassRegistration. For more information, contact Christina Slentz at cslentz@sdcatholic.org.

Homeschool Community Opening Third Campus

Holy Hearts Academy is opening a third campus for a Classical Catholic homeschool community and is seeking passionate and committed families to join it.

Families will meet for a weekly class day at Our Mother of Confidence Parish in the University City/UTC area.

For more information, visit holyheartacademy.com or email utchoolyhearts@gmail.com.

Magnificat Forming East County Chapter

Magnificat, a ministry for Catholic women, is looking to form a new chapter in East County.

The group exists to evangelize and encourage Catholic women to grow in holiness through the power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The organization's essential function is the Magnificat Meal, which provides an opportunity for fellowship, praise, personal testimony and intercessory prayer.

Women interested in helping to establish the East County chapter are encouraged to email eastsandiegomagnificat@gmail.com.

For more information about Magnificat, visit magnificat-ministry.net.

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Obituary

Msgr. Raymond Kirk

Msgr. Raymond Kirk, a retired priest who ministered for many years in the Diocese of San Diego, died July 1 in Wildomar, in Riverside County. He was 90.

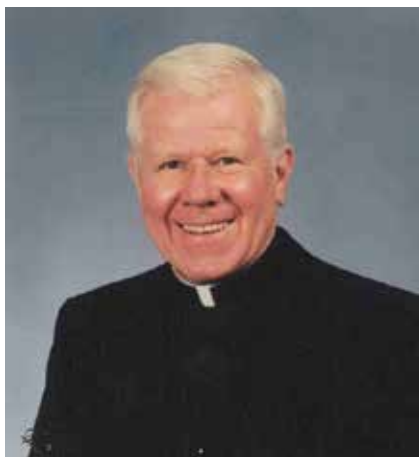
Born in Chicago, Msgr. Kirk was ordained to the priesthood for the Diocese of San Diego on March 19, 1959, at St. Joseph's Cathedral.

Ordained at a time when the Diocese of San Diego also included San Bernardino and Riverside counties, he served as pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Riverside, St. Joseph Parish in Barstow, St. Francis de Sales Parish in Riverside, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish in San Diego, and St. John of the Cross Parish in Lemon Grove.

From 1962 to 1963, Msgr. Kirk served on the faculty of Marian Catholic High School, whose legacy continues today at Mater Dei Catholic High School.

Made a monsignor in 1985, he also served as director of the Diocese of San Diego's Office for the Missions, from 1997 until his retirement.

In 2003, Msgr. Kirk was diagnosed with macular degeneration, which made him legally blind. He retired and relocated to Sun City. With the



assistance of guide dogs, he continued to exercise his priestly ministry.

Msgr. Kirk's second guide dog, Buster, attended his funeral Mass in a harness.

As late as June 23 of this year, eight days before his death, he celebrated Sunday Mass at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish in Sun City.

"Father Ray took all of this in stride, and I think he probably realized that this was God's will for him to minister this way," Patricia Erzinger, past president of Casa de los Pobres USA, said of his vision problems.

She recalled Msgr. Kirk as a generous contributor to her nonprofit, which was founded to support the work of the Tijuana-based Casa de los Pobres, an urban relief center that provides food, clothing and other essentials to the local poor.

"He had a beautiful smile. He welcomed everyone. When you first met him, it was sort of like you've known him all your life," she said.

"Everybody will (miss him) ... because he was just such a wonderful, wonderful man," she said.

Msgr. Donald Webber, a retired priest of the Diocese of San Bernardino, was a longtime friend of Msgr. Kirk's. The two men lived together for the past 21 years in their retirement.

"We've been friends through all the years, back to the seminary days," said Msgr. Webber.

The priesthood was "the heart of who he was," he continued. "He loved being a priest, pastor, confessor, missionary, or to raise his voice for justice for the poor — not just financially poor, but poor in human resources," he said. "He enjoyed his many priest-friends, whether it was playing handball with late (Auxiliary) Bishop (Gilbert) Chavez once a week or concelebrating a Mass."

A viewing was held July 13 at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish, followed by the first of two funeral Masses. The second funeral Mass, which preceded an interment at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery and Mausoleum, was celebrated July 15 at St. John of the Cross Parish in Lemon Grove; Cardinal Robert W. McElroy was the principal celebrant.

Newspaper Wins National, Local Awards

The 2024 National Catholic Media Awards were presented on June 21 at the Catholic Media Conference, in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Southern Cross won first place in the "Best Photograph-Portrait" category for freelancer Andy Hayt's photo of San Diego State University basketball player Aguek Arop.

Hayt also shared with Assistant Editor Denis Grasska an honorable mention in the "Best Story and Photo Package—By two individuals or more" category. The award was for coverage of the reinterment of Franciscan Father Jeremiah Joseph O'Keefe at Mission San Luis Rey de Francia.

Father Chris Bongato also received an honorable mention in the "Best Story and Photo Package—By an individual" category for "Gospel Lights the Journey," his first-person account of the pilgrimage that he and fellow seminarians took to the Holy Land.

The Society of Professional Journalists (San Diego Pro Chapter) also honored the newspaper in its annual awards.

Grasska received a second place in the "Reporting and Writing—Profile" category for his profile of basketball star Arop and a third place in the "Arts/Entertainment Story (Visual Arts)" category for an article about children's book author Haley Stewart and her "Sister Seraphina Mysteries" series.

Mary Elizabeth Accardi, LMFT
MARRIAGE, FAMILY & CHILD COUNSELOR
 MFT LIC. #20751



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The Vega Family.

Dear Friends and Family of Catholic Charities:

I hope this message finds you well. Today, I want to share a heartfelt story that underscores the critical importance of the Emergency Food Distribution Network (EFDN+) Program and why your support is so essential.

The EFDN+ Program was established in March 2020 to address the food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since its inception, we have distributed **3,307,419** pounds of food, equating to **2,756,185** meals, and assisted **255,677** unique individuals. The EFDN+ Program is now a cornerstone of our organization as we have seen the continuous rise of the need for food in both San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Currently, the EFDN+ Program has 14 distribution sites and 9 pantries throughout San Diego and Imperial County, where families and individuals can pick up food packages.

Distribution sites are located in Barrio Logan, Normal Heights, Lemon Grove, Downtown San Diego, Escondido, Chula Vista, Imperial Beach, Bonita, Solana Beach, Lakeside, Pacific Beach, El Cajon, and El Centro.

In 2023, it was reported that 78% of Americans were living paycheck to paycheck, marking a 6% increase from 2022. The U.S. Department of Agriculture found that nearly 7 million households were so financially squeezed that they sometimes had to skip meals because there wasn't enough food to go around. In some households with children, kids also experience the pangs of hunger – skipping meals or going the whole day without eating. With the median home price in San Diego now \$1,000,000, our fellow neighbors are feeling the financial strain of keeping up with the cost of living in paradise.

Consider the story of the Vega family from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. The father, the sole breadwinner, shared the struggles his family faces as a one-income household trying to stretch every dollar to provide for their family of five.

The Vega's have been utilizing the EFDN+ Program for about six months. They usually receive rice, canned foods, bread, fruits, and vegetables. Occasionally, there are lunch bags and backpacks for the kids, which they sincerely appreciate. The father mentioned how the EFDN+ Program feels like a blessing every single day, easing the pressure that is weighing heavily on his shoulders and putting a smile on his face when his wife heads to the pantry.

Our team is working to onboard two more locations before the holidays and increase the amount of food we are able to distribute to each person who comes to us for food.

To continue helping those in need, we are asking for your support. A small contribution of \$28 can purchase a 20-pound box of nutritious food to feed up to three individuals per family. This ask is to help Catholic Charities go above and beyond for families in San Diego and Imperial County. Your generosity can make a real difference. Please join us in supporting the EFDN+ Program and help ensure no family goes hungry.

With profound gratitude,

Appaswamy "Vino" Pajanor
Chief Executive Officer



EFDN+ volunteers from various distribution sites.



Food Pantry at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.



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