

THE SOUTHERN CROSS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO



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Page 12

JOHN CASTALDO

SEALED WITH A KISS: A total of 16 couples celebrated their wedding in the Catholic Church in a joyous Mass at St. Mary Parish in Escondido on Aug. 17.



World Day of Migrants

Local efforts to help migrants and refugees as Catholic Church highlights their struggles. **Page 2**



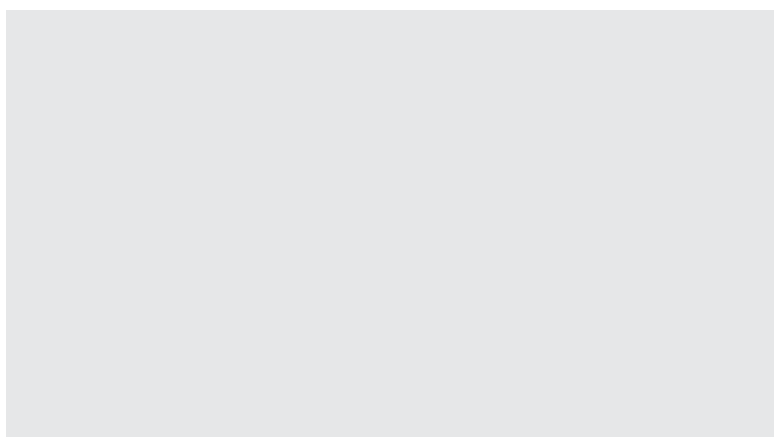
Leadership

Schools welcome new principals for new school year. **Pages 8-9**



On Mission

About 600 gather for diocesan Hispanic conference "Profetas en Misión." **Pages 10-11**



Catechetical Sunday
Domingo Catequético
Sept. 15, 2024
SUPPLEMENT INSIDE

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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.



Eucharist 'Nourishes Our Hope'

By Cindy Wooden



VATICAN CITY — When receiving the Eucharist, Catholics should respond with gratitude and awe that Jesus offers Himself as nourishment and salvation, Pope Francis said.

Jesus "becomes true food and true drink," the pope said. "Thank you, Lord Jesus! Let's say, 'Thank you, thank you' with all our heart," he told visitors and pilgrims who joined him in St. Peter's Square Aug. 18 for the mid-day recitation of the Angelus prayer.

In the day's Gospel reading from St. John, Jesus tells the crowd that He is "the living bread that came down from Heaven" and that whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood will have eternal life.

Some were surprised by Jesus' words, and not in a good way, the pope said. But for Catholics, "the bread from heaven is a gift that exceeds all expectations."

"The heavenly bread, which comes from the Father, is the Son Himself made flesh for us," he said. More than the bread that human beings need to survive, the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist "satisfies the hunger for hope, the hunger for truth and the hunger for salvation that we all feel not in our stomachs, but in our hearts."

"Every one of us needs the Eucharist," Pope Francis said.

"He saves us, nourishing our lives with His own, and He will do this for-



TENDER TOUCH: A child kisses Pope Francis at the conclusion of his weekly general audience in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican on Aug. 21, 2024.

ever," the pope said. "And it is thanks to Him that we can live in communion with God and with each other."

The Eucharist, he said, is not "something magical, no. It is not something that will immediately solve all problems, but it is the very body of Christ that gives hope to the poor and overcomes the arrogance of those who gorge themselves at their expense."

Pope Francis asked Catholics to ponder two questions: "Do I hunger and thirst for salvation, not just for myself, but for all my brothers and sisters? When I receive the Eucharist, which is the miracle of mercy, do I stand in awe before the body of the Lord, who died and rose again for us?"

Catholic News Service

Fr. Joe's to Open Detox Facility

The Southern Cross



Father Joe's Villages will open its first fully dedicated detox facility.

"Ending homelessness and saving lives demands we adapt and provide new solutions for the ever-changing environment our neighbors in need face," Deacon Jim Vargas, president and CEO of Father Joe's Villages, a Catholic organization, said at a July 31 press conference.

"To meet the moment," he said, "we will build the region's largest detox and sober shelter facility for people struggling with substance use."

The facility, which is expected to open next year, will contain 45 beds that turn over every 14 days, providing a 90-bed complement every month.

There are only 78 Medi-Cal eligible detox beds in all of San Diego County, making the additional 45 beds at Father Joe's a significant increase of what exists currently throughout the region.

Underscoring the pressing need for such a facility, statistics show that more than 1,772 people have died of fentanyl-related deaths in San Diego County since 2019.



EXPANSION: Deacon Jim Vargas, president and CEO of Father Joe's Villages, announced on July 31 that the organization would open a detox facility, along with San Diego city officials.

The new center will be located at the organization's main facility at 1501 Imperial Ave. It was made possible by the Land Development Code (LDC) update approved by the City Council in early July. Each year, the city adopts changes to the way that it governs land-use and permitting.

Councilmember Raul Campillo, who represents the 7th District and was among the speakers at Father Joe's Villages' press conference, pushed for code changes to lower barriers and eliminate red tape for building behavioral health facilities.

Father Joe's Villages' new facility is the first of its kind to be announced since the passage of the code update.

"We are grateful for Father Joe's Villages, which is stepping in to provide both behavioral health services and housing for individuals experiencing homelessness," said Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, who represents the 3rd District, in which the new facility is located. "Their new program is designed to better serve those with behavioral health challenges, helping them overcome their current situation."

Shelters Assisted Nearly 100,000 Migrants

By Aida Bustos



The Catholic Church has been celebrating the World Day of Migrants and Refugees since 1914.

It is an occasion to express concern for different vulnerable people on the move; to pray for them as they face many challenges; and to increase awareness about the opportunities that migration offers.

Every year, the day is celebrated on the last Sunday of September; in 2024, it will be celebrated on the 29th. As the title for his annual message, the Holy Father has chosen “God walks with His people.”

Locally, the Church continued to encounter and assist migrants and refugees through Catholic Charities. The organization operates programs that assist immigrants and refugees and operates two Migrant Respite Shelters in San Diego and Imperial counties.

The shelters welcomed 98,183 asylum-seekers from June 2023 to June 2024. Nearly a third of them were families, according to the organization.

The shelters have served a total of 362,233, of which 95,922 were children, since they opened their doors in May of 2021 to July 30 of this year.

The migrants’ top countries of origin were Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, Cuba and China. In all, they came from 143 countries, about 70% of the world’s nationalities.

These migrants were released by the Border Patrol. They are legally in the country while awaiting a court date on their petition for asylum.

“We, as His followers, are called by Him to welcome the stranger, and



HELPING HAND: Catholic Charities assisted nearly 100,000 immigrants in the last year at its two respite centers in the region. They are legally in the country and are requesting asylum.

when we do this, He would definitely say, ‘Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for Me,’” said the organization’s chief executive officer, Appaswamy “Vino” Pajanor, citing Scripture (Matt 25:40).

The organization’s staff and volunteers at the shelters welcome the migrants, provide a health screening, and meet their basic needs, treating them with dignity, regardless of their faith tradition and culture. They connect them with loved ones elsewhere in the United States and coordinate their travel by bus or airplane, usually within a day or two of arrival. The most common destinations are elsewhere in California, New York, New Jersey and Florida.

The organization also operates a program that serves refugees legally

Volunteers Needed

Catholic Charities needs volunteers to serve in its migrant shelter program to help asylum-seekers in a variety of ways, from assembling snack bags, to organizing clothing and other donated items, to helping migrants at the bus terminal or airport. Volunteer opportunities are available seven days a week, from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information and to register to volunteer, please visit bit.ly/3yKzdtg.

authorized to resettle in the country. Its staff resettled 417 refugees in the period of Oct. 1, 2023, to July 31, 2024.

In that period, the agency also assisted 2,001 refugees and asylum-seekers through the San Diego New-

comers Project, providing training in English, employment services, and cultural orientation, among other services. They came from such countries as Afghanistan, Iraq, Cuba, Haiti and Ukraine.

Pope Francis: ‘God Walks with His People’

By Carol Glatz



VATICAN CITY — Every encounter with people on the move as migrants or refugees is an encounter with Christ, Pope Francis said.

“It is an occasion charged with salvation because Jesus is present in the sister or brother in need of our help. In this sense, the poor save us, because they enable us to encounter the face of the Lord,” the pope wrote in his message for the celebration Sept. 29 of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

“Do not let us become possessive” of the land God has offered as “a temporary home. Help us to keep walking, together with our migrant brothers and sisters” toward Heaven, the pope wrote in a prayer for the world day.

Pope Francis’ message and prayer, which focused on the theme, “God



WELCOMED: A sculpture by Canadian Timothy Schmalz in St. Peter’s Square depicts a boat with 140 figures of migrants from various historical periods and various nations.

walks with His people,” were released at the Vatican June 3.

By emphasizing its synodal nature, the Catholic Church can rediscover its “itinerant nature, as the People of God journeying through history on

pilgrimage, ‘migrating,’ we could say, toward the Kingdom of Heaven,” the pope wrote.

The biblical narrative of Exodus, with the Israelites’ long journey from slavery to freedom, shares a number

of similarities with the stories of migrants today, he wrote.

“Migrants often flee from oppression, abuse, insecurity, discrimination and lack of opportunities for development. Similar to the Jews in the desert, migrants encounter many obstacles in their path: They are tried by thirst and hunger; they are exhausted by toil and disease; they are tempted by despair,” he wrote.

Yet, with every exodus, the pope said, “God precedes and accompanies His people and all His children in every time and place.”


“Thanks to Him,” he said, “there are good Samaritans along the way.”

God also “identifies Himself with men and women on their journey through history, particularly with the least, the poor and the marginalized,” he wrote. “For this reason, the encounter with the migrant, as with every brother and sister in need, is also an encounter with Christ.”

Catholic News Service

Retreat-goers Seeking 'All Joy and Peace'

By Denis Grasska

 Bella Carvajal has attended the Diocesan Young Adult Retreat three times.

When she joins around 150 fellow young adults for this year's installment, which will be held Sept. 13 to 15 at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center, that will make four.

What has kept her coming back?

"This event is so special because it is really the one time a year we get to escape our lives and just be still," said Carvajal, 21, a member of St. Pius X Parish in Chula Vista. "For a moment, our worries pause; we are allowed to take a break, be renewed ... so that we can resume our work with more of the Lord's heart for those we cater to."

The retreat, open to Catholics ages 18 to 39 from across the diocese, is sponsored by the diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

The office's director, Maricruz Flores-Strauss, said that the popular event is "a moment of renewal" for many young adults. She wants participants "to leave your ... burdens at home" and "be in tune with the peace that God is ready to give us."

She said a record 163 young adults participated last year. This year's event is expected to sell out before the Sept. 1 registration deadline.

The theme is "Hope Rising," inspired by a verse from one of St. Paul's epistles: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15:13).

"The theme ... speaks to something that we need as a society," said Brilema Perez, an associate director of the Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry. "We need to have hope in God, to remember that He is in charge of everything and that He wants us to have peace ... and trust Him."

Check-in will be at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, with participants departing by 12:30 p.m. on Sunday. In between, there will be inspiring talks, breakout sessions, small-group discussions, personal reflection time, fun group activities, Eucharistic adoration and opportunities for confession.

The keynote speakers will be Brya Hanan, a licensed marriage and family therapist and life coach, and Father John Francis, a member of the Community of St. John who serves in youth and young adult ministry as chaplain of Eagle Eye Ministries and Seton Hall University.

During her talk, Hanan will help participants to understand how different nervous system states can lock them into survival mode and disconnect them from experiencing hope.

"My prayer is that retreatants, through the grace of God, experience deeper healing and learn how to regulate their bodies well, so they can move away from survival and rest in God," said Hanan, who is the author



PEACE: Young adults enjoy a moment of fellowship at last year's Diocesan Young Adult Retreat. This year's installment will take place from Sept. 13 to 15, once again at Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center.

of "Befriending Your Inner Child: A Catholic Approach to Healing and Wholeness."

Perez said that Father Francis' talk will be "on the spiritual side of hope," complementing Hanan's exploration of the topic from the perspective of psychology and neuroscience.

Carvajal admitted that she hadn't known what to expect when she attended the retreat for the first time in 2021.

What she encountered was a "lively, welcoming, and generally pretty diverse" group.

"We are all here because we love Jesus," Carvajal said of the participants. "It's amazing! Conversations in small group — and everywhere, really — are just so intentional."

Alex Agpaoa, a 27-year-old member of St. Therese of Carmel Parish, is another returning participant. This will be the third consecutive year that he has attended the event.

What drew him the first time was the prospect of making friends with other practicing Catholics.

"The retreat was exactly what I needed," he said. "I ended up meeting some of my closest friends there and also got introduced to the overall young adult community in San Diego to which I'm very involved in to this day."

Agpaoa said the retreat is "one of the best places to be introduced to this community."

For more information or to register, visit sdcatholic.org/youngadult.



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Faith Focuses on Suicide Prevention, Loss



Why him? Why her? What did I do wrong? What's going to happen with his soul? How am I going to tell others? What could I have done to prevent this?

Family members and friends of individuals who have lost their lives to suicide ask these and other questions — and feel guilt, sadness and shame.

For those of you coping with this reality, looking for these answers, please remember that you're not alone.

I'm associate director for Culture of Life in the Diocese of San Diego. Six years ago, at the request of then Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan, I organized a Mass for family members and friends who had lost a loved one to suicide.

This year, Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido will celebrate this Mass, which will be held on Sept. 28 at 5 p.m. at St. John of the Cross Church in Lemon Grove. As at previous Masses, individuals are invited to send the name of a loved one who died by suicide so they may be remembered at this liturgy. You may submit the name using this link: rb.gy/eqpu0.

Often, those who die by suicide do so as a result of mental illness, falsely believing there is no other alternative but to take their life. They suffer from depression, substance abuse disorders, and anxiety, among other illnesses.

Once, a young woman who suffered from anxiety since childhood told me that she had recurring thoughts of suicide. During her anxiety attacks,

Associate Director,
Life, Peace and
Justice

**María
Valencia**



nothing would calm her down, she told me. She wished to stop living to escape the anxiety. Fortunately, with medication, professional help, and family support, this young lady is overcoming her illness.

For individuals like this woman, please remember that you're not alone.

Bishop Dolan had received his community's support when he lost three family members to suicide. He wanted individuals enduring a similar experience to be able to go to a Mass where they could support each other mutually. He wanted them to know that they were not alone, that the Church was there to accompany them. Most of all, he wanted to raise awareness that suicide can be prevented.

This is the most difficult Mass I have to organize because of the conflicting emotions I feel. My heart breaks when I hear the painful stories from parents, brothers and sisters, and friends who have lost a loved one to suicide. My body aches when I see them depositing a white rose at the altar to remember their departed loved one. It's devastating to observe that some people, like Bishop Dolan, deposit more than one rose.

At the same time, I feel satisfaction when I see how their sadness is transformed to hope and gratitude as they thank us from the heart for having the



REMEMBRANCE: Then Auxiliary Bishop John Dolan placed roses near the altar at a Mass for survivors of suicide loss on Sept. 4, 2021, at Our Mother of Confidence Church.

opportunity to gather year after year for a Mass where they feel understood and supported by the Church.

A total of 360 people killed themselves in San Diego County in 2022, the latest figures available, with death rates increasing 7% for youth and young adults between the ages of 10 to 24.

September is a month dedicated to the prevention of suicide. Please join us in this effort to raise awareness that suicide can be prevented and to spread our faith's message that, "You're not alone!"

The experts recommend five steps to help prevent suicide: reduce the stigma of mental illness, inform yourself about suicide, recognize the symptoms of someone contemplating it, find out what resources are available, and ask for immediate help.

Our diocese encourages parishes to establish a mental health ministry in English and Spanish, and supports those that have them.

We also have organized a variety of resources that are available for those coping with mental illness and their loved ones. You can view these resources at sdcatholic.org/mental-health-ministry.

We work with the organization Survivors of Suicide Loss San Diego. You may reach their support line at (619) 482-0297.

And if you or a loved one are having thoughts of suicide, you can text 741-741 and connect with a trained volunteer crisis counselor 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

María Valencia can be reached at (858) 490-8323 and mvalencia@sdcatholic.org.



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22 Students Get \$31,900 in Scholarships

The Southern Cross



POWAY — A local Knights of Columbus council has awarded \$31,900 in scholarships to 22 local students.

Bishop Buddy Council 6031, which is based at St. Gabriel Parish in Poway, has been providing scholarships for more than two decades. The council has more than 185 members and is among the largest of the 76 councils in the Knights of Columbus San Diego Chapter. The council evaluates the scholarship applicants based on academics, Church service, community service and financial need.

“The Bishop Buddy Council’s scholarship program is our council’s largest program,” said Scholarship Committee Chairman Steve Cobb, who has run it for more than 15 years. “It confirms our commitment to youth, education and advancing Catholicism.”

“Many winners are first-generation college students,” he added, “and some are also leveraging the scholarship for a trade school.”

This year’s scholarships were presented at the 10:30 a.m. Mass on June 30, with more than 40 Knights of Columbus in attendance. This was the largest amount of money that the council has awarded in scholarships in a single year.



WINNERS: Scholarship winners pose for a group photo after a June 30 Mass at St. Gabriel Parish in Poway. The parish’s Knights of Columbus Bishop Buddy Council 6031 awarded \$31,900 through its scholarship program this year — a council record.

Cobb said that the bulk of the funding for the program comes from direct donations from parishioners and their families.

Among this year’s winners were 13 high school seniors and nine current college students, who are studying Child Development, Business, Nursing, Computer Science, Biology, Civil and Electrical Engineering, Radiology and Statistics.

The top award, the Deacon Bob Troy Memorial Scholarship, is pre-

sented to the best applicant each year. Its namesake was a permanent deacon at St. Gabriel Parish and a member of the Knights of Columbus.

“I extend my deepest gratitude to the Knights,” said Mary Jane Widjaja, winner of this year’s Deacon Bob Troy Memorial Scholarship. “Your generosity ... is having an immense impact on my education.”

Widjaja, who received \$3,000 to apply toward her education at San Diego State University, has demonstrated

commitment to her academic studies and has been active at St. Gabriel Parish as an altar server, an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, and a member of the parish youth group’s student leadership team. She is an artist, speaks two languages and is learning three more.

The second highest award, the Jim-Tom Cavanaugh Memorial Scholarship, is named after a longtime St. Gabriel’s parishioner in recognition of his dedication to the Knights, the parish and the Catholic faith. Candidates for this scholarship must demonstrate strong faith and be majoring in Broadcasting, Communications or Business.

“I really appreciate this award, because it is from the Knights at my church and reinforces my desire to strengthen my faith while pursuing an education,” said Kiara Bowser, who received \$2,500.

Bowser was an active participant in religious education and an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. At the University of San Diego, she is active in the Torero Ambassadors, through which she leads tours for campus visitors, and in University Ministry. She regularly attends USD’s weekly Mass for Peace, held every Wednesday night when classes are in session.

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PICTURE PERFECT: Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic School in San Ysidro greeted students, including fifth-grader Yoliana Barron, on the first day of the new year on Aug. 14.

Schools Have Colorful Start

The Southern Cross



SAN YSIDRO — Schools began welcoming back their students in mid-August amid colorful first-day-of-school traditions.

Students anxiously waited to meet their new teachers, while parents scrambled to make sure their kids had all they needed for the new academic year.

Among the first schools to go back were those at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School in San Ysidro. Students there, as well as at Mater Dei Elementary in Chula Vista and St. Charles Borromeo School in Point Loma, gathered for their first day of classes on Aug. 14.

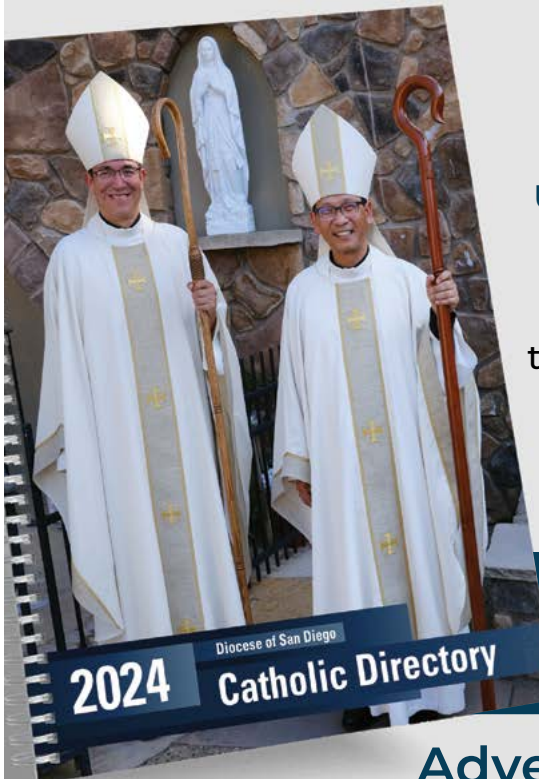
Most of the 41 elementary schools in the diocese started the new academic year between Aug. 19 and 21. The Catholic high schools went back even earlier, between Aug. 12 and Aug. 19.

The last to go back will be Our Lady's School, where the start date was pushed back to allow time for the completion of campus renovations. The first day of classes there will be Sept. 4.

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Local Schools Welcome New Principals

By Denis Grasska



New principals have taken the reins at local Catholic schools.

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

A search is underway for a new principal for Our Lady's School. The school's president, Judy Ziment, has stepped in as interim principal.

The following are profiles of this year's new principals.

James Brandt

Stella Maris Academy



"When I discovered the open position of principal at Stella Maris Academy last January, I believed this was an answered prayer from God," said

James Brandt, whose association with the school goes back 50 years.

He's a member of the graduating class of 1982.

Brandt attended the University of Notre Dame on an NROTC scholarship, graduating in 1990 with a bachelor's in Economics with a concentration in Math. He went on to serve in the U.S. Navy for 14 years on active duty and 10 years as an active reservist.

For much of his life, he didn't consider himself to be a good candidate for a career in education.

"I believed mistakenly that, to be a teacher, you had to know everything," said Brandt, who credits a stint as a math instructor at the U.S. Naval Academy, during his last two years on active duty, with giving him the teaching bug.

Discerning a call to the priesthood, he spent three years in the seminary for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., before returning to San Diego.

Brandt taught at St. Joseph Academy in San Marcos, from 2008 to 2015, and subsequently served as a teacher and principal at two Northern California schools: St. John the Baptist Catholic School in Healdsburg, and St. Pius X School in Redwood City.

He earned a master's in Operations Analysis in 1998 from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, and a Master of Education in 2019 from Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia.

"I am very excited about being the principal of Stella Maris Academy," he

said. "I am grateful and humbled that I have this opportunity to return to the place that formed me as a child and to discover — and even contribute to — the great things that are happening in this community."

Annalisa Burgos

St. Mary's School



Annalisa Burgos, an El Centro native, is the new principal of St. Mary's School in her hometown.

"I am thrilled to be here (at St. Mary's), where

my educational career and ministry journey began," said Burgos, who has spent 21 years in Catholic schools. "I look forward to furthering the mission of Catholic education and contributing to this wonderful community."

Burgos holds a bachelor's in Liberal Studies from San Diego State University and a master's in Theology from St. John Seminary. She is currently a doctoral candidate (Organizational Leadership with Emphasis on TK-12 Leadership) at Grand Canyon University.

She previously taught middle-schoolers at St. Mary's, from 2000 to 2002, discovering there that she had a "passion for integrating faith and education" and that Catholic education was her "true calling."

She went on to teach at Vincent Memorial Catholic High School, serve as principal of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, teach Theology at Yuma Catholic High School, and serve as principal of Holy Family School and then at Sacred Heart School in Brawley.

Burgos served at Sacred Heart School from 2016 until this past summer, when it closed after a decades-long struggle with low enrollment.

In her new post, she is being reunited with former students from Sacred Heart School, many of whom have transferred to St. Mary's this year.

"I love that many students from Sacred Heart are continuing their Catholic education at St. Mary's School," she said. "Seeing them will be bittersweet, as I cherish the memories we made together, but I'm nonetheless excited to witness their growth and journey in faith and learning."

Jimmy Davoren

St. Columba School



"I had not planned on becoming principal — or even trying to become a principal — but God has His own plans," said Jimmy Davoren, a fixture at St. Columba School since he moved to San Diego three years ago.

Davoren started as the English Language Arts teacher for the third through fifth grades. Over the past

two years, he was the middle-school Religion and Social Studies teacher.

With his predecessor, Principal John Amann, leaving to become principal at Cristo Rey San Diego High School, Davoren "felt called to fill (Amann's) very big shoes."

The first-time principal reflected on his new job's demands.

"A principal's job relates to the shepherd metaphor the Church uses for pastors," said Davoren, who earned a bachelor's in Linguistics and Anthropology from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 2013, and a master's in Elementary Education from the University of Hawai'i Mānoa in 2019.

He explained that the principal is "primarily a support person for everyone," whose job is to show the community "where to go" and to "help everyone get there."

"The teachers, the parents and the students are doing the work," he said, "but the principal is there to connect them (and) make things go smoothly."

Regarding his immediate plans, he said, "It's not the year for me to set into motion too many new ideas, but sustain the good ideas we are already doing at St. Columba."

Davoren said that Catholic education, with its "Christ-centered curriculum," comes with "the huge benefit of ... a common framework."

"We can bring multiple cultures to one table while still being linked — a healthy diversity that values collaboration and the same goals," he said. "We have hundreds of years of history educating the entirety of the world, and thousands of years of scholarship to be our foundation. Yet, we are always responding to the needs of the times."

Larissa Frost

St. Katharine Drexel Academy



A native San Diegan, Larissa Frost is the product of local public schools.

And she has spent most of her 18 years as an educator in the public school system, including as a special education teacher in the San Diego Unified School District and as a special education director at the Museum School, a tuition-free charter school in San Diego.

But, for the past two years, she served as vice principal and inclusion director at St. Columba School.

"I love being able to share my faith with my school community and being able to pray with my students when we need guidance and inspiration," she said, explaining what drew her to the Catholic school system. "The Christmas and Easter festivities are extra special as seen through the experiences we share with our students."

Frost, whose mother was also a teacher, shared that she had been "trying to get into teaching in a Cath-

olic school" ever since she earned her bachelor's degree in 2006, but she felt that opportunities were harder to come by prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

She holds a bachelor's in Social Science/Communication, a master's in Educational Leadership, and multiple subject and education specialist credentials from California State University, San Marcos. She also earned an administrative credential at Point Loma Nazarene University.

"I am very excited to lead the amazing team at SKDA and meet their wonderful community," she said.

"My goal as principal this year is to learn as much as I can about this unique community and be able to enrich the school with my years of knowledge in learning supports, so that every child can excel and be supported in the academic journey."

Dr. Amanda LoCoco

Holy Trinity School



Dr. Amanda LoCoco felt that God was calling her to "a place of leadership" where she could "make an impact in Catholic education."

She has found one at Holy Trinity School.

A San Diego native, LoCoco's first exposure to Catholic education was as a fifth-grader, when she was enrolled at Santa Sophia Academy in Spring Valley. It was "a formative experience," during which she became an altar server and lector and felt a desire to continue her Catholic education at the Academy of Our Lady of Peace.

She earned a bachelor's in Religion and Fine Arts from Regis University (2011), a master's in Biblical Theology from John Paul the Great Catholic University (2014), and a doctorate in Interdisciplinary Leadership from Creighton University (2023).

She taught sixth through eighth grade at the former St. Michael Academy in Paradise Hills, from 2013 to 2014. She was a teacher at Cathedral Catholic High School, from 2014 to 2022, and served as director of institutional research and as an adjunct professor at John Paul the Great Catholic University, from 2022 to 2024.

In 2024, she also was an adjunct professor at the University of Saint Katherine, a San Marcos-based Orthodox Christian university, during its final year in operation.

"I love Jesus," LoCoco said, explaining what attracted her to a career in Catholic education. "Everything I do is for Him and through Him. In no way would I be capable of working at a secular school devoid of Christ. My love for teaching is rooted in the teaching of Christ."

"Catholic schools mold the whole person," she said. "We are not just

Principals *Continued from Page 8*

trying to get students into a good high school. We are trying to get them into Heaven.”

Sister Patricia Rodriguez, SJS

Vincent Memorial Catholic High School



Struggling students at Vincent Memorial Catholic High School have a principal who can sympathize with their difficulties.

“I enjoyed school, but was not a good student in elementary (school) and did not enjoy reading,” said Sister Patricia Rodriguez, a member of the Sister Servants of the Blessed Sacrament, who recently began her first year as principal.

She was born and raised in El Centro by parents who immigrated to the United States to work in the agricultural fields of the Imperial Valley.

“They both valued education and taught us the importance of it,” said Sister Rodriguez, who attended public schools in her youth. “Learning English as a second language was not easy for me, but the dedication, patience and support I received from my teachers were instrumental.”

Her own career in education was inspired by the “joyful witness” of her third grade and high school math teachers, who “went out of their way to help those in need of extra help.”

Sister Rodriguez earned a bachelor’s in Liberal Studies, a teaching credential, and a master’s in Curriculum and Instruction, all from San Diego State University.

She has been an educator for longer than she has been a religious sister.

Sister Rodriguez taught first and second grade at Seeley Elementary School and second grade at St. Mary’s School in El Centro, before entering religious life in 2014.

Since professing her first vows in 2018, she has taught middle school Social Studies at St. Kieran School in El Cajon and middle school Religion at Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy in Calexico.

She is scheduled to profess final vows on Aug. 31.

Erika Rosas

Sacred Heart School, Coronado



“Stunned.”

That’s how Erika Rosas describes her reaction to the news that she had been selected as the next principal of Sacred Heart School.

“Being the first laywoman to lead Sacred Heart in our 76-year history comes with great responsibility and ... I felt the weight of this responsibility,” she explained. “Nevertheless, I have



SETTLING IN: Fifth-graders Joshua Rangel, left, Camille Arocha, and Sofia Alcocer got to work on the first day of the new academic year at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic School in San Ysidro.

not stopped smiling, because I see so much potential in our school and have a vision to bring the school to a new level of student achievement and student success.”

Born in El Centro, Rosas grew up in Tijuana, Mexico, crossing the border to attend Sacred Heart School from 1990 to 1999. She continued her Catholic education at Instituto México, a high school run by the Marist Brothers in Tijuana.

Rosas earned a bachelor’s in Religious and Pastoral Studies in 2009 from Mater Ecclesiae College in Greenville, Rhode Island. Five years later, she earned a multiple subject teaching credential, a mild/moderate special education credential, and a master’s in Special Education from Point Loma Nazarene University.

She was a substitute teacher at Sacred Heart School in 2012, later that year becoming the kindergarten aide. She taught fifth grade at the school for three years, after which she proposed the creation of a Learning Center to help struggling students and served as its director. Since 2018, in addition to directing the center, she simultaneously served as vice principal.

“I am looking forward to leading students to a well-rounded education, focusing on the development of the whole person. ... My other priority will be to continue to create a sense of community, both internally within the staff and externally in our Coronado community.”

John Amann

Cristo Rey San Diego High School



John Amann is the product of a Catholic education, having attended Catholic elementary and middle school as well as two Catholic universities.

That experience set him on the path to where is today.

“Our Catholic faith has been integral in my life,” he said, “and I knew at a young age that I wanted to be

Catholic Schools at a Glance

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actively involved in our Church due to my Catholic education.”

Amann has been a Catholic educator since 2011, when he graduated from Santa Clara University with a bachelor’s in Political Science and a minor in Catholic Studies. He went on to earn a master’s in Secondary Education from Loyola Marymount University in 2013.

“The opportunity to be able to live out my calling as an educator in an environment where Christ is at the heart of all we do is truly a blessing,” he said.

After three years of teaching in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Amann relocated to San Diego, where he served as a middle school teacher at Nazareth School, an assistant principal at All Hallows Academy and, from 2018 until this year, as principal of St. Columba School.

“I was looking for a new challenge,” he said, “and the opportunity to lead Cristo Rey San Diego, with a mission that aligns so well with my philosophy of education, was something I could not pass up.”

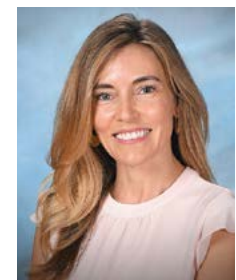
Cristo Rey San Diego, which opened in August of 2020, exclusively serves low-income families.

He said that he is “excited and also nervous” as he begins his first year in high school education.

“That is a new and different experience for sure,” he said. “I am most looking forward to getting to know this amazing community of students, educators and families, and supporting the school in its growth and development.”

Brittany Bateman

The Nativity School



Brittany Bateman’s passion for education goes back a long way.

“I’ve known I wanted to work in a school since I was 5 years old and was forcing my cousins to ‘play school’ on the weekends,” she said. “I even gave them homework assignments.”

“They dreaded weekends,” she said. Since those early days, Bateman has earned a bachelor’s in Education from the University of Arizona (2001), a master’s in Education from the University of La Verne (2005), and a Master of Arts in Teaching from San Diego State University (2019).

She has more than 20 years of experience in education, including at public, independent and parochial schools.

Bateman believes that Catholic education is “truly priceless.”

“I love that our faith permeates every aspect of our experience, and the teachers and families who invest in Catholic education are dedicated to challenging students, modeling character, and teaching them the importance of service,” she said.

Before becoming principal of The Nativity School, Bateman had served there for four years as assistant principal and director of learning support. Prior to that, she had been at Francis Parker School as part of its student support division.

She decided to apply for the principal position at The Nativity School when her predecessor, Marc Thiebach, announced that he was retiring.

“I knew that God was inviting me to step out of my comfort zone and take on a new role that was equal parts exciting and terrifying,” she said. “I love our students, faculty, staff and the families at The Nativity School, and I am committed to serving them to the best of my ability.”

By Aida Bustos



Baptized Catholic, Luis Enrique Pérez began a spiritual journey about a year ago.

That journey took him on Aug. 3 to the diocesan Hispanic conference “Profetas en Misión,” which he attended with members of his young adult group, *Luz de Cristo*.

“I’m searching for paths that will bring me closer to God and will help me better understand the Word,” said Pérez, whose group is based at St. Jude Shrine of the West Parish in San Diego.

Auxiliary Bishops Ramón Bejarano and Felipe Pulido, the main speakers, explored the Gospels and offered concrete ways to be “United in Christ to Love and Serve,” the conference theme.

Father Bernardo Lara, who leads the Catholic Communities of Brawley and Westmorland, served as emcee.

Around 600 faithful from San Diego and Imperial counties attended the conference in Spanish held at Good Shepherd Catholic School, said Luis Barajas, president of the diocese’s Hispanic Commission. The commission collaborated with the diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechetical Ministry to host the third annual event.

Conference-goers included catechists and members of parish groups, *movimientos* and apostolates, who joyously crowded into the school’s gym for the presentations.

The conference included a Holy Hour, a Eucharistic procession and an opportunity for reconciliation, and it concluded with Mass.

New this year, the diocesan Office for Youth and Young Adult Ministry hosted an evening event on Aug. 2, *Ven y Verás* (Come and See), which drew about 150 youth ages 13 to 17.

Also that evening, the organizers hosted more than 100 servers at a special dinner to recognize their support.

The event featured an exhibitors’ zone, where the faithful could meet representatives of a variety of organi-



JOYFUL: Around 600 faithful from across San Diego and Imperial counties gathered for the annual Hispanic Catholic community’s conference, *Profetas en Misión Galván*, Chancellor and Director of Pastoral Ministries; Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano; Father Bernardo Lara; and Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido.

zations, as well as an area where they could buy traditional fare.

The conference is one of the events that the diocese is presenting to support the Eucharistic Revival, a three-year national initiative to deepen love for the Eucharist.

‘Love Is a Decision’

The auxiliary bishops shared personal anecdotes and even sang a little during their talks, held in the school’s gym.

Bishop Bejarano spoke first, sharing

the Biblical and theological foundation that calls for a life of love and service.

“Christ has the power to make what we do be transformational, like the multiplication of the loaves and fishes,” he explained. “Jesus can help us to do more than we can imagine.”

He explained that Jesus had a concrete message for His disciples.

“I’m giving you a new commandment: ‘Love one another like I have loved you,’” the bishop said, citing the Gospel of St. John (13:34). “That is His command.”

“It’s through the practice of this love that Christ remains in us and we in Him,” he added.

The bishop asked, “Why does Jesus repeat this message so many times, ‘Love one another’? Because He knows we don’t do it, right?”

He said the faithful are called to obey this command in all situations.

“I have to do everything with love. I have to treat my children with love. I have to treat my wife with love. Even when I post things on Facebook, I have to do it with love.”



WORSHIP: Conference-goers heard two talks, enjoyed uplifting music from the group *Renovando en el Espíritu*, and attended a Mass, among other activities.



TOGETHER: Among those participating were catechists, and members of parish groups, movements and apostolates.



...n, on Aug. 3 in Good Shepherd Parish's school gym. They included, in front row from left to right, Marioly

He said it feels differently when things are done with love.

"It's very different to correct your kids with love than with anger," the bishop said.

He added, "Love is more than a feeling; it's a decision. I have to decide to love."

Jesus wants us to love one another unconditionally, perfectly, he continued.

"Are we there? No, it's a daily struggle. Every day, we have to make that decision. At times, we're going to fail. Jesus

knows that. Our love won't be perfect until we're with Him for eternity."

He said that, when Jesus was on the cross, He did not judge, reject or abandon anyone.

"That's why, when we celebrate the Eucharist, we have a crucifix present, because it reminds us, 'This is how Jesus loves me.'"

"The Eucharist is an encounter with the One we love, and it's a renewal of the love Christ has for me."



GREAT SUPPORT: Numerous groups supported the conference by providing a service, such as serving food, and assisting with hospitality and supporting the Eucharist procession and Mass.

'We Need to Learn from Jesus'

In his talk, Auxiliary Bishop Pulido used popular Mexican expressions to share how love can be lived day to day, in service of others.

"*Del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho*," he began, meaning, "It's easier said than done."

"We can talk a lot about love, but at the end of the day, what do I do concretely?" he continued.

"Some say that the scandal in the Church is not that convents and seminaries are half empty, nor that fewer people are going to Mass, nor that some priests and religious failed.

"The great scandal in the Church is that we have not followed Jesus' principal command: 'Love one another as I have loved you.'"

Bishop Pulido said that it may seem impossible for family members to love one another, especially in dysfunctional families.

"We don't practice love; we only seek our own self-interest. There's such a vacuum of love in our lives."

What can we do concretely to obey Jesus' command? He said it begins with the practice of prayer.

"The more we love our neighbor, the more we love God. To demonstrate that love, we need to pray because, if we don't have a relationship with God, it will be more difficult to have one with others."

He said that listening is another way to practice love.

"Listening to one another makes us feel loved, appreciated. We all want to be listened to."

He said people lead distracted lives, peering at their cellular phone, rarely paying attention, even to family members.

"Listening to one another makes us more sensitive, more human. When we listen to others, we're also helping ourselves."

He continued with another expression, which means that it's best to keep one's mouth shut.

"The words we use to talk about ourselves and others have a lot of

power. With just one word, I can lift someone and, with another, I can sink him.

"We're always talking about other people. This divides our communities. Love is expressed in concrete actions. If I say that I love my brothers and sisters, then I have to be very prudent in what I say day to day."

Bishop Pulido encouraged those on hand to pick one concrete action to demonstrate love and to do it. And to be willing to feel vulnerable and humble doing it, as Jesus had been.

"At the Last Supper, where Jesus gave up everything He had, he became poor. All He had left was His life, and He gave that up completely, keeping nothing. And from there, He evangelized.

"At the end of the day, we all want to be missionaries, delivering this message of love and service to others. We need to learn from Jesus, who did this from a state of poverty. That's how Our Lord approached us, and that is how we should approach those who don't know Our Lord."

The bishop concluded where he began.

"*Del dicho al hecho hay mucho trecho*. To say 'I love you' means to love one's entire life, daily and totally."

Maria Hisel traveled from the Imperial Valley community of Calipatria with around 30 faithful to attend the conference.

What message was she taking home?

"Christ is there, waiting for us to open the door," she said. "We have to understand each other to be able to love one another like God loves us."

The young adult Luis Enrique Pérez also reflected on what he would be taking with him.

"I'm taking love with me. The Scriptures teach us to love unconditionally those who treat us well and those who don't. They teach us that we have to work on ourselves."

For photo gallery of conference, visit thesoutherncross.org/profetas2024.



YOUNG HEARTS: Luis Enrique Pérez, left, and fellow members of the young adult group Luz de Cristo, from St. Jude Shrine of the West Parish, attended the conference.



UNITED: Sixteen couples completed the marriage preparation process at St. Mary's Parish in Escondido and were married in the Church on Aug. 17 in a joyous Boda Comunitaria, celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido, along with Deacon Amador Durán, left, and Father Scott Herrera.

Congratulations! Sixteen Couples Say 'I Do'

By Aida Bustos

ESCONDIDO — A Catholic wedding is a joyous event, where a couple becomes husband and wife in the sacrament of marriage, surrounded by excited family members and friends.

Now picture that multiplied by 16.

On Aug. 17, St. Mary Catholic Church celebrated a “Boda Comunitaria,” a wedding Mass where the 16 couples were married. Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido celebrated the Mass, accompanied by Father Scott Herrera and Deacon Amador Durán.

Parishes across the diocese occasionally hold a group wedding. At St. Mary's, the idea began last December, when Bishop Pulido asked the deacon to prepare couples for a group wedding.

Deacon Durán said that many couples jumped at the chance to be married in the Church.

Mostly in their forties and fifties, they had been living together for years, and many had grown children. Some had been married civilly.



READY: Ofelia Zacarías Martín, from Guatemala, arrives at the church for her wedding to Marcelo Santos Zacarías.

The couples participated in the diocese's rigorous marriage prep process, including taking the FOCCUS Inventory, meeting privately with the deacon at least five times, taking natural family planning classes, and participating in a retreat on Theology of the Body. The deacon and his assistants worked with the couples, including helping them to obtain all the needed paperwork.

“Our team is committed to supporting couples to live a holy life for them-

selves and their families,” he said.

The brides wore beautiful wedding dresses, and one wore a traditional dress from Guatemala. They waited in a side room for the ceremony to begin.

María Sánchez was one of them. She had been with her partner, Benjamín Quintero, for 37 years. The couple have three children and three grandchildren.

Why were they getting married by the Church?

“Foremost, to be able to receive

God,” she said, adding that she was looking forward to receiving the Eucharist with her children and grandchildren. “It's beautiful to do it as a family.”

The brides processed into the church one by one, flanked by children and parents. The grooms waited for them near the front, each at the beginning of a pew.

Bishop Pulido celebrated a traditional Mexican ceremony, complete with *padrinos*, or sponsors, for the *anillos* (rings), *arras* (coins), and *lazo* (lasso). The couples surrounded the altar, one after the other.

“The Catholic Church teaches us that matrimony is a bond that is perpetual and exclusive, an alliance between a man and a woman,” the bishop said in his homily. “It teaches us that God ratifies the couple's consent. And that matrimony gives the couple a special grace to reach the holiness needed to overcome the challenges of living together and to responsibly educate and embrace their children.”



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Season of Creation 2024



DAVID MAUNG

By Christina Bagaglio Slentz, PhD



**“To everything turn, turn, turn;
There is a season turn, turn,
turn; And a time to every
purpose under Heaven.”**

So the song goes! Pete Seeger wrote these lines to open The Byrds' 1965 number-one hit, “Turn! Turn! Turn!”, drawing almost entirely on Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, a Scripture passage that contemplates the cycles and rhythms of life on earth.

Across cultures and over the course of history, humanity has celebrated seasons, echoing the patterns of change and transformation we observe in the gift of God's creation. These timely markers, bearing the fingerprints of God, organize our lives and give us a sense of purpose and connectivity with each other and the cosmos.

In this light, we might understand the Season of Creation to be a celebration of the source of all earthly seasons. As St. Francis exclaims in his Canticle of the Creatures, “Praised be You, my Lord,” for certain!

Why Do We Celebrate the Season of Creation?

Within our Catholic tradition, our entire year is mapped out by liturgical seasons, inviting us to revisit and renew our commitment to various aspects of our faith. Similarly, during the Season of Creation, we take time to focus on our relationship with our Creator and all creation as God's chosen stewards of this gift.

In 1989, Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I of the Eastern Orthodox Church first proclaimed Sept. 1 as a day of prayer for creation. He aligned this day with the first day of the Orthodox liturgical year when this community traditionally commemorates God's creation of the world. Gradually, the worldwide Christian community came to extend this celebration fittingly to Oct.



4, the Feast of St. Francis, patron saint of ecology. In 2015, Pope Francis officially welcomed the Season of Creation for the Roman Catholic Church — the same year he published his encyclical “Laudato Si” on the care of our common home.

Season of Creation Events:

Sept. 14: Season of Creation Mass & “Laudato Si” Awards Ceremony

Sept. 11 & 18: Eco-Citizenship & Spirituality Workshop (Live from the University of Notre Dame via Zoom)

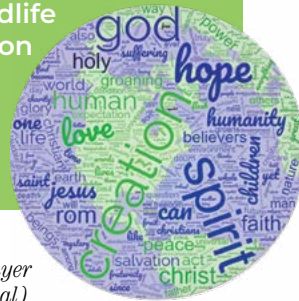
Sept. 21: St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish visit and free tour of the Barona Museum & Cultural Center

Sept. 22: Children's Art Contest and Creation Care Teen Applications due

Sept. 26: Fragility of Wildlife Photography Presentation

Oct. 6: Feast of St. Francis Tree Festival and Eco-Fair

Word Cloud based on Pope Francis' Message for the 2024 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (Slentz original)



Designating Sept. 1 as the Day of Prayer for Creation, Pope Francis writes:

“As Christians, we wish to contribute to resolving the ecological crisis which humanity is presently experiencing. In doing so, we must first rediscover in our own rich spiritual patrimony the deepest motivations for our concern for the care of creation. We need always to keep in mind that, for believers in Jesus Christ, the Word of God who became man for our sake, ‘the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us’ (‘Laudato Si,’ 216). The ecological crisis thus summons us to a profound spiritual conversion: Christians are called to ‘an ecological conversion whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them’ (‘Laudato Si,’ 217).”

How to Celebrate Season of Creation 2024

The theme of this year's celebration is “To Hope and Act with Creation,” which resounds the call of Pope Francis' 2023 exhortation “Laudate Deum,” demanding our faith in action. To join in this effort:

- View the Vatican's family-friendly film, “The Letter,” which offers a glimpse of today's environmental crisis and its impact on four planetary “voices”— the poor, the indigenous, biodiversity, and the youth. It's free on YouTube to watch at home or contact us to arrange a group screening.
- Each week, the diocese's Creation Care Ministry will offer opportunities and activities to learn more about these four “voices.”
- Come to our Season of Creation Mass, celebrated by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy on Sept. 14, at 5 p.m., at St. Gregory the Great Parish. Bring your household, parish, or school “Laudato Si” action plan to care for creation over the coming year, and you will receive a special blessing to carry out your intentions. All are welcome! Register at bit.ly/SOC24MassRegistration.
- Enroll in the Vatican's “Laudato Si” Action Platform! Learn more about how your household, parish or school can participate in the “Laudato Si” action plan by attending our Sept. 11 and 18 Zoom workshops.
- For children and youth: Grades 4-12 are invited to participate in our “For the Beauty of the Earth” Art Contest, offering cash prizes and the opportunity for all to show off their work at our Feast of St. Francis Trees, Peace & Goodness Festival on Oct. 6. Submissions are due Sept. 22 at 11:59 p.m.
- Plant a tree! Register for our Feast of St. Francis Tree Festival and take home a Coastal Live Oak. If you can't make it, contact the Creation Care Ministry. Trees are available for households, parishes and schools.

All Season of Creation events are listed at our diocesan creation care webpage at sdcatholic.org/care-for-creation-and-environmental-issues, or scan the green QR code on this page.

Creation is God's gift to us; how we care for creation is our gift to God. Let us spend a little time this season to refresh and renew this relationship.



Send pictures of your family or parish illustrating Care for Creation to cslentz@sdcatholic.org. We will post them on our Facebook and Instagram accounts.


sdcatholic.org/creation

Creation Care Ministry Explores a Theme Monthly to Inspire Action.



Father Shares Brotherhood with Students

By Denis Grasska

 Augustinian Father Max Villeneuve, 36, serves as the chaplain at St. Augustine High School, an all-boys Catholic secondary school founded in 1922 by the Order of St. Augustine.

Born in Houston and raised in Los Angeles, Father Villeneuve made his first profession of vows in 2014 and his final profession four years later. He was ordained to the priesthood by Cardinal Robert W. McElroy on Dec. 15, 2018, at St. Patrick Church in North Park.

He is currently in his eighth year of ministry at St. Augustine High School, popularly known as Saints, which began a new academic year on Aug. 15.

Question: When did you first feel called to the priesthood?

Answer: I started discerning the call when I was a student at San Diego State University, where I was majoring

**Chaplain,
St. Augustine
High School**

**Father Max Villeneuve,
OSA**



in Religious Studies. I was very involved with the Newman Center there, helping out with retreats, Bible studies, socials and things of that nature.

Father Bruce Orsborn, then director of the Newman Center and now pastor at St. Mark's Parish in San Marcos, encouraged me to discern the priesthood. And so, I did. It just seemed like the natural thing to do.

What happened next?

After graduating from SDSU in 2009, I spent one year in the priestly formation program at St. Francis Center, where I studied philosophy. I loved my time there, and my favorite part was living in community with the other seminarians. Ultimately, I realized that I wasn't called to be a diocesan priest, but to be part of a religious community. I left the seminary and

began a two-year discernment process that led me to the Augustinians.

What did you find attractive about the Augustinians?

The Augustinians' charism is community life. So, what I had loved at St. Francis Center, I was able to fully find with the Augustinians.

As an Augustinian, I'm a member of a worldwide brotherhood. Everywhere I go in the order, wherever I am, even if there's a language barrier, that brotherhood transcends everything. I have brothers all over the world living out this charism with me.

To find the right religious order for me, I started looking here in my backyard in San Diego. I was living in the College Area, and the Augustinians were in North Park, not very far away. Part of my discernment was just going to the monastery next-door to St. Augustine High School and having dinner and socializing with the friars. It didn't take long before I felt like I was

at home, that I was where I needed to be and where I was being called to be.

What have you found most fulfilling about priestly ministry?

I love celebrating the sacraments. I love being someone who can be a guide in showing others the beauty of our faith, how it's rational, and how living with faith brings joy to our lives.


That's certainly been at the forefront of my ministry at Saints, but I also try to bring that message to diocesan parishes as a supply priest. On the weekends, I celebrate Masses at different parishes, filling in for priests who are on vacation or out of town.

What is it like to minister in a high school setting?

It's never boring. There's always something happening. There's always a game, or a practice, or a school play. There's always something to do. You can't be bored in this ministry.

Chaplain *Continued on Page 15*

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Chaplain *Continued from Page 14*

The boys keep you on your toes, but they're very wholesome. They're curious, they're adventurous, they want to know things, and they keep asking questions. That's a quality that they share with Augustine. So, I try to foster an environment where they can ask their questions and also to channel their energies into good places, so that they can recognize how God is calling them as they prepare for the next steps of their life into college and beyond.

You have also led students on several international trips. Isn't that right?

Yes, I've attended every World Youth Day since Rio de Janeiro in 2013 with students from St. Augustine High School. And then, every January for the past two years, I've led students on a two-week Augustinian pilgrimage through our heritage sites in Italy.

The pilgrimage starts in Milan, so we get to encounter St. Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan who converted St. Augustine. We're also able to visit the Duomo of Milan, where Augustine was baptized in 387; we pray and renew our baptismal promises there. And, in Pavia, just outside Milan, we visit Augustine's tomb.

From there, we head to Tuscany, to a town called San Gimignano. The Augustinians have a monastery there that's very historic and very important in the life of the order; we're able to stay there and experience how the first Augustinian friars formed a community in the 13th century.

We end in Rome, where we visit the major basilicas, including St. Peter's; the Vatican Museums; and also St. Augustine's, where we visit the tomb of Augustine's mother, St. Monica. We also attend a general audience with the Holy Father, which is always a highlight of the trip.

What do you hope the boys take from this experience?

For a lot of them, it might be their first time in Europe and their first time seeing all the tremendous history that's there. It's certainly a very boy-friendly trip; they get to eat all the pizza and pasta that they want. But, while we do fun and interesting things, we're intentional about calling it a pilgrimage; it's not an Italian vacation. The focus is definitely on the important heritage sites of our Augustinian tradition and of our Catholic faith.

What advice do you have about discerning a vocation?

First of all, don't be afraid. Reach out to the vocation directors of religious communities that interest you, and make arrangements to visit them. Go and really get a sense of what life in that religious community is like. Pay attention even to the vibes that you get during your visit.

Every religious community is a little bit different, and different communities call to different people in different ways. In-person visits are essential; you can't rely on online research. You might be interested in a particular community, but until you visit, you'll never know if it's the right one for you.

Diocese Celebrates 'All Are Welcome' Mass

The Southern Cross



The diocese celebrated the "All Are Welcome" Mass at St. John the Evangelist Parish, San Diego, on July 14.

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano presided at the Mass to raise awareness of the gift that Jesus is for everyone.

The following are thoughts Bishop Bejarano shared during his homily:

This Sunday, the second reading from St. Paul to the Ephesians, spoke about how God has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing, and that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy.

The call to holiness is for everyone because we all are in need of redemption and salvation. But to respond to this call, we must be aware of the amazing love of God, who chose us first.

It is amazing to know how much God values us. As we have sung today, "I praise You, for I am wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). Each one of us is wonderfully made.

When we are valued, we feel good and happy because we know we are loved.

In His earthly ministry, Jesus welcomed everyone, even His enemies. As a Church, we must do the same: welcome everyone, without any

distinction. As Pope Francis says, "Todos, todos, todos."

Unfortunately, as a Church, sometimes we have not loved as God loves us.

Last year, I went to a workshop organized by New Way Ministries. It was not until I heard the stories of those present that I realized the pain, the sorrow, the stigma and trauma that we have caused others because we don't accept them, because we tell them that they do not belong, because we judge them.

I apologize for the pain and distress that I and the Church have caused many of you. I apologize for the stigmatization and trauma we have caused others, because we have told them that they are not valued and that they are not worthy of the love of God.

Like Jesus, who in today's Gospel sent the 12 Apostles for mission, so Jesus sends us to any home where we are welcomed. But before we get welcomed, we must also welcome. The members of the Church many times have unwelcomed the homeless, the prisoner, the immigrant, the mentally ill, the LGBTQ, the one who speaks a different language or has a different skin color. We are in danger of seeing them as "they" instead of "us."

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In my classroom and travels to speak with diverse communities recently, I have observed some trends you may have noticed too.

- Many people want to do the right thing. There's a longing for the good within our hearts, and we feel pulled toward it.
- Many people want their lives to be meaningful. This manifests in the desire to contribute to the common good.
- Most people also realize that the current state of our world is not conducive to either of these. In a culture with more information available in one minute than our ancestors had in a lifetime, we are often paradoxically more isolated than ever, mired in disunity and heartbreakingly discouraged.

If this rings true, then I want to invite you to a conversation. Six decades ago, the Second Vatican Council provided the Church with

Columnist

Cecilia González-Andrieu, PhD.



an insight that awakened imaginations globally. In a key document, the Council bishops told us that:

"... the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which (people) ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics" ("Gaudium et Spes," 4).

The Council initiated a breakthrough identifying a host of issues

affecting the world of its time. The concerns were not only about the Church's internal workings (the liturgy, etc.), but also exposed issues from the domestic sphere (the changing role of women), the societal sphere (the scourge of racism), and the global sphere (the introduction of mass media).

Today, we live in a time as convulsive as the 1960s, and even more complicated. As Pope Francis likes to say, we are in "a new epoch."

We are also tragically disoriented and divided.

How do we take up the invitation "to scrutinize the signs of our times" so we can discern the call of goodness and turn it into a way of living that meaningfully contributes to the good of the world? Over the next few months, I invite you to reflect with me on these questions. As people of the 21st century, we know how to break objectives down into their components, examine the ways systems work, and formulate ways to reach our goals. Let's put this knowledge to good use.

So, to begin, I invite you to think about your uniqueness, your gifts, your voice, and your abilities. Make an abundant list. And then, I want you to take a cue from the early disciples and listen attentively to Jesus' expectations.

One of my favorite moments in the story of the feeding of the five thousand (Matt 14:13-21) is when Jesus answers their concerns by saying, "You feed them." Or again, in 25:40, when He declares that "whenever you did this for the least of these ..." Notice the repetition of "you" in Jesus' conversations with His friends. The Teacher repeatedly makes clear that there is a lot of work to do, and that it is work He does not intend to do alone or accomplish once and for always. And so, Jesus sent out His friends, and continues to send us out now.

Are you ready? Let's meet in these pages in the next month for Step One of our plan to take up the work Jesus entrusted to us.

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



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How Will We Use Our Power?



We all have a power, a force, an impulse that inhabits us. Our challenge: How will we use it?

That power can serve to build or to destroy, to unify or to divide, to liberate or to oppress.

The values we have learned at home, at school and at church guide our actions. If what we have learned in our family is to treat people with respect and understanding, it's expected that the use of our power will be guided by these values. If what we have seen and learned is control, humiliation and violence, that is likely what we will manifest when we exercise our power.

Time and again, we repeat and affirm that the family is the nucleus of society; that what is planted and sowed in that nucleus will yield fruits

Columnist

Ricardo Márquez



for cities, countries and the world; that the changes we want to see have to begin in that nucleus; and that mothers and fathers are the builders of future human beings.

And what do we see?

The reality is not very encouraging. Because of that, we have an opportunity to wake up, although it will require time, resilience and work. What we have not learned through our conscience, we will learn through our experience, some of it very painful.

It's not an exaggeration to say that we live in a toxic culture. The word "culture" has Latin roots related to agriculture; it means "to cultivate" and "what is cultivated." And what is

being primarily cultivated, nourished and promoted these days? Isolation, separation, distraction, consumerism, appearance, utilitarian relationships and money are being presented as the keys to success.

What do we feel in this context? Uncertainty, confusion, loss of purpose and meaning in life, an empty interior ... all generated by work dynamics, economic and environmental crises, wars.

But, as real as these feelings are, so is our profound desire for respect, love, peace and justice that we carry within us, like subterranean rivers that remind us that we're invited to a plentiful and harmonious life.

It takes time to wake up from our confusion and wishful thinking, to push against the current, to look within and recognize the murmurings of that subterranean river that we can only hear in the silence of our conscience until we can hear and feel what St. Augustine expressed with these beautiful words from his autobiographical work, "Confessions":

"Late have I loved You. Beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved You! Lo, You were within, but I outside, seeking there for You, and upon

the shapely things You have made I rushed headlong. I, misshapen. You were with me, but I was not with You. They held me back far from You. You called, shouted, broke through my deafness; You flared, blazed, banished my blindness; You lavished your fragrance, I gasped; and now I pant for You; I tasted You, and now I hunger and thirst; You touched me, and I burned for Your peace."

Today, I feel invited to give life to what Jesus reminded us about the use of power: "Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave' (Matt 20:25-27).

Whoever wants to be great should use his or her gifts, his power and force to serve, promoting justice, peace and fraternity among brothers.

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

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
9:30 AM – Rosary & Novena in the Church
10:00 AM – EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION
MAIN CELEBRANT/HOMILIST: Cardinal Robert McElroy
CONCELEBRANTS: Filipino and Diocesan Clergy

Following the Mass, there will be a procession to the Parish Gym, immediately followed by a reception.

NOTE: Nine Days Novena will begin after the 8:30 am Mass, starting Friday, September 6, 2024, at Good Shepherd Parish

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Lardy Gallardo, GSP SLR Coordinator, (858)414-5680; lardygallardo@yahoo.com

DCFC Chair – **Athena Besa**, (858)382-0036; abesa@san.rr.com
Diocese Office – **Alejandra Diaz** (858)490-8306; adiaz@sdatholic.org

News Briefs

Deep-Pit BBQ Returning to Descanso Parish

DESCANSO — Our Lady of Light Parish in Descanso 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, a 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, which will begin at 5:30 p.m. and take place at St. James Parish Hall, will include a Mexican buffet dinner, a gift card pull, live auction vacation items, and more. Tickets will be \$65 per person or \$650 per 10-person 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 sandiegotchineseatholic.org or call (858) 442-3532, (858) 666-5064 or (619) 997-6911.

Ladies Guild to Hold Membership Luncheon

The Father Joe’s Villages Ladies Guild will host a membership luncheon on Monday, Sept. 9, at St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch.

The catered event will take place from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Attendees will learn about volunteer opportunities available through the Ladies Guild, a service organization that raises funds for homeless children and assists with events and services at Father Joe’s Villages.

There is no cost to attend the luncheon, but RSVP is required by Monday, Sept. 2. For information or to register, email margie.r.mills@gmail.com.

Parish and Museum Trip to Showcase Indigenous Culture

LAKESIDE — Local Catholics are invited to learn about local indigenous history and culture by taking part in a visit to St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish and the Barona Cultural Center and Museum.

Participants will gather at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 21, at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish for a church architectural history tour and a presentation by the pastor, Father Herman Manuel, a member of the Society of the Divine Word. The church is located at 1054 Barona Road, Lakeside 92040.

Around 10:30 a.m., the group will travel about a mile to the museum, located at 1095 Barona Road, where a movie, self-guided walk-through and presentation will be offered. The event is expected to conclude around noon.

For more information, email cslentz@sdccatholic.org or call (858) 490-8327. Register at bit.ly/SDCCBaronaTrip.

‘Lemon Fest’ Theme of Parish’s Fall Festival

LEMON GROVE — St. John of the Cross Parish’s fall festival, dubbed “Lemon Fest,” will be held on Saturday, Sept. 21, and Sunday, Sept. 22.

Saturday hours will be 4 to 9 p.m. Sunday hours will be 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The event will include carnival games, raffles, live performances, food and craft vendors, a beer garden, a car show, a lemon baking contest, a white elephant sale, and more.

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy will celebrate the 8 a.m. Sunday Mass. For more information, visit sjcparishlg.org.

Oktoberfest Fundraiser to Combat Sex Trafficking

ESCONDIDO — Children of the Immaculate Heart, a San Diego-based nonprofit that serves survivors of sex trafficking, will hold its annual Oktoberfest fundraiser on Saturday, Sept. 21.

The event will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. at St. Mary Parish, 1170 S Broadway, Escondido 92025.

There will be a live German band, an art workshop for children, traditional German food and drinks, a gift faire, and a German costume contest.

Tickets are \$40 for adults and \$10 for ages 3 to 12. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit childrenoftheimmaculateheart.org/oktoberfest-2024.

Rachel’s Hope Marking 30th Anniversary

A bilingual anniversary gala will be held to mark the 30th anniversary of Rachel’s Hope After-Abortion Healing and the 23rd anniversary of its Spanish-language counterpart, *La Esperanza de Raquel*.

The celebration will be held at 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 5, at Our Mother of Confidence Parish.

The dress code will be “dressy.” Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will deliver the keynote address. The evening will include a meal, talks, testimonies and music.

Tickets are \$50 per person. For more

information or to register, call (858) 581-3022 or text (858) 752-9378.

Women Invited to Find After-Abortion Healing

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

It will take place from Friday, Oct. 11, to Sunday, Oct. 13, at the diocesan Pastoral Center.

The retreat includes a closing Mass. Confidentiality will be maintained. Group size is limited.

The cost to attend is \$60. Partial scholarships are available; housing is available if needed.

For more information or to register, visit rachelshope.org, call (858) 581-3022, text (858) 752-9378 or email rachels_hope@juno.com.

Jamulfest Returns to St. Pius X

JAMUL — St. Pius X Parish will host its 61st annual Jamulfest on Sunday, Oct. 13.

The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the parish, which is located at 14107 Lyons Valley Road in Jamul.

It will feature live entertainment, a deep pit BBQ, a beer garden, a white elephant sale, crafts, and equestrian events. There also will be a prize raffle with tickets for \$1 each with a chance to win \$1,000, \$300 or \$100.

For more information, contact the parish at (619) 669-0085.

Ladies Guild Hosting Annual Craft, Bake Sale

The Father Joe’s Villages Ladies Guild will hold its annual craft and bake sale on Monday, Oct. 14.

It will be held from 10:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Father Joe’s Villages Ladies Guild Room at 1501 Imperial Ave., San Diego 92101. Enter through the main entrance on Imperial Avenue.

For more information, email shirleyjgiese@gmail.com.

Briefs Continued on Page 19

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Briefs *Continued from Page 18*

Mass to Mark Domestic Violence Awareness Month

To mark Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which is observed every October, the diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality is inviting local Catholics to the annual Diocesan Domestic Violence Awareness Mass.

It will be celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop Michael Pham at 4:30 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 19, at Ascension Parish.

The use of violence against another human being, especially within the domestic Church, is a sin and a crime, as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has expressed in its letter, "When I Ask for Help: A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence Against Women."

For more information about the Mass, email wbaez@sdccatholic.org or call (858) 490-8295.

If you or someone you know needs help, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-7233 or TTY at (800) 787-3224.

Women's Auxiliary to Hold Fall Brunch

The Whispering Winds Women's Auxiliary will hold its fall brunch on Saturday, Oct. 26, at Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

The event will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the California Room. The theme is "Trust in the Lord, He will rescue You." The guest speaker will be Julia Chadwell.

Those who wish to attend Mass can do so in St. Francis Chapel at 8:30 a.m.

The cost to attend is \$45 for current members of the Whispering Winds Women's Auxiliary and \$50 for non-members. Registration will be online at whisperingwinds.org/womens-retreat. For more information, email anniekorn@gmail.com or call (619) 929-4660.

'Love Our Priests' Prayer Group to Gather on Oct. 26

Father Clement T. Iorliam will be the special guest when the "Love Our Priests" Prayer Group gathers on Saturday, Oct. 26, at Ascension Parish in Tierrasanta.

There will be a Mass at 10 a.m., followed by a potluck luncheon.

Father Iorliam, who serves as a hospital chaplain and is in residence at Mary Star of the Sea Parish in La Jolla, will share his vocation story with the group.

For more information, email jeanlaskey@outlook.com.

Miles Christi Preaching Silent Retreats

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

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

The next retreats for women will be held 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 Prince of Peace Abbey. Space is limited.

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

Priest Assignment

The Office of the Cardinal has announced:

With the permission of his provincial, **Father Caleb Insko, FSSP**, has been assigned as associate pastor of St. Anne Parish, effective Aug. 1.



FIRST SAINT: The Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz celebration includes a procession, such as this one held on Sept. 10, 2022.

The entire Catholic community is invited to five special Masses being organized by the diocese's cultural communities in September.

Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz Mass, Sept. 14

The 37th annual diocesan celebration of the Feast of San Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint and martyr, will be held on Sept. 14 at Good Shepherd Church, with Cardinal Robert W. McElroy as the celebrant. There will be a rosary at 9:30 a.m., followed by the Mass at 10 a.m., and a procession afterward.

Our Lady of Peñafrancia Mass, Sept. 21

The veneration of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is one of the oldest and largest Filipino Marian celebrations in San Diego. The cardinal will celebrate a Mass in her honor on Sept. 21 at St. Michael Church in San Diego. The event begins with a prelude at 10 a.m., to be followed by the Mass at 10:30 a.m.

Indonesian Mass, Sept. 21

Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano will celebrate the Indonesian Mass at 1 p.m. at San Rafael Parish, the Indonesian Catholic community's new home. The Mass will be followed by a lunch with a traditional menu served on special occasions.

Indigenous People Mass, Sept. 27

Bishop Bejarano will celebrate the Indigenous People Mass at 10 a.m. at Mission San Antonio Pala. All tribes from the region are invited to participate in the Mass, being held on California Native American Day.

Indian Mass, Sept. 28

Auxiliary Bishop Michael Pham will celebrate this annual Mass at 10 a.m. at San Rafael Church. The Mass, organized by the diocese's Indian Catholic community, will honor St. Francis Xavier, the co-founder of the Jesuits. The Mass includes various cultural liturgical traditions from India.

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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.

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



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