

SAINT
THOMAS
MORE
CATHOLIC
CHURCH

Our Church is a House of Prayer for all People!

Our Church and Blessed Sacrament Chapel are open
7:00am-7:00pm, seven days a week.
The door on the left side of our main doors remains unlocked.
Please enter and exit through that door.
You are always welcome!



*A Roman Catholic Parish
in the Diocese of San Diego*

✝ Spirituality
✝ Tradition
✝ Community

Mass Schedule

Saturday at 5:00pm
Sunday at 8:30am and 10:30am
Monday-Friday at 8:15am

Eucharistic Adoration

Every Day, 7:00am-7:00pm

Reconciliation (Confession)

Saturday, 3:30-4:30pm
and by appointment

Rev. Michael Ratajczak, Pastor
Rev. Karl Bauer, Senior Priest
Deacon John Fredette
Deacon Thomas A. Goeltz

1450 South Melrose Drive
Oceanside, CA 92056

760-758-4100

760-758-4165 fax

Office Hours: Monday-Friday,
8:30am-12:00noon
and 12:30-4:00pm

parishoffice@stmoside.org
www.stmoside.org



StThomasMoreRCC



Second Sunday of Advent December 4, 2016

Pastor's Column

Rev. Michael Ratajczak
760-758-4100 x100
michaelr@stmoside.org

Jesus, God's "Face of Mercy"

Please see the insert for my reflection from our Prayer Service on Sunday, November 20, celebrating the end of the Jubilee Year of Mercy.



The Sultan and The Saint

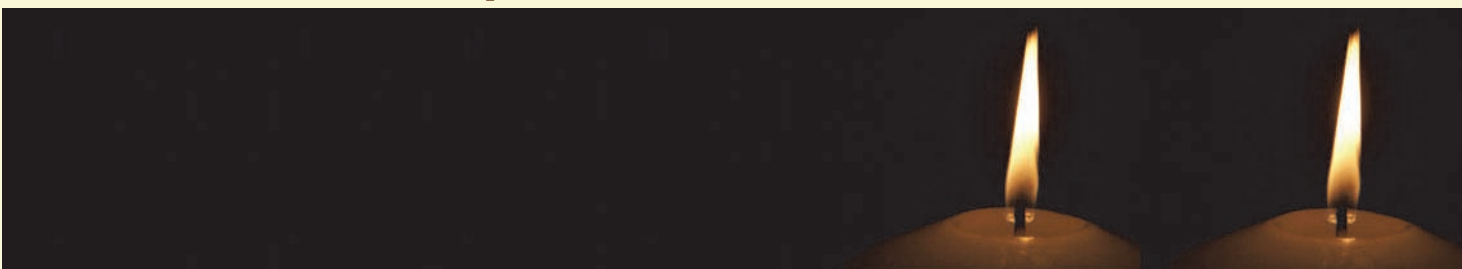
Movie screening, Saturday, January 7, 7:00pm
Parish Center Upper Level
Refreshments at 6:30pm

With the rise of new forms of extremism across the Middle East and North Africa, Christians and Muslims around the world are facing a media narrative that pits both communities against one another. St Thomas More is excited to be partnering with the San Diego Muslim community to show a film that will serve as a counter-narrative to inspire Muslims, Christians, and others to take risks for peace and greater understanding.

In 1219, in the midst of the disastrous Fifth Crusade, Francis crossed enemy lines to gain an audience with al-Kamil, the Sultan of Egypt. Francis, who opposed the warfare, hoped to bring about peace by converting the Sultan to Christianity. He didn't succeed, but came away from the peaceful encounter with revolutionary ideas that called for Christians to live harmoniously with Muslims. Thus began a relationship between the two that lasted the rest of their lives, each man risking his life to promote peace between their faiths.

This newly created documentary has been produced by Unity Productions Foundation and is narrated by Jeremy Irons. For further information, please contact either Sister Maureen, our Pastoral Associate, (760.758.4100 ex 131) or Regina Aulisio, our Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs Parish Liaison (760 295 5530).

Watch the trailer at www.sultanandthesaintfilm.com.



Dedication DVD Celebrates Our 30-Year History and Our Dedication Anniversary!



St. Thomas More Catholic Church held our Mass of Dedication and Blessing on December 16, 2015. This culminated a 30-year effort to realize a dream come true, with a beautiful liturgy, followed by a fabulous reception! Our Dedication DVD covers our 30-year history, as well as special parts of the Mass and the reception.

This is a special keepsake that all will want to have! The intro and outro are narrated by Doug D'Agrosa and Linda Brault, who both served for multiple years as chairpersons of our Pastoral Council during those 30 years. This DVD has photos of our progress as we journeyed from the beginning in 1985 up to the present and the Year of Mercy as one of the eight Pilgrim Churches in the Diocese of San Diego.

The DVD is about 53 minutes long. It is beautifully done by Thom Hiatt of Faith in Marketing! Thanks to all who helped over all the years and also in preparation for this special day and year!

DVDs are available for \$20 each on the plaza before or after all Masses, as well as in the Parish Office during working hours and online at our website, www.stmoside.org.

You may also contact Chris Smith at 760-758-4100 x120 or chriss@stmoside.org

STM Mental Health Ministry Network

STM is a member of the San Diego Mental Health Ministry Network and has made a commitment to become a faith community that both understands mental illness and can provide compassionate support. If you or a loved one is experiencing mental health challenges, or if you would like to find out how to become a member, please contact us at 760-758-4100 x104.

Local Hospitals with Catholic Chaplains Available

If you or a loved one is in one of these hospitals and need the ministry of a Catholic priest, please contact the Chaplain's Office to make the arrangements.

Hospital	Chaplain's Office
Tri-City	760-940-7954
Palomar	442-281-1328
Scripps Encinitas	760-633-7784
Scripps Green	858-554-3698
Scripps Mercy	619-260-7020
UCSD Thornton	619-543-2103
Kaiser Zion	619-528-5188

Welcome New Parishioners

Carol Filippi
Viroj Jinatongthai & Family
Eugene & Yvonne Wade

Congratulations to

Jack & Andrea Sweeney

who celebrated their 40th anniversary of marriage on Nov. 27.

May God continue to bless your marriage, and may you be an inspiration to other married couples.

Advent Reconciliation Services at Local Parishes

Date	Time	Parish
Mon, Dec. 5	6:30pm	Mary, Star of the Sea, Oceanside
Tue, Dec. 6	12:00pm	St. Francis, Vista
Tue, Dec. 6	6:30pm	St. Francis, Vista
Wed, Dec. 7	7:00pm	St. John, Encinitas
Sun, Dec. 11	4:00pm	St. Thomas More, Oceanside
Tue, Dec. 13	7:00pm	Nativity, Rancho Santa Fe
Wed, Dec. 14	7:00pm	St. Elizabeth Seton, Carlsbad
Thu, Dec. 15	1:00pm	Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside
Thu, Dec. 15	7:00pm	Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside
Mon, Dec. 19	6:30pm	St. Mark, San Marcos
Tue, Dec. 20	6:30pm	St. James, Solana Beach
Wed, Dec. 21	6:30pm	St. Mark, San Marcos
Thu, Dec. 22	10:30am	St. Peter, Fallbrook
Thu, Dec. 22	6:00pm	St. Peter, Fallbrook

Retirement Fund for Religious

Help aging sisters, brothers, and religious order priests. "Each year the need to provide for our elderly (members) becomes more pressing, and we are ever more grateful for these providential funds," writes a religious sister about the financial assistance received from the Retirement Fund for Religious. Your donation helps provide necessities such as prescription medication and nursing care. Please give to those who have given a lifetime. You may return the envelopes any time during December. Thank you!

Donations for Those Affected by Hurricane Matthew

If you would like to make a donation to help the people and the Churches impacted by Hurricane Matthew, place it in an envelope and mark it Hurricane Matthew. If you write a check, please make it out to St. Thomas More with the notation, Hurricane Matthew.

Your donations can be given any time until December 31.

Also, if you wish, you can make your donations directly to Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org) or Catholic Charities USA (CatholicCharitiesUSA.org).

Readings for the Week Ahead

Sunday Year A; Weekday Year I
Readings online at www.usccb.org.

Sunday, December 4 (4)
Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-2,7-8,12-13,17
Romans 15:4-9
Matthew 3:1-12

Monday, December 5 (181)
Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalm 85:9ab,10-14
Luke 5:17-26

Tuesday, December 6 (687)
Nicholas, bishop

Isaiah 6:1-8
Psalm 40:2,4,7-11
Luke 10:1-9

Wednesday, December 7 (688)
Ambrose, bishop, doctor

Ephesians 3:8-12
Psalm 89:2-5,21-22,25,27
John 10:11-16

Thursday, December 8 (689)
The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Genesis 3:9-15,20
Psalm 98:1-4
Ephesians 1:3-6,11-12

Luke 1:26-38

Friday, December 9 (185)

Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin, hermit
Isaiah 48:17-19

Psalm 1:1-4,6
Matthew 11:16-19

Saturday, December 10 (186)

Sirach 48:1-4,9-11
Psalm 80:2ac,3b,15-16,18-19
Matthew 17:9a,10-13

Sunday, December 11 (7)

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 35:1-6a,10
Psalm 146:6-10
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Mass Intentions

Saturday, December 3, 5:00pm
Roxanne Shaffer & John Lannan

Sunday, December 4, 8:30am
Sally Ruser ☩

Sunday, December 4, 10:30am
Fiorina Tusei ☩

Monday, December 5, 8:15am
Yvonne Lannan ☩

Tuesday, December 6, 8:15am
Jean Calderone ☩

Wednesday, December 7, 8:15am
Gloria Mauapin

Thursday, December 8, 8:15am
Ann Buko ☩

Thursday, December 8, 7:00pm
Alexander Mathews ☩

Friday, December 9, 8:15am
Maria Abreu ☩

Saturday, December 10, 5:00pm
Dolly Cole ☩

Sunday, December 11, 8:30am
Jack Gillen ☩

Sunday, December 11, 10:30am
Jan Feiner ☩

Prayer List *(Call 760-758-4100 x102 to add a name for four weeks.)*

Changa Aguilera
Ernie Aichele
Mary Alexander
Carrie Autrey
Joshua Avery
Addison Abigail Aviña
Bob Baker
Rosemary Ballard
Jose Luis Barbosa
Eliza, Isaías, Thaisa,
and the Barbosa
Family

Patricia Barbour
Francie Barron
William Bartha
Clarice Bednarz
Taylor Bell
John Bennici
Regina Bentz

Lisa Berg
Roseanne Berg
Lyle Bergeson
Mary Betz
Betty Jean Bielich

Zane Breier
Janet Brown
Bill Bryson
Anita Buerger

Amelia Buono
The Butler Family
The Cababa Family

Shelby Campbell
Breanne Campos
Aria Cappeluti

Nanette Carey
Jorge Cartajena
Donald Cashmore

Anne Caywood
Ravy Chea
The Vaughn Clevenger

Family

Anne Cline
Jacqueline Cohen
Carl & Dorothy

Coleman
James Coleman
Maria Colfer

Addie Colgan
Judy Colson
Karen Connell

Geoff Coolidge
Sandra Cracchiolo
Steven Cresencia

Lené Crowe
Anthony Curione
Karen Flaharty Daley

Beverly de Gelder
Velia Deal & Family
Paul Del Vecchio

Hugo Delgado, Jr.
Cassandra D'Ercole
Christine DeSantis

Cecilia DeSimone
David deVilleneuve
Carole Dillon

Elizabeth Doherty's
Aunt Jackie
Art & Dave Dossman

Steven Douglas
Marge Egan
Jerome Elbacha

Arthur Eral
Carolyn Erickson Ey
Sally Fay

Victoria Lopez Fenton
The Fiore Family
Fr. James Flanagan

Mary Fleming
Ryan Flum
Ernie Folis

Eugene Franciscus
The Greg French
Family

Family

Family

Family

Family

Family

Family

Family

Brian Frink
Ernie Gallagher
The Joe Garcia Family
Kathy Gardner
Joan Gay
Alyssa Gerhard
Wendy Gonzales' Dad
Rick Gonzalez
Lou Gordon
Loretta Graskemper
George Gritt
Luke Guenst
Susan Hallahan

Colleen Hanna
The Harker Family
Dorothy Harrison
Michelle Harrison &
Family

Barbara Hatem
LaNay Hazzard
Barry Henwood
Lilian Hills
Lisa Hodges

Georgia Ann Hodina
Samara Hook
Susan Hori
Iolanda Iacobelli

Katherine Jacobs
Jacqueline Johnson
Sue Johnston
Laura Kater

Dottie Kearney
Connor Kerzie
Peggy Kiernan

Debbie Kinney
Mark Kneisel
Dewey Kolbo

Tony Korwin
Faith Kowallek
Helen Kuhn

Lorene Kundert
Lillian Lachance
The Lamelin Family

Ashley LaMothe &
Family

Pauline Lapre's sister
Justine
Brandon LeBlanc

Susan Lee
Jake Lefferdink
Jeremiah Lemus

Aleah Leon
Ashley Load
Cassandra & Lauren

Loretto
Jack Lucarelli
Joaquin Maldonado

The Maldonado Family
The Maldonado Trejo
Family

Paige Mansell
Gloria Maupin
Colleen McCall

Virginia McConnell
Paige McCoy
Jerry McEniry

Ann McGear
The McGinley Family
Ann McMahan

Bob McWilliams
Joyce Meehan
Kalei Mendiola

Lorraine Micallef
Rita Mikridge
Tom Miller

Phyllis Minaya
June Mitchell
Maria Molina

June Montgomery
Nancy Moore
Elizabeth Muehlbacher

Conrad Murphy
Eddie Murphy

Family

Family

Family

Family

Family

Family

Family

Margie Myers
Andrew Philip
Nacional
Angela Nacional
Melanie Nacional
Nida Navarro
Richard Obsitnik
Gillian Ochoa
Kare O'Dell
Laura Paciorek Gloor
Katie Padilla
The Padua Family
Ethan Palm
Cynthia Pearson

Salina Pearson
Elisa Petrie
Merri Phelps
Helen Pingtella
Delilah Plasterer
Perry Postulka
The Joe Prokop Family

Bernie Ptak
Barbara Ramm
Randy Reznicek
Jenni Richard
Evelyn Richards
Rita Ritchie
Ralda Rizke

Lily Robinson
Bea Rocha
Maria Rogers
The Rudolph Family
The Russo Family

Rachel Sainc
Sam Sam
Cindy Sanelli
Lori Sanna

Linda Schmidt
Grace Schweighofer
The Segars Family
Joan Shea

Elizabeth Shirzad
Nick Soltau
Darek, Vanessa, &
Elba Spizewski

Don St. Pierre
Patricia St. Pierre
Sybil Staples

Mike Sterling
Laura Bernard Stover,
MD

Pete Sullivan
Pat Swanton
Julie Teare

Laura Thiele
Tommy & Ginger
Thompson

Maryann Tien
Sarah Tillinghast
William Tompson

Stephen Toth, Jr.
Olivia Trejo
The Trejo/Beltran

Family
The Trejo/Maldonado/
Uribe Family

Frank Urso
Martin Vertson
Lucy Vienna

Lucy Viarmontes
Vanessa Vitiello
Wilson Wanner

Kevin Watson-Graff
Jerry Wechsler
Rylee West

The Xavier Family
Patricia Zavala
Romano Zehila

Jeanne Zeltner

Calendar Highlights

More details at www.stmoside.org,
Schedule and Calendar

- Dec 4 Liturgy of the Word for
Children at 8:30am and
10:30am Masses
- Dec 4 REACH Classes at Church
- Dec 6-7 Restaurant Fundraiser at
BJ's in Carlsbad
- Dec 8 Immaculate Conception of
the Blessed Virgin Mary—
Masses at 8:15am and
7:00pm
- Dec 11 Advent Communal
Reconciliation Service—
4:00pm
- Dec 12 Women's Guild Luncheon
- Dec 13-14 Restaurant Fundraiser at
Nucci's in Vista
- Dec 16 Anniversary of Dedication
Mass at 7:00pm**
- Dec 17 Christmas Cookie Exchange
- Dec 18 Living Nativity—5:00pm
- Dec 21 Spirited Seniors Winter
Luncheon
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve—Masses at
4:00pm, 6:00pm, and
10:00pm
- Dec 25 Christmas Day—Masses at
8:30am and 10:30am
- Dec 31 Mary Mother of God—
Mass at 5:00pm
- Jan 1 Mary Mother of God—
Masses at 8:30am and
10:30am
- Jan 8 Twelfth Night Choral
Festival

***The Prayers for Women Religious
have moved to the monthly
calendar insert—
please check there.***

Deployed Military

*As a faith community let us pray for all who
serve our country in these troubled times. We
pray especially for those connected to our
Parish who have been deployed:*

Gunnery Sgt. Fernando Andrade, Jr.
Lt. Devon Czarzasty
Capt. Branden M. Felker, USAF
Patrick G. Felker, USN
Grant Fischer
Gunnery Sgt. Julian Fyffe, USMC
1st Lt. Eric Galamay
MSGT Steve Gallegos, USMC
Sgt. Alex Garcia
Adolfo Granados, MD, US Navy
PFC Samuel Haro, US Army
Staff Sgt Stephan LaMothe, USAF
Cpl Caleb Lemons, USMC
PFC Cody Madere
Jordan Millikan
1st Lt. Jennifer Mozzetta
Jeremiah Gabriel Nelson, USAF
Thomas Kevin Nelson, US Navy
Firearm Griffin Joseph Ochoa, US Navy
Pvt. 2 Jess Phillips, US Army
Nicole Rieger CTR2, US Navy
Sr. Airman Robert Spear, USAF
Sgt. Charles Watts, USMC

Social Ministries & Outreach

Christmas Angels

Thank you to all who participated in the Christmas Angel ornament program. All ornament items were due by December 1, so if you still have your gift please drop it off in the office ASAP! The Camp Pendleton Adopt a Family packages/gift cards are due December 11 so that we have enough time to get them to the Naval Hospital before their distribution day. The tree now has the Crown ornaments for items needed by Birth Choice and are due at Mass on January 7-8 for the Feast of the Epiphany.

If you would still like to help with this ministry, we will be taking the donated items and making gift bags for the children from Catholic Charities next Saturday, December 10 in the lower level of the Parish center at 9:00am until we finish. The more hands we have, the quicker we get the items packaged! If you have any further questions, please call Lisa Seufert (760)716-0977 or leprechaun81@sbcglobal.net.

Do YOU Recycle?

The youth of the Parish have started a recycling ministry to raise money for their activities. The California CRV program provides a wonderful opportunity for fundraising, as more than 60% of the money raised through the CRV program never gets redeemed. Watch for the blue recycling bins on the plaza after Masses in the coming weeks and make sure to deposit your eligible drink containers in them. There will also be an information table on the plaza explaining how the program works.

Help Feed the Hungry

Pope Francis reminds us: "You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. That's how prayer works."

We encourage every STM family to donate one nonperishable food item each weekend when they come to Mass.

Together we can help feed the hungry in our local community.

Blood and Bone Marrow Drive for Jerome

St. Thomas More will be having a blood and bone marrow drive on Sunday, December 11, to support one of our Parishioners, 11-year-old Jerome, who is fighting leukemia. Please sign up on the plaza after Masses or contact Morgan and Stacey Espe at 760-224-2699 or sesperdh@gmail.com

The Friends of La Posada Thank You!

Thank you, parishioners of St. Thomas More, for your donations to "La Posada," the shelter for homeless men and farm-workers in Carlsbad. Thank you to Father Mike, who bought a table for ten at our recent luncheon fundraiser, and to the ten people who attended and added their contributions. Many thanks for your generosity! If you would like to know more about "Friends of La Posada," please visit www.friendsoflaposada.org and/or contact Cathy Blecki at 760-704-6407.

Diocesan Young Adult Christmas Gala

Saturday, December 10, 6:30-11:30pm, St. Michael Catholic Church, 15546 Pomerado Rd., Poway. Details at www.yamsd.org.

Marriage & Family Life

Moms & Kids—Are you a mom with infant through school age children wanting to meet other moms in our Parish? Want to find a great way to meet friends for both you and your children? Join our dynamic and energetic Moms and Kids ministry! We have park play dates on the first and third Monday of each month at a local park, and there are many other events throughout the month posted on our private Facebook page. Join us! Contact Natalia Sada at vzlanaty@yahoo.com or Estelle Eral at estelle.eral@gmail.com.



Marriage Encounter—Do you have a good marriage but want a little jumpstart? Would you and your spouse like to rediscover and reconnect with each other? Then we invite you to attend a Marriage Encounter Weekend. Weekends take place in San Diego and other Southern California locations throughout the year. For more information, visit www.wme.org or contact Eddie and Sheila Murphy at 760-295-0008.

Natural Family Planning—Struggling to conceive but nothing is happening? Or doctors tell you IVF is your only hope? Want to space children naturally and effectively? Come listen to a free Introductory Presentation of the Creighton Model FertilityCare system. Every third Thursday of the month. Next presentation: Thursday, December 15, 7:00pm, St. Thomas More, Parish Center Upper Level. Please RSVP with Beth at 619-630-8086 or beth@veritasfertilitycare.com.

Relationship Skills Workshops—Deacon John and Debbie Fredette present Relationship Skills Workshops every Tuesday evening, 7:00-8:30pm, at St. Thomas More in the Parish Center Lower Level through January 17. Come and explore how to improve your relationship! You can attend one workshop, several, or all of them. The topic for December 13 (no meeting on December 6) is *The Third Option*. There is no pre-registration or fee. For more information call Deacon John at 760-758-4100 x104

Bishops' Letter on Marriage—Between a Man and a Woman: "Jesus teaches that marriage is between a man and a woman. 'Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female...For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh' (Mt 19:4-6)." <http://www.usccb.org/loveandlife/>.

Marriage Moments—Feast then famine. It's a paradox of US and Christian church calendars that the feast of Thanksgiving is quickly followed by Advent—a season of waiting and preparation. Our culture hurries Christmas by trying to get us to fill Advent with buying and busyness. Don't let yourself be robbed of this holy time of reflection. Simplify. www.SusanVogt.net.

Parenting Pointers—Your Thanksgiving meal is probably over, but you may have leftovers. May it prompt you to reflect on your abundance. Consult your family about one way during Advent that you can use extras around your home (food, toys, tools...) to ease the lives of those who don't have as much. www.SusanVogt.net

For more information, visit www.sdcatholic.org Ministries/Marriage and Family Life or call Jen Frost at 858-692-7438.

Parish Events

Men's Fellowship Update

Are you hungry for a good message, good fellowship, and a good breakfast? Join us for our Saturday morning men's gathering and breakfast called **iHunger**. To stay informed of what's going on with **iHunger** via SMS text messages, text iHunger to 84576 or email Deacon John to have your email added to the iHunger distribution group. (Note: breakfast is off-site on the first weekend of each month).

Also, if you find yourself thirsty for occasional fellowship over a beer at a local micro-brewery, or taking a day hike, or going to a ball game together with some other great men from the Parish, Text **iThirst** to 84576.

Women's Guild News

By now you have received the Women's Guild annual Christmas Raffle tickets in the mail. If you haven't done so yet, send them in with your donation. Make sure your name and phone number are on EACH stub (address labels trimmed to fit work wonders and saves time!). Just drop the envelope in the collection basket at Mass or in the Parish office, or you can mail them. The drawing for the \$500, \$300, and \$200 prizes takes place after the 10:30am Mass Sunday, December 18.

Please plan to attend the monthly luncheon meeting on Monday, December 12, when we celebrate an American Advent. We hope you will volunteer to share your childhood or early years family memories of this wonderful season. You may contact Genevieve Green, Program Chair, at 760-822-6605 to arrange this. Always a festive event for Women's Guild, be sure to put the date on your calendar and consider inviting a guest or two! Contact Patty Remington, Hospitality Chair, at cprem@pacbell.net or 760-805-6935 to reserve your spot(s).

It's not too early to think about programs coming up in early 2017! Our January 9 meeting features our Chinese Auction which is lots of fun...provided you bring some items you may not have used (or slightly used in good condition) for the auction. February 25 is the date of our Tea...chaired by Maureen Tutino and Mary Dahlberg. They are busy planning a wonderful Saturday again and invite you to decorate your table and bring your friends. Details will be forthcoming.

In the spirit of Advent, put some time aside each day to prepare your heart for his coming. —*Kathy Gerhard, president*

Spirited Seniors Winter Luncheon

The Spirited Seniors have planned a delicious luncheon on the first day of Winter: Wednesday, December 21. The doors will open at 11:30am, our caterer is Bobby's Hideaway Café and the cost is \$20 for members and \$22 for guests. Please complete the reservation form that was in the Bulletin or print the following on a piece of paper: Name(s) of people attending and your phone number. Put this and your check made payable to "STM Spirited Seniors" in an envelope marked "STM Spirited Seniors Winter Luncheon." You may place your envelope in the offertory collection or direct it to Box 12 in the Parish Office. Space is limited, the deadline is noon on December 13. Questions, please call Jim and Marilyn Day at 760-509-4545 or jandmday@cox.net.



The Gala team thanks YOU for your support in 2016 and invites you to join us in our final "Year of Celebration" event, the Christmas Cookie Exchange. This is a fun and festive event, where everyone brings four dozen cookies to exchange and also enjoys hot chocolate, coffee, juice, treats and fellowship! Our own Ava Ratajczak hosts this event, accompanied by Robin and Mary Ratajczak. This helps with the Gala's start-up funds for our 2017 Cinco de Mayo Gala!

Sign up at the Information Table, in the parish office or by contacting Chris Smith.

Christmas Cookie Exchange

Saturday, December 17, 10:00am-12:00noon
\$20/per person (\$10 tax deductible)

**For information, please contact Chris Smith
760-758-4100 x120 or chriss@stmoside.org.**

Pictorial Directory Update

We are expecting delivery between December 9-15!

For those of you who have the complimentary 8x10 photo to pick up, you can come to the Parish Office during business hours (8:30am-4:00pm, Monday-Friday), or pick it up at the information table on the plaza after all weekend Masses.

**Please note that if you did not have your photo taken at STM during our photo sessions in June, July, and August, OR at another Lifetouch photo location but submitted a photo, there will be a \$10 charge for processing and for the photo directory.*

Kim Wright, 760-518-8465, kimw@stmoside.org

Considering Becoming Catholic?

Has Pope Francis ignited a spark in you to know more about the Catholic faith and become a member of the Church he shepherds?

If you are already Catholic, perhaps you have a new enthusiasm for your faith that you would like to share with a friend or family member who is searching.

Our lives sometimes go through seasons of change, of closeness to God and distance from God. Yet the Father's love is steadfast, full of mercy, and ever-present to those who seek with a sincere heart, no matter what sins or situations have caused separation.

If you have thought about becoming Catholic and beginning a new "season" in your life, contact Kathleen Bell, 760-809-6526, 80bell80@gmail.com.

STM \$crip News

Do you shop on Amazon? Use Amazon Smile and raise money for STM while you shop! Click the link at www.stmoside.org/scrip.htm to get started.

We appreciate your continued support for the Scrip program. **For more information, visit www.stmoside.org/scrip.htm or contact the Scrip team at 760-758-4100 x150 or scrip@stmoside.org**

Liturgy & Music *Worship God*

Douglas Lynn
Director of Liturgy & Music
douglasl@stmoside.org; 760-758-4100 x140



CELEBRATING ONE YEAR

Anniversary Mass on Friday, December 16, 7:00pm

Can you believe it's been a year?!

One year ago, on December 16, 2015, we dedicated our permanent Church, and our one-year anniversary approaches.

For every Parish, the date of the anniversary becomes a feast day, with the rank of Solemnity.

It's a big deal!!!

This year, on Friday, December 16, we will celebrate our first anniversary with Masses at 8:15am and at 7:00pm.

Come celebrate the day, the year, and this faith community.

In his letter to us on the day of the Dedication, Bishop McElroy wrote:

This splendid new place of worship is a treasure of our local church...because it is the spiritual home for a parish family which is vital, welcoming, sacrificing, teaching, serving, and healing in the name of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen? Amen! Certainly worth celebrating a little, yes? And, of course, there will be cake.

See you there!

—Douglas

Almighty ever-living God,
pour out your grace
upon this place
and extend the gift of your help
to all who call upon you,
that the power of your word
and of the Sacraments
may strengthen here
the hearts of all the faithful.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son,
Who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

*Collect (Opening Prayer)
The Mass of the Dedication of a Church*

Upcoming Music



DECEMBER 8
**Immaculate
Conception of
Mary**



7:00pm

Sanctuary Choir



DECEMBER 11
**3rd Sunday of
Advent**



5:00pm

Tower Bells

8:30am

Sanctuary Choir

10:30am

Praise Team

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Thursday, December 8 | Masses at 8:15am and 7:00pm

The Anniversary of the Dedication of Our Church
Friday, December 16 | Masses at 8:15am and 7:00pm

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)
Saturday, December 24 | Masses at 4:00pm, 6:00pm, and 10:00pm
Christmas Caroling begins at 9:30pm
Sunday, December 25 | Masses at 8:30am and 10:30am

Faith Formation

Teach and Live the Gospel

Matt Franklin
Youth Advocate

760-758-4100 x161; mattf@stmoside.org

Debbie Fredette
Director of Faith Formation

760-758-4100 x110; debbief@stmoside.org

Family Faith Formation

Today Is a REACH Sunday !!

Is Your Child Enrolled in Faith Formation?
Classes are available for ages 3-adult

Contact Debbie in the Faith Formation Office For More Info

Sacrament Prep News



TODAY Sunday, December 4, 12:30pm is a
Reconciliation/Eucharist Parent Meeting
for parents with a child in their
second year of Sacrament preparation.
Meet on the Parish Center Upper Level.



Saturday, December 10, is an **M3** event for **Year 1**
and **Year 2 Confirmation** classes and their families.
Join us for 5:00pm Mass and a potluck immediately
following on the Lower Level of the Parish Center .

Adult Confirmation Preparation

Are you an adult (19 years or older) who would like to prepare
for the Sacrament of Confirmation in 2017?

Classes begin Sunday, January 8 at 7:00pm
and will be held twice a month through May.

Please contact Debbie in the Faith Formation office at
debbief@stmoside.org to discuss registering for the classes.

Little Books for Advent Almost Gone!

Little Books for Advent are available to purchase in the Parish
Office during the week or at the information table after all the
weekend Masses. Get inspired this Advent by using this daily
reflection tool. Just \$2, and they make wonderful gifts for family
and friends!

Fuel Up at Tommy's Café!



Specialty Coffee/Homemade Cinnamon
Rolls/Donuts/Bagels/Juices. Come check
out Tommy's Café after Mass and
Support Youth Ministry at our Parish.

Youth Ministry

Middle School



EDGE

Sunday from 4:30-6:00pm

High School

IGNITE
ST. THOMAS MORE
oceanside, ca
Wednesday 6:30-8:30pm

Adult Faith Formation

Bible Study News



**Don't Miss Out on These
Great Studies!**
**Register Today by Calling
the Faith Formation Office
at 760-758-4100 x110**



**Wednesday Morning
Bible Study Continues
December 7
9:00-11:00am**

**Thursday Evening
Bible Study Continues
December 15 at 7:00-8:30pm**
For Childcare please RSVP to
debbief@stmoside.org prior to the
evening of the study

Relationship Skills Workshop



Tuesday evenings, 7:00-8:30pm

Come Find Out About "The Third Option"

**The next session will be held December 13 (no session on
December 6) on the Parish Center Lower Level.**
No need to register, and there is no cost to attend.
Come for just some or all of the sessions.

Sunday Missals Are Here!

Sunday Missals for the New Liturgical Year are now available.
The books are just \$5 and are available to be purchased in the
Parish Office throughout the week, or at the
information table after all the weekend Masses.
They will sell out fast, so do not wait. Get yours today!

The Ark Nursery



**Open during the 10:30am Mass for
children up to 5 years of age.**
Contact Lia Keane at liak@stmoside
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THRIVE
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Mondays 7:00-10:00pm

contact Matt Franklin mattf@stmoside.org

Stewardship & Development

Serve God's People

Chris Smith
Director of Stewardship & Development
chriss@stmoside.org; 758-4100 x120

Collection for Week of November 19/20, 2016

Number of Registered Households	1,236
Offertory	\$13,085.60
Offertory (Loose Collection)	\$1,548.00
Total	\$14,633.60

Collection for Week of November 26/27, 2016

Number of Registered Households	1,237
Offertory	\$7,087.14
Offertory (Loose Collection)	\$1,347.50
Total	\$8,434.64

Mortgage/Building Completion Fund Income

November, 2016

Mortgage Offering Collected	\$42,734.75
Mortgage Payment Due	\$44,806.21
Mortgage Payment Overage/(Shortfall)	(\$2,070.19)
Payment toward Parish Reserves *	\$0.00

Memorial Items toward Building Completion Fund \$3,700.00

Please continue to support the
Mortgage/Building Completion Fund!

2016 YEAR-END CHECKLIST

Got Deductions?



- † **BE SURE TO COMPLETE** all gifts by December 31 to qualify for tax savings on this year's tax return. **Advance planning with the Parish Office is essential, since the office will be closed from Friday, December 23, 2016, at noon and will reopen on Tuesday, January 3, 2017.**
- † Donations received at the Saturday, December 31, 2016 Vigil Mass will be credited in the 2016 tax year.
- † **Envelopes POSTMARKED by Saturday, December 31, 2016, will be counted toward the 2016 tax year.**
- † **Annual Catholic Appeal** ~ Parishioners with a balance due on their pledges made to this year's ACA are requested to conclude payments by December 31, 2016. *(Tithing families, know that your tithe covers your ACA contribution.)*
- † Keep all gift receipts and acknowledgment letters, especially for gifts of \$250 or more.

For more information please contact:

Chris Smith at 760-758-4100 x120 or chriss@stmoside.org

Empowered by God's Grace and Love We Serve God and Share Our Gifts with Joy

Francine died last night. She was my elderly next-door neighbor. Over the last few years she had trouble getting around. I started mowing her lawn in the summer and shoveling her driveway in the winter. She always offered money but I wouldn't take it.

Once, she asked me to stop inside after shoveling and asked, "Why are you always doing these nice things? We weren't really close as neighbors." My answer was simple. "It's because of Jesus, Francine."

I prayed briefly with her for comfort and the strength to do her daily activities. She was very moved. There are many who sit next to you in church each week suffering silently.

They don't know how to ask for prayer or help. Maybe they could use a little conversation or a cup of coffee after Mass. Or maybe a hug, a word of encouragement, or just someone to listen to their story. Sometimes just a warm smile, eye contact and "hello" will make someone's day.

All it takes is a few minutes of our time and an open heart to help with the hurts and needs of others. Prayer helps. When you consider the sacrifice God made for us, the Christian Stewardship of our time is an awesome way of saying thanks!

—partially excerpted, Parish Publishing, LLC E-bulletin December 2016 (with permission)

First of all, I want to thank each of you at STM for all that you do to continue our many ministerial efforts! Some of you are visible to all as we attend Mass each week, while others are rarely, if ever, seen by the majority of our Parish.

Fr. Mike has referred to our Parish as one of "Intentionality" ever since he first came here in July 2003. He was immediately struck by the dedication with which our Parishioners attended to all of the various ministries that we serve.

Over the years I've heard people tell me they have no talent. God doesn't create people with no talent . . . it is just that simple! We may not always recognize our talent, but it is there all the same.

Each week there is a lengthy prayer list on page 3 of our bulletin. It is there for our Parishioners so that we might all lift up these people in prayer. Our faithful have "stormed heaven" many times for people on that list, as well as people whose names you will never see. God hears our prayers and recognizes the voices of those who pray. Prayer is powerful and we can all pray!

Always know that I'm here for you if you'd like to be involved, but are not sure of doing what or where to begin. Email or call me and we will surely find a good fit for you! *Chris :-)*

As we prepare for the joyous Christmas birth, remember that the shortest distance between two people is a smile!



Memorial Item Donations Available

Jesus on the Road to Emmaus

**Bronze Sculpture for
Daily Mass Chapel** \$30,000

Parish Offices

Metal Framing Exterior Walls \$60,000

HVAC Components \$55,000

Roofing \$45,000

Exterior Windows and Doors \$45,000

Exterior Brick \$30,000

Plumbing \$30,000

Plumbing Finish and Fixtures \$10,000

Memorial Item Donations Partial

Jesus, Divine Redeemer and

**Master of the Universe Mosaic Panels
for Memorial Garden** \$5,000/each
(54) 12 available

Priests' Concelebration Vestments
(4) 4 available \$400/each

Pew Seating for the Church
(1,000) 706 available \$300/each

Daily Mass Chapel and Choir Chairs
(200) 93 available \$300/each

Altar Server Albs
(15) 8 available \$125/each

Pipe Organ—Our pipe organ is our
“pipe dream”...but dream we must...
donations of any amount toward the
pipe organ will be accepted **\$850,000**

11/01/16

Memorials are a way of honoring those whom we love, whether they are living or deceased. Often, memorials are made for a special intention or in thanksgiving for a variety of blessings received from God.

Listed above are items still available for adoption.

All contributions will be recognized in a special memorial to be displayed in our Parish Memorial Garden.

For more information or to adopt an item, contact Chris Smith
760-758-4100 x120 or chriss@stmoside.org



STM Vehicle Donation Program

Do you have a vehicle you want to donate?
Call us, and we'll have it picked up operational or not!
You get the tax deduction!

We can accept vehicles without current registration
and can file for replacement title if it has been lost.



**As of November 1, we have netted \$66,782
from this program. Thank you donors!**



**For more information, contact the Parish Office:
760-758-4100 x100 or parishoffice@stmoside.org**

The Larger Church News

Sing Me Home, A Concert with Tony Alonso and Jeanne Cotter—Saturday, December 10, 7:00pm, St. John the Evangelist Church, 1001 Encinitas Blvd, Encinitas. For more information, contact julie.marnar@yahoo.com.

Casa de Molina Children's Christmas Party—Saturday, December 16. Volunteers and donors needed. For more information, contact Vicky Molina at motherev5@cox.net

John Paul the Great Catholic University Master of Arts in Biblical Theology—For more information, go to www.jpcatholic.com or contact 858-653-6740 x1117.

The Glory of the Lord Shines upon You: Epiphanies in LGBT Lives—January 6-8, 2017; Non-silent Retreat for Women and Men at The Jesuit Retreat Center of Los Altos, California; Fr. Michael Zampelli, SJ; Dr. Sheila Nelson; and, Mr. Gregory Dale Schultz. A weekend retreat for the LGBT community to relax and reflect on the mysteries of Incarnation and Epiphany... Information Contact: reservations@jrclosaltos.org.

Lutheran/Anglican/Roman Catholic "Day of Dialogue"—Saturday, January 21, 9:30am-12:00noon, Diocesan Pastoral Center, 3888 Paducah Dr., San Diego. \$25 at the door or send check with name, address, phone number, and email to Msgr. Dennis Mikulanis, 17252 Bernardo Center Dr., San Diego, CA 92128.

† † †

Detention Ministry Volunteers Needed—Spend a couple hours per week or once per month to serve on a ministry team and pray, read scripture, and facilitate discussion with Catholic inmates. Information and Training Seminar scheduled for January 10. Visit www.sdcatholic.org/restore or contact 858-490-8375 or jwalsh@sdcatholic.org for more information.

Young Adult Opportunities around the Diocese

The Young Catholic Professionals Speakers Series presents author and two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist Steve Breen on Tue, Dec 13 at 7:00pm, Ascension Catholic Church, 11292 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., San Diego. Come hear Steve's faith walk as a Catholic professional. All are welcome! For more information visit www.yamsd.org.

Catholic Radio—AM 1000/Sirius 130—San Diego

Visit ihradio.com/sandiego

St. Francis Church News

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For a video about the school, visit: <http://tinyurl.com/gwqu23u>



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Parish Contacts

Updated 11/20/2016

Council Chairpersons: Pastoral-Lisa Attardo 760- 940-1505 • Finance-Ron Briseno 760-224-3105 • Development-Jody Cadieux 760-809-9761

Pastoral Council Committees

Religious Education/Faith Formation/Evangelization

Rory Griffin 760-414-3939
 Religious Education for Adolescents & Children (RE.A.CH)
Debbie Fredette 760-758-4100 x110
 Liturgy of the Word for Children..... Heidi Madden 760-529-2400
 Sacramental Preparation.....Debbie Fredette 760-758-4100 x110
 RCIA..... Kathleen Bell 760-809-6526
 Moms & Kids..... Lia Haubert 760-758-4100 x100
 Natalia Sada 760-758-4100 x100
 Estelle Eral 760-758-4100 x100
 Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs..... Regina Aulisio 760-295-5530
 Youth Ministry..... Matt Franklin 760-758-4100 x161
 High School Matt Franklin 760-758-4100 x161
 Young Adults Matt Franklin 760-758-4100 x161
 Religious Education for Adults...Debbie Fredette 760-758-4100 x110
 Bible Study..... Patt Goeltz 760-727-8442
 Centering Prayer Mary Williams 760-758-4100 x100
 Men's Fellowship..... Dcn. John Fredette 760-758-4100 x104
 Women's Ministry Lia Keane 760-586-8049
 Vocations Matt Franklin 760-758-4100 x161

LiturgyKathy Arciero 760-231-1022

Art & Environment Kathy Arciero 760-231-1022
 Bereavement Ministry..... Sr. Maureen Brown 760-758-4100 x131
 Eucharistic Adoration Available
 Interior Design Team Pat & Phil Goscienski 760-732-1414
 Liturgical Ministries..... Douglas Lynn 760-758-4100 x140
 Music Ministry..... Douglas Lynn 760-758-4100 x140
 Sacristans—Altar Guild Diana Diaz 760-758-7870
 Sacristans—Altar Linens Anna Meyers 760-727-4998

Marriage & Family Life Jen Frost 858-692-7438

Bringing the Celebration Home Jen Frost 858-692-7438
 Diocesan Liaison..... Andrea Spencer 760-560-6540
 Family Services..... Rev. Michael Ratajczak 760-758-4100 x100
 Marriage Preparation..... Rev. Michael Ratajczak 760-758-4100 x100
 Widows & Widowers of North County..... Carol Kope 760-758-4100

Parish Organizations & Events..... Patrick Attardo 760-940-1505

Annual Gala Chris Smith 760-758-4100 x120
 Historian/Archives Brandon Oswald 760-845-5450
 Knights of Columbus John Murphy 760-497-6117
 Social Activities Henny Jocelyn 760-758-4100 x100

Spirited Seniors..... Jim & Marilyn Day 760-509-4545
 Treasures Rummage Sale..... John & Wendy Murphy 760-497-6117
 Walking Ministry Diane Pal 760-815-2519
 Women's Guild..... Kathy Gerhard 760-732-5951
Social Ministries Stacey & Morgan Espe 760-224-2699
 Blood Drive Stacey & Morgan Espe 760-224-2699
 Brother Benno's Collection Dcn. Tom Goeltz 760-727-8442
 Brother Benno's Kitchen Server George Jones 760-940-9288
 Christmas Angel Ministry..... Kevin & Lisa Seufert 760-732-5965
 CPR/AED Classes..... Phil Goscienski 760-732-1414
 Culture of Life Jane Kelleher 760-822-7041
 Disability Facilitation Ann Eriksson 760-305-9985
 Jail Ministry Rita McCarthy 760-758-4100 x100
 Mental Health Ministry..... Chair: Tim Keane 760-758-2717
 Referrals: Deacon John Fredette 760-758-4100 x104
 Prayer Request Line..... Pat Wong 760-806-1310
 Lee Cocco 760-598-6248
 Project Linus..... Mary Coxon 760-599-8760
 Social Justice Committee Henri Black 760-758-8137
 Interfaith Center for Worker Justice
 Joyce Meehan 760-304-0373
 San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP)
 Sr. Maureen Brown 760-758-4100 x131

Solutions for Change Kevin & Lyn Leahy 760-643-0872
 Family Shoe Ministry Rick & Heidi Madden 760-470-4998
 St. Bonaventure Mission..... Dcn. Tom Goeltz 760-727-8442

Office Support..... Henny Jocelyn 760-758-4100 x100

General Support..... Henny Jocelyn 760-758-4100 x100
 Kitchen Manager..... Rebecca Eyer 760-758-4100 x100

Development Council Committees

Annual Catholic Appeal..... Lorraine Doering 760-758-4100 x102
 New Construction Brian Leahey 760-224-1674
 Parish Membership Valerie Thompson 760-630-1703
 Planned Giving Chris Smith 760-758-4100 x120
 Publicity/Public Relations..... Jane Gladden 760-659-6168
 Scrip Sales Andrea Sweeney 760-216-6389
 Lisa Seufert 760-732-5965
 Stewardship Chris Smith 760-758-4100 x120
 Vehicle Donations..... Diana Diaz 760-758-4100 x100
 Welcome Ministry Chris Smith 760-758-4100 x120

Pastoral Staff

Rev. Michael Ratajczak, Pastor 760-758-4100 x100 michaelf@stmoside.org
 Rev. Karl Bauer, Senior Priest..... 760-758-4100 x133 karlb@stmoside.org
 Dcn. John Fredette..... 760-758-4100 x104 johnf@stmoside.org
 Dcn. Tom Goeltz 760-758-4100 x100 thomasg@stmoside.org
 Sr. Maureen Brown, Pastoral Associate 760-758-4100 x131 maureenb@stmoside.org
 Dcn. John Fredette, Business Manager..... 760-758-4100 x104 johnf@stmoside.org
 Debbie Fredette, Director of Faith Formation 760-758-4100 x110 debbief@stmoside.org
 Matt Franklin, Youth Advocate 760-758-4100 x161 mattf@stmoside.org
 Stacey Griffin, Faith Formation Office Assistant 760-758-4100 x110 staceyg@stmoside.org
 Lia Keane, Director of Ark Nursery 760-758-4100 x100 liak@stmoside.org
 Douglas Lynn, Director of Liturgy and Music 760-758-4100 x140 douglasl@stmoside.org
 Kathy Santy, Assistant Music Director 760-758-4100 x100 kathys@stmoside.org
 Sally Fay, Organist/Choir Accompanist 760-758-4100 x100 sallyf@stmoside.org
 Chris Smith, Director of Stewardship and Development..... 760-758-4100 x120 chriss@stmoside.org
 Joe Garcia, Director of Maintenance 760-758-4100 x151 joeg@stmoside.org
 Henny Jocelyn, Receptionist/Secretary 760-758-4100 x100 hennyj@stmoside.org
 Lorraine Doering, Parish Office Technician..... 760-758-4100 x102 lorrained@stmoside.org
 Rebecca Eyer, Sacristan 760-758-4100 x100 rebecca@stmoside.org
 Brian Leahey, Director of Construction..... 760-758-4100 x152 brianl@stmoside.org

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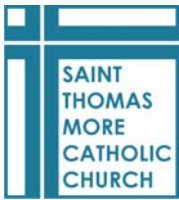
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Second Sunday of Advent December 4, 2016

Pastor's Column

Rev. Michael Ratajczak
760-758-4100 x100
michaelr@stmoside.org



Jesus, God's "Face of Mercy"

This is my reflection from our Prayer Service on Sunday, November 20, celebrating the end of the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

God is Mercy! Jesus, the Son of God, is the "Face of Mercy!"

To be a Disciple of Jesus, to be a Christian, to be a Catholic Christian, is to allow the face of mercy to smile and shine in all the thoughts and actions of our daily lives.

The definition of mercy from my Google search is, "*Compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone to whom it is within one's power to punish or harm...*"

With this definition of mercy in mind, it means that although I have a right to exact justice from someone for the harm that that person caused me, I choose not to do so. I have not exacted justice but have expended mercy. When the mind and heart of Jesus, the "Face of Mercy," is practiced, mercy is greater than justice!

Polarization and animosity among peoples is a growing concern not only in the United States but around the world.

Pope Francis has said, "*How many situations of uncertainty and suffering are sown by this growing animosity between peoples, between us!...The virus of polarization and animosity permeates our way of thinking, feeling and acting. We are not immune from this and we need to take care lest such attitudes find a place in our hearts... In God's heart there are no enemies. He only has sons and daughters. We are the ones who raise walls, build barriers, and label people. God does not wait for us be a little bit better or more perfect before he loves us...*"

Pope Francis begs us to see mercy as the antidote to this virus of polarization and animosity that keeps us from our true self, from our families and our communities, and our relations with the global village.

What are the ways in which we allow Jesus, the "Face of Mercy," to smile and shine in and through the thoughts and actions of our daily lives: in our own life, in our family and community life, and in our political life?

1. The "Face of Mercy" in our own life

We must surrender to the reality that we are not perfect people. We sin, and we are in need of God's mercy and forgiveness.

So often it is pride that keeps us from admitting our sinfulness. It is a lack of trust in God, that God really does forgive us and that God is merciful.

Over the years, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I have experienced people who keep confessing the same sin over and over again. Not that they keep committing this same sin, but, even though, they have confessed it before, they keep confessing it because they just cannot believe that God really and truly forgives them and has mercy on them.

They are not able to forgive themselves because they cannot or are not willing to comprehend God's great and total mercy and forgiveness.

I see this happen most often in women who have had an abortion and also in men who have helped a woman procure an abortion.

They cannot believe that this grave sin can be forgiven, that God's mercy and forgiveness is greater than that grave sin.

To allow the "Face of Mercy" to shine in our own lives, we must take a leap of faith! We need to surrender and trust in God's love, a love that is given without condition!

When we take this leap of faith, we then have the ability to stop looking back and instead look forward.

This leap of faith gives us a future that was not there before!

Pope Francis said, "*It is not easy to entrust oneself to God's mercy, because it is an abyss beyond our comprehension. But we must! 'Oh, I am a great sinner!' All the better! Go to Jesus: He likes you to tell him these things! He forgets. He has a special capacity for forgetting. He forgets. He kisses you. He embraces you and He simply says to you: 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more'*" (Homily on March 17, 2013).

2. The "Face of Mercy" in our family and community life

Sheila McKinley, our Parish representative to the recent San Diego Diocese Synod, "Embracing the Joy of Love," included this description of her extended family in a presentation she gave to our Parish in preparation for the Synod. She created an alphabetized list in her description of family characteristics: "My extended family: addictions, ADHD, alcoholism, anxiety that needs meds, arrests, Asperger's, children born out of wedlock, cancer, clinical depression, death of a child, divorce, DUI, drug use, dyslexia, falling out with family members, financial stress, family members who are LGBT, family members who have left the Catholic Church, family members who have married non-Catholics, infidelity, marriage annulment process (some did; some didn't), and suicide..."

Sheila describes not only her extended family, but mine as well and, if you are honest, yours as well.

As Pastor of St. Thomas More, I can attest that this describes our Parish family as well.

This is the challenging and difficult world in which we live today. Simply, this is our world today!

Pope Francis talks much about creating a spirituality and culture of encounter, of moving beyond our comfort zones and entering into conversation with the world around us. In his Pentecost Mass homily, he said, "*Newness always makes us a bit fearful, because we feel more secure if we have everything under control, if we are*

(Continued on page 2)

the ones who build, programme and plan our lives in accordance with our own ideas, our own comfort, our own preferences...We fear that God may force us to strike out on new paths and leave behind our all too narrow, closed and selfish horizons in order to become open to his own...The newness which God brings into our life is something that actually brings fulfilment, that gives true joy, true serenity, because God loves us and desires only our good. Let us ask ourselves: Are we open to God's surprises? Or are we closed and fearful before the newness of the Holy Spirit? Do we have the courage to strike out along the new paths which God's newness sets before us, or do we resist, barricaded in transient structures which have lost their capacity for openness to what is new?" (Pentecost homily on May 19, 2013)

Mike Jordan Laskey, the Director of Life and Justice Ministries of the Diocese of Camden, New Jersey, in an article, "It's Time for a Theology of Encounter," in the June 4, 2015, issue of the National Catholic Reporter gives five requirements necessary for a Theology of Encounter:

1. *Encounter requires physical movement across traditional boundaries;*
2. *Encounter requires a willingness to change plans;*
3. *Encounter requires careful discernment;*
4. *Encounter requires follow-through; and,*
5. *Encounter requires systemic change.*

Can we simply encounter one another without judgment?

Can we patiently take time to get to know one another, without trying to change each other?

Can we live in areas of disagreement without trying to prove who is right and who is wrong?

Can we live in the gray, without everything having to be black and white?

I would suggest that this is where oftentimes we discover God in ever new and more vibrant ways, in those in-between spaces of encounter, non-judgment, and acceptance; knowing that there are differences, different ways of viewing reality, but yet celebrating our common humanity.

The "Face of Mercy" in our Family and Community Life is encounter not judgment. Encounter is an invitation to conversation, and in that conversation we discover God anew.

Pope Francis has said, "God's mercy can make even the driest land become a garden. It can restore life to dry bones. Let us be renewed by God's mercy, let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives too; and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish" (Easter "Urbi et Orbi" message on March 31, 2013).

Mercy in the spirituality of encounter can bring the driest of families and the driest of communities back to life!

3. The "Face of Mercy" in our Political Life

For me to allow the "Face of Mercy" to smile and shine in my political life, I must look at the world and its many issues as a Catholic Christian first, and as a US citizen second.

I think that for many Catholics this may be a very difficult transformation. But how we look at issues, in terms of what is our starting point, makes all the difference regarding the conclusions we reach.

For example: How do we view the "The Affordable Care Act?"

What is our starting point? Are we pleased that over 22 million more people now have health insurance? Are we glad that people with "pre-existing" conditions can now get health coverage? Are we happy that children can now stay on their parents' health coverage plan until the age of 26?

Or is our only concern the rising costs of the insurance, and so the conclusion is that we need to scrap the entire program?

Affordable health care coverage for everyone is a Catholic issue and concern. If we start at that point, then the answer is not to scrap the entire program, but to come together, both Democrats and Republicans, to massage and fix what needs to make it workable for all.

A second example: Immigration reform is desperately needed.

What is our starting point on this discussion? Do we want to build walls and cut off immigration, and deport millions of undocumented people, breaking up families in the process? Are we falling into the trap of being afraid of the stranger?

Are we blaming whole groups of people because of the actions of a few?

Or in light of this massive situation, are we willing to trust in the foundational principle of this country? Our nation was built on immigration. We are a great nation because of immigration, and we will continue to be great as long as we build on that foundation as a nation, as we welcome the stranger, and not shut her and him out.

Do we no longer believe in the words graven on the "Statue of Liberty?"

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightening, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowed world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
'Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!' cries she
With silent lips. 'Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

—The New Colossus, Emma Lazarus

If we deny this foundational principle of our nation, we are on the road to oblivion.

If we need strength at this point in our nation's history to face the immigration situation, as Catholics, we only need to look at our own roots of faith. We have been a global community from our very beginning 2,000 years ago.

(Continued on page 3)

The Apostles went to every known corner of the world at that time, and extended an invitation to all people to encounter and experience Jesus, the “Face of Mercy.”

In a very real sense, we Catholics are not bound by borders. We are a global community and we have global concerns and care.

We are global in our faith, and we have a global concern for all the people who inhabit Planet Earth. We are all brothers and sisters under one God.

From my perspective, our political parties and our political leaders have lost faith in the system, the structure of our government. They do not trust the system to work for the common good of our country.

They are not allowing the system to work. Political leaders’ egos and Political Parties’ egos are in the way, thus not allowing the system to function. They do not see themselves as instruments, as stewards, on behalf of the system.

For example, for many months now we have a Supreme Court with only eight Judges. It is the duty of a President when there is a vacancy on the Court, to nominate someone to fill that position, and the Congress acts on that decision either positively or negatively.

No action has been taken. Political Leaders do not trust the system of our government. Instead their egos are in the way. They do not realize that they are showing disrespect for our form of government, and in the process making a shambles of it.

Put faith and trust in the system. Use it. The gift of our government, with its checks and balances, is an amazing gift from our forefathers and it is falling apart because our Political Leaders do not place faith in the system. Their faith, unfortunately, is misplaced. It is selfishly in themselves and not in the structure of our government.

Several years ago I approached a local Congressman to talk about the need for immigration reform, and I was told: We cannot trust President Obama. Nothing can be done until he is out of office.

Where is faith in the system of government? It seems to be all about personalities and egos.

And now I hear people saying, we cannot trust President-elect Trump. Nothing can be done until he will be out of office.

Misplaced faith and egos bring great disrespect to our form of government, and are causing it to fail, because it is not being used. Nothing gets done and our country suffers!

The “Face of Mercy” in our Political Life is putting trust in the structure of our government. It is surrendering to the structure and seeing ourselves as stewards and instruments of the structure and having faith in it, thus allowing it to work for us.

The “Face of Mercy” in our Political Life is to believe in the definition of Politics: the art of compromise.

The “Face of Mercy” in our Political Life is about working for the common good through compromise, not about the glory of one party or the other or one individual over another.

We must apply the “Face of Mercy” to our Political Life:

Pope Francis recently said, *“Fear, besides being a good deal for merchants of arms and deaths, weakens us, unbalances us, destroys our psychological and spiritual defenses, and anesthetizes us to the suffering of others, and in the end makes us cruel. When we hear about celebrations for the death of a young man who may have lost his way, when we see that war is preferred to peace, when we see xenophobia is widespread, when we find that intolerant proposals are gaining ground; behind the cruelty that seems to prevail is the cold breath of fear...Mercy is not easy, not easy...it requires courage. Jesus tells us: ‘Do not be afraid,’ because mercy is the best antidote to fear. It is much better than antidepressants and anxiolytics. It is much more effective than walls, gates, alarms, and weapons. And it is free: it is a gift from God”* (Speech at the Vatican on November 5, 2016).

The Jubilee Year of Mercy is over, but our need for Mercy continues: in our own lives, in the lives of our families and our communities, and in our political life.

Mercy is not easy, but it is the only way out of sin, judgment, fear, and destruction.

Only Mercy brings peace!

Fr. Mike



XLT OCEANSIDE

D E C E M B E R 1 2

6:30 - DINNER

7:15 - XLT

Special Guest
**Chika
Anyanwu**

Worship Leader
**Matt
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