



# OLG's 55 PLUS CLUB...

... is all about food,  
fellowship and fun!

OUR LADY of GRACE CATHOLIC CHURCH





**PRIEST'S INTENTIONS FOR MASSES**

<b>Sun, Oct 10</b>	<b>TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME</b>
5:30 pm	† Alejo Zafra
8:00 am	† John S. McCabe
11:00 am	† Markell Treanor
5:30 pm	For the People of the Parish
<b>Mon, Oct 11</b>	<b>Weekday</b>
8:00 am	† Antonio Cadiz
<b>Tue, Oct 12</b>	<b>Weekday</b>
8:00 am	† Stan Wesley Enriquez-Pielago
<b>Wed, Oct 13</b>	<b>Weekday</b>
8:00 am	† Francisco Cruz
<b>Thu, Oct 14</b>	<b>Weekday</b>
8:00 am	† Dennis Roth
<b>Fri, Oct 15</b>	<b>Saint Teresa of Jesus, Virgin, Doctor of the Church</b>
	No Mass
<b>Sat, Oct 16</b>	<b>Weekday</b>
8:00 am	† Rosa Cruz; † Francisco Cruz
<b>Sun, Oct 17</b>	<b>TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME</b>
5:30 pm	Living and deceased members of the Fallow family
8:00 am	† Ruby Chamgizian
11:00 am	For the People of the Parish
5:30 pm	† Clayton Schenkelberg

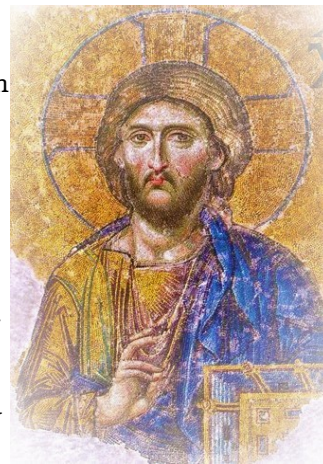
**Welcome to OUR LADY of GRACE!**

Welcome to all members and visitors who are joining us for the celebration of the Eucharist.

If you have been away from the Church for a little while or for quite some time, but now feel a tug at your heart calling you back to the Catholic Church, welcome home!

If you feel drawn to the Catholic Church yet come from another faith tradition - or have no faith experience at all - we are glad you are here!

The Catholic Church has been teaching truth since she was founded by Christ over 2,000 years ago. We invite you to enrich your life through joining our parish family. In addition to our liturgies there are many ministries and service groups that help you to build friendships and serve our parish along with the greater community. We also offer life-long learning through our many faith formation opportunities for children and adults.



For baptized Catholics needing to complete their Sacraments of Initiation please contact our Director of Catechetical Ministry, Lissa Hutcheson, at (619) 466-5656. For those interested in joining the Catholic Church, please contact Deacon John Sawaya at (858) 869-5079. You can also contact them by using the "Contact us" link at [olg-church.org](http://olg-church.org).



**We love having you as part of our flock! Get updates about Masses and parish life via email or text!**

**Sign up! Visit [olg-church.org](http://olg-church.org) and scroll to the blue and white sheep.**

**FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP IN THE PARISH CENTER**

*All are welcome Sunday mornings after Mass.*

**Oct 10 School Sunday**

*Sponsored by OLG School families*  
Complimentary coffee and refreshments. Contributions not necessary but gratefully accepted. Proceeds benefit OLG's Tuition Assistance Fund, the Gerard Family Endowment for Catholic Education.

**Oct 17 Wheelchair Sunday**

*Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Frances Cabrini Council 8879*  
Complimentary coffee and breakfast breads. Donations gratefully accepted. Proceeds provide wheelchairs for those in need.

**Oct 24 Coffee and Donut Sunday**

*Sponsored by Cub Scout Pack 951*  
All donations benefit the activities of the pack including camping trips, supplies and derbies.

**Allergies**

The first morning Mass of the Sunday or holy day will always be incense-free. The Sunday 11:00 am Mass will almost always include the use of incense.

**Mindfulness of Others**

Please silence all devices and refrain from using them during the liturgy.

**READINGS FOR OCT 10 - 17**

**Sun:** Wis 7:7-11; Heb 4:12-13; Mk 10:17-30

**Mon:** Rom 1:1-7; Lk 11:19-32

**Tue:** Rom 1:16-25; Lk 11:37-41

**Wed:** Rom 2:1-11; Lk 11:42-46

**Thu:** Rom 3:21-30; Lk 11:47-54

**Fri:** Rom 4:1-8; Lk 12:1-7

**Sat:** Rom 4:13, 16-18; Lk 12:8-12

**Sun:** Is 53:10-11; Heb 4:14-16; Mk 10:35-45

## Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Mass readings:

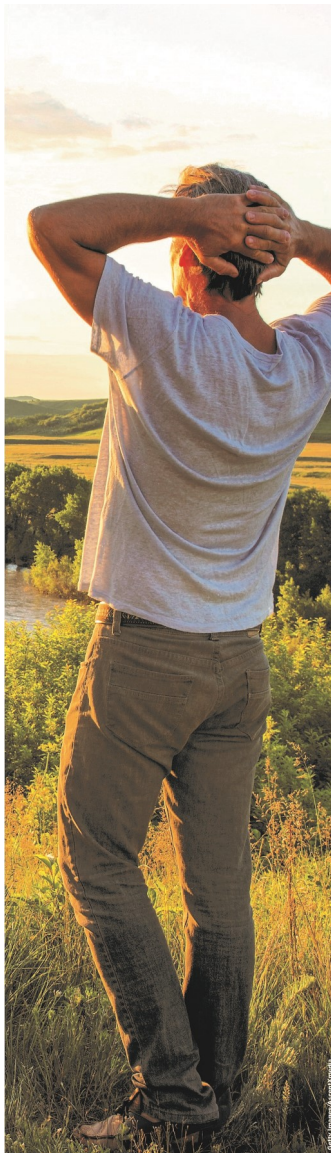
**Wis 7:7-11**

**Heb 4:12-13**

**Mk 10:17-30**

**GROW:** In the Old Testament, wealth was considered a sign of God's favor. So imagine the rich young man's surprise when he approached Jesus, only to find out that he would need to sell what he had and then give to the poor in order to follow Jesus. His face fell and he walked away. His demeanor highlights the fundamental error of equating what we have, and what we do, with salvation – of relying on earthly things, rather than God, for our deepest comfort and security. In contrast, the Book of Wisdom speaks of the richness and worth of divine wisdom over that of any precious gem or gold. We understand that divine wisdom to be manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, true wisdom means having faith in Jesus Christ rather than in our own efforts and whatever we might have earned in our lifetime. Otherwise, we are like a camel trying to squeeze through the eye of a needle. Jesus truly offers us the only way. I like to think that the young man came around eventually.

After all, as Jesus says, "all things are possible for God." As we reflect, we can ask Jesus what we need to



"let go of" to turn our sights, our minds, and our lives over to God, knowing that following his will is the surest path to the Kingdom.

**GO:** Just a few days ago, we celebrated the feast of

St. Francis of Assisi. The behavior of the rich young man in today's Gospel – daring, enthusiastic, confident – brings the young Francis to mind. Born into wealth, he relished his carefree lifestyle and sought to become a knight. His dreams of glory, however, quickly became a nightmare as his comrades fell and he was imprisoned in a dank cell for a year. After his release, he fell seriously ill, and God spoke to him. He cast aside the trappings of wealth, choosing instead to seek God's will in all things. His example invites us to pray about our priorities: What things or attitudes get in the way of our relationship with God and one another? What is the Lord asking of us and how can we respond? How can we give witness to our belief that all things are possible with God?

**ACTION:** Perhaps try a "consumption fast" for the next couple of weeks, purchasing only what you need – food and other necessities. Use time and energy spent shopping to deepen your relationship with God and others through practices such as Eucharistic adoration, confession, visiting an elderly relative, or writing/calling an old friend.

*Written by The Faithful Disciple*

## OUR LADY OF GRACE CHURCH

*Founded 1954*

### CLERGY

#### PASTOR

*Very Rev. Peter McGuine*

#### AUXILIARY PRIEST

*Rev. Maxime Villeneuve, OSA*

#### PRIEST IN RESIDENCE

*Rev. Minh Do*

#### DEACON

*Dcn. John Sawaya*

### SCHEDULE of MASSES

#### SUNDAY VIGIL

*(Saturday) 5:30 pm*

#### SUNDAY

8:00 am, 11:00 am, 5:30 pm

#### MONDAY-THURSDAY AND SATURDAY

8:00 am

*Holy days and holidays  
listed separately in bulletin.*

### SACRAMENTS

#### INFANT BAPTISM

Baptisms are celebrated on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 12:30 pm. Preparation packet is available in the parish office.

#### RITE of CHRISTIAN INITIATION of ADULTS

Contact Deacon Sawaya  
(858) 869-5079.

#### HOLY MATRIMONY

Marriage preparation begins nine months in advance.

Please contact  
Fr. Peter McGuine or  
Deacon Sawaya.

#### PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Monday 6:00 pm  
Thursday 8:45 am  
Saturday 4:00 pm

#### ANointing of the Sick

Call the parish office  
(619) 469-0133.

## Weekend 5 of our *Be Renewed* Eucharist Initiative!

**Oct 9-10** is the next step in our seven consecutive "*Be Renewed*" weekends. Before each Mass we will hear brief explanations about the meaning and history of various parts of the Mass and celebration of the Eucharist.





## Cub Scout Pack 951 Popcorn Sales

The Cub Scouts fall Popcorn Sale takes place after all weekend Masses on **Oct 9-10**.

Look for their tables at the front and south entrances of the church! Proceeds from the sales support pack activities such as camping, hiking, fishing, woodcrafts, derbies and so much more!



## 55 Plus Luncheon is Tue, Oct 12

The doors open at 11:00 am. This month's theme is "Halloween!" Cost is \$15.00 at the door. Reservation forms are available on the info table inside the church or download clicking on the Upcoming Events ad at [olg-church.org](http://olg-church.org).



## Centering Prayer - Enter Your Inner Room

Do you long for a deeper Relationship with God? Centering Prayer may be for you. Centering Prayer is a silent prayer in which we open our mind and heart to the presence and action of God who dwells at the center of our being. This silent prayer is designed to reduce the obstacles to an intimate relationship with God and to provide personal healing, and transformation in our every day lives. OLG's Centering Prayer group meets via Zoom on Mondays from 9:00 to 10:00 am. For more info please contact Irma at [godisinnerpeace@cox.net](mailto:godisinnerpeace@cox.net).



## OLG | SAN DIEGO YOUNG ADULTS

### Fall Pumpkin Painting and Guest Speaker

Celebrate the season on Wed, **Oct 13** painting holiday décor and listening to an inspired speaker, guaranteed to lift your spirits. Meet in the Youth Ministry Room from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.



Save Sun, **Oct 24** for Mass at OLG (sit together in the section in front of the Mary statue) followed by dinner and socializing at City Tacos, 8325 La Mesa Blvd, La Mesa 91942.

- The OLG Young Adults (ages 18-39) get together weekly on Thursdays in the Youth Room from 7:30 - 9:30 pm.

To receive texts or emails about activities text **OLGYA** to **84576** and follow us on Instagram@[sd.ecya](https://www.instagram.com/sd.ecya) and at [facebook.com/groups/youngadultsolg](https://www.facebook.com/groups/youngadultsolg).



For a complete list of spiritual development and social opportunities for Catholic adults in their 20s & 30s follow Instagram @[sd.ecya](https://www.instagram.com/sd.ecya) or visit [sdcatholic.org/office-for/young-adult-ministry](http://sdcatholic.org/office-for/young-adult-ministry).

## YOUTH MINISTRY ACTIVITIES

### It's Socktober!

New Life (high school youth) and Escape (jr. high youth) will be collecting new children's socks for the East County Transitional Living organization until **Oct 26**. Bring sock donations to meetings and/or events. Last year 99 pairs were collected. The goal this year is to double that number!



**New Life** is back to meeting on Sunday nights in the Youth Room from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. Meet old friends and make new ones while having fun and sharing faith. Pizza and snacks are available.

This year's **High School Retreat** is the weekend of **Oct 22-24** at Pine Valley Bible camp, 8668 Pine Creek Rd, Pine Valley, 91962. Open to all in grades 9-12 this retreat is always an exciting time of fun and deeper understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Parents must provide transportation to and from the retreat.



Visit [tinyurl.com/5a4vxaz9](https://tinyurl.com/5a4vxaz9) for info.

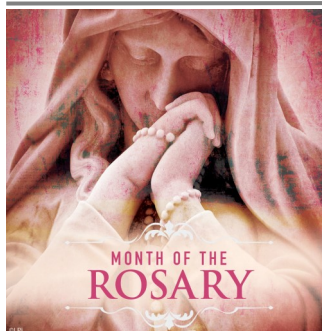
On Fri, **Nov 5** **Escape** middle school youth learn the meaning of serving others in the name of Jesus through *Box of Joy*, a service project of Catholic Missions that shares the spirit of Christmas across the world. Parents must provide transportation. From 6:30 to 7:15 pm youth will shop at the 99¢ *Only Store* at 2320 Fletcher Parkway, El Cajon, 92020. Then, wrapping takes place in the Youth Room from 7:15 to 8:15 pm. We end at 8:15 pm after a short time prayer for the children who will receive each Box of Joy. No permission form is necessary.



For more info about our youth groups you can visit [olg-church.org/parish-groups](http://olg-church.org/parish-groups) and choose Youth Group, then **Escape** (Jr. High) or **New Life** (High School). For answers to your questions call Doris, Youth Minister, at (619) 466-5451.

### October is the Month of the Rosary

By tradition, the Catholic Church dedicates each month of the year to a certain devotion. The month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary, one of the best known of all Catholic devotions. You can join others



around the world praying the rosary or leave an intention at [comepraytherosary.org](http://comepraytherosary.org).

### America Needs Fatima Public Rosary

**M**eet on the sidewalk of Navajo Rd. along Our Lady of Grace Church property on Sat, **Oct 16** at noon. *America Needs Fatima* is a special call to spread the message of Fatima by promoting devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart in the United States through praying of the Rosary. For more info call Elba at (619) 804-4937.



### Celebrating the Joy of Love Family Mass

**G**ather at St. Gregory the Great, 14511 Blue Cypress Dr, SD, 92131 on **Oct 23** at 11:00 am to celebrate the five-year anniversary of "The Joy of Love" (*Amoris Laetitia*) and the movement it inspired to welcome and serve today's families. There will be a family rosary at 10:00 am and family activities after Mass. For more info email [bolivero@sdcatholic.org](mailto:bolivero@sdcatholic.org).



### After-abortion Healing Retreat for Catholic Women (or Catholic friendly) "Not judged, not lectured, just healed"

**P**rofessionally led by Rachel's Hope on **Oct 29-31**. Held at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 3888 Paducah Dr, 92117. Cost \$60.00; partial scholarships available. Limited housing available. For info call Rosemary Benefield at (858) 581-3022; text (858) 752-9378 or learn more about this ministry and retreats at [RachelsHope.org](http://RachelsHope.org).



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- > Click the Sign Up
- > Select "Sign up as a parishioner"
- > Find Our Lady of Grace parish by name or zip
- > Enter your email and you are in!

### PRAYER REQUESTS

*Please pray for those who have requested prayer and for the special intentions written in the Book of Intentions in the Baptistry of our church.*

Griselda Albanez  
Heriberto Albanez  
Tilly Allison  
Gabriela Alvarenga  
Marvin Alvarenga  
Angie Arrayan  
Patrick Attardo  
Gary Barker  
Joe Baessler  
Angie Biner  
Mark Bonebright  
Anita Branch  
Stephanie Butcher  
Janice Butterfield  
Pam Carlson  
Rosemary Cosgrove  
Barbara Cyr  
Dee Draper  
Steve Duggins  
Mark Habina  
Brenda Hilgeman  
Dawn Hoope  
Susan Hori  
Lynn Jolivet

Adam Kahan  
Nathan Kahan  
Stephanie Kahan  
Ken Kanine  
Elizabeth Kozakiewicz  
Rebecca Leyden  
Tim Leyden  
Mickey Lyle  
Donald Marsh  
Barbara Messier  
Jacob McDermott  
Donna O'Fallon  
Ed O'Neal  
Cory Rentschler  
Anthony Renzi  
Violet Rhodes  
Sue Seguin  
David Smith  
Theresa Smith  
Tony Tabadisto  
Terry Tedrow  
Marilyn Winger

*Names remain listed for four weeks and can be renewed by contacting Marie Pospichal at [mpospichal@olg-church.org](mailto:mpospichal@olg-church.org).*

### An Invitation to Use Your Life Experience and Talents in Service to God's People The Ignatian Volunteer Corps is recruiting!

**W**ould you like to make a significant contribution with your life to the lives of others? The Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC) is an opportunity for adult men and women, over age 50, to share their life skills and wisdom in direct service to the poor. IVC volunteers work in local social service and educational programs. A guided process of reflection helps IVC volunteers discover the deeper meaning of the work they do and see the face of Christ in their experiences. Become a "Contemplative in Action." Call Curran Gaughan, IVC Director – San Diego at 858-822-9814 or e-mail [cgaughan@ivcusa.org](mailto:cgaughan@ivcusa.org).

**Share your lifetime of experience - Get the experience of a lifetime! [www.ivcusa.org](http://www.ivcusa.org)**



Visit [olg-church.org](http://olg-church.org) and scroll to the "Annual Catholic Appeal" ad. Click the "2021 ACA video" link to see how funds raised will support diocesan and local efforts to announce the Gospel and serve God's people. Click the "Renewing Hope" image to make a pledge and/or gift to this year's Appeal. Thank you!



## Help Protect Mothers and Children

For those who are able, our parish is committed to cover prayer shifts from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm every Sunday through **Oct 31**. We pray on the public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood at 1685 E. Main St, El Cajon. Please contact Vicki at (619) 647-5793 to schedule at least one hour coverage as your schedule allows.



Parenthood at 1685 E. Main St, El Cajon. Please contact Vicki at (619) 647-5793 to schedule at least one hour coverage as your schedule allows.

## OLG's Electric Vehicle Charging (EVC) Stations Available

Our EVC Stations are available for use by those with electric vehicles and who have an ongoing affiliation with our parish and/or school. Interested persons should contact [mpospichal@olg-church.org](mailto:mpospichal@olg-church.org) for more info regarding the required smart phone app, account set-up, and pricing.



**Save the Date - Sat, Nov 6 - for the CWC's Annual Holiday Craft Fair!**

*Congratulations to*  
**Diana Loera**

who received a Quinceañera Blessing on Sat, **Oct 9** at the 5:30 pm Mass.

Diana turned 15 on Aug 26, 2021.



## CALLING ALL ANGELS!

OLG parishioners have been generously serving East County families and seniors in need of life's basics at Thanksgiving and Christmas



for over 32 years through the OLG Holiday Angel Program. In this time of pandemic, we are all familiar with the increased needs of our most vulnerable community members. With your support, we will continue the program again this year using the same gift-card-giving format from last year for the safety of volunteers and program

participants.

The Holiday Angel Program is now accepting monetary donations for Thanksgiving and Christmas for the families and seniors in crisis. Any donation amount is helpful; we will serve as many people as possible with the donations we receive. Visit [olg-church.org](http://olg-church.org) and click on the "Online Donation" link or place your check in the donation basket. Be sure to write "Holiday Angel Program" in the memo line.

Thank you, OLG faithful family, for your enduring generosity! If you have questions, please contact Angel Coordinator Lesley Bradley at (619) 878-0278.

*Please pray for the repose of the souls of*

**ANN RENZI**  
**CARMEN SALENDER**



*May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

## WEEKLY OFFERING REPORT

**Sep 28 — Oct 4, 2021**

**\$22,206.48**

Plate	\$1,766.40
Envelopes	\$15,456.58
Online Giving	\$4,983.50

### Breakdown of Gifts Received

\$0.01 - \$5.00	27
\$5.01 - \$10.00	32
\$10.01 - \$25.00	99
\$25.01 - \$50.00	80
\$50.01 - \$100.00	38
\$100.01 - \$150.00	17
\$150.01 - \$500.00	23
\$500.01 - Over	3

**Total Contributing Households**

**319**

### Additional Gifts

Building Fund	\$3,880.00
Food Pantry	\$722.00
School Support - General	\$927.00
School Support - Tuition Assistance	\$375.00
Religious Education and Youth	\$407.00

## Please Consider Online Giving

*Give a one-time gift or set up recurring gifts*

Visit [olg-church.org](http://olg-church.org) and click on the "Online Giving" image or link (or use the QR code with your smart phone app). Thank you!



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## OUR LADY of GRACE PARISH AND SCHOOL DIRECTORY

2766 NAVAJO ROAD, EL CAJON, CA 92020



## PARISH OFFICE

PHONE: (619) 469-0133  
 FAX: (619) 469-0575  
 WEB: [OLG-CHURCH.ORG](http://OLG-CHURCH.ORG)  
 HOURS: MON-THU 8:30 AM-4:30 PM

Pastor **FR. PETER MCGUINE** | Ext. 17  
 Deacon **DCN. JOHN SAWAYA**  
 Business Manager **PATRICIA KANE** | Ext. 12  
 Special Projects Coordinator **KEN DISCENZA** | Ext. 24  
 Bookkeeper **SIONI BAUTISTA** | Ext. 16  
 Office Manager **MARIE POSPICHAL** | Ext. 10  
 Publicity & Comms **GEORGENE KRUZEL** | Ext. 33

Housekeeping **MARIA ARIAS**  
 Maintenance & Facilities **DAN BRESLIN & VINCE OLIVER**

**MATTHEW HILGEMAN**

## LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

Liturgy Coordinator **ROSA HILGEMAN** | Ext. 14

Director of Liturgical Music **DANIEL MENDOZA II** | Ext. 26  
*Cantate Kids and Gaudete Choir (11:00 am Sun)*

Director **ROBERT FILLEY**  
*Laudate Ensemble (5:30 pm Sun)*

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**SCHOOL OF RELIGION, CONFIRMATION  
 & ADULT FAITH FORMATION**

PHONE: (619) 466-5656

Director of Catechetical Ministry **LISSA HUTCHESON**  
 Youth Ministry Coord. Jr. High, Sr. High **DORIS HERTZIG** (619) 466-5451  
 Young Adults (18-39 yrs.) **BERNADETTE ROSE HILGEMAN**



To email members of the parish staff, please visit our website at:

[olg-church.org](http://olg-church.org)

Click on the "Contact Us" in the upper right corner of the browser window.

And please Like Us on Facebook!

## Reporting Sexual Abuse

Complaints about sexual abuse by a member of the clergy or by a parish or Catholic school employee or volunteer can be made by calling Mary Acosta at (858) 490-8353 or email [misconduct@sdcatholic.org](mailto:misconduct@sdcatholic.org).

**On the cover:** 55 Plus members and service volunteers gather for the first luncheon after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. For info about membership and reservations for upcoming luncheons email [maryk.cloward@gmail.com](mailto:maryk.cloward@gmail.com)



## PARISH SCHOOL

PHONE: (619) 466-0055  
 FAX: (619) 466-8994  
 WEB: [OLG.ORG](http://OLG.ORG)  
 HOURS: WEEKDAYS 7:15 AM-3:30 PM  
 (DURING SCHOOL YEAR)

Principal **ERIN MARES** | Ext. 11  
 emares@olg.org  
 Vice-Principal **RACHEL SATO** | Ext. 27  
 rsato@olg.org  
 Development & Admissions **KELLI BALISTRERI** | Ext. 16  
 kbalistreri@olg.org  
 Administrative Assistant **LINDA PETERS** | Ext. 10  
 lpeters@olg.org

## PARISH MINISTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

To email members of the parish staff or the ministry leaders listed below please visit our website at: [olg-church.org](http://olg-church.org) - click on the "Contact Us" link in the upper right corner of the browser window.

For a ministry leader phone number please call the Parish Office at (619) 469-0133.

**55 PLUS CLUB**—Mary Cloward**BLOOD DRIVE**—Debbie Ipsen**CATHOLIC WOMEN'S CLUB (CWC)**

CWC—Mary Cloward

Book Club—Julie Hazelton

Craft Fair—Kathy Porterfield

**CENTERING PRAYER**—Irma Eichinger or Beatrice Doblado**CUB SCOUTS**—Pack 951—Crystal Carr**CURSILLO**—Dcn. John Sawaya**EVENTS COMMITTEE**—Nettie Aguinaldo**FOOD PANTRY**—Since 1981

Bob Cosgrove

(619) 469-0061

M-F, 9:30-11:00 am

**HOLIDAY ANGELS**—Since 1988—Lesley Bradley**INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC FAMILIES (ICF)**

Carla Pedroncelli

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**—Frances Cabrini Council 8879

Robert Yslas, Grand Knight

**LADIES OF GRACE**—Rosemarie McLain**LEGION OF MARY**—Since 1987—Dee Draper**MEN FOR CHRIST**—Steve Faucher**MINISTRY TO THE SICK & HOMEBOUND**

Rosa Hilgeman

**PRAYER QUILT MINISTRY**—Since 2006

Nettie Aguinaldo

**PRO-LIFE**

Vicki Whitmire (40 Days for Life)

**WALKING WITH PURPOSE**—Women's Bible Study

Joanie Hilgeman



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jbolwerk@century21award.com

**Elizabeth G. Blust**  
Attorney at Law

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# Be Renewed EUCHARIST INITIATIVE

*Understanding the Real Presence of Christ in the Mass*

## A Walk Through the Mass: A Step-by-Step Explanation



### Week One: Introductory Rites and Concluding Rites

Over the next three weeks across the diocese, we will be conducting a “Walk through the Mass: A Step-by-Step Explanation”.

The Mass is the ritual Catholics celebrate in response to Jesus’ command to “do this in memory of me” (Lk 22:19). One of the basic, distinctive marks of ritual prayer is that Catholics know what is going to happen next. We do things over and over. When the priest says, “The Lord be with you,” without any thought or hesitation the congregation responds, “And with your Spirit.” The priest says, “Let us pray,” and the congregation stands up.

Our daily lives have their rituals also: There are set ways of greeting people, eating, responding to a text. And when we are accustomed to a certain way of doing things, we seldom ask why we do it that way. In the Eucharist, too, we have many ritual actions which we perform without asking why.

#### What is the Mass?

A good way to describe the Mass is to say that it is Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday made sacramentally present today in ritual. It is not merely a meal which reminds us of the Last Supper, or a Passion play which helps recall Good Friday, or a sunrise service which celebrates the Lord’s Resurrection. The Mass is, therefore, our opportunity as Catholic Christians to praise and thank God for the gift of our salvation in Christ Jesus. In short, the Mass is

one way in which we share in the Pascal Mystery (the Passion, Death and Resurrection) of Christ.

The basic shape of the ritual of the Mass can be described as a meal. This is not to say it is “just another meal” or that we are ignoring the Mass as sacrifice. Not at all. The point is, the shape of the Mass, even when viewed as sacrifice, is that of a meal.

When friends gather for a meal, they sit and talk. Eventually they move to the table, say grace, pass the food and eat and drink, and finally take their leave and go home. On our walk through the Mass, we will follow this same map: we will see ritual acts of 1) gathering, 2) storytelling, 3) meal sharing, and 4) commissioning.

We will focus today on the gathering or Introductory Rites of the Mass and the commissioning or Concluding Rites of the Mass. Next week we will look at the storytelling, or what we call the Liturgy of the Word. And the following week we will focus on meal sharing, or the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

#### Gathering (The Introductory Rites)

Coming together, assembling, and forming community is at the heart of our Sunday worship. The reason behind each of the ritual actions of the first part of the Mass can be found in this word: gathering. The purpose of these rites is to bring us together into one Body, ready to listen

and break bread together. Note that God is the one who has summoned us to this celebration of the Eucharist. We are present in response to His invitation.

**Genuflection.** In medieval Europe, it was a custom to go down on one knee (to genuflect) before a king or person of rank. This secular mark of honor gradually entered the Church and people began to genuflect to the presence of Christ in the tabernacle before entering the pew. If the tabernacle is not located in the sanctuary, it is proper for members of the assembly to express their reverence for the altar with an even older custom and bow to it before entering the pew.

**Posture, song.** When the Mass begins everyone stands up. Standing is the traditional posture of the Christian at prayer that expresses our attentiveness to the Word of God and our readiness to carry it out. Often, we begin by singing together to unite our thoughts and our voices in a common word, rhythm and melody.

**Greeting.** We begin with the Sign of the Cross, reminding ourselves of our Baptism, and then the priest will greet us, saying, “The Lord be with you.” This prayer reminds us of Christ’s declaration that “...where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). The ritual response to this greeting is always the formula, “And with your Spirit”, which acknowledges that the priest has received the Spirit of God through his ordination to the priesthood.

**Penitential Rite.** All the other ritual acts of this first part of the Mass are intended to gather us together into a worshipping assembly. In the Penitential Rite, we are invited to call to mind our sins and the one (the Lord) sent to save us from the power of sin. While this Rite lacks the efficacy of sacramental absolution, we believe

that through the reception of Holy Communion our less serious (venial) sins are forgiven.

**Glory to God.** Just as the angels proclaimed the praise of God at the birth of Christ, saying “Glory to God in the Highest” (Luke 2:13-14), we make our own declaration of praise and worship of the Holy Trinity in singing or reciting the hymn, “Glory to God.”

**Opening Prayer.** At the close of this first part of the Mass the priest will ask us to join our minds in prayer with the invitation, “Let us pray.” As the priest pauses, we offer our intentions. Then he will collect (or gather) them all into one prayer, to which we all respond “Amen,” a Hebrew word for “So be it.”

## Commissioning (Concluding Rites)

The burdens we have laid down at the door of the church for this Eucharist, we know we must now bear again—but now strengthened by this Eucharist and this community.

**Blessing and Dismissal.** We bow our heads to receive a blessing. As the priest names the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—we make the Sign of the Cross. The priest or deacon then dismisses the assembly: “Go in peace.” And we give our liturgical “yes” by saying, “Thanks be to God.”

**Living the Eucharist in the world.** We leave the assembly and the church building carrying Christ within us. What happens in our lives during the week gives deeper meaning to the ritual actions we have celebrated at Mass, whether it is with family, work with the poor or just plain work. It is only in relation to our daily lives that the full meaning of the ritual actions of the Mass becomes clear to us. We bring Christ to the world.