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Friends, I prepared these remarks for the installation of Father Matthew Murray as new pastor of St. Isidore Parish in Danville on Aug. 14. But they apply to all good pastors.

What’s the definition of a good pastor? He must be a good shepherd, after the example of the model Good Shepherd, Christ Himself. What does that look like?

First, a good pastor willingly and lovingly cares for the sheep entrusted to his care. Father Matthew, you immediately and happily accepted the assignment to care for the good people of St. Isidore. No pushback, no anger at being moved, no sulking or cynicism. Just a willingness to go where the bishop and the Church need you. Like Our Lady, who when responding to the angel at the Annunciation said, “Let it be done unto me according to your word.” (Lk 1:38) You are off to an excellent start.

This assignment was not of your making or asking. In fact, the only time you had expressed to me any preference for a parish was in 2016, when as a deacon you were assisting me with Mass at St. Mark in Richmond. Richmond is dangerous: There had been multiple shootings in the neighborhood. It was poor; the rectory had bed sheets tacked over the windows for curtains; yet it was full of faith! As we processed down the aisle of the church packed full of humble yet enthusiastic worshipers, you whispered to me: “When I am ordained, Bishop, may I please serve in a parish like this one?”

Well, Danville is not Richmond, but it IS filled with people of faith. And these people need a good pastor who will love them, serve them, and care for them. They need a pastor after the heart of the Good Shepherd.

Secondly, to be a good pastor, you need to make St. Isidore a “Christ-centered parish,” not a “pastor-centered parish.” Your motto should be that of St. John the Baptist, who saw Jesus walking by and said, “He must increase, I must decrease.” A Christ-centered parish begins with a Christ-centered priest. You, and your parochial vicar, Father Candelario, must have a loving, personal relationship with the living Jesus Christ. Only then can you lead and invite others to have such a relationship. You have to love Jesus like the first apostles did, before you can go to others and announce to them, “We have found the Messiah!”

Christ said a “good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.” It’s not the other way around. The parishioners do not exist to serve the pastor. Your vocation is to serve them with your whole heart and soul, and if need be, even to “lay down your life for them.” Just as Christ laid down His life for us on the Cross. You have already shown your ability to “lay down your life for the sheep” when, as the COVID-19 epidemic broke out, you contacted me and volunteered to minister to COVID-19 victims anywhere in the diocese who needed the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. You volunteered to perform this ministry, even though it might put your own health at risk. Just as St. Aloysius Gonzaga, a fellow alumnus of yours from the Gregorian University in Rome, who gave his life ministering to plague victims in Rome. That’s just one example of what Christ is talking about when he says you need to be willing to lay down your life for your parishioners.

A third aspect of a good shepherd is that he seeks out the lost and the stray. Jesus said, “The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.” (Lk 19:10) Father Matthew, I ask you to make it a priority of your pastorate at St. Isidore to:

• Seek out and reconcile those who have left this parish and who now worship at other parishes or even at other Christian denominations.
• Seek out those many young people who have been confirmed here, and do not return to Mass the Sunday following their Confirmation ... or any Sunday after that!
• Take special care of the young who are in your Catholic school and in your religious education program. Lead them through the heart into a personal relationship with the living Jesus.
What's at stake in the Mission Alignment Process?

The reality is some of our parishes are being subsidized by the diocese and this is something that we can't continue indefinitely. So part of the process is to take a look at that reality, which, if not addressed, would put extreme financial constraints on the diocese and possibly could lead to bankruptcy within four to six years. We have to address that part as we look at the big picture of how to not eliminate parishes, per se, but to make them more available to everyone in a way that's sustainable in the long term.

What is the role of the people in the pews in the Mission Alignment Process?

Their role is an important one in that they are going to be contributors to the process. The process works by looking at what the parishioners are saying and what the data is telling us about parish life and parish health, such as financial health, Mass attendance and the utilization of our resources. Demographic data as well: What does the surrounding area tell us about who it serves and the kind of people we are trying to reach there. Schools data comes into the picture, too, as well as the availability of our resources in clergy, priests and deacons. Parishioners have a very important role in giving us information that will go into this process of looking at our resources and aligning them for the mission of announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ more effectively in our day and our time.

How — and when — will parishioners participate?

We want them to know they're an important part. Their input in the surveys this October is really important for our process. Surveys will be available online and also paper copies in as many languages as are needed so everybody can have a voice in the survey. They have 15 languages. We'll translate for any needed language; I heard we will be doing a form in Tongan.

What kind of survey is it?

It's a simple survey, where we're looking for your input. It's a fill-in survey.

What happens after the survey?

In March, April and May of next year, we will be reviewing what the data is telling us at the parish level and doing consultations at the parish level. How we better align our resources. In June 2022, we will want to make our final recommendations to the bishop.

And after that?

Phase I is doing the work and looking at what the Holy Spirit is telling us, what the data is telling us and getting ourselves better aligned to the mission. Phase II would be bringing that reality to bear. That would be determined as we get closer to the final recommendation date.

What’s important to keep in mind as we go forward?

This process primarily is the work of the Spirit. We're very much looking at what the Spirit is telling us, along with data, about how to better align ourselves to the mission. That is the
Dear Father in heaven, look kindly upon the Diocese of Oakland as we take stock of the many gifts you have given us. Send your Holy Spirit to inspire and guide us so that our efforts to proclaim the saving Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ more effectively may bear tremendous fruit. May we, as your people, courageously proceed on this path of self-reflection and renewal. In the end, with your divine assistance, we know that we cannot fail. Holy Mary, Queen of the World and St. Francis de Sales, co-patrons of our Diocese, pray for us!

Mission Alignment Process Prayer

Way the Church has always adapted to the times, to guide us and direct us into the future. That's why the Church has been a continuous institution for 2,000 years. It's not just data; first and foremost, it's about what God is doing.

What is this process going to ask of us?

It's a courageous process. It's going to take courage. In the end, I think the Spirit will confirm what we proceed toward in people's hearts.

This is what God is doing in our hearts and our Church. It's a process of renewal that's always driven by God.

The hearts of individuals will come to understand this is a path forward that God has put his stamp on, so to speak. That's not so say it's not going to be difficult, for some people, for all of us, to some degree.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Point Richmond’s Our Lady of Mercy Church is a gem of architecture, mission and using your resources wisely

When I came here to Point Richmond back in 2003, both the parish and church were a real surprise to me. I had come with friends to eat at the Hotel Mac a few times well before that. But I never knew that there was a church in Point Richmond. So to find such a beautiful church, such a Catholic architectural treasure, really surprised me.

I was interested in learning what these first parishioners did here. What we know now as the Chevron Refinery opened in 1902. And at the same time cross-country trains to San Francisco went right to docks out on the Bay, where they were on driven onto railroad barges and ferried across to San Francisco. Interesting stories of a little town of hardworking people. And there were some stories about how back when the church was being built, these Catholic folks took real part in the building.

But thinking back to those first years, I was brought back to my own family history in 1902, in another little railroad town. This one led to the Lackawanna Ferry in Hoboken, N.J., right across the Hudson from...
New York City. My grandfather was a pipe-smoking track foreman. The track crews were Italian immigrants, mostly from Calabria, family men and Catholic. My grandmother, worried about the lack of an Italian church, arranged for an Italian priest from Newark to come up for Mass on Sunday. And for religious lessons for the kids he brought a sister from an Italian order of missionary sisters. Except for the 3,000 miles of world and cultures between them, Point Richmond and our little place had similar histories of Catholic peoples planting their own living faith in the ground on which they were living and growing.

My grandmother and the archbishop of Newark did not see eye-to-eye on the need for a church in the little town. Mama, the family legend tells, was a wide-ranging expert on knowing what buttons to push to get what she wanted. So, in the sacristy of the cathedral, where the archbishop pointlessly took refuge when he saw her coming, and after kneeling and kissing his ring, she told him: “Your Grace — if we do not have a church, our children will lose their faith.”

“Very well, Mrs. Woods, you may have your church.” But it was up to her to come up with the church. And for Mama, “our children” meant all the children, no matter whose they were or what language they spoke.

So she rented a storefront on the main street in town. Set it up for Mass. And she knew that the heart of the church is a tabernacle for the Blessed Sacrament. So she took her kitchen clock, emptied it out, and lined it with the cloth from her white wedding dress.

Out here in Point Richmond, in 1902, we started out with a beautiful gothic church. It was one of five designed by a noted French architect working in this part of California. But when it was being built the men in town — mostly railroad and refinery workers — wasted nothing usable. One of our parishioners, Martin Lopez, whose family first came to this parish in 1944, has discovered how the wooden shipping crates sent here to the parish during construction were saved and used in building the bases for the altar. With real determination and some neck-craning, some addresses on the crates can still be seen.

Our churches here, from the very start, reflected the diversities and richnesses of the different Catholic peoples who have come to our corner of California. When you live along one of the great harbors of the world our American phrase “a country of immigrants” becomes an everyday reality. And our churches do so much more than house people. They teach. But not with words of theories or ideas. They teach with images. Images of life. Images of our lives, played out before the eyes of our memories that arise unlooked for, sometimes in the oddest of circumstances.

When I first came here, I had already begun working in Lithuania in the Baltics, helping rebuild Catholic life there just a few years after the Soviet collapse and the departure of the Soviet tanks a few years later. The Soviets had deported thousands and thousands of people to Siberia and to the mines along the Pacific coast. As one of my friends told me, “Every family lost someone.” And the KGB, the feared security police, were everywhere.

Images of the church are so abundant if we wish to see them. Our church in the capital city of Vilnius, a 350-year-old national monument, and the tallest church in the county, had been used as a warehouse and intentionally desecrated. It was being restored slowly. The Soviets had closed churches and allowed no new ones to be built. Every day, old women would come in well over an hour or more before Mass, to a church as beat up as they were. I would see them walk silently to the church, enter slowly, and quietly attend to their own prayers. Years and years of repression take their toll. At Communion they would shuffle up slowly in their heavy winter boots, drop slowly and often painfully to their knees, and then turn their heads up to receive the host. I placed the host carefully on their tongues, often with tears coming to my eyes.

We were in a church. But for me, these old women were the Church.

Another of my own images of the Church: My pipe-smoking, track-foreman grandfather died of cancer — lip cancer predictably enough. At the end, it left him unable to open his mouth. But shortly before he died, he awoke and found he could open his mouth somewhat. He walked down to the church, to the pastor. “Father, I think you can slip the host in now.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
Later he learned his father could not get comfortable in the church; he found it too hot in summer, and too cold in winter. It would be years before Martin returned to the Point Richmond church.

“I discovered it as an adult,” he said. “I came to this place. I asked that aunt to start anew. I have some idea of what she really wanted. She knew I decorated, I did electrical work, and that I would look after her parish.”

And, he added, “They don’t build them like this.”

He engaged in conversations, he said, with the “old-timers,” learning as much as he could about the history of the parish and the technology. Each element has a piece of the story to tell.

Beneath the altar, Martin found shipping crates with the name of the first pastor, Rev. M.P. Scanlan, and Point Richmond, still visible, 120 years later.

The parishioners reused the shipping crates that brought the altar and statues to Point Richmond in constructing the altar’s base.

Among the original statues is a lamb. Martin said he has seen young children approach the altar to pet it.

Among his favorite times of the year is Christmas, when he displays trees on the church walls. Given the unobstructed views from anywhere in the church, they are visible to children and to those with limited vision.

He does this, he said, “for all those people who made Christmas for me when I was a little boy. They’re the ones that drive me to go above and beyond what I could possibly do.”

He draws inspiration from the martyrs of Mexico and his family that kept the faith during that era.

“My family did not take up weapons, but they did risk their lives bringing Communion to the sick, making rosaries and at night going to Mass somewhere in the neighborhoods,” he said.

“These things have motivated me.”

Martin, who is 55, began volunteering at the age of 21 at his home parish, St. Paul in San Pablo. His mentor, who knew of Martin’s skill as an electrician, tapped him for some needed work.

He “told me I would volunteer, do this for free, and be happy about it.” How right he was.
HOW TO BE BOTH consistent & loving

PARENTING

OUR KIDS NEED LOTS OF THINGS. They need fun, adventure, faith, vegetables and consistent structure (not necessarily in that order!). Some of those are certainly more desirable through the eyes of a child than others, but they all help create strong, healthy kids. One thing parenting experts agree on is that children thrive when they are in an environment that is structured, dependable and consistent. There are days when our tank runs low, and consistent discipline can take more energy than we have left, so here are a few tips for maintaining consistent, loving parenting even when giving in and making the kids happy would seem easier.

MAKE A PLAN!
Be clear about the expectation and the consequence so there aren’t any surprises, and be sure to have this chat when everyone is calm and not in the middle of a conflict. Start small; tackle one or two things at a time.

PRAY FOR GUIDANCE,
pray for strength and pray in thanksgiving for the times you see growth. In moments of turmoil, stop and say to your child, “Things aren’t going well right now; let’s take a minute to pray and ask Jesus to help us do the right thing.”

RESISTANCE IS INEVITABLE!
There will be push-back, so rise up and prepare for it.

RESPOND WITH CONSISTENCY.
Build a sense of trust and security in children. If they can whine and get what they want one day and whine and don’t get their way another day, it leaves them confused and unsure. The message to them is “push back harder.”

IT TAKES TIME.
Behaviors aren’t going to change overnight, but if those behaviors are met with consistent consequences and responses each time they occur, things will change.

Consistent discipline is how we raise great humans, and we do it out of love. Don’t forget to ask for the help of the Father, who loves our kids even more than we do!
Polish nuns killed by Soviet army as World War II ended showed courage

WARSAW, Poland — Ten Polish nuns have been approved for beatification as martyrs 76 years after they were killed while resisting rape and facing other atrocities by Soviet soldiers in the final months of World War II.

“This will show how courage and devotion are linked to saintliness. It’s been an explosion of spiritual joy for us,” said Sister Jozefa Krupa, spokeswoman for the Congregation of Sisters of St. Elizabeth, the religious order to which the women belonged. “Even with the passage of time, their stories still provide an opportunity to look to the depths of our inner life, seeing what truly has value and is worth defending,” Sister Jozefa told Catholic News Service.

Pope Francis approved the beatification of the women religious June 19, a decade after officials in the Diocese of Wroclaw launched the process for sainthood.

The women, ranging in age from 29 to 70, were chosen from among more than 100 murdered St. Elizabeth sisters based on the availability of documentation and witnesses, Sister Jozefa said.

Meanwhile, a leading Catholic historian said the mass beatification would highlight a little-known historical period, and recall the “terrible sufferings” faced by religious orders during the Soviet army’s presence in Poland. “Contemporary opinion still has trouble grasping the parallel criminality of Nazis and Communists, and isn’t much interested in martyr stories,” said Jan Zaryn, director of Poland’s Roman Dmowski and Ignacy Jan Paderewski Institute for the Legacy of National Thought.

“Poles experienced both totalitarian systems, and remember how the Soviets brought terror, rape, arson and captivity with them, arresting and murdering priests and nuns in a bid to prove only lunatics believed in God,” he said.

The religious order, founded in mid-19th century Silesia by Blessed Maria Luiza Merkert to nurse cholera and typhus patients, was one of many facing brutality during the 1944-1945 Soviet sweep through Poland.

Reprisals were harshest against clergy of German origin, who were among millions of civilians expelled from a region stretching 140 miles to the Oder and Neisse rivers that was incorporated into Poland in return for Polish lands taken by the Soviet Union in the east.

Among those to be beatified is Sister Maria Paschalis Jahn. She joined the congregation in 1938, caring for elderly and sick nuns. She sought safety with another nun in a parish schoolhouse at Sobotina in nearby Czech Moravia, but was spotted by a Soviet soldier on May 11, 1945, and shot when she rebuffed his advances.

Sister Maria Edelburgis, a 40-year-old ambulance nurse, hid with other nuns in a presbytery chapel at Zary, but was beaten and shot during a struggle when Soviet troops entered the building in February 1945.
Sister Maria Acutina, born Helena Goldberg in 1882, taught war orphans and escaped from the village of Lubiaz with a group of girls, only to be apprehended by drunken soldiers and shot trying to protect her charges.

Zaryn said many Polish cities and towns had been “treated as conquered territory to be plundered and destroyed,” with Catholic churches torched and priests and nuns “raped, murdered and driven out.” The sisters’ beatification had been made possible by improved knowledge of what occurred, he said.

Harsh anti-church measures continued in Poland as a Soviet-backed communist regime took power after World War II, viewing religious orders as secretive organizations threatening its absolute power.

In the western region, 323 convents were closed in August 1954 under a campaign codenamed “Operation X2,” with more than 1,300 nuns rounded up by armed militia and bused to labor camps with no electricity and where tuberculosis was rife.

A congregation statement said the 10 nuns had been recognized as martyrs from the time of their deaths, as recorded in a 1946 letter by their superior general, Mother Mathildis Kuttner.

“Many girls, women and nuns were raped despite heroically resisting until reduced to a defenseless state by beating. A gunshot often silenced such victims forever,” the congregation said.

“For many years, we were not permitted even to mention their Christian heroism. But today their names belong to history, revealing these unbroken witnesses of faith to contemporary humanity.”

Another martyrred nun, Sister Maria Melusja, was shot trying to protect a local girl from a Soviet trooper at Nysa. And 70-year-old Sister Maria Sapientia was gunned down while defending a younger nun from assault.

Sister Maria Adela, a convent superior in Godzieszów, was seized by soldiers while seeking refuge at a nearby farm, and buried in a bomb crater after being shot with her hosts and others.

Wroclaw-born Sister Maria Rosaria, who was once Protestant, hid with other nuns in an air raid shelter, but was dragged out and raped by a group of 30 soldiers and shot a day later.

Sister Jozefa said she hoped the martyr stories would enhance knowledge of the heroism shown by Polish nuns while encouraging women fearful of discerning a religious vocation.

“These martyr-sisters represent many whose beatification processes haven’t even begun. It’s an act of recognition for all religious orders,” she said.

“Although we’ve had a long wait, this may also be a prophetic moment, when models of loyalty and sanctity in service to the poor, sick and homeless are very much needed.”

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“Como migrante, muchas veces llegamos aquí con ese miedo de haber cruzado una frontera, y muchas veces no tenemos en quien confiar, y en el grupo de oración (la Renovación Carismática Católica) uno encuentra personas que le ayudan sin esperar algo a cambio… Las personas que llegan al grupo de oración se sienten acogidas, amadas y respetadas”, narró Díaz, un parroquiano de San Luis Beltrán quien vino a EE.UU. de Michoacán, México en 2002.

Díaz ha sido coordinador diocesano desde hace tres años. El pasado 24 de julio coordinó el Congreso Anual de la Renovación Carismática Católica de la Diócesis de Oakland que tuvo lugar en la iglesia Divina Misericordia de San Pascual Baylón y San Lorenzo O’Toole (Divina Mercy of St. Paschal Baylon and St. Lawrence O’Toole) en Oakland.

En este evento al aire libre, trabajaron con esmero miembros de las 17 parroquias de la Diócesis de Oakland que tienen grupos de Renovación Carismática Católica. Asistieron más de 400 personas, superando las expectativas, por ser el primer evento diocesano carismático presencial después de la pandemia. Antes de COVID-19, congregaban hasta 1.200 personas en el Auditorio Conmemorativo y Centro de Convenciones en Richmond, (Richmond Memorial Auditorium and Convention Center).

El padre Olman Solís, director espiritual diocesano del Movimiento de Renovación Carismática Católica, y párroco de la iglesia San Luis Beltrán en Oakland reconoce que la renovación atrae a los migrantes hispanos más que otros ministerios.

“La razón es por la espiritualidad (del movimiento) que nos conecta con nuestras raíces y ayuda a integrar a las personas de diferentes países en una sola comunidad de habla hispana. Esa integración ayuda
al crecimiento personal”, dijo el padre Solis.

La Renovación Carismática Católica es un ministerio diocesano financieramente independiente, trabaja con las contribuciones de los miembros, y aporta muchos servidores a las parroquias, quienes después de crecer en la fe a través de experimentar la acción del Espíritu Santo se integran a otros ministerios parroquiales, como lectores, ministros extraordinarios de la comunión, entre otros.

A pesar del buen espíritu y energía positiva que traen los carismáticos a las parroquias, lamentablemente algunos obispos ponen trabas a los fieles que solicitan un espacio en su iglesia para reunirse, explicó el asesor espiritual.

De la oración a la formación

La Renovación Carismática Católica de Oakland fundó y dirige el Instituto Bíblico Teológico Pastoral, un centro de formación que funciona en la iglesia St. Jarlath en Oakland y es acreditado por la diócesis.

A través del programa básico de formación de cuatro años el instituto ofrece los cursos básicos de Teología, entre ellos Introducción a la Iglesia, Mariología, Cristología, Biblia y Liturgia, entre otros. El 5. ° año es opcional para quienes desean profundizar en el conocimiento del Movimiento de Renovación Carismática Católica.

Antes de la pandemia, el instituto tenía registrados 200 alumnos y en la actualidad hay 140 estudiantes.

Iluminados por el Espíritu Santo, los carismáticos en la Diócesis de Oakland se atreven a soñar. El padre Solís comentó que la Renovación Carismática sueña con que la diócesis les dé una iglesia —de las que han tenido que cerrar— para concentrar todas las actividades en un lugar, donde se impartan las clases, puedan celebrar los retiros y congresos diocesanos y las reuniones de los diferentes grupos carismáticos parroquiales.

Rosita de Lima Mendoza ha sido carismática desde hace 10 años, ella participó muy efusiva en el congreso el 24 de julio. Comenzó a participar en las noches de oración asistiendo a varias iglesias en la diócesis, entre ellas San Luis Beltrán. La Renovación Carismática le atrae por la libertad que tiene para expresarse danzando y alabando a Dios.

Mendoza es una de las estudiantes del Instituto Bíblico Teológico Pastoral quien cursa el 4. ° año de formación. Comentó a “The Catholic Voice” que en el instituto ha aprendido sobre el catolicismo en general y en particular acerca de Jesús Eucaristía, y algo nuevo para ella ha sido el tema de las herejías. “Ahora puedo defender la fe Católica, ya no me pueden engañar”, dijo.

“Jesús Eucaristía me ayudó a dejar el vicio del alcohol y aprendí a servir a los hermanos”, dijo.

Durante la pandemia, Mendoza comenzó a servir en el ministerio Alcance a los pobres (Outreach to the poor) de la iglesia Estrella del Mar (Star of the Sea) en San Francisco donde colabora llevando comida a los desamparados en el barrio Tenderloin.

Jóvenes carismáticos

La Renovación Carismática en Oakland también organiza un ministerio carismático juvenil diocesano, este ministerio diocesano coordina ocho grupos juveniles en diferentes parroquias en la diócesis.

Yorleny Vargas, subcoordinadora de la Renovación Carismática Católica de la Diócesis de Oakland y parroquiana de la iglesia San Pablo en San Pablo, narró que los jóvenes tienen su propio retiro diocesano, sus reuniones parroquiales, pero siempre son acompañados por la Renovación Carismática Católica Diocesana.

Para Vargas el compromiso y gran participación de los migrantes hispanos tanto jóvenes como adultos y niños en este movimiento de la Iglesia Católica se debe a que “la Renovación Carismática es un ministerio que lanza a los fieles a no quedarse estancados y los mueve a integrarse a otros grupos, gracias a la acción del Espíritu Santo que contagia no sólo a los miembros de la Renovación sino a toda la Iglesia a través de las personas renovadas”, dijo Vargas.

“La razón es por la espiritualidad (del movimiento) que nos conecta con nuestras raíces y ayuda a integrar a las personas de diferentes países en una sola comunidad de habla hispana.”
Today he is the diocesan coordinator of this movement.

“As a migrant, many times we arrive here with that fear of having crossed a border, and many times we have no one to trust, and in the prayer group (the Catholic Charismatic Renewal) one finds people who help him without expecting something in return ... People who come to the prayer group feel welcomed, loved and respected,” said Díaz, a St. Louis Bertrand parishioner who came to the US from Michoacán, Mexico in 2002. Díaz, who has been a diocesan coordinator for three years, coordinated the annual Congress of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Diocese of Oakland that took place July 24 at the Divine Mercy Parish in Oakland.

At this open-air event outside St. Paschal Baylon Church, members of the 17 parishes that have Catholic Charismatic Renewal groups worked diligently.

More than 400 people attended, exceeding expectations, as it was the first in-person charismatic diocesan event after the pandemic. Before COVID-19, up to 1,200 people gathered at the Richmond Memorial Auditorium and Convention Center.

Father Olman Solís, diocesan spiritual director of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement and pastor of St. Louis Bertrand Church in Oakland, recognizes that renewal attracts Hispanic migrants more than other ministries.

“The reason is because of the spirituality (of the movement) that connects us with our roots and helps to integrate people from different countries into a single Spanish-speaking community. This integration helps personal growth,” Father Solís said. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a financially independent diocesan ministry, working with the contributions of the members. It contributes many servants to the parishes, who, after growing in faith through experiencing the action of the Holy Spirit are integrated into other parish ministries, as lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, among others.
From prayer to formation

The Oakland Catholic Charismatic Renewal founded and directs the Pastoral Theological Biblical Institute, a training center that operates at St. Jarlath Church in Oakland and is accredited by the diocese. Through the four-year basic training program, the institute offers basic courses in theology, including Introduction to the Church, Mariology, Christology, Bible and Liturgy, among others. The fifth year is optional for those who wish to deepen their knowledge of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement.

Before the pandemic, the institute had 200 registered students and today there are 140 students. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, charismatics in the Diocese of Oakland dare to dream. Father Solís said that the Charismatic Renewal dreams of the diocese giving them a church — one of the ones they have had to close — to concentrate all the activities in one place, where classes are taught, they can celebrate retreats and diocesan congresses and the meetings of the different parish charismatic groups.

Rosita de Lima Mendoza has been charismatic for 10 years. She began participating in the nights of prayer, attending various churches in the diocese, including St. Louis Bertrand. The Charismatic Renewal attracts her because of the freedom she has to express herself dancing and praising God. Mendoza is one of the Pastoral Theological Biblical Institute students who is in the fourth year of training.

She said she has learned about Catholicism in general and in particular about Jesus the Eucharist. “Now I can defend the Catholic faith, they can no longer fool me,” she said.

“Jesus the Eucharist helped me to give up the addiction of alcohol and I learned to serve my brothers,” she said. During the pandemic, Mendoza began serving in the outreach to the poor ministry of Star of the Sea in San Francisco, where she brings food to the homeless in the Tenderloin neighborhood.

Charismatic youth

The Charismatic Renewal in Oakland also organizes a diocesan youth charismatic ministry, coordinating eight youth groups in different parishes.

Yorleny Vargas, deputy coordinator of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Diocese of Oakland and a parishioner of St. Paul Parish in San Pablo, said that young people have their own diocesan retreat, their parish meetings, but they are always accompanied by the diocesan Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

For Vargas, the commitment and great participation of Hispanic migrants, both young and old, and children in this movement of the Catholic Church are due to the fact that “the Charismatic Renewal is a ministry that launches the faithful not to remain stagnant and moves them to integrate into other groups, thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit that infects not only the members of the Renovation but the whole Church through the renewed people.”

Pictured on page 14: Faith is practiced at the Diocese of Oakland’s Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Pictured on page 15, left: Yorleny Vargas is deputy coordinator of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of the Diocese of Oakland.

Page 15 second from left: Father Olman Solís is diocesan spiritual director of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement and pastor of St. Louis Bertrand Church in Oakland.

Page 15 second from right: Rosita de Lima Mendoza has been charismatic for 10 years.

Page 15 right: José Díaz is the coordinator of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement of the Diocese of Oakland.
If you’re looking for tips on nurturing vocations, you might ask Joan and Brian Eichman of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

First, he’ll tell you, you don’t tell them: You must be a priest.

“Let them know it is possible,” said the dad of the family of 11 children. That way, he said, they will be “ready to hear the call.”

The Eichman day-to-day practice of possibility has resulted in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, including three priests of the traditional order of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter, one Carmelite Sister and a seminarian, among the 11 children, who range in age from 37 to 18. There are three older sisters, who are married and are mothers to a total of 17 children. The three youngest children are two recent college graduates and a second-year college student.

Many of the Eichmans were in Kensington in June, on their annual visit with Mother Mary Catherine of the Christ Child, OCD the fifth child who is the sub-prioress of the Carmel of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

The visit with the daughter, once known as Catherine, was conducted through the grille of the convent’s speak room.

The visiting priests — identical twins Father Nicholas Eichman, FSSP and Father James Eichman, FSSP —
were on the third leg of their post-ordination journey that took them from their seminary in Nebraska to their home diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, to their sister’s home in the Diocese of Oakland.

They would celebrate solemn Masses for the Sisters before leaving for the temporary assignments, one to Kansas and one to Rhode Island.

But before that, the Eichmans sat outdoors in a circle with a reporter for The Catholic Voice to talk about nurturing vocations to the priesthood and the religious life.

“If we took any credit for this, we would be wrong,” said Joan Eichman, mother. “It’s all grace of God and being called to whatever their vocation is.”

Mother Mary Catherine, interviewed separately another day at the monastery, offered an observation about her parents: “We saw Mom and Dad living their faith very joyfully.”

The Eichman children were educated at home.

Their curriculum, the Seton Home Study, familiarized them with the Lives of the Saints. They attended Mass daily. They prayed the rosary nightly. They read. They had music lessons. They had golf and tennis lessons in the summer in the recreation department. Blessed with a height advantage, they played basketball. They liked to win.

Every Sunday summer night, they would gather with extended family for music and song; during the school year, they gathered, albeit less frequently.

All these seeds bore fruit.

Reading the Lives of the Saints, Brian said, shows how they were real people. “People don’t realize what the saints did and how they lived.”

Such reading, Father James said, “habituates you to the idea there are people who give their lives in this way.”
Family support is crucial.

“It helps to have a family that is also supportive. They’re not going to be mad at you if you don’t. They want what’s right,” Father James said.

“Some people have ideas of what they want their children to be and they are pushing them into that,” he said. “God created them not for what the parent wants but to follow what God wants.”

His brother agreed. “A calling doesn’t mean a hearing any kind of voice in your head,” Father Nicholas said. “Calling, in the end, is confirmed by the Church. It’s putting yourself in the right place where God wants you to be.”

The first Eichman to be called to the priesthood, Father Gregory Eichman, FSSP, was ordained in 2012. Next year, he will serve at the seminary, guiding first-year students.

His vocation provided an example for his siblings, as did the arrival at their home parish of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter, the order devoted to the traditional Latin Mass and the sanctification of priests.

Fathers Nicholas and James, then pre-teens, began serving at the daily Masses. In addition to learning Church Latin, it gave them an opportunity to see “the example of a good priest happy with what he’s doing,” Father James said.

“My biggest influence is my older brother went to the seminary,” Father James said.

Father Nicholas said his sister, Catherine, who was “willing to give her life for something greater,” also inspired him.

Now 25, Fathers James and Nicholas entered the seminary at the age of 19, after completing one year of college. Their brother Christopher, now a seminarian, entered after graduating from the University of Saint Francis.

The parents of those called to the priesthood and religious life are also called to make some sacrifices.

When adult children marry, Brian said, they stay around and you see them. The 17 grandchildren and

A visit with Mother Mary Catherine of the Christ Child, OCD takes place in the speak room at the Carmel of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. In the monastery in Kensington, the visitor rings a bell and is greeted at the turn. She is expected. She is invited to enter the room where, behind the metal grille, Mother Sylvia Gemma, OCD, prioress, sits beside Mother Mary Catherine, OCD, the sub-prioress.

Much of a Carmelite sister’s day is spent in silence. The visit is to talk about vocations, her own and those of her family, the Eichmans of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

She is 28.

“As early as I can remember, either my parents or one of my older siblings would read little children’s stories of the life of St. Therese. I remember thinking I wanted to be just like her. That was always in my heart,” she said.

When she was 13, the family traveled from their home to visit her brother, who was studying for the priesthood at Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary of the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter in Denton, Nebraska.

The family attended Mass at the Carmel of Jesus, Mary and Joseph in Valparaiso, Nebraska, about 25 miles away.

“One of my older sisters leaned down to me, ‘They’re dressed just like St. Therese.’”

It was her introduction to the possibility of life in the Carmel, just like St. Therese.

“What really helped,” she said, “one time my mom just out of the blue came up to me in the kitchen and said she really wanted me to think about becoming a nun,” she recalled. “She wasn’t pressuring me, but she thought I should consider it.

“The confidence she showed helped. I wanted to do it, but wasn’t sure I could do it. It took away any doubt I had because someone else thought I could do it.”

When she was 16, she wrote to the Carmel, inquiring.

“I actually didn’t write much,” she said. “I knew I wanted it; it would have helped them to know more about me.”
The following year, she made a three-day visit to the Carmel. On her 18th birthday, she received the news that she has been accepted. “That was really special,” she said. Three months later, she entered.

A year later, her elder brother, Father Gregory Eichman, was ordained to the priesthood. His postulant sister, now a novice, was to be clothed in the habit. He presided at the rite, blessing each piece.

Later that year, she was in for a surprise, as Sister Mary Catherine was on her way to California. “I was surprised. I had no idea. They told us we were going to Oakland to make a foundation. I didn’t know where Oakland was.”

One of the other Sisters, who was being told at the same time, asked. “For the rest of the day I was walking around saying to myself, ‘I’m going to California; I’m going to California. I never would have dreamed of living in California.”

She was in the second group of Sisters to come to California, living the rustic life in Canyon before the diocese was generously given the monastery for the use of the sisters.

On Aug. 15, 2016, she made her final vows in the chapel in Kensington, overflowing with Eichmans, large and small.

In November 2018, Sister Mary Catherine became sub-prioress, and the title Mother was bestowed. “It was really, really beautiful, I found, coming to such a small community,” she said, “It’s more of a family. You learn to be more flexible.”

The Carmel of Jesus, Mary and Joseph has six sisters, the same number of Eichman sisters.

As the fifth child of 11, Mother Mary Catherine of the Christ Child knows about family. “We saw Mom and Dad living their faith very joyfully,” she said. “They passed the faith on as something beautiful that adds joy to your life, not inhibits your life.”

At daily Mass, they would see their grandparents, another example of living the faith. “They gave us a really good balance in our lives,” she said.

Daily life included Mass and prayer, sports and music. “We were blessed that Mom and Dad were able to homeschool us,” she said.

The Catholic curriculum included the Lives of the Saints, she said, “good literature that taught morals, values and virtues.”

“When you read the Lives of the Saints it doesn’t seem so strange to become a priest or a sister and give your life to God,” she said. “It’s also almost as normal as knowing that marriage is an option.”

Praying to know what God’s will is in your life was also valued. “That’s not putting pressure; it’s also making sure it’s recognized that giving your life like that is an option: being very grateful to God for things in your life.”

“When I wanted to enter, I felt that God had given me so much in my life, I want to give Him my life back.” †
Praying for Peace in Oakland

Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ and Rev. Jayson Landeza, pastor of St. Benedict Parish in Oakland and chaplain to the Oakland Police Department, were among the clergy participating in a prayer vigil for peace in Oakland and for the victims of violent crimes in the city. The June 27 vigil at Elmhurst Park, at 89th Avenue and B Street in East Oakland, was sponsored by the Bay Area Community Benefit Organization. Bishop Barber and Father Landeza were joined by the faithful from St. Benedict and St. Columba parishes of Oakland and St. Joan of Arc Parish in San Ramon. By the end of June, there were 65 homicides in the city of Oakland. Crosses commemorating each victim have been placed on the front lawn at St. Columba Parish, 6401 San Pablo Ave., Oakland.

LEARN MORE
For information on upcoming prayer vigils and other violence prevention events, visit www.catholicvoiceoakland.org.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DR. CHIQUITA TUTTLE AND DIONNE COLA

UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

SEPT. 4: Our Lady of Vailankanni Festival, St. James the Apostle Parish, 34700 Fremont Blvd., Fremont, 7 p.m. Witnesses, vigil Mass and procession to the parish’s meditation garden, where the statue of Mother Vailankanni, Our Lady of Good Health, holds a place of honor. Information: 510-792-1962.

SEPT. 9: The ninth annual Big La Bocce, a bocce ball tournament at Martinez Bocce Courts, hosted by St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County and Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa. Information: 925-439-5060.

SEPT. 25-26: The St. Clement Parish Festival. The festival will run two days, Saturday, Sept. 25 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 26 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Food will be available for purchase, with games, prizes, entertainment and raffle among the festivities. The parish is at 750 Calhoun St., Hayward. Information: saintclementhayward@gmail.com

OCT. 16: Dream Flight, a fundraising event for tuition assistance at St. Joseph Notre Dame High School in Alameda, will begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Claremont Country Club, Oakland. Register at sjnd.org.

Catholic Charities Golf
benefits COVID-19 relief

Generous sponsor support helped raise more than $50,000 to benefit COVID-19 relief, from back rent to food assistance, at the June 21 Catholic Charities East Bay Golf Classic at the Blackhawk Country Club. The need remains overwhelming in the East Bay.

Sponsors included:
• Presenting: The Wilcox Family Foundation
• Platinum: Catholic Funeral & Cemetery Services
• Silver: Fremont Bank, Mechanics Bank, Peterson CAT
• Bronze: French Bros. Flooring America, California Bank of Commerce, Union Bank, N.A. and Brent and Margaret Simor
On July 21, 10 young men received the habit of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in the Bronx, N.Y., and became novices. One is from Santa Maria Parish in Orinda: Gunnar Davison, now known as Brother Joshua Mary. He’s in the front row, far right. The CFR Franciscans serve the poor and preach the Gospel in the Diocese of Oakland from San Junipero Serra Friary in East Oakland. (Courtesy Photo)

The postulants of the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of Eucharist received their Dominican names and habits on July 22 at the motherhouse in Ann Arbor, Mich. The sisters’ ministry in Catholic education is rooted in the New Evangelization. Among the postulants is Sister Maria Carlo, pictured in the front row, bottom left. Sister Maria Carlo, whose birth name is Clare Mahr, is a 2020 graduate of Bishop O’Dowd High School in Oakland and was a parishioner at St. Joseph Basilica Parish in Alameda before entering the community last year. In 2017, as a 15-year-old, she wrote a story on the St. Joseph Basilica Parish participation in the West Coast Walk for Life. (Courtesy Photo)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Lead them through their minds to address their intellectual doubts about the existence of God or their mistaken assumption that science conflicts with faith. Choose carefully, religious education teachers. Pick those who know and love Jesus Christ, and who understand the modern challenges to the faith.

It was to prepare you for a pastorate like St. Isidore, filled as it is with young people, and to prepare you to meet the challenge of pastoring them in these times, that when you had just finished seminary, I assigned you to teach religion and be a chaplain at St. Joseph Notre Dame High School in Alameda. That assignment delayed your ordination to the priesthood by two years. You accepted that mission with the same equanimity and trust that you have accepted this assignment to St. Isidore. Now I pray that two-year investment in youth ministry will come to full fruition.

Finally, to be a good pastor, be a priest-in-communion. Maintain communion with Christ and His Church. That means live in communion with your bishop. When you were ordained, like all priests in the history of the Church, you placed your hands in mine and solemnly promised “obedience and respect” to me and my successors. That is part of “laying down your life for your sheep.” When that promise is lived out, Christ and the Holy Spirit will work through you. St. Paul said, “It is not I who live, but Christ living in me.”

A pastor who lives in communion with Christ and His Church creates a parish in communion with Christ and the Church. And that means in communion with the bishop and the Holy Father as well. A pastor turned in on himself creates a parish turned in on itself.

Make yours the prayer of St. John Henry Newman, a prayer so favored by St. Mother Teresa that she has her nuns recite it every morning after Holy Communion:

**Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go.**

Flood my soul with Your spirit and life.
Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly,
That my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me
That every soul I come in contact with
May feel Your presence in my soul.
Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus!

When the patron of parish priests, St. John Vianney, was assigned by his bishop to become the new pastor of the village of Ars, he was walking trying to find the town and got a little lost. He met a boy on the road and asked if he knew the way to Ars? The boy said, “Yes.” The saintly priest replied, “You show me the way to Ars, and I will show you the way to heaven.”

Father Matthew, today I put on your shoulders responsibility for the care of the souls of the people of Danville. Show them the way to heaven. Better yet, be out in front, and lead them there yourself.†
Dear Father Joe:
I hear people say we need to be more reverent at Mass.
How do I do this?

A.

Great question!
For those just tuning in, this was a follow-up question to one I answered previously about the Mass. Let’s get right to it!

First things first, you simply have to remember that the desire to be reverent at Mass is holy. That’s your gift to God. He sees your hunger to do justice to and for him and treasures it. There will be a lot of people (usually the loud ones) who will tell you that you have to be a certain way or do things a certain way. I invite you to relax and remember that God sees your heart. He sees how much you want to love him in the way he deserves.

Let’s start with the definition of reverence.
It’s really cool.
We took it from the Latin for respect. The word “respect” is, in and of itself, really neat because it’s two different words stuck together: re and spectare. Re means “again.” Spectare means “to look at” (think of spectators or spectacles).

So, when we are asked to be respectful or reverent, we are being asked “to look again.”

We look again at where we are: a sacred place, doing a sacred thing.

We look again and see in the readings the sacred word of God spoken to us.

We look again and see in the host the very presence of the Living God.

We look again and see the diversity of people around the body of Christ.

It’s an amazing thing to do.

For you and I to be reverent is to commit ourselves to not letting the familiarity of Mass lead us into unintentional disrespect. We need to remember to look again at where we are and what we are doing.

Now, we’ll quickly look at how to use our body and mind to help us be more reverent at Mass.

Let’s start with the mind.

For me, I’m a spacey guy and I carry a lot in my head. Because of that, I can catch myself “drifting” at Mass. When I was younger, I used to panic and get mad at myself for that. I’d catch my mind in mid-drift and almost yell inside my head “STOP! FOCUS!”

My spiritual director at seminary taught me that mind drift is a normal reality and if I violently rebuke myself or if I get angry/frustrated, all I’ve succeeded in doing is pulling myself further away from the celebration.

Now, when I catch myself “in the drift,” I acknowledge and say, “Come, Holy Spirit.” I ask God to help me focus and get right back on track.

Also, we can use our mind to help us be reverent by investing a little time before Mass to get ready: Look up the readings for next Sunday’s Mass and read them every day that week to prepare. If you’re feeling saucy, look up some commentaries about the readings and try to get the context of it all.

Reverence takes some discipline and patience. Crying kids and the motions of people are only distractions if we let them be. Pray for struggling parents. Pray for people who are around you. Let every invitation to be irritated be a chance to pray. Don’t focus too much on what you wish was happening; focus on what is happening. Our God was born in a barn during a census; chaos doesn’t bother him at all.

Let’s look at how we can use our bodies to increase our reverence.

Part of the genius of Catholicism is its recognition that we humans are body/soul unities. In some ways, our bodies are the portals to our souls. As physical
creatures who worship a God we cannot see, it’s so helpful that our sacred Mass incorporates our bodies into it.

When we walk into Church, we should make a slow genuflection. Find the tabernacle, look toward it and (if you can) put one knee on the ground, while the other is up. The quick-dip genuflections rarely get done the very thing they can help us accomplish: I am doing something unusual with my body because I am doing something unusual; I’m in a place unlike any other.

Allow this thoroughness with our gestures is to carry all through Mass. Do no motion without thought. Do nothing quickly and thoughtlessly. Pray for the discipline to truly engage our minds.

We don’t kneel often in everyday life. We kneel before Jesus, our savior, in the Blessed Sacrament. We kneel at the eucharistic prayers when we enter the Last Supper. We kneel because of our contrition. We stand to be attentive; we sit to listen and absorb.

I could go on and on, and any victims of my homilies will tell you that is always a possibility; but I think you get it. Our celebration is filled with opportunities to use our bodies as a tool to focus our minds and bring us back to the wonder of what we are doing.

A couple of “cleanup” points …

First things first, you simply have to remember that the desire to be reverent at Mass is holy. That’s your gift to God.”

According to the Gospels of Mark, Luke and Matthew, Jesus saw a tax collector sitting at his customs post and said, “Follow me.” The tax collector immediately left everything behind and not only followed Jesus, but hosted a banquet for Jesus, inviting “a large crowd of tax collectors and others.” This tax collector is called Levi in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and Matthew in the Gospel of Matthew.

As a Jew who collaborated with the Romans by collecting taxes, Matthew was considered an outcast and a traitor by his Jewish brethren. Tax collectors were known to charge extra fees they kept for themselves, so were even more despised for their greed and exploitation of their power.

But Jesus singles out Matthew to follow him and Matthew responds completely. He begins evangelizing immediately — inviting his peers, also despised in the eyes of the Pharisees — and other “sinners,” to share a meal and an encounter with Jesus. When challenged for associating with such a crowd, Jesus admonishes the self-righteous religious by responding with words from the prophet Hosea, “Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.” (Mt 9:12b-13) Matthew is not mentioned otherwise in the New Testament, except in each Gospel list of the apostles. In the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that Matthew is present with the apostles when Jesus ascends into heaven and when the Holy Spirit descended on them.

Tradition holds that Matthew preached the Gospel among his fellow Hebrews in Judea before evangelizing in Ethiopia, where he was martyred. The painting The Calling of St. Matthew, by Italian master Caravaggio, was completed in 1600 for the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi in Rome, and it still hangs there. The beloved painting continues to be studied today by students of art history, and prints can be found in chapels, churches and homes throughout the world.

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SAINT OF THE MONTH

Saint Matthew
APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

FEAST DAY - SEPTEMBER 21

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BY SUE PARKER
Jackie, what was it like for you growing up?

I wasn't born in the U.S. actually. I was born in Vietnam, and I immigrated to the U.S. when I was about 3 years old. Religion wise, I was really Catholic. My family are all really seriously Catholic, like never-something-to-joke-about kind of Catholics. But I went through a pretty weird childhood. My parents are first-generation immigrants, and they work seven days a week. Total workaholics. When I got to the U.S., I had an accent and didn't speak English very well. I was bullied at school, bullied at home, bullied by my babysitter. I just started resenting everything, and I didn't really like life at all. So at around fifth, sixth and seventh grade until all the way to sophomore year of high school, I declared myself as an atheist.

Wait, how did you decide to be atheist in such a Catholic family?

I know, I know, I know! You're going to think I'm crazy! I didn't tell my family though, but on the inside, I was one of those people who was all, “God isn't real blah blah blah.” The funny thing is, I still went to Mass, I still went to Faith Formation and Confirmation classes.

Really? What happened there?

See that's just it. It wasn't a huge thing. It wasn't the stories, or the fun and games or praying together. No one whispered in my ear, and I didn't have this big vision or anything. Nothing big or epic happened. But I just felt something inside my soul. I just felt it. Like this teeny, little spark, this little ... I don't know, difference? I just started crying for no reason, and I was like what's going on? I promised myself that when I graduated and moved out, I would never set foot inside a church again. But in that moment, about two years ago, I became ... different. Something really shifted. It made me think about what I was feeling inside and I thought, “Hey, is that really Jesus? Is that really You knocking at my door?” I thought to myself that maybe I should take this Jesus guy a little more seriously! [laughing].
Wow, that actually sounds bigger than you think!

What did you do next?

Well, I started taking my religion seriously, and I started becoming like a “real Catholic.” I started being aware and present at Mass and in prayer. I mean, from the outside I probably didn’t look any different. I was doing the same things — going to church every Sunday and stuff — but that one little moment at the retreat changed me on the inside. So, I started listening in Mass more, you know? I started going to choir practice and really got into it in a different way.

Did it change your outlook, this new awareness of God?

Yeah, it made me look back at past events with new eyes. I noticed in a new way that when I was in sixth grade, I moved to Livermore and things got a little better. I met people at St. Michael’s and made some really great friends. People were treating me nicer and then everyone around me started loving me. So now, “post-spark,” I think it is God is showing me that things get better with time, and that there might be down times, but it’s not the worst ever. I mean while I was experiencing it, it was awful, but looking back I can see that my life is pretty good. I can see how far my family and I have come. My parents are more financially stable, I have good friends, I got away from toxic relationships, my schoolwork is better and I can just balance it all better. And I just graduated from high school! It’s like I can see now that God has a plan for me. It’s a pretty good life!

You’re involved in singing with the St. Michael Music Ministry and volunteering at Community Care now?

Yes! I originally joined the Music Ministry four years ago, and it was honestly only because I was trying to wrap up some service hours for my confirmation. As I mentioned earlier, I didn’t really think God existed then, and I only came sometimes, so I never really felt a connection. I was just going through the motions. But then after that retreat and “the spark” [laughing], I was singing my heart out! Like I really got so into it that time flew and felt like only 10 minutes, but it had been over an hour. It’s like that spark just got a little bigger when I sang, and I was praying through song.

Then at St. Michael Community Care, I had to do 75 or 100 hours of community service for school. Again, it was just like one more thing to just get done for the hours. I volunteered to help on the Traffic Team, and my job is to greet people at their cars and get some basic information from them like how many boxes of food they need. After a while, I noticed that it is so cool to talk to people and greet them warmly, because they just need a little help. Some people feel embarrassed or awkward. I like just being friendly and putting them at ease, you know? I see some regulars now who recognize me, so it’s pretty awesome. Anyway, so I kept coming back even after I got all my hours done.

Now that you’ve graduated from high school, what’s your next step?

I’m sticking around Livermore a little longer, going to go to Las Positas. And maybe even after that, I might commute to maybe Santa Clara or something. So I’m happy to keep my volunteer ministries at St. Michael’s going. I mean, even though I grew up Catholic, I’m in a lot of ways a “newbie.” And I want to make sure I can balance school and faith life, too.

What would you say to someone who is in a rough spot?

Well, first, you know you hear all these crazy stories about how people became Christian or found Jesus or God healed them or something. You know these really, really BIG things. And it is true that God can do the big stuff, but at least in my life it was more of little quiet subtle things that changed me. That one little moment at the retreat. Then it’s other little things like waking up in the morning with a new positive outlook that maybe wasn’t there before. Or maybe it’s just a random guy who smiles at you and it makes your day a little better. Most of the time it’s the smallest things that just start to pile up to be bigger things and before you know it, you’re just different. Better! I think God likes moving little things!

What do you hope for next?

I don’t know, but maybe when I’m working at Community Care and someone needs groceries, I’d like to think that maybe I’m the smiling face that they needed to see.” —JACKIE LI

JACKIE LI TOLD HER STORY TO TINA GREGORY, COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR OF ST. MICHAEL PARISH IN LIVERMORE.

For more of these stories from parishioners, visit StMichaelLivermore.com. You’ll find them in the bulletins and on the parish’s social media pages.
Community Care: 
Feeding bodies and souls in Livermore

The pandemic brought hard times to Livermore, especially to workers in the city’s restaurants, shops, wineries and theaters, many of them shuttered, at least temporarily, or operating with drastically reduced staffing.

Father Carl Arcosa, pastor of St. Michael Parish, was among the early adopters of drive-through confession and live-stream Mass. What could the parish do to meet the need for food?

He deputized Jacqueline Garcia, parish secretary, and Tina Gregory, communication director, to lead, using their skills — Jackie as a buyer, first shopping sales in grocery stories, and Tina activating the parish’s already-in-place communications systems to invite volunteers to participate.

The first Community Cares giveaway, on Aug. 22, 2020, served about 350 to 400 people, Tina’s record show.

The program expanded to weekly two months later.

A year later, the event is still weekly. They serve mostly Livermore residents, not all of them parishioners, and have been building a network of alliances to bring food to the people who need it.

The parish became an official partner of the Alameda County Community Food Bank — Livermore is its easternmost partner — and engaged with food programs such as the Farmers to Families, and agencies in Livermore and Pleasanton.

Such partnerships have helped provide sundries once a month. A popular giveaway is diapers for babies.

The parish was inspired by the work of St. Anthony Parish in Byron.

“As long as people keep coming, there’s still a need,” Tina Gregory quotes their pastor.

Open from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturdays, it’s a drive-through organization. At the first stop, drivers are asked how many households they’re feeding and their ZIP code. They deliver to four senior communities, encompassing 80 to 100 households.

“People can pick up for friends,” Tina said.

At that first stop, the guests are also asked if they’d like to pray. If the answer is yes, a prayer card is slipped under the windshield wiper. About 60 percent of the people say yes to prayer or a blessing.

“It’s hosted at St. Michael Catholic Church. It’s really a community gathering place, for people who are volunteering and donating, and our guests. It’s neat to extend our parish walls,” Tina said.
GROW AS A DISCIPLE

MAKE SUNDAY
THE FOUNDATION
of YOUR WEEK

There's an adage that says you should work from your rest, not rest from your work. Like most adages, this is easy to say but hard to do. God commands us to keep holy the Lord's day because he knows how easily humanity can slip into the undue self-reliance of constantly working. Sunday is not the culmination of the week, but the starting point. The refreshment gained from a well-observed Sabbath should propel us through the week. Instead of seeing Sunday as the end of something, let's see it as the foundation of a life fully lived the rest of the week.

We also need to remember that our identity is received from a loving Father, not generated by what we accomplish. We are not what we do but whom the Father says we are; and he calls us beloved. Glorify and thank the Lord by your work, but don't let it affect your God-bestowed identity.

Let's be honest, work is real and a healthy work/life balance is often elusive. So start small, reclaim Sunday, remember your identity as a child of God and see what happens.

EXODUS 20:11
For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. ♦

PETE BURAK is the director of i.d.9:16, the young adult outreach of Renewal Ministries. He has a master's degree in theology and is a frequent speaker on evangelization and discipleship.
IN MEMORIAM

Tribute to Father Ricardo Chavez

BY MOST REV. JOHN S. CUMMINS, BISHOP EMERITUS, DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

I share today with you — family, friends, parishioners here at St. Peter Martyr — in the prayerful remembrance of the grace that was the ministry of Father Ricardo Chavez. It is fitting that we offer our prayers in the parish where he last served and where he was baptized and received First Communion and Confirmation.

He likewise was ordained a priest in this parish by Bishop Floyd Begin, whose genius was to ordain the Class of 1963 each in his own parish. That class should also be remembered well for the talent brought and communicated to each other with a sharpness of mind and the willingness to share creative initiatives.

Among these was a gift they had as sons of immigrant parents to be sensitive to the growing awareness of ethnic diversity that was moving through the diocese at that time. A bicultural air they breathed suited the day.

Father Ricardo could use that preparation well at Our Lady of the Rosary in Union City, which early on brought the integration of the Spanish-speaking community to the heart of parish life. So too were his efforts with the comfortable diversity that existed in the community of St. Edward’s in Newark as well as at St. Leander’s later.

It was built into his sensitivity to be aware of the diversity particularly in south county with the early Portuguese settlers. He took the initiative to travel to Brazil to learn the language, arriving home to some surprising lack of appreciation since they said he had a Brazilian accent.

His quiet pastoral style was abruptly redirected with the invitation from the California bishops for Father Ricardo to manage their Department of Spanish Speaking Affairs in Sacramento. To the surprise of some, he sensed the opportunity. The three-year term turned into eight years to the satisfaction of the bishops and to the Spanish-speaking community for his availability and his listening capacities. Again his initiative led to the development of dialogue between the bishops of California and those of Northern Mexico. We met twice a year with mutual concerns, with staff aid from Ricardo.

A notable highlight of that particular service was the development of a cultural study about La Frontera, directed by Bishop Pierre DuMaine in San Jose and Bishop Perez-Gil of Mexicali outlining the Frontera as a particular culture neither thoroughly American nor Mexican. Communication with that community placed radio in prominence.

Along with the Sacramento position went the responsibility for the national organizing called the Encuentro to give prominence to the Latino presence in the entire country. Meeting in dioceses and local parishes consumed much of the early years of Father Ricardo’s work leading to the leadership role he played at the national level. The opening day in Washington, D.C., found him at the podium chairing a thousand and more representatives from around the country, this native of St. Peter Martyr Parish in Pittsburg, California.

Later in his life he had the opportunity to serve here at St. Peter Martyr in a community that had changed since the days of the Dominicans in his childhood. Fourteen years after he returned came time to retire. His retirement was marked by availability for any emergency in the Delta area, liturgical or otherwise. In the meantime, he produced a history of the parish as well as his reminiscences of the early days in the city of Pittsburg.

His was a rich ministry adapted to the mood of the times. We are grateful.

Father Ricardo Chavez, retired priest of the Diocese of Oakland, died June 16. Bishop Cummins wrote this tribute for Father Chavez’s funeral Mass.

Maurine Behrend

Maurine Vestal Behrend, whose involvement in ministry in the Diocese of Oakland included parish and diocesan as well as advocacy for the people on the margins, died in Oakley on Oct. 30, 2020, with her husband and daughter at her side.

She worked many years as the pastoral minister at St. Joan of Arc Church in San Ramon, where she supervised the high school and young adult programs and coordinated confirmation programs, retreats, adult education and parish renewal groups. She was responsible for starting many programs that are still thriving today.

She worked for the Department of Catechetical Ministries for the diocese, where she coordinated the diocesan Youth Day and SPLUNGE retreat. She served on the planning team for the diocesan REACH Process, which put together a four-day social justice experience for young people.

Ms. Behrend received her master’s degree in theological studies from the Franciscan School of Theology in Berkeley in 1986.

In 1998, Ms. Behrend formed the Tri-Valley Interfaith Poverty Forum, a nonprofit organization, to help people move from welfare to work, and trained faith communities throughout the East Bay to help their cities meet California housing goals. She was a regular at city council meetings and church groups all over Tri-Valley, sharing stories of people’s struggles for affordable housing.

She worked as director for the local Catholic Campaign for Human Development office at Catholic Charities of the East Bay, where she was a grant writer for nonprofit organizations.

In 2009, Ms. Behrend was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment most likely to lead to Alzheimer’s. Even with Alzheimer’s she continued to have a strong faith, love of life and love of all people.

She was predeceased by her parents and beloved son Todd Behrend. She is survived by her husband of more than 55 years, Wayne Behrend; daughter-in-law Cathy Behrend; daughter and son-in-law Wendy and Dave Thompson; and six grandchildren.

Mass was held at St. Joan of Arc Church on Aug. 6. Donations in her memory may be made to Catholic Charities East Bay.
Sister Barbara Hazzard, OSB

Sister Barbara Hazzard, OSB was born Sept. 3, 1936. She died June 17.
She started her religious life as a Sister of the Holy Names. She ministered at Newman Hall in Berkeley as CCD director for five years and left the order soon after that to follow an increasingly insistent call to silence and meditation.

Sister Barbara felt that our modern life did not create space for quiet and contemplation and she longed to change that.

She approached Bishop John Cummins about the idea of starting an urban Christian community dedicated to contemplation and based on the Rule of St. Benedict. Bishop Cummins gave her his blessing, at which point she left the Sisters of the Holy Names and pronounced Benedictine vows.

She founded the community in 1981 and named it Hesed, the Hebrew word for “God’s faithful love.” It is associated with the World Community of Christian Meditation centered in London. Hesed consists of people who desire a community context in which to nurture the contemplative aspects of life.

“One of the fruits of our meditation practice is what the Buddhists call ‘mindfulness’ ... When Jesus says, ‘Pray always,’ he is not suggesting that we stop our lives to pray. Rather, everything can be prayer,” she wrote.

“My favorite definition of prayer is, ‘Prayer is the heightening of awareness of what already exists.’ (Francis Bauer, OFM) ‘Live in me as I live in you,’ is what Jesus tells us. We are constantly in God’s presence and God is constantly present to us. We just need to take the time to be aware of weeds, and birds, and dishes, and wine, and love.’”

Her community writes, “Barbara was an original. She asked herself, ‘What can God do for you today through me?’ We say of her, lovingly, gratefully and resoundingly, ‘Yay, God;’ for lending Sister Barbara to us for her time on earth.”

A Mass of Christian Burial was offered at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Oakland on July 16.

Donations in her memory may be made to Hesed Community, PO Box 18863, Oakland, CA 94619.

Kathleen Moore, RN

Kathleen Moore, who served as the nursing director of the Order of Malta Clinic of Northern California from its opening in 2008 to her retirement nine years later, died May 26.

Ms. Moore, who was born Aug. 2, 1937, was a graduate of St. Joseph College of Nursing in San Francisco. After a career with the city and county of San Francisco, she put her considerable skills to work in Oakland.

Colleagues recall that Ms. Moore set the plan for clinic flow, including patient registration, patient nursing evaluation and medical exam.

Ms. Moore is remembered for her compassion and competence. She made the patients feel welcomed and she was good with family members, colleagues recall, and she worked beautifully with the nurse volunteers.

She had a quiet and simple presence about her that provided ease and comfort to patients and brought calm and reassurance to staff and volunteers during the most hectic times, colleagues remember. It was clear to those who worked with her that she was a servant of God, doing what she was meant to do in the most loving and compassionate way.

In a short interview with The Catholic Voice upon her retirement, Ms. Moore didn’t focus on herself, but on the clinic.

“We do good medicine,” she said of the clinic. “The biggest pleasure is being able to serve people without charge. It’s a rarity.”

She said she has met people from all over the world at the clinic. She has a special place in her heart for immigrants. “I think it takes such courage to pick up your family and go to a strange country.”

Ms. Moore is survived by her daughter and two grandchildren. She was remembered in a ceremony at St. Mary’s Cemetery in Oakland on July 22.

Marilyn Mosher

Marilyn Mosher, who co-founded FACE (Family Aid Catholic Education) in 1977 and was honored with the “1000 Thanks” award in 1996 by the Diocese of Oakland for her endless years of work for FACE, died June 26 in St. Helena, where she and her husband Karl Mosher lived in retirement. She was 81.

Marilyn met the love of her life, Karl Mosher, in Berkeley while in sixth grade and they later married on April 16, 1949. Karl and Marilyn were blessed with five sons and one daughter. Marilyn was a devoted wife and mother, filling their home with love, strong moral values and laughter.

Mrs. Mosher used her sharp mind, quick wit and endless energy in a life of service to her family, the Catholic Church and variety of philanthropic and educational organizations. In the Diocese of Oakland, she served as president of the Parent Teacher Group at St. Theresa School; chairman of Advisory Board for Bishop O’Dowd and St. Mary’s College High Schools; and president for four years of the PTG Board of Directors for the Oakland Diocese’s then-52 schools.

She was a member of the Foothill Branch of Oakland Children’s Hospital for 20 years and chairperson for two years, and co-chaired the annual White Elephant sale for the Oakland Museum of California.

After raising their family, the Mosher moved to St. Helena, where they became active in their new community, including charter membership in St. Vincent de Paul Church in St. Helena.

A memorial Mass was scheduled in August at St. Helena Church.

Mrs. Mosher is survived by Karl Mosher, her husband of 72 years, and her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Children include Richard (Kathy), Stephen (Elizabeth), David, Marianne (Al) and Robert (Carol); nine grandchildren Abraham (Lindsay), Thompson (Sunshine), Jill Ann (Mark), Kaylee (Cameron), Matthew (Lauren), Jonathan (Lauren), Mia, Shayla and Michael; and four great-grandchildren — Kingston, Koa, Knox and Lennox. Her son Paul preceded her in death.
FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

BISHOP BARBER APPROVES CONTINUED USE OF TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS

STATEMENT FROM BISHOP MICHAEL C. BARBER, SJ:
“Last Friday, July 16, the Holy Father issued guidelines regarding the use of the traditional Latin Mass, known as the extraordinary form. We will need time to properly study the document and its implications. In the meantime, I grant permission to those priests and parishes that already have my authorization to offer Masses according to the 1962 Missal to continue to celebrate them, following the norms of the Church. The Holy Father’s constant concern throughout his papacy has been the care of souls and preserving the unity of the Church. These are my goals as well. I want to assure those faithful in the Diocese of Oakland who find sustenance and the consolation of Jesus Christ in the ancient form of worship that your spiritual needs will continue to be met.”

COUNTIES ORDER MASK USE INDOORS
In compliance with the new order issued Aug. 2 for all Bay Area counties, masks are required indoors, regardless of vaccination status, effective 12:01 a.m. Aug. 3.

• Alameda County vaccine information: https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines.
• Contra Costa County vaccine information: https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/get-vaccinated

PERMANENT SUSPENSION OF USE OF MUSIC BY DAVID HAAS
This is a follow up to the directive published in the September 7, 2020 Admin Weekly, asking parishes to cease using music composed by David Haas until the investigation into allegations of his sexual assault have been completed. The letter from GIA confirms the permanent suspension of his music at public worship.

Letter from GIA Publishing
Last year, we were deeply heartbroken as dozens of women came forward to share their allegations of sexual assault by composer David Haas. I assume that by now you are aware of the non-profit organization that supports survivors of sexual abuse, Into Account, which recently released a comprehensive investigation and report about these allegations at www.intoaccount.org/reports. Unfortunately, new information has just surfaced reporting continued grooming behaviors by Mr. Haas towards a young woman, which is why we are reaching out to you now with this email to share the actions and position we have taken with regard to Mr. Haas’ music.

Specifically, we have suspended our publishing and sponsorship relationship with Mr. Haas and have also removed his music, books, and recordings from our catalog and website. While we understand that Mr. Haas maintains his innocence, we took these actions out of compassion and respect for the dozens of survivors who have come forward and because we believe Mr. Haas’ music no longer has a place in communities committed to maintaining a safe environment.

APPOINTMENT
Bishop Barber approves the following appointment made by Very Rev. David J. Gaa, OFM, Minister Provincial of the Franciscan Friars, Province of Saint Barbara:

Father Armando Lopez, OFM has been assigned as associate pastor at St. Elizabeth Parish, Oakland, effective Aug. 2.

OFFICIAL SCHEDULE

SEPT. 1-8
Pilgrimage for the Sick with the Western Association Order of Malta, Lourdes, France

SEPT. 13-15
USCCB meetings in Washington, D.C., including Doctrine Committee and Administrative Committee

SEPT. 18
10 a.m. 150th anniversary Mass of St. Anthony-Mary Help of Christians Parish, Oakland. 5 p.m. Gala Dinner and Fundraiser, St. Patrick’s Seminary and University, Menlo Park

SEPT. 19
11 a.m. 100th anniversary Mass of Legion of Mary, Cathedral of Christ the Light, Oakland

SEPT. 21
10:30 a.m. College of Consultants meeting, Chancery Offices, Oakland

SEPT. 23
• 10 a.m. Priest Personnel Board Meeting
• 1 p.m. Presbyteral Council Meeting

SEPT. 24
Episcopal Installation of Most Rev. Daniel Mueggenborg as the eighth Bishop of Reno, Reno, Nevada

SEPT. 25
10 a.m. Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, St. Bede Parish, Hayward

SEPT. 26
10:30 a.m. Mass and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, Santa Maria Parish, Orinda

SEPT. 28
6 p.m. Silver Chalice Award Dinner for Malta Clinic, San Francisco

SEPT. 29
Meeting of the San Francisco Province Bishops, Archdiocese of San Francisco

SEPT. 29-OCT. 1
Joining priests of the diocese attending annual Spiritual Retreat — Villa Maria del Mar, Santa Cruz
Please support the retired priests of the Diocese of Oakland. The second collection for the Diocesan Priest Retirement Benefit Trust will be on Sept. 11-12.

**Donate online**
Visit oakdiocese.org/diocesan-donation and select Priest Retirement Second Collection

**Donate by mail**
Office of Mission Advancement,
2121 Harrison St. Oakland, CA 94612
Memo line: Priest Retirement Second Collection

**Scan the QR code below**
Scan the QR code with your mobile device and follow the instructions on your screen.

Thank you for your generous gifts!