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Opening Doors

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ANDY HAYT

COMMITTED: The University of San Diego offers a program, Torero Urban Scholars, which works to connect individuals who are formerly incarcerated or have been impacted by the justice system to enroll at the college. For Austin Galy, the co-founder of the program, the program's mission is personal.



Decision Time

Cardinal McElroy offers principles to consider when voting. **Page 4**



'Tis the Season

Annual "Season of Creation" Mass celebrated at St. Gregory the Great Parish. **Page 11**



Once a Monk

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World Mission Sunday
Oct. 20, 2024



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OF THE FAITH

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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.



Second Synod Session in October

By Carol Glatz



VATICAN CITY — The second session of the Synod of Bishops on synodality, which will bring 368 bishops, priests, religious and laypeople to the Vatican, including Cardinal Robert W. McElroy, of the Diocese of San Diego, will be held Oct. 2 to 27.

In July, the Vatican released a working document of what the second session of the synod would undertake during its monthlong gathering. The document said the synod should spur the Church to become a “refuge” for those in need and encourage Catholics to “allow themselves to be led by the Spirit of the Lord to horizons that they had not previously glimpsed” as brothers and sisters in Christ.

“This is the ongoing conversion of the way of being the Church that the synodal process invites us to undertake,” the document said.

The document will serve as a discussion guideline for the second session, which will reflect on the theme: “How to be a missionary synodal Church.” The reflections are the next step in the synod’s overarching theme: “For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission.”

Two key challenges facing the Church are “the growing isolation of people and cultural individualism, which even the Church has often absorbed,” it said.

Synodal practice, however, “calls us to mutual care, interdependence and co-responsibility for the common good,” it said, and it is willing to listen to everyone, in contrast to methods “in which the concentration of power shuts out the voices of the poorest, the marginalized and minorities.”

The document strongly encouraged the “renewal of liturgical and sacramental life, starting with liturgical celebrations that are beautiful, dignified, accessible, fully participative,



HISTORIC: Participants in the assembly of the first Synod of Bishops gathered Oct. 25, 2023, for an afternoon session in the Paul VI Audience Hall at the Vatican.

well-inculturated and capable of nourishing the impulse towards mission.”

And it called for renewing “the proclamation and transmission of the faith in ways and means appropriate to the current context.”

While the second session will focus on certain aspects of synodal life, “with a view to greater effectiveness in mission,” it said, “other questions that emerged during the journey are the subject of work that continues in other ways, at the level of the local Churches as well as in the 10 study groups.”

In March, Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, announced that Pope Francis had decided that some of the most controversial issues raised during the 2021-24 synod process would be examined by study groups. Among the subjects assigned to the 10 groups are the possible revision of guidelines for the training of priests and deacons, the role of women in the Church and their participation in decision-making processes and community leadership, a possible revision in the way bishops are chosen and a revision of norms for the relationship between bishops and the religious orders working in their dioceses.

The study groups will complete their in-depth study by June 2025, if possible, but will offer a progress report to the synod assembly in October 2024, the document said.

“Ahead of the conclusion of the second session, Pope Francis has already accepted some of the requests of the first session and begun the work of implementation,” it said.

The work of the second session, the document said, will continue the synodal method of “prayer, exchange and discernment” as participants are invited to look at “the missionary synodal life of the Church from different perspectives” by reflecting on three aspects which emerged from previous discussions: relationships within the Church, pathways for formation and places of connection.

“On this basis, a final document relating to the whole process will be drafted and will offer the pope proposals on steps that could be taken,” it said.

Catholic News Service

Follow the second
Synod session at
thesoutherncross.org.



First, Ask for Forgiveness



VATICAN CITY — The second session of the Synod of Bishops on synodality will begin by asking forgiveness for sins on behalf of all the baptized.

As synod members did before last year’s session, they will spend two days on retreat before beginning work; that period of reflection will conclude Oct. 1 with a penitential liturgy presided over by Pope Francis in St. Peter’s Basilica.

The liturgy will include time to listen to the testimonies of three people: one who suffered from the sin of abuse, one from the sin of war and a third from the sin of indifference to the plight of migrants.

Afterward, “the confession of a

number of sins will take place,” said a Vatican statement. “The aim is not to denounce the sin of others, but to acknowledge oneself as a member of those who, by omission or action, become the cause of suffering and responsible for the evil inflicted on the innocent.”

The sins confessed will include: sins against peace; sins against creation; sins against Indigenous populations and migrants; the sin of abuse; sins against women, family and youth; the sin of “using doctrine as stones to be hurled”; and sins against poverty.

The liturgy is specifically geared toward young people, the Vatican said. “Indeed, it will be the young people present in the Basilica who will receive the sign that the future of the Church is theirs.”

Catholic News Service



PRAYER: Pope Francis at a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on Oct. 29, 2023, marking the end of the first session of the Synod on Synodality.

'We Bring So Much Lived Experience'

By Denis Grasska



Austin Galy knows how it feels to pursue educational and career opportunities with a criminal record.

"It's just sort of a stigma that follows you," he said, referring to the failed background checks and job rejections that dog the formerly incarcerated.

Originally from Atlanta, Galy grew up in a home where domestic violence was prevalent. He was arrested multiple times for a variety of reasons, between age 13 and 19, serving sentences in juvenile hall and county jail that ranged from a few weeks to several months.

After a stint in the Air Force, he moved to San Diego for a fresh start.

He earned a bachelor's in Sociology and a master's in Peace and Justice Studies at the University of San Diego, where he now serves on staff in a role that allows him to help others who come from similar backgrounds.

Galy is senior director of Student Social and Economic Mobility at USD's Mulvaney Center for Community, Awareness and Social Action.

In that capacity, he assists students from marginalized communities to navigate the ins and outs of higher education. They include those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the undocumented, and the formerly incarcerated.

With Janelle Brown-Peters, he is also the co-founder of Torero Urban Scholars, a program for USD students who are either formerly incarcerated or "justice-impacted" as the result of an immediate family member's incarceration.

There are 16 students enrolled in the program, which began in 2022.

Brown-Peters said that most tend to be graduate students, rather than undergraduates, and they reflect a wide range of academic disciplines, including Sociology, Peace and Justice Studies, Education and Business.

"Their stories are so different," she said, contrasting those who were incarcerated as juveniles vs. as adults, and those who were sentenced to "a couple of years" behind bars vs. those who spent decades in state correctional facilities or federal prisons.

Speaking with *The Southern Cross* on Sept. 6, Galy said that he had met earlier that day with a 19-year-old and a septuagenarian — both of whom are currently Torero Urban Scholars.

"(The program) covers quite a wide swath, which is kind of beautiful in a way," he said.

Torero Urban Scholars was modeled after programs like Project Rebound and the Underground Scholars Initiative, which are offered at schools in the California State University and University of California systems, respectively.

Brown-Peters said three "pillars" support the program. These are providing training for USD faculty and



BREAKING BARRIERS: Austin Galy, left, and Janelle Brown-Peters chat with Ryan Shipley on the University of San Diego campus. Galy and Brown-Peters are co-founders of Torero Urban Scholars, a program that assists students like Shipley, who are formerly incarcerated.

staff on how best to accommodate formerly incarcerated students; student support, including financial aid, scholarships and career development; and a transfer pipeline, through which USD works with its community college partners to identify and connect with potential transfer students.

The program fosters a sense of community among participating students by hosting a "welcome back" event at the start of the academic year, holiday activities, social outings, and workshops on financial literacy, mental health and other topics.

Galy said that the program also provides advocacy and problem-solving.

"Because of the stigma that follows our community, we have to do a lot of advocating for our students, hence the training that we ask faculty and staff to come to," he said.

Also, the students' circumstances "can shift on a dime," he said. As an example, a student might find himself homeless "all of a sudden" and having "a really hard time getting approved to have an apartment." Then, the program can spring into action, helping that student to find a place to live.

For both Galy and Brown-Peters, the program's mission hits close to home.

Along with his own experience of incarceration, Galy said that many among his own family and friends have been "in and out of the system."

"It seems like almost every other person I know growing up was incarcerated or continues to be impacted by it," he said. "So, (this issue is) very, very near and dear to me personally."

Though Brown-Peters herself has never been incarcerated, she too can empathize.

She grew up in a Southeast San Diego neighborhood and, like Galy,

many of her friends and neighbors were incarcerated.

"(My father) was in and out of the system my entire upbringing," she said.

Her husband has been in prison since 2006, and she is hopeful that he will be released next year.

Galy acknowledged that formerly incarcerated and justice-impacted students tend to have "more needs than the average incoming students out of high school." He noted that many have full-time jobs, young children, or "extenuating circumstances."

But such students also bring "so many assets and strengths" to campus, he said.

Dr. Robert Ehnou, director of the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice, who is himself formerly incarcerated, met Galy and Brown-Peters at USD when he was working on his doctorate, and they were earning their master's degrees.

He described the Torero Urban Scholars program as "really transformational, not just for the students that are involved, but ... for the entire community."

Galy agrees.

"We tend to be viewed from a deficit lens rather than for all the resiliency, and the wisdom, and lived experience that we bring," Galy said of students in the program. "You put any one of our students in a Sociology classroom, you might as well pay them a professor fee because they could teach the class when it comes to criminal justice or juvenile delinquency."

"I think it's such a gift to be able to have us in a classroom," he continued, "because we bring so much lived experience to the theory."

Ryan Shipley, 41, is among the current crop of Torero Urban Scholars.

As a child, he was prescribed stimulants to manage attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). He recalled that it was "a natural progression" from these to the "street drugs" that he started using after high school.

"From there, I ran into trouble with the law pretty much the entire first half of my life," he said.

In 2014, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 10 years on supervised release on charges related to drug distribution.

Now clean and sober, Shipley was released from prison on July 27, 2022. This December, he is on track to earn an Interdisciplinary Certificate in Trauma Awareness and a Restorative Justice Facilitation Certificate. Next May, he expects to receive his master's in Peace and Justice Studies.

After that, he hopes to attend law school.

"Torero Urban Scholars is really what started it all and allowed me the open door to allow my talents, and my skills, and my life experience to make a difference," said Shipley. "It really makes it feel like I went through all that for a reason, and I can use that as my greatest asset instead of my biggest shortcoming."

From Shipley's perspective, the Torero Urban Scholars program provides "an opportunity to prove yourself, and work hard, and be a part of an amazing school, and make a difference."

"That's all anybody can ask for, I guess."

More information:
sandiego.edu/torero-urban-scholars



Election Calls for Reflection, Prudence

By Aida Bustos



“How are we, as members of the Catholic

community in the United States, called to confront this challenging electoral moment in our country’s history and transform it into an opportunity to bring the vision of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the social teaching of the Church into the core of our national life?”

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy asked that question a few weeks before the 2020 presidential election, in an essay titled “Conscience, Candidates and Discipleship in Voting.”

In the essay, he wrote that the faith-filled voter is asked to make the complex judgment: Which candidate will be likely to best advance the common good through his office in the particular political context he or she will face? Such a decision embraces the planes of principle and character, competence and leadership. And, for the faithful voter, the very complexity of this moral judgment demands a recourse to the voice of God that lies deep within each of us — our conscience, he said.

Four years later, citizens are facing another contentious presidential election, which offers starkly competing visions for the future of the nation. Cardinal McElroy once more urges faithful Catholic voters to promote unity, while engaging in deep spiritual reflection on the issues and candidates themselves.

“We are called in our lives as citizens to be missionaries of dialogue and civility in a political culture that values neither. And that requires deep spiritual reflection, courage and judgment. It demands a Christ-like dedication to seeking the truth no matter where it may lie and defining our politics and voting in the light of the Gospel,” he wrote.

He said that the challenge to faith-filled voters was to weigh the salient issues of the day and evaluate them



VOTING MATTERS: “We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: ‘A good Catholic is not interested in politics.’ This is not true: Good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern,” said Pope Francis.

as Christ would in advancing the common good. He singled out three of them: the protection of unborn children; the reversal of climate change that threatens all creation; and the struggle against the culture of exclusion, which is built upon racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, religious prejudice and social division.

However, elections ultimately involve choosing a candidate for public office, not a stance, nor a specific teaching of the Church, he wrote.

The cardinal proposed three criteria that voters could use to help them to discern what candidate to choose.

Leadership is one of them, he noted.

“Good leadership comes in many forms ... It can be inspiring and motivational. It can be healing and unifying. What form of leadership does the United States need at this moment in its history?”

Competence is also a central metric

for voters to consider, he wrote.

“Faith-filled voters must assess the intelligence, human relations skills, mastery of policy and intuitive insights that each candidate brings to bear, for voting discipleship seeks results, not merely aspirations.”

Finally, a candidate’s character also should be considered, citing qualities such as truthfulness, collegiality and political courage.

“How do faith-filled voters integrate the tenets of Catholic social teaching, recognize the role that leadership, character and capacity play in the real world of governing, and preserve a stance of building unity within society?” Cardinal McElroy asked.

They can use the Catholic virtue of prudence to discern their electoral choice, he wrote.

Prudence “brings into balance all of the virtues of the Christian moral life to provide a singularly incisive moral

perspective for the disciple confronting ethically complex problems.”

He added that, “There cannot be faith-filled Catholic voting without the virtue of prudence, exercised within the sanctity of a well-formed conscience.”

In 2020, Cardinal McElroy offered a prayer on the eve of that year’s consequential election, one relevant today.

“In his address to Congress in 2015, Pope Francis said a nation is great when it defends liberty as Abraham Lincoln did, when it seeks equality as Martin Luther King did, and when it strives for justice for the oppressed as Dorothy Day did. Let us pray that our nation embraces the pathway of such greatness in this election year and that faith-filled, prudent disciples are leading the way.”

Voter Information

ONLINE ELECTION INFORMATION

State: sos.ca.gov

San Diego County: sdvote.com

Imperial County: elections.imperialcounty.org

Register to vote online: registertovote.ca.gov

ONLINE CATHOLIC RESOURCE

Campaign to promote civility: CivilizeIt.org

VOTER REGISTRATION STATUS

Check your registration status at sdvote.com (San Diego County) and elections.imperialcounty.org (Imperial County)

KEY ELECTION DATES

Oct. 5: Ballots begin to be mailed to registered voters in San Diego County

Oct. 7: Ballots begin to be mailed to registered voters in Imperial County

Oct. 7-Nov. 4: In-person registration during early voting at county elections office

Oct. 21: By 11:59 p.m., deadline to register online at registertovote.ca.gov

Oct. 21: Registration by mail must be postmarked by this date

Nov. 5: In-person registration and voting at voting locations on Election Day



PHOTOS COURTESY DIOCESAN COMMISSION FOR FILIPINO CATHOLICS

Moving Tribute to San Lorenzo Ruiz

FOLLOWERS: Filipino priests and other clergy joined the members of the Diocesan Commission for Filipino Catholics in a colorful procession around the parking lot at Good Shepherd Church.



“We remember this great saint who gave his life for his faith.”

That’s how Cardinal Robert W. McElroy began the Mass on the Feast Day of San Lorenzo Ruiz on Sept. 14 at Good Shepherd Parish.

San Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino saint, is also considered the patron saint of Filipino migrants.

The Mass, organized by the Diocesan Commission for Filipino Catholics, included traditional prayers and hymns.

Beforehand, commission members participated in a colorful procession. After the Mass, they gathered in the nearby school gym for a reception complete with traditional Filipino cuisine and musical presentations.



BLESSING: Cardinal Robert W. McElroy blessed the medallions to be presented to the altar servers attending the Mass.



CAMP SONG: During the reception, children performed a song in Tagalog they had learned in the Filipino Culture Camp in August.



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Educator's Legacy Lifts Parish's Students

By Iliana De Lara

 **Cristo Rey Parish commemorates the legacy of a dedicated school administrator through a scholarship program that bears her name.**

Since its creation in 1991, the Maida Torres-Spanovik scholarships have been a source of hope and opportunity for the parish's young people who dream of attaining a college degree.

This year's scholarships will be presented on Oct. 20 after the 1 p.m. Sunday Mass.

Maida Torres-Spanovik, Ph.D., was an active member of the San Diego parish for many years before her death in 2004. She was a former teacher and Area Superintendent at the Sweetwater Union School District.

She had a clear vision: support the young people at her parish who wanted to go to college but could not afford it. This vision continues to be a beacon of hope for many of them today, thanks to the educator's family and the Hispanic Committee at the parish, currently headed by Olga Loya Estrada, the program's coordinator.

"It's been an incredible project, and it has had a great impact on the community," Loya said.

Torres-Spanovik donated the funds to begin the program. Since her passing, her family members and friends have continued to fund it, giving around \$15,000 annually, Loya said.

The parish administers the program



SCHOLARS: The college scholarship winners were recognized on Oct. 22, 2023, at Christ the King Parish after a Mass with Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano and Father Tommie Jennings.

and holds events throughout the year to raise funds for the scholarships, collecting an average of \$5,000 annually.

The total amount awarded varies every year, based on how much money is available. Applicants attending a university full-time can receive as much as \$2,500, while those attending a community college part-time can receive up to \$500. The coordinator stressed that all qualified applicants receive a scholarship, adding that she expects that between 15 to 18 scholarships will be awarded this year, the same as last year.

Applicants must submit an essay about their academic goals and career plans and proof of current enrollment in a university or college. As important, they also must prove that they are members of the parish and participate in one of its ministries.

One of the recipients is Monserrat Ramírez Gutiérrez, who is 31 years

old. She moved to the United States when she was 8.

She is a "Dreamer," an undocumented immigrant brought to the United States as a child who has received temporary legal status.

"As a family, we faced many difficulties here," she recalled. "As a 'Dreamer,' I didn't have the same opportunities to continue studying as someone who is a citizen."

She said that she enrolled in a community college knowing that she did not have enough funds to attend a university.

"Getting (the parish's) scholarship was an enormous relief for me and my family," she said. "It not only covered a portion of my educational expenses, but it also allowed me to concentrate on my classes without having to worry about how I was going to pay for the next semester," said Ramírez.

She received a scholarship from

the parish for six years, graduating with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from San Diego State University.

Many scholarship winners return to the parish after graduating from college to participate in one of the ministries.

That's what happened with Ramírez, and then some.

"I now serve as the administrator of the parish," she said, formally taking over two years ago. "I'm trying to give back a little of what they gave me."

The day the parish awards the scholarships is special. The recipients sit together in the church. After Mass, each is called up to receive their check.

Afterward, the students and their families are invited to the parish hall for a reception with the family members of Torres-Spanovik, who year after year travel here from their home in New Mexico for the presentation.

The committee would like to raise more funds to be able to give more scholarships.

"We're a tiny parish and our capacity to raise funds is nearing its limit," Loya said.


She noted that a family member of Torres-Spanovik has passed away, putting at risk future funding for the scholarship program.

This year, though, there's a celebration to plan for the 2024 scholarship recipients.



More information: Olga Loya at (619) 994-7154 or loyaestrada@att.net. 


IN LOVING

Memory



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



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Diocese Welcomes New Formation Leaders



A total of 18 new Directors of Catechetical Ministry and Faith Formation Coordinators gathered for a full day of orientation on Aug. 29 at the diocese's Pastoral Center as they embarked on their new role in parish catechetical ministry. Representatives from 15 parishes across the diocese were present. These leaders will oversee elementary school ministry, middle school ministry, adult faith formation and Christian initiation for children and adults. The diocese is grateful for their yes to serve.

Front row, from left: Susan Varela (St. John the Evangelist, Encinitas), Raechelle Manlapaz and Catherine Embalsado (St. Columba), Megan Trejos (Our Lady of the Rosary), Patricia Myers (St. Agnes), Amanda Holmstrom (St. Brigid), Charlotte Fajardo (Good Shepherd), Diane Adkins (St. Louise de Marillac), Glory Hartdegen (St. Thomas More). Back row: Deacon Lyle Blackmon (Mission San Luis Rey), Sister Sofia Rivera, CCVI (Sacred Heart Mission, Heber), Sister Hellen Muchira, CCVI (Most Precious Blood), Erika Ramirez (St. Anthony of Padua, National City), Monica Salazar (St. John of the Cross), Claudia Escobedo and Christine Gonzalez (Mission San Antonio de Pala), Henrieta Vyzinkar (Our Lady of Grace), and Lupita Lozano (Mission San Luis Rey).

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Questions? Christina Slentz cslentz@sdcatholic.org

Faithful Can ‘Respect Life’ in October

By Denis Grasska



For more than 50 years, the U.S. Catholic Church

has designated October as “Respect Life Month” and the first Sunday of that month (Oct. 6 this year) as “Respect Life Sunday.”

This year’s theme is: “I came so that they might have life” (John 10:10).

“During this month, we take time to reflect on the beauty and sanctity of human life,” said Maria Valencia, associate director of Culture of Life in the Diocese of San Diego.

She said that, during that month, parishes are encouraged to hold such activities as prayers for an end to abortion or to support pregnancy resource centers.

One way for Catholics to get into the spirit of Respect Life Month is by participating in the ongoing fall campaign of 40 Days for Life, which runs from Sept. 25 through Nov. 3.

In communities throughout the world, over the same 40-day period, people will pray and fast that abortion might become both illegal and unthinkable. The centerpiece of the campaign is a peaceful, round-the-clock prayer vigil on the public sidewalks outside local abortion clinics.

There are eight praying locations



ADVOCATES: Participants in 40 Days for Life pray outside abortion clinics.

in San Diego County, including Chula Vista, Clairemont, College Avenue, downtown San Diego, El Cajon, Escondido, Mira Mesa and Vista, as well as in El Centro. For more information, visit sdcatholic.org/event/40-days-for-life-fall.

On Saturday, Oct. 5, Msgr. Steve Callahan will celebrate a Mass for those who have struggled with infertility or experienced reproductive loss; it will take place at 5:30 p.m. at St. Brigid Parish in Pacific Beach.

On Saturday, Oct. 19, Auxiliary Bishop Felipe Pulido will preside at a special Mass for mothers and pregnant women at 10 a.m. at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in El Centro.

Valencia said that October is also a month for life-affirming organizations to hold fundraisers.

For example, a bilingual anniversary gala will mark the 30th anniversary of Rachel’s Hope After-Abortion Healing and the 23rd anniversary of its Spanish-language counterpart, *La Esperanza de Raquel*. It will be held at 5 p.m., Oct. 5, at Our Mother of Confidence Parish. The dress code will be “dressy.” Tickets are \$50 per person. For more information or to register, call (858) 581-3022 or text (858) 752-9378.

Culture of Life Family Services (COLFS) will hold its 15th annual “Pro-Life Is Good” Gala and Auction, beginning at 5:30 p.m., Oct. 19. Catholic author and speaker Chris Stefanick, president and founder of Real Life Catholic, will be the guest speaker at the semi-formal event, which will take place at Paradise Point Resort & Spa, located on Mission Bay. Tickets are \$300 per person or \$2,500 for a table of 10. More information is available at (760) 741-1224, gala@colfs.org and friendsofcolfs.org/gala.

In addition to the unborn, Respect Life Month is also a fitting time to remember those at the other end of life.

On Oct. 5 and Oct. 19, the diocesan Office for Life, Peace and Justice will offer a two-day training workshop for “Caring for the Whole Person,” an initiative of California’s bishops and Catholic healthcare system.

The initiative was launched in response to the California End of Life Option Act, an assisted-suicide law that went into effect in 2016. The training equips parishes to support the sick and dying and to direct them to community resources.

Valencia noted that the prospect of assisted suicide is far less tempting to those who do not feel isolated and unsupported. She explained that the initiative seeks to remind the sick and dying “that they are loved, that they are worth it.”

The free training will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the diocesan Pastoral Center. It will include a combination of videos, live presentations and group discussions. Topics covered will include palliative care and hospice, caring for parishioners, roles of clergy and ministers, the parish as a loving community, Catholic moral teaching, advance care planning, and the grieving process.

Those interested in attending the two-day training must register by Monday, Sept. 30, at sdcatholic.org/event/cwp-training. For more information, email cdiaz-romero@sdcatholic.org or call (858) 490-8212.



Welcome our new Executive Director

WILL PETERSON

The Catholic Community Foundation of San Diego (CCFSD) is thrilled to announce the appointment of Will F. Peterson as its new Executive Director. With a deep connection to San Diego and the Catholic community, Mr. Peterson brings a wealth of experience in philanthropy, nonprofit leadership, and Catholic education.

“I jumped at the opportunity to return home to San Diego because the position is driven by mission, and guided by faith and strong business principles. This reflects what I have built over the last seven years and feels very much aligned with who I am.”

- Will Peterson

Graduate of the University of Notre Dame (B.A. '14, M.Ed. '16)
Founder of Modern Catholic Pilgrim

Under Mr. Peterson’s leadership, CCFSD aims to expand its donor base and enhance its philanthropic efforts. With a background in building strong donor relationships and a passion for advancing the Foundation’s vision, he is well-positioned to lead CCFSD into this new phase of growth.



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St. Francis and Wolf of Gubbio

By Christina Bagaglio Slentz, Ph.D.



One of the most beloved legends of St. Francis is the story of “The Wolf of Gubbio.”

According to tradition, the town of Gubbio, located in the Umbria region of early 13th century Italy, was increasingly suffering the violent attacks of a big, scary wolf. Straight out of a child’s — or Creation Care minister’s — nightmare, this carnivorous “apex predator” was not only feasting on livestock but had also begun to terrorize the townsfolk with attacks on humans. Sadly, the village’s best efforts to thwart the animal were unsuccessful.

Enter St. Francis. An atypical hero. A man who had pledged himself to a life of non-violence.

Undaunted by the charging wolf, Francis humbly stood fast and gently preached the way of Christ to this great beast, stopping him in his tracks and gentling the creature. He entered into dialogue with the wolf, offering him a deal: If the wolf promised to abandon his predatory behavior, the townspeople would, in turn, promise to feed him. The wolf put a paw into St. Francis’ hand. All agreed, peace and security returned, and a new friendship took root in Gubbio.

More to the Story?

As we celebrate the Feast of St. Francis in October, let us ponder this tale further. Is this simply a story of “how to tame a wolf” — or any wild animal, for that matter? Perhaps a key detail invites us to consider St. Francis to be more than a “wolf-whisperer” and the moral of this story to be more than a lesson in superficial exchange.

Remember, the wolf calms down when Francis preaches to him “the way of Christ.” How is it that this way of Christ transformed the wolf, such that he — or she? — departed from what many might think as “natural?”

In today’s dog-eat-dog culture, the work of Charles Darwin tends to dominate our expectations of the natural world. His “survival of the fittest” theory of evolution not only explains patterns of life on earth but also offers to many a convenient justification for dismissing the demise of the weak. Better to be a “Wolf of Wall Street” than a “sacrificial lamb,” right? It’s just natural.

A Holistic View of Nature: Competition and Cooperation

While Darwin’s work illuminates the genius of our Creator and creation’s capacity to evolve, evolution is only one force of nature bearing the fingerprint of God. Symbiosis, for one, shines a light on patterns of cooperation and interconnectedness woven throughout creation. Might the way of Christ, which St. Francis preached to the wolf, have offered this other path, a path of integral ecology?



Most likely, your favorite science-savvy fifth-grader can tell you symbiosis describes a relationship between two dissimilar organisms. Technically, this includes “commensalistic” and “parasitic” relationships — one-sided beneficial relationships that are respectively harmless or harmful to the host organism.

In common terms, however, we typically think of “symbiotic relationships” as mutually beneficial. If you have seen the movie “Finding Nemo,” you will recall that the clown fish boasts a secretion that enables them to live in the safety of highly toxic anemones, where other creatures cannot pursue them. The clown fish acts as a colorful lure, drawing not-so-lucky predators into the anemone’s stinging tentacles, leaving them paralyzed and ready to be consumed by the anemone.

As science reveals more about the incredible design of our Creator, we discover case after case of harmonious exchange throughout the natural world. In botany, we have only more recently come to understand mycorrhizal fungi, critical interconnectors that form a mutually beneficial relationship with plants. In fact, about 95% of the plants scientists have examined exhibit a relationship with this fungi. By attaching to and penetrating plant roots below ground, this fungi can consume sugars produced by the plant in the above-ground process of photosynthesis. In turn, the fungi grow in a lacy web of

filaments called *hyphae*, extending far into the soil beyond the reach of the plant roots, thereby increasing the plant’s capacity to absorb nutrients and water. To learn more as a family about the integrated lives of plants, trees and fungi, go to kidsgardening.org/resources/digging-deeper-mycorrhizae. A good read for adults is “Finding the Mother Tree” by Suzanne Simard.

Taming the Inner Wolf

The story of the Wolf of Gubbio presents to us the danger of violent competition in our imperfect world in contrast to the self-giving power of Jesus — a way of love of neighbor and integral flourishing. While both patterns are evident in our natural world, we know that hyper-consumption or domination by an apex predator disrupts the balance of an ecosystem, introducing chaotic results.

Moreover, we — God’s chosen stewards of creation — are given the grace to act with more than animal instincts; we are given the choice to embrace the way of Christ, as St. Francis and the Wolf of Gubbio do. We might think of this choice as a struggle with our “inner wolf,” that primal tendency to resort to over-consumption, cruel domination, and self-promotion.

How might you put your paw in the hand of St. Francis, agreeing to be transformed? Being our best self is assuredly part of God’s plan, but so is our capacity to act for the good of others, to live as contributing participants of a thriving, integral ecology.

As we conclude our 2024 Season of Creation with the Feast of St. Francis on Oct. 4, we invite you to learn more about caring for creation and how to be a positive force of nature at our family-friendly Feast of St. Francis Trees, Peace and All Goodness Festival on Oct. 6. In addition to our tree blessing and giveaway, there will be free churros, eco-education, crafts and recognition of our children’s art contest winners. For more information and to register, please go to bit.ly/SDCC_FOSF24.

God has given us the grace to steward the gift of our sister, Mother Earth. Our gift to God is our choice to act with hope and love for the good of our interconnected common home!



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

sdccatholic.org/creation

Creation Care Ministry Explores a Theme Monthly to Inspire Action.

Disciples Called to Protect Creation



JOHN GASTALDO

PRAYERFUL: Cardinal Robert W. McElroy celebrated a Mass on Sept. 14 at St. Gregory the Great Parish as part of the Season of Creation, Sept. 1 to Oct. 4, the Feast of St. Francis. This period highlights the faithful's relationship with the Creator and their role as His chosen stewards of the gift of creation.



JOHN GASTALDO

GIFTS: Seminarian Ralph Marinas, Caroline Yandell, Barbara Barnes and Ted Flora, left to right, served at the Season of Creation Mass.



JOHN GASTALDO

FACETIME: Before and after the Mass, the diocese's Creation Care Ministry shared resources for individuals and families, schools and parishes.

By Aida Bustos



“Who do you say that I am?”

Cardinal Robert W. McElroy explored that question from the day's Gospel in a special Mass on Sept. 14 at St. Gregory the Great Parish highlighting Care for Creation.

The question is not just for the Apostles, the cardinal said in his homily. “It's a question that is directed to each and every one of us.”

He said that the answer has two dimensions.

“The first is in our spiritual lives, not in some abstract sense but deeply in our hearts and souls. Who do we believe Jesus is? Who do we embrace when we embrace Jesus Christ?”

He said the second element is, “How do my actions in the world say who Jesus is for me? And what does that mean for our moral lives and how we treat others?”

He shared a story about Rwanda, an overwhelmingly Catholic country that is home to two tribes with an adversarial relationship dating back to colonial times — the majority Hutu and the minority Tutsi. In 1994, the death of the Hutu president led to conspiracy theories and ultimately to the horrific massacre by the Hutus of more than 800,000 Tutsi men, women and children.

A priest in a parish in Kalongo, however, had asked his parishioners to understand true discipleship and to

live by those values, the cardinal said.

The majority Hutus in the parish, led by a charismatic prayer group, decided to shield every Tutsi in their community, gathering them in the church building.

“If you're going to kill them, you're going to have to kill all of us, too,” the cardinal said the Hutus told the attackers.

“It's called the ‘Miracle of Kalongo,’ because ... not a single person died during that terrible time because the Hutus had internalized the understanding of what we, as Christians, are called to be in terms of who we say Jesus is ... and how we should act in the world.”

The cardinal then spoke about God's gift of creation.

“The spirituality of creation calls us to see all of the beauty that God has bestowed upon us, all of its wonders, and the ways in which it gives us the very possibility of living with dignity.”

He spoke of the second dimension of creation care, “of understanding that God calls us to protect, to savor, to understand the glory of the creation that lies all around us and which is under grave threat.”

“That's what we celebrate in this Mass today. It is the same way the people of Kalongo celebrated those two questions: ‘Who do we believe that Jesus is for me? What does that mean, and how do I truly act upon it in my life in the world?’”

School Embraces Transfers from Brawley

By Denis Grasska



EL CENTRO —
Students, parents, teachers and even the principal of Sacred Heart School in Brawley, which closed last summer, have found a new home at St. Mary's School in neighboring El Centro.

At St. Mary's, the 2024-2025 academic year began Aug. 21. Among the approximately 180 students enrolled this year are 19 who attended Sacred Heart School last year.

After the announcement that Sacred Heart School was closing due to years of low enrollment, the Diocese of San Diego offered an annual \$1,000 scholarship for Sacred Heart students who decided to continue their Catholic education this year at either St. Mary's or Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy in Calexico.

"Sacred Heart students are thriving and have been enthusiastically embraced by the St. Mary's community," said Principal Annalisa Burgos, who came to St. Mary's this year after eight years as Sacred Heart School's principal.

Second-grader Dominic Lu admits that he was "very sad" to learn that Sacred Heart School, where he had



FIRST DAY: St. Mary's School in El Centro opened on Aug. 21, welcoming returning students as well as those who transferred from Sacred Heart School, which closed last summer.

been a student for two years, was closing.

"Sacred Heart School closing meant not seeing some of my teachers and a lot of my friends and classmates," he said.

But of his first year at St. Mary's, he said, "It's going great so far."

Fourth-grader Valentina Berry had attended Sacred Heart School for six years.

"I felt really sad and really nervous to go to a new school," she admitted, while adding that the new school year has been "really fun because I have a

teacher that is really funny and all my classmates are nice."

The principal said that parents of transfer students from Sacred Heart School have been "relieved and pleased with their children's smooth transition to their new school environment."

And these parents have quickly become active members of their new school community, she said, sharing that several Sacred Heart families have joined the Parent Teacher Group (PTG) and have volunteered as room parents.

Burgos said that five teachers from Sacred Heart School have joined the St. Mary's faculty this year, while two more are now teaching at Our Lady of Guadalupe Academy.

"All of them have been warmly welcomed and are thriving in their new roles," Burgos said of her former Sacred Heart colleagues.

For Belen Villalobos, a seventh-grader who had attended Sacred Heart School for eight years, seeing these familiar faces has been a boon.

She said that she was "excited and happy" that some students and teachers from Sacred Heart would also be going to St. Mary's.

"It's been nice getting to know new teachers," she said, "but also having some of the same teachers, too."

Burgos actually has a history with her new school: She taught middle-schoolers there from 2000 to 2002.

"St. Mary's School holds a special place in my heart, as it was where I began my ministry in Catholic education years ago," she said. "Returning to St. Mary's has felt like coming home, and the transition has been even more positive than I could have hoped."

"While the closure of Sacred Heart School was a challenging experience," she said, "I trust in God's plan and believe He guides us through these changes."

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Father Efrain Bautista, pastor of Corpus Christi Parish in Bonita, recently got a firsthand look at “the hard work it takes to put cherries on our table.”

Father Bautista was one of 14 participants in a Pastor Mission Immersion Trip sponsored by Catholic Extension Society. It was held from July 9 to 11 in Yakima, Washington.

The Diocese of Yakima is home to an ever-increasing migrant population, both temporary and permanent, who are attracted to the agricultural region and are mostly Catholic. Temporary migrant workers arrive in June for cherry-picking season. The work is labor intensive, with some of the workers showing up at 4 a.m. to the fields.

Funded through the Lilly Endowment Inc., the Mission Immersion program aims to broaden Church leaders’ horizons through learning experiences of the Church’s missionary activities.

Father Bautista participated in the



FIELD WORK: Father Efrain Bautista, of Corpus Christi Parish, center, visited agricultural sites in Yakima, Washington, in a program that immerses faith leaders in the Church’s missionary activities.

COURTESY CATHOLIC EXTENSION SOCIETY

trip alongside fellow priests from the Archdioceses of Newark, Chicago and New Orleans.

They participated in the Literacy Wagon Ministry serving teachers, students and children, talked with migrant families and read to the children. They also met and participated in Mass at the migrant camps. The Literacy Wagon and Mass in the Fields are part of a broad effort to reach out to migrant workers where they live, and to bring Church to them, according to information from the Endowment.

“It was an eye-opening experience to see the sacrifices many of these families go through to provide (for) their families, including enduring very early hours to beat the heat of central Washington,” Father Bautista said, reflecting on the trip.

“Among the things which stuck to me is the need to see the Church beyond the Diocese of San Diego,” he said. “It is, at times, easy for us to simply focus on our parish, diocese and region and not think about the broader Church. I think this trip also influenced my way of seeing just the amount of work it takes to put food on our tables and all those who do that hard work.”

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Asking, 'Why'?



Over the next five months, we will reflect on the steps needed to meet the challenge Jesus presents us, beginning with a period of discernment.

Jesus wasn't interested in justifying people's self-righteousness, but wanted to wake them up to God's vision for them. As the Gospel writers attest, what Jesus teaches and how He lives is God's intervention in history. In his Second Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul stresses how God's communication with reality goes beyond laws written on stone tablets. The Spirit of God, he reminds the community, writes on "hearts of flesh," calling us to live out God's desires in history (2 Cor 3:2-6).

As a community of faith, we have many examples of individuals who suddenly connected their sense of a loving God with the urgency of making that love visible in the world. Most often, this clarity emerged from an everyday encounter. Saints like Francis of Assisi,

Columnist

Cecilia González-Andrieu, Ph.D.



Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, as well as ordinary people like our grandmothers, experienced moments that awakened and transformed their faith because they cared deeply about something or someone in their midst. Even Our Lady of Guadalupe shows how she was moved to intervene in history by the suffering of the Mexican people.

We also see this in Jesus as He has experiences that clarify His vocation. Like us, Jesus was free and had choices to make. For instance, when Jesus is baptized, it is as a disciple of John, who explicitly links love of God with acts of repentance. The Baptist's disciples are called to share the necessities of life with the poor and to be honest in all their dealings. After this, Jesus heads out to the desert to face head-on what is lighting a fire in His heart. The temptations Jesus faces in the desert revolve around comfort,

wealth, power. He could have chosen these, as many religious leaders of the time had, turning a blind eye to the suffering caused by the Romans while enriching themselves. But Jesus forcefully rejects the glamor presented to Him and goes home to discern what this means. It is there, in the midst of His people, that the depth of who He is comes to the surface.

The young people I teach are often on the precipice of such a moment, when they are facing hard choices and when only an openness to God's voice within them will set them on the right path. Young people need to feel Jesus' humanity accompanying them through their own fragility. I often ask them to imagine Jesus sitting in Nazareth asking Himself, "Why am I being called out of quiet anonymity into the difficult life of a prophet?" As He prays with His community in the synagogue, He is asked to read the scroll. Remarkably, He hears the prophet Isaiah speaking directly to Him (Luke 4:16-22). In Isaiah's haunting words, Jesus finds the answer to His "why" in the suffering that surrounds Him: In the poor, the

captive, the blind, the oppressed. Seeing the truth of their brokenness will motivate Him every day to get up, try again, and continue to discern where He is needed. Jesus knows that God is love, and His answer to "Why should I do this?" comes from the love that burns in Him for the most vulnerable.

In a time when political polarization can make caring for the vulnerable seem partisan, we are called to remember that this call comes from the Gospel. Discernment, like Jesus' own reflection in the desert and synagogue, is the foundation of all meaningful action. As Jesus continued to discern His calling, so too are we invited to make discernment a continual practice. This first step invites us to pause and notice. Reflect on the suffering, injustice and vulnerability that exist both near and far in today's world, and pay attention to what begins to burn in your own heart.

Theologian Cecilia González-Andrieu, Ph.D., is a professor at Loyola Marymount University.

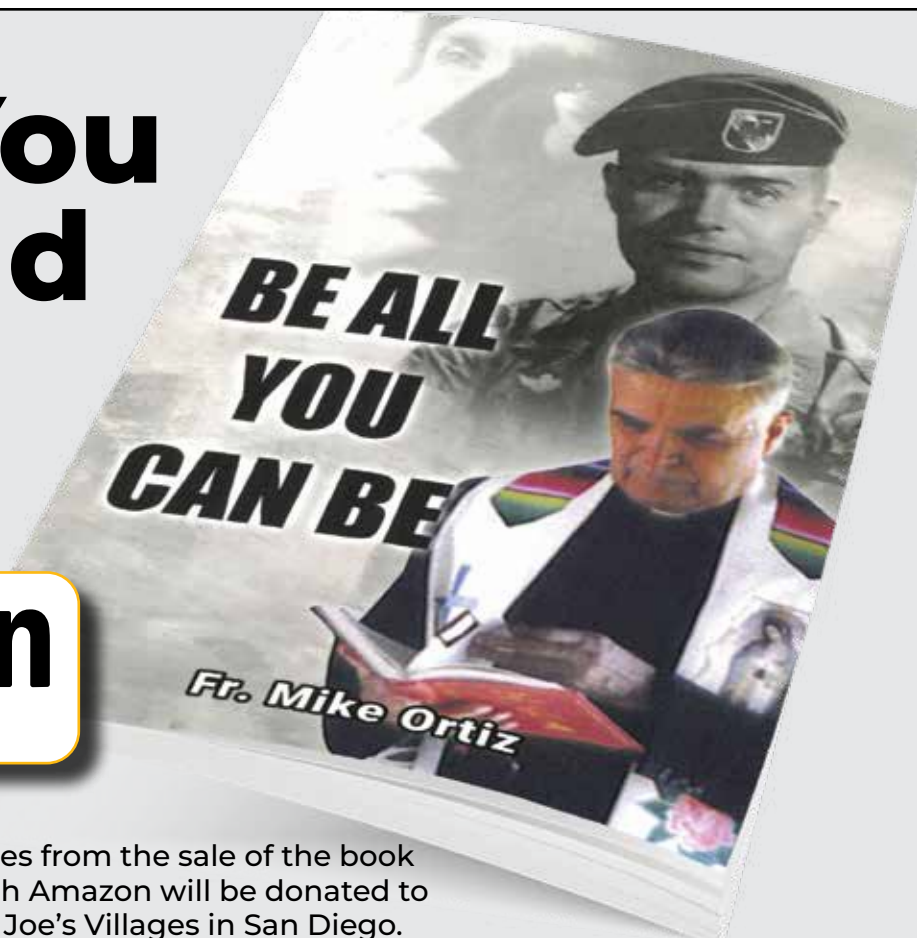
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Father Mike Ortiz is now retired from both the army chaplaincy, and the active priesthood. After several attempts to become a military chaplain he was finally accepted and volunteered for the Green Berets and served with the 1st, the 3rd, the 5th and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

What Will You Choose: Fear or Hope?



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Fear contracts, paralyzes or drives a movement that can save us from danger.

Hope expands, strengthens our spirit, energizes our body and nourishes our purpose in life. We live these two dynamics during our life. Which will prevail?

This reminds me of the legend of two wolves attributed to the Cherokees. A Cherokee elder was teaching his grandson about life and about the struggles we all face in our interior.

He told him, "Inside all of us, there is a constant battle between two wolves. One of the wolves is evil; he represents rage, envy, pain, greed, arrogance, guilt, resentment, lies, false pride, superiority and ego. The other wolf is good; he represents joy,

Columnist

Ricardo Márquez



peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson reflected on these words for a moment and then asked: "Grandfather, which of the two wolves will win?"

The elder replied, "The one you feed."

Just a glimpse at the news and we're overwhelmed with frightening information about a possible third world war, earthquakes and volcanoes springing to life, contentious upcoming elections, even an asteroid heading for the earth — news that makes us afraid, contracting us emotionally.

Prophets throughout time have warned their contemporaries of looming dangers if they didn't profoundly change the values that guided their actions.

There is so much information about international organizations sounding the alarm of what awaits humanity if drastic measures are not taken. In this sense, the pope's encyclical "Laudato Si" is a reference for us from the perspective of faith; it's an invitation to hope. There, we find profound reflections, challenges and invitations to take care of our common home, the earth, where all of us are interconnected and there is no individual or collective conduct that does not affect all of us.

The awareness of this reality is the beginning of collective responsibility, of the love that Jesus modeled for us. This process of raising awareness about the threatened and vulnerable reality that we all live, and what is

expected of us to sustain and care for life, is the most urgent educational challenge we face in our families, schools, churches, communities and universities in our time.

Today's prophets announce that calamities will only increase if our decisions continue to be guided by neglect and abuse of the earth and its people. Yet they also invite us to make a profound change within ourselves, a radical one that will spark external changes in our families, society and the world.

The Lord, like the prophet Hosea announces (2:14-15), speaks to us in the profound silence of our hearts, in the desert of our suffering, and from there, renews us. Fear or hope? Which of these two dimensions will prevail in your mind and heart? The one you feed.

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

Healthcare Professionals Mass

Sunday, Oct. 20, 2024 11:00 AM

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'Eye-Opening Experience' for Seminarians



One of the things I really enjoyed about being the

pastor at St. Didacus for more than 11 years was the diversity of the people in the parish and the school.

We had folks from Russia, Egypt, Syria, Nigeria, Colombia, Mexico, Korea, Vietnam, England, Ireland, Ethiopia, Eritrea, China and many other countries. The different countries of origin gave our parish a small taste of what the universal Church was like.

Our men preparing for priesthood also have the opportunity to interact pastorally with our people in the Diocese of San Diego, including immigrants.

In August, I had the privilege of going with four of our seminarians to the Casa del Migrante in Tijuana. It was part of an immersion experience organized by Laura Martin-Spencer, the diocese's Coordinator of Pastoral Formation at the St. Francis Center for Priestly Formation. I had volunteered at the Casa for a month during a sabbatical in 2014, and I had very positive memories and received a broader view of the world.

The Casa del Migrante is part of the ministry of Scalabrinian religious men and women. The Casa was founded in 1987 to assist the immigrants, refugees and those deported by the United States who arrive in Tijuana every day in search of a better life.

Father Patrick Murphy, the Scalabrinian priest and CEO, shared with me that the Casa has offered uninterrupted service for almost 37 years assisting more than 270,000 migrants. Their mission statement was taken from a passage in the Gospel of St. Matthew: "I was a stranger and you welcomed Me" (Matt 25:30). We also have two Scalabrinian priests stationed at the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Chula Vista.

The four seminarians who went to the Casa had different cultural and educational backgrounds. I would like to share some of their thoughts about their experience.

Matthew Junker is a lawyer who is discerning priesthood.

"Being at the Casa helped me move past experiencing migration as an abstract political debate to encounter real



MEAL TIME: Seminarians Liam Cruz Kelly, left, and Francisco Lopez recently helped to feed around 40 children staying at Casa del Migrante in Tijuana.

Contributor

Father Michael J. Sinor



people seeking safety and security. My heart was filled as I got to know families through serving meals and spending time with the kids playing dominos, helping with English, and cracking jokes. Pope Francis talks about God's style being one of closeness, compassion and tenderness, and my time at the Casa helped form me in that style. I was blessed to be there, learning from these families and seeing that God is with them, walking with His people."

Francisco Lopez, a transfer here from the seminary in Tijuana, had this to say:

"This is my second time going to the Casa del Migrante. It is always great being there, giving others the gift of serving and being with them to help them in a way that offers hope in our society. The Casa has impacted people, and even we who were there, because everyone is cared for with dignity and

seen as an image of Christ present. The Casa has a place in my heart, and I will continue to pray and contribute whenever possible."

Ralph Mariñas has a bachelor's degree in Science in Medical Technology from the Philippines. This is what he wrote:

"Casa del Migrante is a privileged place in the eyes of God. In my brief stay there, I saw firsthand the promise of Christ that He will be with His people and that He will not abandon them. I met people who had to flee from their homes and experienced tremendous stress and anxiety, but Casa del Migrante became a safe haven where their needs were met and their souls given rest. It was truly an eye-opening experience, and it has given me a face and a sense of humanity to the issue of immigration."

Liam Cruz Kelly is both Irish and Salvadoran. He has a doctorate in Medieval Literature. This is what he shared:

"At Casa del Migrante, you will encounter God's favored people, the poor and searching. Some of these people are not unlike my own father, Guillermo Cruz, who immigrated to the U.S. from El Salvador in the 1980s. Despite many

difficulties, he worked hard, pursued an education, learned English, obtained citizenship, became chair of the Economics department at our local college, and raised our family in the Catholic faith. Sadly, he passed away last November. But, as I served the residents of the Casa and as I spoke with them in my broken Spanish, I felt connected to him once again.

"I was also honored to cantor the Mass at the Casa one evening and, as I looked out onto the congregation, gathered in folding chairs, I saw my father's face in theirs. The refrain of the responsorial psalm moved me deeply, as I chanted the words of Psalm 23 together with those who need so much: 'El Señor es mi pastor, nada me faltará' (The Lord is my Shepherd, nothing will I lack)."

At the beginning of the day and the end of the day, we are all sons and daughters of God. Who we are is who we are in God's eyes.

Father Michael J. Sinor is Coordinator of Spiritual Direction at the diocese's St. Francis Center for Priestly Formation.

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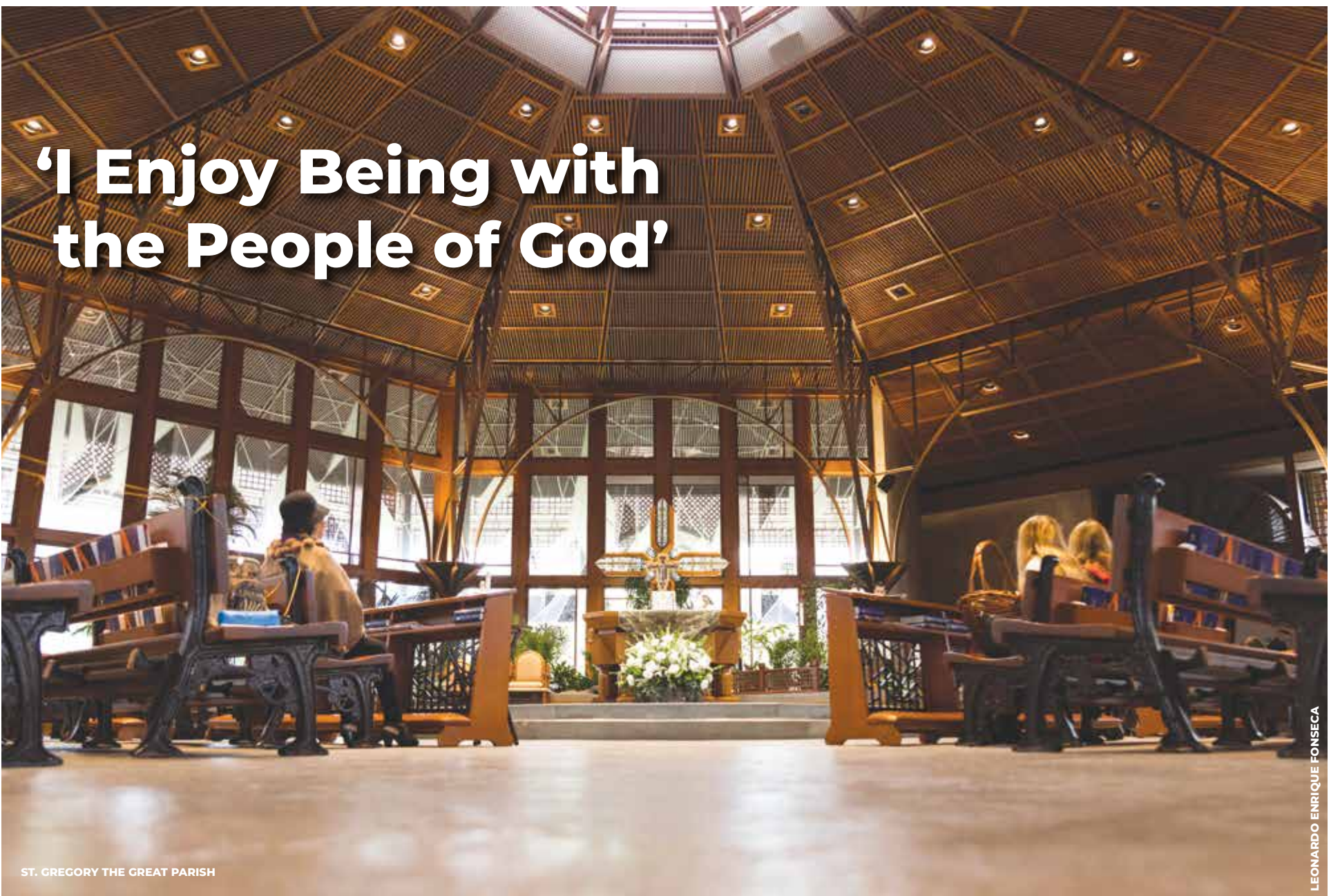
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ST. GREGORY THE GREAT PARISH

LEONARDO ENRIQUE FONSECA

By Denis Grasska



Paulist Father Bart Landry is pastor of St. Gregory the Great Parish in Scripps Ranch.

Father Landry, 54, has served in that role since July of last year.

Born in Church Point, Louisiana, to a Southern Baptist father and a Catholic mother, he was ordained to the priesthood on May 19, 2007, in New York City.

At the time of his appointment as pastor of St. Gregory the Great Parish, he was serving as a full-time evangelization minister (mission preaching and parish revivals) for the Paulist Fathers and as the coordinator for the Black Catholic Ministry in the Diocese of Sacramento.

Question: When did you first feel called to religious life?

Answer: At the age of 14, I entered Divine Word High School Seminary in Wisconsin. I did so mostly out of curiosity, because I don't think that I had the language or the understanding at that time to articulate a call from God.

After high school, I did four years of undergraduate studies, earning a bachelor's in philosophy. Then, I entered St. Bernard Abbey in Cullman, Alabama, to become a Benedictine monk.

Pastor, St. Gregory the Great Parish

Father Bart Landry, C.S.P.



What appealed to you about the Benedictines?

It's a very rewarding and beautiful life. What drew me in was the rhythm of life, called the "Horarium," that I found there. The day is punctuated with moments when everyone comes together in prayer as a community.

Why did you leave the monastery? What led you to the Paulists?

After almost 15 years at the Benedictine monastery, I felt called to be more apostolic, especially in terms of evangelization. Feeling drawn to more missionary activity, I visited several religious communities and, among them, I felt that it was with the Paulists that my gifts and talents would be best utilized.

I've been a Paulist for about 22 years. We're a missionary community, though we are strictly missionaries within the United States. We focus on evangelization and spreading the word of God. We also reach out to those who may find themselves on the peripheries of the Church, and engage in ecumenical dialogue with our Christian sisters and brothers from other faith traditions.

Among the ways that Paulists engage in evangelization is through what's called "mission preaching." For some Paulists, mission preaching is their exclusive ministry. They travel across the country, accepting invitations to speak at parishes on a variety of topics.

My assignment before becoming pastor of St. Gregory the Great was in evangelization, so I did a lot of parish preaching, missions and revivals within the Black and African American communities.

What have you found most fulfilling about being a priest?

The people. I enjoy being with the people of God, working with them and sharing their journey of faith. I truly feel that their experiences have helped to shape me into the priest I am today. As long as I'm with the people of God, I am really happy and fulfilled — not just happy, because happiness is fleeting, but fulfilled.

I really can't name any one thing that has given me pause or made me question my vocation over the years. Challenges — or I should say, issues — arise from day to day, but they're usually laid to rest before sunset. God has never put me in a place where there were challenges so great that His grace did not overcome them. It's a matter of trust and surrendering to God. All things work together for the glory of God.

What advice would you offer those who are trying to discern their vocation?

First and foremost, pay attention to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in recognizing your own gifts and talents, because you don't join a religious community to simply have that community change you. You join a community so that you can contribute with your gifts and talents. Discern what those are, and then you will be more aware of how you will best live that out.

You spent 15 years with the Benedictines before deciding that that wasn't your vocation. Presumably, you don't view those years as "wasted" ...

Not at all. The Lord puts us in life situations where we need to be. We bloom in the garden where He plants us until He decides that He wants to transplant us somewhere else. We must try to do our best at every stage.

You may enter religious life as a Benedictine monk, whose primary charism is contemplation. And while you are there, you learn, as I did, to really root yourself in a deep personal prayer life, focusing on solitude and the quietness, the stillness, and the simplicity of God's voice in silence. I still use those gifts, that foundation for personal prayer. It's still valuable to me in my life as a Paulist priest.

News Briefs

Knights Award Seminarian Scholarship

CHULA VISTA — The San Diego Diocese Chapter Knights of Columbus has announced an annual \$500 scholarship to help defray the costs of studying for the priesthood at a Catholic seminary.

Named in honor of retired Father John Grace, O.S.A., the scholarship will be awarded to a first-year seminarian, who will receive \$500 for each of his four years of theology studies.

The 2024-2025 scholarship will be presented to Michael Sibal during the Knights' Priest and Religious Appreciation Dinner on Friday, Oct. 11, at St. Pius X Parish in Chula Vista.

Sibal, 34, was born in Alameda and grew up in San Diego. He is a member of St. Michael's Parish in Paradise Hills. For the last three years, he has studied Philosophy with the Marian Fathers at Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio. He was recently accepted as a seminarian for the Diocese of San Diego.

Beginning Experience Weekend Coming in October

OCEANSIDE — Beginning Experience of San Diego will be hosting a healing weekend for those grieving the loss of a marriage.

It will be held Oct. 11 to 13 at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside.

Separated, divorced and widowed men and women are welcome to come and meet others who have experi-

enced a similar loss.

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

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.

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.

Mass to Mark Domestic Violence Awareness Month

The diocesan Office for Family Life and Spirituality is inviting local Cath-

olics 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, according to the U.S. Catholic Church.

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.

Special Mass to Be Held for Healthcare Professionals

The annual Healthcare Professionals Mass will be held at 11 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 20, at St. Mary Magdalene Parish.

The liturgy, which will be celebrated this year by Auxiliary Bishop Ramón Bejarano, acknowledges those who serve in the healthcare profession, including physicians, nurses, mental health caregivers, and their office staff.

The Healthcare Professionals Mass is known by some as the "White Mass" because of the white lab coats traditionally worn by many healthcare professionals. It is often celebrated in October, which is when the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, patron saint of physicians, also takes place.

Healthcare professionals are welcome to wear their lab coats or uniforms during Mass.

A complimentary lunch will follow in the parish hall.

For more information, call (858) 490-8323 or email mvalencia@sdccatholic.org.

'Love Our Priests' 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.

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.

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.

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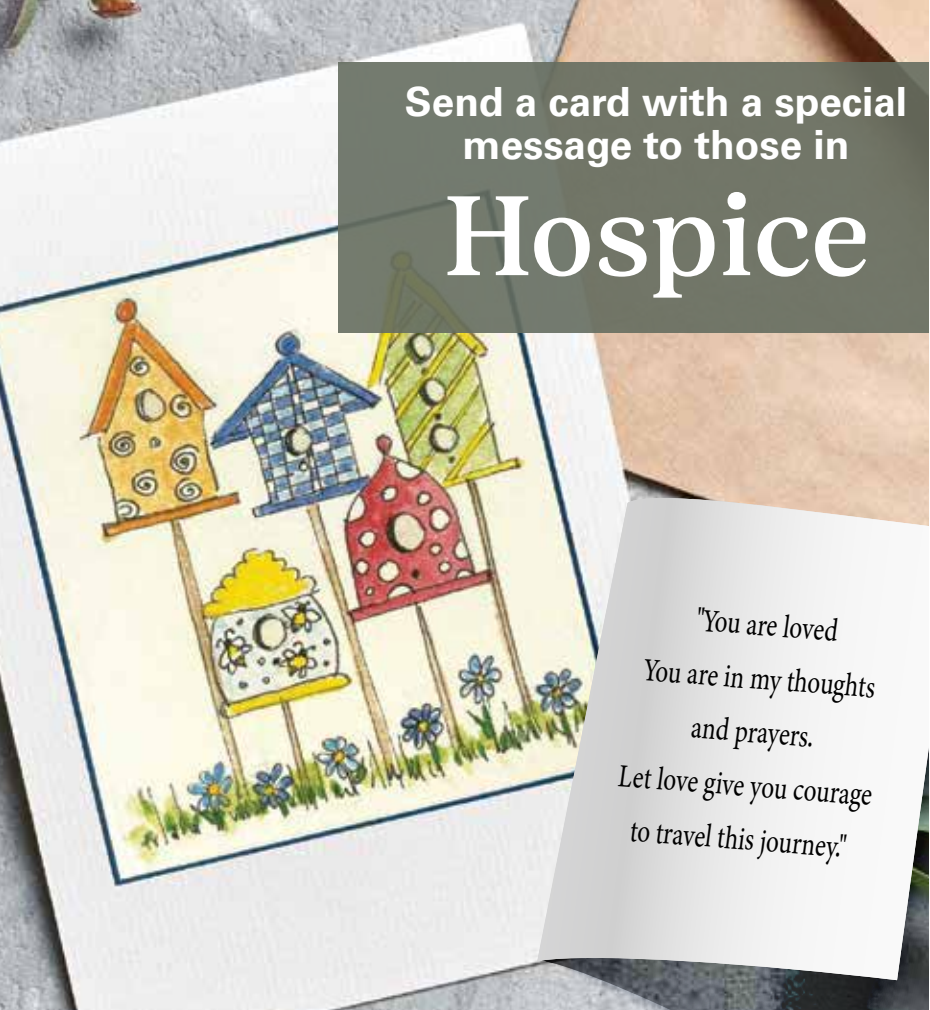
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October Festivities, Celebrations at Parishes

'Evening in Bavaria' at San Rafael Parish

"An Evening in Bavaria" will be held from 5 to 7 p.m., Friday, Oct. 11, in the church hall at San Rafael Parish in Rancho Bernardo.

Hosted by the parish's Knights of Columbus Valley of Angels Council #9170, the Oktoberfest will feature a German-inspired menu, and kids' fare. Beer, wine and soft drinks will also be for sale. And music will be provided by an Oompah band.

There will be a raffle for several gift cards, with accommodations for a Las Vegas Get-Away as the grand prize.

Tickets at the door will be \$20 for adults and \$10 for children ages 6 to 18. Discounted pre-sale tickets will be \$17 and \$7, respectively; they will be sold after all Masses during the Sept. 28-29 and Oct. 5-6 weekends. Children ages 5 and under are free. All net proceeds will support Knights of Columbus council charities.

Fall Festival Fun Coming to Guardian Angels

SANTEE — Guardian Angels Parish will hold its annual fall festival from Friday, Oct. 11, to Sunday, Oct. 13.

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

The pulled pork plate fundraiser

will be offered on Saturday, Oct. 12, from noon until 7 p.m. or for as long as supplies last.

The festival location is 9310 Dalehurst Road, Santee. The hours will be 5 to 9 p.m., Friday; noon to 9 p.m., Saturday; and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday. For more information, visit guardianangelssantee.org or call (619) 448-1213.

Jamulfest Returns to St. Pius X

JAMUL — St. Pius X Parish will host its 61st annual Jamulfest-Gymkhana 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. There will be a parade at 9 a.m.

Jamulfest will feature live entertainment, a deep-pit BBQ, a beer garden, a rummage sale, a craft fair, 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.

Knights Preparing to Go 'Medieval' in Poway

POWAY — The Knights of Columbus at St. Gabriel Parish in Poway will host "Medieval Fantasy," a dinner-auction fundraiser, on Saturday, Oct. 19.

The event will run from 5 to 10 p.m. in the parish's Msgr. Charles

Dollen Hall, and organizers promise "A Knight to Remember."

Guests will enjoy dinner, a hosted bar, casino games, entertainment, a costume contest, both silent and live auctions, and the opportunity to purchase a ticket for the Reverse Raffle with a \$10,000 first prize.

Tickets are \$150 per person, adults-only, and can be purchased at powayknights.com.

All proceeds will support Knights-sponsored charities and nonprofit community organizations.

St. Martin's Festival Includes 'Haunted House'

LA MESA — St. Martin of Tours Parish will hold its fall festival on Friday, Oct. 25, with food, rides, games, prizes, a "haunted house" and more. It will take place from 5 to 8:30 p.m. in the church parking lot at 7710 El Cajon Blvd, La Mesa 91942.

Proceeds will benefit St. Martin of Tours Academy.

St. Jude's Holding Parish Fiesta

St. Jude Shrine of the West Parish will hold a parish fiesta, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., during the weekend of Oct. 26-27.

There will be Masses, a procession in honor of St. Jude, live entertainment, delicious food and fun raffle drawings.

For more information, visit the parish office at stjudesd.com or call (619) 264-2195.

Obituary



Father James P. Retzner, O.S.A.

Augustinian Father James P. Retzner, 75, died Sept. 11 at Scripps Mercy Hospital.

Born in Wausau, Wisconsin, Father Retzner first encountered the Augustinians at St. Patrick Parish in North Park.

He professed vows as an Augustinian brother in 1976.

His first assignment was as a teacher at St. Augustine High School in San Diego and then at Villanova Prep School in Ojai. Shortly after these apostolates, then-Brother Retzner was introduced to the ministry that shaped the rest of his life — hospital ministry.

Father Retzner was ordained to the priesthood in 1995.

He served as a chaplain at Scripps Mercy Hospital in San Diego. For many years until his retirement, he was a full-time chaplain at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles.

A funeral Mass for Father Retzner was celebrated Sept. 21 in the St. Augustine High School Chapel. Burial followed at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery and Mausoleum.

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