



DECEMBER 2019

The Messenger

Saint Gregory the Great Catholic Church
San Diego, California

A Message from Fr. Nick

Dear Parishioners,

The journey towards Christmas is one we make at the darkest time of the year. Days are short and the evenings are filled with shadows. We celebrate the birth of our Savior – the light of the world, the light that shines in the darkness.

The candle we light in our homes and Churches at Christmas time reminds us also that we are called to shine the light of Christ in the world. Our community has been able to shine the light of Christ through Offertory Renewal in support of our Mission toward young adult outreach and the formation of small groups; building community by investing in each other.

Earlier this year, Cardinal Newman was canonized. One of his most important works was a poem called “The Pillar and the Cloud”, better known as the hymn ‘Lead Kindly Light’. It contains the powerful imagery of light, including the lines:

***“Lead kindly light, amidst the encircling gloom, Lead thou me on!
The night is dark and I am far from home, Lead thou me on!”***

At the canonization Mass on October 13th, Pope Francis called on us all to be “kindly lights” in the darkness.

When we light our Christmas candle, let’s consider where we can be the light of Christ. When we place a lit candle in our windows, as is the tradition for Christmas eve and Christmas day, do we live out the hospitality it represents? Do we shine the light of love in our families; the light of compassion and kindness for the poor and hurting? How do we offer the light of hope to the less fortunate? As Christians, we make the hearts of non-believers burn within them if we can convey the truth that our religion is not a moral code to keep us in order, but a vibrant way of life that radiates joy.

“The Christian has a deep, silent, hidden peace, which the world sees not.... The Christian is cheerful, easy, kind, gentle, courteous, candid, unassuming, has no pretense...” Saint John Henry Newman

To help surface all those qualities in our lives, we have the parish Advent Penance Service on Monday, December 16th at 7:00pm. I encourage you to prepare for His coming by participating in this healing Sacrament. If you have wandered away from the Catholic Faith, this is a great way to come home for Christmas.

May the Christ child bring home tender love to your family with Christmas blessings in abundance. And may your great generosity in Christ to this community bring its own rewards.

Merry Christmas!

Very Rev. Nicholas Clavin
Pastor





From the Desk of Deacon Ron

Greetings to the Church of St. Gregory the Great, Peace and joy be your's in Christ!

I've always wanted to start a letter to you as if it was Paul writing to one of the early Churches. While I am no St. Paul or a saint for that matter, you are Christ's Church and I address you as such.

It is just before Thanksgiving that I am writing to you. With the Advent and Christmas seasons rapidly approaching and with the onslaught of 50 degree weather, which is subfreezing to many San Diegans (LOL), there is a mood change. Our thoughts turn to our relationship as family and friends. There is a desire to reconnect with those that have meaning in our life that we don't seem to make time for during the year. We also tend to reflect on all the things that went on in our life this past year and wonder what it's all about.

Recently my wife and I were having dinner with friends at their house. Before and during dinner, we talked about many things like faith, family, travel, food, wine, of course, and the like. Toward the end of dinner, the husband of the couple asked if he could ask a question: "What is life all about?" He went on, "Is it about working most of your life, amassing things, traveling? Is there more to life than waking each day, eating, working and sleeping, just to get up the next day and start it all over again?"

I have been pondering this for weeks in prayer and in discussions. My conclusion to what life is all about; it's about loving relationships. Sounds too simplistic I know. Here is my premise: when each person is conceived, the human and divine work together. As we share a small piece of us, as male and female, to create new life, God also shares a small piece of God's self, which we call a soul. It is this Trinitarian relationship that brings about the human being. This three-in-one relationship sets within us a lifelong desire and hunger for loving relationships. The longing of that little piece of God within us, to be reunited with the fullness from which it came, is what life is about. All of our desires, longings, hopes and dreams, are driven by the God in us being attracted to the source from which it was separated. Out of this quest for completeness also comes pain and suffering, when we try to fulfill the longing for God with other things. The divine life that dwells within us is fed or starved by how, and with what, we feed it. "Unless I have love I have nothing" (1Cor. 13:2). To find the meaning of life, I must feed that part of God that is in me. It is like the parable of the coins in Mt. 25: 14-30: please dust off your bible and take the time to read this passage. Now ask yourself, am I increasing that which is God within me?

The soul is fed by first giving thanks to the source of life and then passing that on to others. It's a process. There is wisdom in our seasonal celebrations. First, we give thanks to God for all that we have and through gratitude we develop a desire to be gift to others, and then, to celebrate the relationship that has been fed and has new life. This is Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas seasons.

The things we give for Christmas should represent the gift of self and not the thing. There are those who are in need of love all around us, the homeless, those in the hospital hanging onto life and their families. There are those who are distracted from the meaning of love by cancer, illness and loneliness. There are those of us who have had the recent loss of a loved one. The fact remains that until we rest in God we will always feel a lacking in this life. St Augustine once said, "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you." May we all be blessed with the desire to feed the soul within us, in order to feed the soul of others, to at long last be in the fullness of the meaning of life, the God who created us.

With gratitude,
Deacon Ron



Faith Formation

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Faith Formation!



Another wonderful year has begun; registrations for Faith Formation-2019/2020 have brought us 380 students and 85 students desiring to celebrate First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

We also had a wonderful Vacation Bible School this past summer with almost 140 children and 80 Youth volunteers. It was called Roar: Life is Wild-God is Good.

This is always the highlight of the summer for the kids and for us. We enjoyed a week of singing, dancing, water and science activities, drama and of course, food. Next year's VBS is called **Rocky Railway-Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through**. We hope to have a full house again on July 20 through July 24 2020. Registration will begin in late April for VBS 2020.

Blessings, Ginger Marlin, Erica Rossio & Janet Malacane

Young Adult Ministry

The past couple of months have been very eventful for the young adult ministry here in the Diocese and at St. Gregory the Great. In the last month, we saw the conclusion of the Young Adult Synod that took place here in the Diocese of San Diego. This event saw 130 young adults from all over the San Diego and Imperial counties meeting for two days to discuss the challenges that are facing our Church and the Young Adult community. This gathering named proposals that were then presented to Bishop McElroy at a ceremony at Mission San Diego. These proposals are targeted at reaching out and ministering, not only to young adults in our parish community, but also reaching out to disaffiliated young adults as well. Over the next two years, we will begin to implement these proposals in our parish and our diocese. I wish you all a wonderful Advent, a merry Christmas, and a very Happy New Year.

Matt Tobin

Instagram: @stgg_ya





Youth Ministry

Our teens have been very busy since summer. Confirmation classes started in September, and we are off to a great start! There are about 166 Confirmation Candidates and about 86 Servant Leadership Team Teens (juniors and seniors) that are involved in the monthly classes. We've held 4 Drop-Ins, 3 evenings of Adoration, and been involved in collecting candy for Casa de los Pobres, as well as other service projects.

Our Year 1 Confirmation Retreat was in early November, and Fr. Nick joined us for Reconciliation and Mass at Whispering Winds.

Speaking of volunteers, our adult small group leaders and our Servant Leadership Team have been doing a tremendous job of facilitating classes AND planning the Year 1 retreat. I am also extremely grateful for the other parent volunteers! Their help has been invaluable.

As we enter 2020, I want to say it is a pleasure working with the youth of our parish, and I look forward to many new adventures. I also want to say thank you for the generous ways in which you continue to support the STGG Youth!

Peace,

Suzanne Guzzardo



Saint Gregory the Great Catholic School

As we look forward to the Christmas season, St. Gregory the Great Catholic School students, staff, and families continue to be mindful and grateful for the multitude of blessings God showers on us daily. November and December are busy months and packed with great activities and projects, which are pictured below:



Upcoming Events in the New Year

**Jan. 23 Junior High Overnight
Retreat**

Jan. 26 @ 1 PM OPEN HOUSE Join
us to tour the school and meet the
Principal & Teachers

**Jan. 26– 31 Celebration of
Catholic Schools Week**



Greeters & Ushers



"... I was a stranger and you invited me in..." Mathew 25:36
For me, Mathew's Gospel verse sums up the Greeter/Usher ministry. Our goal is to be the physical manifestations of the welcoming of the Holy Spirit to God's House. We act as the Hostesses and Hosts who are attending to our community house of worship. For regular parishioners and visitors our goal is to provide for you physical comfort and safety during Mass. We will assist you in finding seats, coordinate the offering, bring Eucharistic Ministers to those who have some walking difficulty, and look over the congregation for any health or safety emergencies so we can coordinate support. In the ministry there are over 100 members. That may sound like a lot, but we can always use more volunteers. Everyone has the talent to be an Usher/Greeter, all you need to do is smile and attend Mass, (smiling can be health benefit). Curious? Think the Holy Spirit is calling you? Or just want to meet other parishioners and feel more a part of the Saint Gregory Family? Please email: John R. Brown (Coordinator) an Email brown47@san.rr.com and/or give a cell phone text or call (858) 525-5710. God Bless and keep smiling! God Loves You!

- John Brown

Liturgical Environment



Greetings from the Environmental Ministry. Our Ministry is responsible for supporting and partnering with Father Nick, Parish staff and the other Parish ministries to provide a beautiful and inspired environment for worship at St. Gregory the Great. Our excellent group of volunteers help to ensure the church and parish hall are decorated for Holy Days of Obligation, holidays and the parish events all year round. This includes adorning the Altar, Ambo and other parts of the church for each Holy Day, ensuring there are supplies of candles for the Altar, the Holy Family Chapel, and maintaining and refreshing floral displays as needed, as well as other duties concerning the interior of the church. Without a doubt, our biggest effort is Christmas. The Environmental Ministry works with Parish Staff at the beginning of each year to plan set up and take down according to the Parish calendar and to work with and around Weddings, Funerals and other church events.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of over 30 volunteers who spend many hours between and after Masses, and other church functions to provide a beautiful place of worship and hopefully enhance the connection with God and each other. To

volunteer for this ministry, please contact either

Eric Thunberg (619) 813-8477 or Christine Thunberg (619) 813 8478.

Helping Hands



"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten the poor and the needy. It has the eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like." - St. Augustine

The Helping Hands Ministry provides assistance to parishioners with varying needs – transportation to Mass or medical appointments; short term meals during difficult times; light yard work and maintenance through our partnership with the Knights of Columbus, and more. While the needs of people vary, the need for help does not. It might be a one-time request or ongoing for those with long-term illnesses.

The time commitment is minimal. You help when you can. If someone needs a ride to a medical appointment, mass or a meal, you can volunteer. If not, you might be available another time.

The best part? Helping someone is not one-sided. It is a gift exchange.

More information about the Helping Hands Ministry is available by contacting Margaret Byrne at 619-985-3375

Military Friendship & Support



The Military Friendship and Support Ministry is a group of St Gregory the Great parishioners that have been called to serve our veterans, active duty and reserve personnel in the local area. We provide fellowship, informational support and the care and feeding of our St Gregory the Great Military Families. If you are a member of the parish that enjoys helping your local military, then this ministry is for you. If you are currently serving, then we also want to hear from you, as our group is ready and able to provide meals, child care, moving support and any other assistance that your family may require. Our motto is "We are here to serve those that protect us". Please come join us in helping our community members that wear, or have worn the cloth of this great nation. We meet on the first Saturday of the month in the nursery for some snacks and fellowship to keep everyone on the same page while seeking out the best ways to continue the support we provide. Our ministry is young, vibrant and ready to support those around us. Come join us! God Bless you all.

For inquiries or to sign up please send your contact info to any one or all the following:

Ryan Lawrenz, 850-384-3269, relawrenz@gmail.com,

Kelli Lawrenz, 850-384-2660, ktlawrenz@gmail.com

Christopher Keane, 858-382-1887, cakeane46@gmail.com,

Cecilia Keane, 661-965-0791, cakeane@aol.com



Filipino-American

The Filipino-American Community Group of St. Gregory the Great aka the Lumpia/Pansit Ministry is a decade and one year old. Starting with five families, we bonded in the spirit of togetherness and work as a team to help meet the immediate needs of our parish. It was and still is our goal to be stewards. We hold Cultural Dinner Dances (Pista Sa Nayan), Jam Sessions, and the Valentine's Dance to raise funds for the parish. With pride, we donate all our proceeds to the parish, helping the school with our first income followed by a donation of song books, Statue of the Blessed Mother, and coming to the aid of typhoon victims in the Philippines with 10 boxes of canned goods and clothes and also donating 5K to the Diocese.

Fil-Am ministry has extended its activities to visiting care facilities, serenading them with love songs of their generation. Priceless smiles, tapping of feet and fingers, and even dancing, has warmed our hearts. Every so often we are asked to lead the Rosary and songs at Bereavement. We also host visits from our Lady of Penafrancia and Our Lady of Fatima. This year, we spearheaded the Multi-Cultural Pot Luck which was a parish wide event.

It is our pride and joy that we have adopted a Seminarian in the Philippines. With God's grace, he will be ordained in a year's time.

The Fil-Am Community Group is on its 4th year of caroling. We sing Christmas carols for donations (again for our beloved parish). May we come to your family this Christmas 2019? Your "YES" is all we want for Christmas!

We await your call- Hermie Moscoso at 858 586 7473 or Ted Melad at 858 935 9567 to reserve a date.

Knights of Columbus



The Knights of Columbus is a worldwide fraternal organization of close to 2 million members, centered on Catholic values and based on the principles of Unity, Charity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. STGG Council 10094 with its 150 plus members serves the STGG parish community in many areas. This past year the K of C held numerous parish based events, such as the STGG Golf Tournament, Lenten Fish Frys, the St. Patrick's Day Dinner, Pancake Breakfasts, the Summer BBQ/Picnic, and the World Famous Beer Garden at the Fall Festival. Proceeds from these and other events directly benefit many charities, Pro-Life activities, STGG School, the Madeline Sophie School, and parish ministries. The K of C is open to all Catholic men, 18 and older. The Council meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month in the parish hall. For more information on how to serve our parish community through the Knights of Columbus, please contact the 2019-2020 Grand Knight, Travis Nguyen, at kofc10094@gmail.com or ask any K of C member on how to get involved.

Wishing our great parish a Very Merry and Christ Centered Christmas Season
and "All the Best" in the New Year.

Rosary Maker Ministry



The Rosary Makers ministry helps promote the Catholic faith through the making, sharing and distributing of Rosaries. The Holy Rosary is considered a perfect vehicle for prayer as it recalls to mind the beautiful story of our salvation. This group gathers to make rosaries for missions throughout the world. Instruction and supplies are also available for volunteers who prefer to work in their own homes.

The Rosary Makers ministry has celebrated its 20th anniversary on September 19, 2019. We currently have twenty rosary makers and always need more.

The Rosary Makers ministry would like to invite you to join us by making mission rosaries for people around the world. The ministry meets on the 3rd Friday @ 9:30am in the Parish Hall. We provide training and continued fellowship. We welcome your friendship. Please prayerfully consider joining our ministry.

To learn more about our ministry, please visit our website at:
<https://www.stgg.org/home/serve/parish-outreach/rosary-makers>



**For more
information
about our
ministries and
how to get
involved, visit
our website at
[stgg.org](https://www.stgg.org)**

Stewardship in Advent

"So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come."
Matthew 24:44

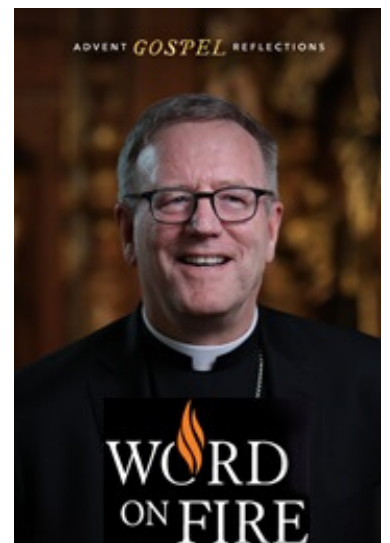
This year Thanksgiving was late which compressed the secular world's view of the Christmas season into an even tighter time-frame for shopping, decorating, planning, and traveling. While those around us launch into frantic mode, we as Catholics are entering a period of watching and waiting in the Advent Season. Don't get caught up in the frenzy, keep your eyes focused on the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

This year, why not incorporate stewardship as an alternative to the hustle and bustle? How about shifting your focus towards building relationships, rather than credit card debt, by joining a St. Gregory the Great small faith group? Maybe there is someone that could use a little extra help while recovering from an illness or surgery; perhaps joining our Helping Hands Ministry or taking communion through the Homebound Ministry is a way to reach out to these folks? Perhaps your prayer life could be enhanced this Advent by signing up for daily reflections with Matthew Kelly, Bishop Robert Barron, Formed.org, or even viewing them on our own St. Gregory parish app. Lastly, share the beauty of the Advent season with our little ones by downloading Advent coloring pages from our parish website and teaching them about the real reason for the season!

During this Advent and Christmas season, enjoy the very real presence of Jesus in your lives through faith, gratitude, and **stewardship!**

Blessings to you and your family,

Nichol Swift



*For resources, please visit our parish website:
www.stgg.org



Up Coming Events

December 16th

Penance Service
7:00pm in the Church

December 24th

Christmas Vigil Mass
4:00pm, 6:00pm,
8:00pm, & 10:00pm

December 25th

Christmas Mass
7:30am, 9:00am, &
11:00am

December 31st

Vigil Mass
5:00pm in the Church

January 1st

The Solemnity of Mary,
Mother of God
Holy Day
Obligation Dispensed
9:00am in the Church

January 9th

Adoration
Beginning after the
8:00am Daily Mass

January 27th

Conversation Hearts
with God
6:30pm in the Hall

**The Office will be close
for the following days:**

December 25th

December 26th

January 1st

January 20th

February 17th





courtesy of <http://www.merrygames.com>