



A bimonthly publication of Good Shepherd Catholic Church ~ steadfast in awakening our true being in God.

## The Poetry of 'Love for Love'

Holy Father's Encyclical letter ***Dilexit Nos***  
proposes renewed reflection on the love of Christ represented in his Sacred Heart

Pope Francis' recent encyclical, published last October 2024, invites us to contemplate the Sacred Heart of Jesus anew. ***Dilexit Nos***, Latin for 'He loves us,' (Romans 8:37) offers a contemporary look at Christ's human and divine love pouring forth from his Sacred Heart, and emphasizes two essential points

to bring the faithful closer to the Gospel. The Pope stresses that (1) personal spiritual experience must be combined with (2) communal missionary commitment.

For **Good Shepherd Parish**, the timely message fits seamlessly with the parish focus on missionary discipleship. Recognizing the call **to encounter Jesus**, and **to be sent out to encounter others**, spreading of the Gospel, missionary discipleship embraces what the Holy Father refers to as "love for love."



St. Margaret Alacoque's 1673-1675 apparitions of Jesus and the message of his Sacred Heart as depicted above the altar, Chapel of the Visitation, Paray-le-Monial, France. Artist unknown.

*Here is this Heart that so loved mankind!*

"I ask our Lord Jesus Christ to grant that His Sacred Heart may continue to pour forth the streams of living water that can **heal** the hurt we have caused, **strengthen** our ability to love and serve others, and **inspire** us to journey together towards a just, solidary and fraternal world. Until that day when we will rejoice in celebrating together the banquet of the heavenly kingdom in the presence of the risen Lord, who harmonizes all our differences in the light that radiates perpetually from his open heart. May he be blessed forever!" (DN 220)

—Pope Francis







# RESPONSIBILITY

## Reflections on Virtues

### Rogelio Clarke

#### We are stewards of God's grace

**“W**e all have the responsibility for caring for each other,” Rogelio Clarke reasons, making a solid case for fulfilling one’s duties in life – work, church, society – as a means of caring. But as he expounds on the virtue of responsibility, his viewpoint settles comfortably on a much larger context. He considers responsibility a God-given, God-centered grace.

“I am a steward of God’s grace,” Rogelio asserts, easily linking responsibility to a type of stewardship that springs from the virtue of justice. It is the ultimate responsibility: *responsibility* to God.

Rogelio admits that his journey to this revelation took some time and still mystifies him.

“All the years of, you know, nine to five, getting up, going to work, doing things that you don’t even think about,” he begins, reflecting on past decades, “we get lost in that,” he posits on busy living. “We forget who we are, we don’t take care of ourselves.”

Without discounting work commitments or the demands of livelihood, he hints at an ever-present, interior yearning for deeper meaning. His years spent as a military medic segued to work in medical labs. Thereafter, he moved into the Labor Management Partnership Department, a part of human resources, for Kaiser Permanente. Along “the way,” he always experienced the “pull” of responsibility and a subconscious obligation to care for others.

Rogelio cites reliability, consistency, follow-through and accountability as necessary aspects of responsible living.

“I put a lot of stock on accountability,” he shares, indicating, “we need to own – I need to own – what happens based on the decisions that I make, good or bad.”

When it came time for Rogelio’s retirement in 2022, he knew he wanted “to do something monumental.” Hawaii was on his mind but during his online searches, he was redirected.

“Welcome to the Camino,” he says of the words plastered on his screen. He navigated elsewhere and it happened again. “I turned a page and it kept bringing me back,” Rogelio explains. Before he knew it, he booked a flight to Europe.

“The whole trip, I don’t know how it happened,” he says, honestly perplexed at the idea of traveling somewhere he had never considered. He mentions an exchange or a voice in his thoughts, encouraging him.

“Something was driving me, and I didn’t know what, I didn’t know why,” Rogelio confesses, admitting, “I didn’t even understand why I didn’t go to Hawaii.”

“I ended up walking,” Rogelio shares of his surreal 582-mile pilgrimage from

Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port on the French side of the Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela, Spain. Everything fell into place as the “noise” in his head began to dissipate.

“It took about two, two and a half weeks to get all that out,” the newly minted pilgrim recalls of his six-week, solo trip. With newfound clarity came spirituality.

“I saw things, I felt things, I experienced things that told me God is alive and that I was moving in the direction he wanted me to move in, I was taking the right journey,” Rogelio discloses, aware of something powerful surging within him. “It was the first sign for me of something bigger than myself,” he shares.

“That trip just really brought it home that I am a steward of God’s grace, which is this world that he has given us, the people that we know,” he conveys coming full circle to the virtue of responsibility. “It just took on a much larger meaning for me,” he explains of the trip that expanded his world, his views and his gratitude to God.

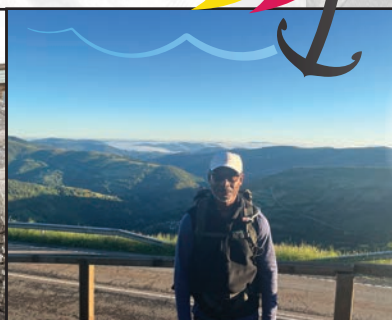
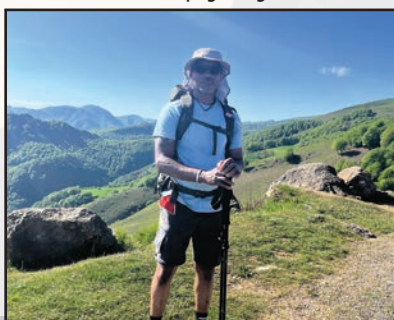
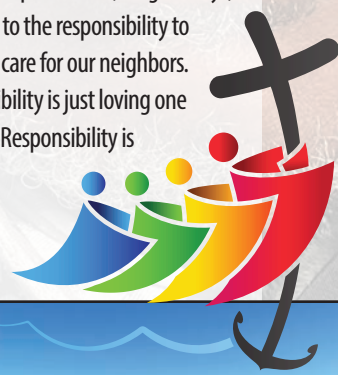
Rogelio returned home and completed his sacraments at Good Shepherd, participating in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA, now Order, or OCIA) in spring 2023.

Motivated to stay attached and involved, Rogelio joined the [St. Josephine Bakhita Black Catholic Ministry \(SJBBCM\)](#). Equipped with a new sense of the virtue of responsibility, stewardship and giving back to God, Rogelio collaborated with the SJBBCM team to launch the annual talent showcase that encourages youth to share their talents and showcase the gifts of God.

Now, three years since his journey along “The Way,” the path of the apostle St. James the Greater, Rogelio remains a “pilgrim of hope” in this Jubilee year, committed to meaningful encounters. He reveals another dimension of responsibility, that of self-discipline.

“I think having self-discipline gives us the ability to manage our emotions,” Rogelio contends, indicating how managing emotions ideally leads to another encounter. “That’s what I strive for,” he says of encounters that are God-inspired “connections.”

“When these encounters happen, maybe I can help someone,” Rogelio says, inferring to the responsibility to love and care for our neighbors. Responsibility is just loving one another. Responsibility is just.



Pilgrim Rogelio walking “the Way” across Spain toward Santiago de Compostela



# Let's Go

GROW IN FAITH  
& DISCIPLESHIP!

Visit [GSCCEG.org](http://GSCCEG.org) to learn more about upcoming events.

## LUAU



*Aloha! Save the date for a festive catered Luau meal hosted by the St. John Paul II Assembly #3504 of the Knights of Columbus! Join in the fun on Saturday, June 21, 2025 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Father Philip Wells Hall.*

*Tickets are \$45 each and go on sale after Masses mid- May. Luau proceeds help the Knights in their ongoing service and support of the parishioners of Good Shepherd community.*

*Experience the Aloha spirit and imagine paradise with Hawaiian music, singing and dancing!*

Knights of Columbus



SAINT JOHN PAUL II ASSEMBLY #3504

### Nostalgic for BINGO? The wait is over!

Join us for BINGO on Saturday, June 28, 2025

Always a good crowd and always fun, plan on a great evening. Following the 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass, come on over to the Father Philip Wells Hall, grab a seat and secure your BINGO card. The first card is free. Additional cards are \$1 each. Winners claim gift card prizes of various denominations from several businesses and restaurants. Sponsored by the Parish Life Ministry. Candy and Pizza available for \$1 each.



### Eucharistic procession planned for the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) on June 22

Please mark your calendars for this holy tradition on the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. A Eucharistic Procession will follow the 5:00 p.m. Sunday Mass on June 22, 2025. Join your parish family in procession around the church campus and share your faith and devotion to the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.



Corpus Christi

### Offer a Spiritual Bouquet!

Parishioners receiving sacraments in May and June

Please pray for our parish youth, teens and adults who will receive **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION** or **CONFIRMATION** in May and June. Your prayers strengthen these candidates claimed for Christ at Baptism, and who now desire to continue their sacramental journeys. Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation represent the sacraments of initiation and full communion with the Catholic Church.

Offer up *your* personal spiritual bouquets for these brothers and sisters in faith. Mix your favorite prayer offerings so candidates may breathe in the "aroma of Christ." (2 Cor. 2:15) Ask the Holy Spirit to come upon them and bless them!

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 1!

Please also continue your prayers for a fruitful registration process for the parish's 2025-2026 religious education offerings for youth and young teens! These turning point years are vital in forming parish youth in a lasting faith.

**For Families:** Watch for online links on the parish website on July 1 to access and complete registration. Students enroll in grade-specific Catholic Faith Formation programs, and sacramental preparation.

**Everyone:** As missionary disciples, your intercessory prayers are a powerful way to ask Jesus for his holy guidance and the grace of **ENCOUNTER** for these young Catholics. **ACCOMPANY** families with your prayers, and invoke the Holy Spirit to stir our **COMMUNITY**, forming us and **SENDING** us out to love God and serve our neighbors.



### Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is June 27

Celebrate this Friday Feast with morning Mass, 8:30 a.m. With special devotion to the loving Sacred Heart of Jesus, deepen your relationship with Jesus on this the 350<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the June 1675 spiritual experience of St. Margaret Mary.

Please consult the parish website for more details on how you may personalize your devotion.





# The Sacred Heart of Jesus:

## A REMINDER OF CHRIST'S GREAT LOVE FOR MANKIND

### A matter of heart *Heart*

Pope Francis announced plans to write *Delixet Nos* last June, 2024, referring to a long history of reflection and contemplation on Jesus' Sacred Heart, rooted in scripture and Magisterial texts throughout the centuries. He also mentioned the familiar Sacred Heart devotion made known to us via St. Margaret Mary Alacoque's personal revelation of Jesus.

The Pope's advance notice of his encyclical also seemed to hint and remind humanity to refocus on the heart — *Jesus' heart, the world's heart, and every individual's heart.*

*"I believe it will do us great good to meditate on various aspects of the Lord's love, which can illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal, and say something meaningful to a world that seems to have lost its heart,"* the Holy Father suggested.

Pope Francis implies a necessary **HEALING** of the heart so that love — *the love poured out from Jesus* — might permeate through us and around us. *Personal encounters* with Jesus, and *missionary disciple encounters* with others will *spread* the love of Jesus.

Published October 2024, the encyclical leaps to the heart point within the first few pages of chapter one.

*"If we devalue the heart, we also devalue what it means to speak from the heart, to act with the heart, to cultivate and heal the heart,"* the Holy Father writes before spelling out the consequences.

*If we fail to appreciate the specificity of the heart, we miss the messages that the mind alone cannot communicate; we miss out on the richness of our encounters ...we miss out on poetry."* (DN 11)

### Personal spiritual experience *Encounter*

The Pope highlights personal encounter with Jesus as the heart-work that must occur in order to return Christ's love and, as Jesus said to St. Margaret Mary, "make reparation for the ingratitude of men."

*"Reparation can be understood as our removal of the obstacles we place before the expansion of Christ's love in the world by our lack of trust, gratitude and self-sacrifice,"* the Pope explains. (DN 194)

The Holy Father offers a long line of saints devoted to the Heart of Jesus. He cites how each attained a spirituality that emphasized *encounter* with Christ's loving heart. With delicate reverence and fervent appreciation, the Pope paints a divine picture of Christ's love encouraging us along to the same privileged poetry of encounter with Jesus.

As one might expect, the Holy Father discusses the apparition of Jesus experienced by St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, and the subsequent devotion to the Sacred Heart still practiced today. This is the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the visions experienced by the French Visitation nun at Paray-le-Monial, France.

For many, devotion to the Sacred Heart may be centered on the 12 promises Jesus made to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, and the encouragement to receive Communion on the first Friday of each month, make a Holy Hour the day before, and celebrate the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the third Friday following Pentecost. These devotional practices lead to other spiritual developments.

*"This powerful realization of the love of Jesus Christ bequeathed to us by St. Margaret Mary can spur us to greater union with him,"* the Pope writes, clarifying how the overarching significance of the core message that St. Margaret Mary heard must be interpreted in the light of the Gospel and the rich spiritual tradition of the Church.

Pope Francis punctuates what St. Margaret Mary heard from Jesus:

*"This is the heart that so loved human beings that it has spared nothing, even to emptying and consuming itself in order to show them its love."* (DN 121)

This helps us *"recognize the gifts of the Holy Spirit present in those experiences of faith and love"* infusing us with the **STRENGTH** to love and serve others. *"This apparition invites us to grow in our encounter with Christ, putting our trust completely in his love, until we attain full and definitive union with him."* (DN122)

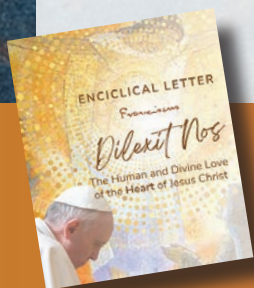
### Communal missionary commitment *Send*

The Holy Father submits, *"we can offer ourselves in another way ... allowing the Lords' infinite love to spread freely"* (DN 196) as we grow closer to Jesus and the Gospel. By *"spreading in this world the flames of his ardent and gracious love... in amends for all those occasions when this love has been rejected or refused,"* (DN 200) we can offer Christ consolation, reparation, and love for his generous, gratuitous love.

The Holy Father emphasizes how Jesus **INSPIRES** us and nourishes us with his own love, making possible our *"acts of love of neighbor, with the renunciation, self-denial, suffering and effort that they entail."* (DN 203)

*"We should not think of this mission of sharing Christ as something only between Jesus and me. Mission is experienced in fellowship with our communities and with the whole Church,"* (DN 212) the Pope explains.

**Dilixet Nos expresses that the Sacred Heart devotion is not about "veneration of a single organ apart from the Person of Jesus." Rather, the devotion appropriately accentuates the heart as representative of "the whole Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man," describing the heart as "the natural sign and symbol of his boundless love." (DN 48)**





Pope Francis speaks poetically of this 'love for love' — a reciprocal love best understood first in the context of a personal encounter with Christ and then with regard to the call to mission, *encountering* Christ in others.

*"Mission, as a radiation of the love of the heart of Christ, requires missionaries who are themselves in love and who, enthralled by Christ, feel bound to share this love that has changed their lives,"* (DN 209) he instructs, continuing to describe encounter in a second way, a missional way. *"He is always there, always at work, sharing our efforts to do good. In a mysterious way, his love becomes present through our service. He speaks to the world in a language that at times has no need for words."* (DN 214)

It is the language of Jesus' heart—  
the language of our converted, inspired  
hearts. Poetry.



POMPEO BATONI, PUBLIC DOMAIN, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Most loving Heart of Jesus, fountain  
of every blessing, I adore You and  
love You. With deep sorrow for my sins I  
offer You this poor heart of mine.

Make me humble, patient, pure and  
totally obedient to Your will.

Grant, Good Jesus, that I may live  
in You and for You.

Protect me in the midst of danger, com-  
fort me in my afflictions. Give me health  
of body, assistance in my needs, Your  
blessings on all that I do, and the grace of  
a holy death. Amen.

**"Encounter" is one of the four essential elements of missionary discipleship, along with accompany, community and send. Encounter describes experiencing Jesus Christ in a profound way — knowing his love and the new life he offers. Meditating on the love of Jesus represented in the imagery of his Sacred Heart, and contemplating Jesus in the Eucharist, in Adoration, in the Word, offer the transformative power and love that Jesus wants for us.**

### Knowing Christ's Sacred Heart — *A grace we need to ask for every day*

"I appreciate the Pope doing that," Father Michael relates, referring to Pope Francis penning *Dilexit Nos*. "He wrote it for a reason," he continues, concluding that this newest encyclical intends to help readers delve deeper into their love for Jesus.

"What we're talking about here is *personal* love for Jesus. To have any real spiritual life, [how we see] God has to change from being *something* to *someone*," Father says.

Noting that popes often "build upon" their predecessor's writings, Father Michael references the importance of Pope Pius XII's 1956 encyclical, *Haurietis Aquas* (Draw Refreshing Water from the Sacred Heart). In this, Pope Pius expounds on the dogma of "hypostatic union" and Pope Francis definitely turns to this dogma to express the basis for the devotion to the sacred heart.

"It [hypostatic union] means true God, true man at the very same time," Father Michael explains, describing this mystery of faith and the divine and human natures within the single person of Christ; God's real human heart, divine and human *at the same time*. The representation of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, then, is an emblem of this and of everything Christ suffered, everything Christ gives — *flaming, burning love*.

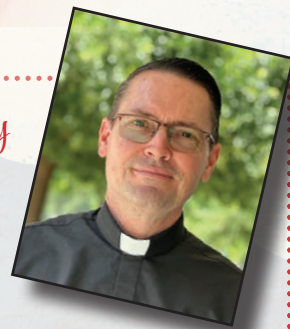
"Just go through the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It says so much about what that heart is," Father Michael implores, pointing to one stanza in particular, "a burning furnace of love."

"For me, that is the essence of who Jesus is," Father Michael conveys, illustrating the intimate friendship of Jesus. "That friendship with Jesus is gradual, it has to be worked on, and like any of our friends, we have to spend time with each other, speak to each other, listen to each other," he insists. This friendship is a "privileged place" of encounter that Jesus *transforms*.

"Jesus gives us his heart, his cross and his mother," Father Michael adds, citing that this outpouring of Christ's love necessitates a *return* of love. "That's why for every baptized Christian, the apostolate is not an option," he says, emphasizing love for love, devotion, reparation, stewardship, evangelization.

"It simply comes from our love for Christ. We're not looking for anything in return. We need this right now," Father Michael perseveres, commending the Pope's timely sharing of *Dilexit Nos* as he laments the consequences of not knowing Jesus.

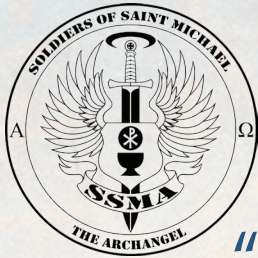
"You can't love someone you don't know," he says, distinguishing how it's not "head knowledge but a heart knowledge, an experiential knowledge. That's a grace we need to ask for every day." ✚





# Here I Am, Lord! Send Me!

## MEN'S MINISTRY ASPIRES TO SAINTHOOD



### SOLDIERS OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL— PRIORITIZING THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

**I** think that a lot of guys, myself included, we're all looking for something, right?" Michael Patrick states inquisitively but is 100 percent sure at the same time. As co-founder of the [Soldiers of St. Michael the Archangel \(SSMA\)](#) men's ministry, he reveals a strong understanding of the sometimes aching void in the average man's heart.

"A lot of guys are looking for something... a lot of guys are looking for something *like this*," Gabriel Klug says, agreeing and emphasizing "this," the recent SSMA offering, **The Path of the New Man**. As a member of the spiritually-focused SSMA men's ministry and its organic leadership team, Gabriel, Michael, co-founder, Rhuel Lucina, and a handful of others designed The Path in consultation with Father Michael Vaughan and Deacon Rommel Declines.

"We tried to make a program that would meet men" where they are, recognizing the differences in every man's personal life and spiritual practice, Michael explains. He details how "prayer, contemplative prayer, building a relationship with God, daily study, scripture, and exercise" are foundational allowing each participant to "add personal asceticism."

Above all, the leadership team cited that their vision had been to create a sustainable, scalable and customizable program focused on building virtuous lives beyond any finite period. The Path commenced in January, continued through Lent and concluded on Easter Sunday, a 90-day period, much like the program's predecessor, Exodus 90.

There are other similarities to Exodus 90, too. Program leaders stress that SSMA and The Path are committed to fraternity, giving men of all ages a sense of brotherhood. This year's Path participants ranged in age from 19 to over 70, both married and single. About 60 men participated.

Each Path participant, paired with an "anchor" (a fellow member also journeying on the Path) garners support and encouragement from their anchor through daily check-ins. Weekly whole-group meetings include a key presentation and smaller break-out groups to continue the dialogue – to listen and to be heard.

"The focus is on humility and our need for God," Michael indicates, describing a desire among the men to increase their spirituality. "They're aspiring to become saints here on earth," he says qualifying the program contents as "what the desert fathers and Church fathers" practiced in the early centuries of the Church. "We're kind of following what they did," Michael adds, as a means "to lead a life of sanctity."

**Put on the new man,  
who according to God  
is created in justice  
and holiness of truth.**

*Ephesians 4:24*

Gabriel points out that The Path offered a "ramp up" or gradual progression to build up spiritual practices and increase the likelihood of long-lasting and sustainable spirituality.

"A beautiful aspect of this is that guys feel comfortable," Gabriel mentions, noting that "people can share" their struggles or whatever they may be going through without reservation or fear of vulnerability. Confidentiality is expected, which creates a "safe zone" for men to speak from their hearts. Gabriel reports that participants experience deepened friendships and camaraderie.

**"There's a need out there"** — "This has been eye-opening," Michael conveys having discovered that "men feel isolated." Exterior lives often suggest men with ideal family and work relationships, and other friendships, but frequently, "the weight of being a

man," and the necessity to portray strength and confidence can take a toll.

"Modern life can be lonely and isolating," Gabriel interjects referring to a Gallup October 2024 study that shows concerning trends. Among U.S. adults, 20 percent report feeling loneliness "a lot of the day yesterday," a number inching closer to the COVID-19 high of 25 percent.

"This is why the fraternity aspect is huge," Michael insists. He indicates "a space for men" like SSMA's year-round offerings, and even specific programs such as The Path give men an environment "where they can grow closer and enjoy shared experiences."

During Lent, in this Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope, The Path offered a physical challenge to participants to experience a tough pilgrim journey. With weighted backpacks, the men set out with Father Michael trekking on foot a six-mile distance to St. Charles Borromeo Parish in South Sacramento, a designated pilgrimage site for the Diocese of Sacramento. Once there, participants had the opportunity for group prayer and personal reflection.

"Men need a clear call to action," Michael surmises, applauding the pilgrim journey but also pointing to the larger call to sainthood. And with that, clear objectives chart a course, setting the direction – *the path* – for how to get there. Michael describes it as a "battle plan" in a world overlaid with spiritual struggles.



# SOLDIERS SENT

"Mission, call-to-action, battle plan, fraternity," Michael says repeating the formula for combating the struggles. Whether family life, addictions, mental health, work matters and any number of other topics that sabotage spirituality, the SSMA team proposes that engaging men in spiritual pursuits together makes a difference.

Michael infers a holistic lifestyle that includes prayer, scripture and spiritual reading will help men to lead spiritually intentional

lives. Reading classical works like Scupoli's *The Spiritual Combat* and *A Treatise on Peace of Soul*, St. Francis De Sales' *An Introduction to the Devout Life* and Thomas

A Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* complement SSMA programs with wisdom to be "the best version of

themselves" so they can be of service to others, and "prioritize the spiritual life."

**"There's always something"** — The Soldiers of St. Michael the Archangel meet every Monday evening all year long, according to Michael. "There's always something" underway with a focus on spirituality and increasing one's love for Jesus, he says, emphasizing, "we're not going anywhere."

Gabriel and Michael stress that involvement is open to everyone. "There's no cost, no bar for entry, you don't have to be a parishioner and you don't have to be Catholic," Michael clarifies.

SSMA offers back-to-back programs typically promoting their offerings a month in advance via parish media. They regularly collaborate with the Knights of Columbus, helping to present programs such as *Into the Breach* and *Mission of the Family*. Their next Knights of Columbus collaboration will be *The Leadership Virtues Series* which will begin shortly after Easter. It is open to all men.

Michael also serves as Faith Director for the Knights of Columbus leading the monthly Rosary Crusade nights which occur every second Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. The Rosary Crusade is open to all. Gabriel is a catechist with the Office of Religious Education.

The "tone" of the Soldiers of St. Michael the Archangel aligns with the Church Militant concept: Christians on earth, combating sin. The Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to this state of the Church as "disciples who are pilgrims." (CCC 954)

While St. Michael the Archangel is the ministry's "saintly" patron and intercessor, the ministry appreciates the earthly leadership of Good Shepherd pastor Father Michael immensely since its founding in 2021.

"We wouldn't be where we are without his leadership," Michael Patrick affirms, calling to mind Father Michael's religious order experience with the Legionaries of Christ, missionary work in South America, US Army military service and his current role as Chaplain for the California National Guard. He is a revered role model never hesitant to roll up his sleeves, serve soup, dole out crab, or go the distance on pilgrim walks, as a few examples. People notice his commitment to a "new man" masculinity that demonstrates love for Christ through service and mission.

"Father Michael is phenomenal," Gabriel heralds, recognizing his visibility, preaching and guidance on missionary discipleship. SSMA sees the hope of Father Michael inspiring conversations that matter... service, almsgiving, vocations. This is the soldier-pilgrim's way to sainthood.







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*Practice the faith...*

# *Awaken* THE SOUL

## **Lisette & Sal Robles—** *Getting each other to heaven*

"We've been married for six years," Lisette Robles shares, recalling her marriage to Sal at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Sacramento in 2019. Sal had been a Cathedral parish-ioner but when Lisette moved here from Southern California, they decided to settle in Elk Grove by 2021.

"He didn't want to leave the Cathedral," Lisette remembers of her appeal to at-tend Good Shepherd, "because *this* is our community...I think it would be good."

And it was good! Four years later, Sal says, "I love Good Shepherd!"

Sal joined the Soldiers of St. Michael the Archangel and soon became involved in its Exodus 90 offering, and more recently The Path.

"It's a big factor," Sal indicates, speaking of how the men "hold each other ac-countable, pray, have daily discussions, and meet every Monday." He reveres the ministry as "a very solid group" of men committed to their faith, striving for holiness.

"It really has shaped our marriage," Lisette adds grateful for their bond of faith. The couple shares how this is a second marriage for both and neither had remarriage in mind.

"We had a small opportunity to meet, a small window," Lisette explains of a two-hour time frame "at the same place, at the same time." She had trav-eled to Sacramento to attend an infant baptism. The parents were Lisette's former college roommate and Sal's former fraternity brother.

"God put us in each other's path," she insists. Months later, Lisette and Sal reconnected, exchanging greetings on social media.

"If marriage were ever to happen, it was important to meet someone with the same faith...the same values and beliefs... a man of faith," Lisette emphasizes.

Having pursued annulments through the Church, Lisette and Sal feel blessed by their blended family and close relationships with their four adult

children and one teen. They sense their commitment has everything to do with getting each other to heaven, serving as examples of faith to their family and friends, and living out their respective baptismal callings.

"They see a healthy marriage, and how God is at its center," Lisette says.

Lisette joined the Walking with Purpose women's small group Bible study last fall and the couple sees how grace builds upon grace.

"We started going to Adoration and confession more often," Lisette shares adding that praying grace before meals, making the sign of the cross — *wherever they are* — remind them and those around them, of the importance of practicing their faith in big and small ways.



"We are taking a trip to Mexico," Sal mentions excited that their travels will take them to the city where former parochial vicar Father Julius K. Kaburu currently resides. Sal shares they plan to connect with him and say "hello!"

Lisette values her position with United Healthcare, working remotely since her move to Elk Grove. Sal serves as the Assistant Sheriff for Sacramento County.

***They sense their commitment has everything to do with getting each other to heaven...living out their respective baptismal callings.***