



the soul & let your spirit fly

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



With every breath and every heartbeat, what we believe as Catholics lives and resonates deep down inside. It may sometimes tumble, or stall, or flourish and mature, but it's there, knocking, always.

As Jesus stands "at the door, knocking" (Revelation 3:20), our faith stirs our souls to know, serve and share Him, among ourselves, within our families and in the larger community.

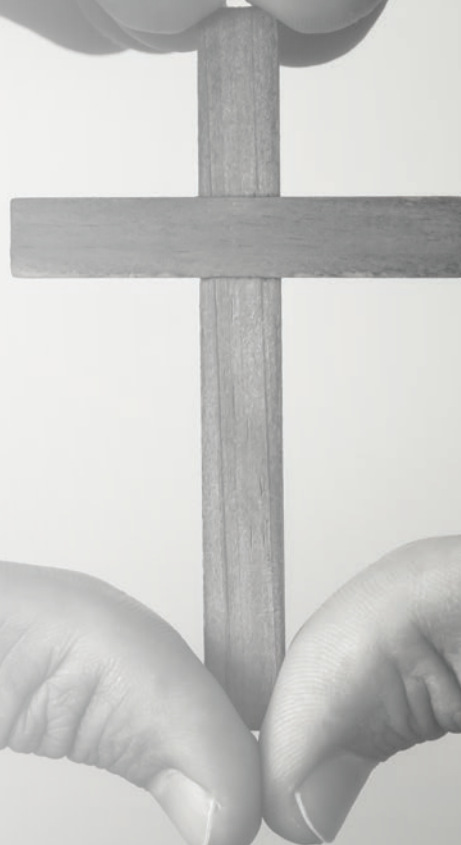
"It's in our DNA," many say, referring to beautiful scripture verses confirming humanity as designed and made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). We are "knit" within our mothers' wombs (Psalm 139:13-16) and "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). We find, to no surprise, that God knew each of us before we were ever born (Isaiah 49:1, Jeremiah 1:5, Galatians 1:15).

The Fourth Commandment makes God's plan ever-clearer: God vests the father and the mother with authority and institutes the human family. The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers a beautiful and rich teaching pointing to the spiritual fruits of family, the temporal fruits of peace and prosperity, and the family's responsibilities, rights and duties. (CCC 2197-2257)

Is it any wonder that "God in Jesus willed to be born into a human family and to grow up in it," (YOUCAT 86) making the family a place where God is present and a prototype for faith, love and community?

The third goal in Good Shepherd's five-year parish plan asks Catholic families to explore and nurture the calling to hand on God's love to each other. It invites the larger parish community to examine how we can SUPPORT FAMILIES IN FULLY LIVING AND LOVING THEIR CATHOLIC FAITH.

KEEPING YOUR CATHOLIC FAITH @ THE heart OF THE FAMILY



(Continues on page 4)

Practice the faith...

Awaken THE SOUL

Ellie Corral: Grateful for "GOD WINKS" in her life



"My faith has always grounded me," says Ellie Corral of Good Shepherd's Office of Religious Education (ORE). She remembers her Catholic childhood, describing faith-filled parents who were very involved in ministries at St. Rose Church and St. Patrick School on Franklin Blvd. Her mom even related how she had asked their priest "to bless us and pray for us while I was still in the womb!"

"It was like a second home to me," Ellie says of time spent running through the hallways with then-pastor Monsignor Kavanaugh's permission.

"I've always seen 'Godwinks' throughout my life," she giggles, thinking of the succession of perfectly timed moments of divine intervention. In hindsight, she marvels at the blessings.

Ellie infers that the opportunity with the ORE is one such God wink.

"I feel like getting this job was an unexpected blessing and I doubted myself," she discloses of securing her administrative support position last October.

"I had dedicated myself to being home with my kids," Ellie says, noting a "gap" in her work experience. The Cristo Rey High School graduate worked for several years before marrying at 23 and having two children.

"But, you know, I stepped into this in faith," she says, insisting that "God has always been a part of my life, taking care of me."

Compelled to clarify, Ellie assures, "I am not a perfect Catholic, but God is so merciful!"



Specifically, she refers to the difficult news she received just months after joining the parish ORE team, hearing that her oldest son's school, St. Charles Borromeo, would be closing. But God winked in Ellie's life, and she was able to enroll him at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School for this coming fall 2026 semester.

Through all the changes, Ellie senses that "God is tugging at me... maybe to serve more." She grew up watching her parents model ministry work, thinking all the while, "It's a parent thing."

"But, we're *all* called to it," Ellie believes, trusting in God's providence. "I feel like I am here for a reason," she ponders, knowing well that God "knows what he's doing."

Ellie is grateful for her job, viewing it as a reminder

to "live out my faith daily." More than Mass on Sunday, her work reminds her—*impels her*—to keep the faith at the forefront of her mind every day. She feels reminded of her responsibilities as a wife and mother.

"I think my husband is happy for me, too," Ellie says of the fulfillment she enjoys, working in an environment that reinforces and supports the family vocation while still allowing the seeds of faith and service to grow.

Ellie mentions that one of her favorite guiding practices is reading the lives of saints.

"They say the saints choose you," she quips, identifying Saint Padre Pio as a go-to intercessor.

"Pray, hope and don't worry," she says, quoting the saint and adopting the words as a personal sacred phrase.

"They lived their lives like us... they weren't perfect, but they were persistent in their pursuit to do good and to do the will of God," she asserts, confident in the help of saintly heroes, real people with real stories.

Ellie describes her work with ORE as "a lot of clerical, administrative work and I love it." She supports the office in its work to deliver faith formation and sacrament preparation classes to parish youth and teens, including upkeep of the sacrament record books, and parent hour documentation. She also helps the parish with Spanish translation needs. †

ENCOUNTER *Jesus*

"I Give it to You"

Regina Barr
walks with
Jesus
every
day

*Surrendering
her life to Him*



Regina Barr sees God's movements in her life. She admits that wasn't always the case, but today she attributes her awareness to trust and surrender.

"I was really very private in the sense of not wanting to connect with anybody," Regina explains, describing a state of loneliness and sadness following her mother's passing two years ago.

One night, fraught with the pain of this loss, she pleaded, "God, I need to talk to somebody, I need community, I need..."

Deep from within the crevices of her heart, she knew God had walked through all of life with her. And in these dire moments, He was still with her. She heard him say, "Don't be afraid."

Like a tap on the shoulder, Regina listened, knowing that God was inviting her to let go of all apprehension and come to Him.

A parishioner for 10 years, Regina and her husband retired here after he completed a 22-year military career with the U.S. Marine Corps. Drawn here upon seeing St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's name on the school,

Regina sensed a connection since their youngest daughter's name is Elizabeth.

She recalls their time stationed in Okinawa, Japan, and the need to choose a saint's name for her baby girl. "It was always going to be Elizabeth," Regina says, following a line-up of three older brothers also bestowed with saintly names, Joseph, Jacob, and Thomas.

"So, when I saw the school, I knew God was calling me," Regina shares. She helped the three youngest prepare to receive the sacrament of confirmation, but she hesitated to fully engage with her new community back then.

Fast forward to 2024, when God tapped her shoulder. Regina breathed in for a split second when someone invited her to join the women's Bible study, *Walking with Purpose*.

"The friend said, 'I think you would really like it,'" Regina remembers, telling herself, "I'm going to do it...God is calling me to do it, I need to do it."

"It was the best thing I ever did," she says, overjoyed at her important yes-moment.

Describing the experience as a powerful growth opportunity, she sensed God's action in her life as she attuned herself to the crosses that others bear.

"Everybody is going through almost the same things," Regina notices in awe of God's gifts of community, comfort and friendship. "It was just amazing to me," she conveys, realizing these encounters — *these faces* — were Jesus.

Just a short time later, she accepted the call to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

"The first time I served, it was like His presence came over me as I served His people," Regina says, worrying and praying to God, "What if I won't have enough?" Reassured by God, she knew that plenty of love and grace are always available in the Lord's vineyard, and it is, and always will be, "so fulfilling."

"His mercy is overwhelming for me," Regina shares, committed to daily Mass

and weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Hearing His voice bid to her, *'allow me to work through you,'* She feels drawn to evangelize and help others encounter Jesus.

"He is my light and my hope," Regina says, stressing, "I know I will never be alone because His presence is within me."

Regina candidly states that crosses exist, and "I walk with Him every day through challenges."

Her peace and confidence are reinforced at Adoration as she surrenders to Jesus, again and again.

"Every time the Eucharist is lifted," blessing the adorers with the monstrance held high, Regina prays, "I give it to you. I give it to you, God."

Regina recognizes that everyone experiences and encounters Jesus differently. She urges quiet listening, allowing the Holy Spirit to "guide you to His presence." †

It is God who is at work within
YOU...shine like stars
in the world. *Philippians 2:13, 15*

[illegible]

Ephesians 3:17-19

the Welcome Desk or go to the Parish Office for more information about confession, a copy of an examination of conscience, and encouraging support.

Offer Prayers of Intercession for your Family — “Be intercessors for your family, no matter the ages of children, young adults, or older,” Alice implores, citing the wisdom of Proverbs 21:1. “God can turn the heart of the king around,” she proclaims enthusiastically, because “all is in the hands of the Lord.” Every parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle... *everyone* can intercede, supporting families with prayer.

Consecration — “Consecrate yourself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary,” Alice recommends, referring to these Catholic devotions of entrustment and encounter. Deepening one’s relationship with Christ strengthens faith and trust, and opens the door much wider for the work of God.

The momentum is there. With Good Shepherd's commitment to families on their faith journey, the parish stands ready to reignite the sacred community of family. Let every soul support them every step of the way. †

Spiritual ascent for families

purposeful, never random or arbitrary. Liturgical seasons, prayers, sacraments and Mass readings return and repeat, supporting and ushering believers *higher* in faith.

Repetition/Newness
Same form, new soul

Individual/Communal
Each family member moves at their own pace, around the axis

The words of the prayers learned at age 10 resonate quite differently at 40- or 50-something. Timeless Gospel stories do not change. *We* do.

Immanent/Transcendent
*Grounded while also reaching
toward what is above*

Our Catholic faith is the DNA, or spiritual code, for life eternal.

Fragility/Resilience
Structurally strong because of the axis (Jesus) supporting the width and pitch, absorbing stress (sin and suffering) without breaking.

"We have many weddings every month, many convalidations, and celebrations of milestone anniversaries," Alice shares, indicators of faith through the generations, continuing and blessing one another with the gifts of God. Similarly, the parish Baptism ministry sees about 15 babies and young children baptized every month. Many are new families and many are young mothers and fathers who grew up at Good Shepherd and now are choosing to have their children receive their sacraments here. Further, 156 children received their First Holy Communion and First Reconciliation last May, and 106 teens and young adults were confirmed in June. This, plus 16 individuals who entered full communion with the Catholic Church through the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) at Easter Vigil last April.

ELAINE MAGTOTO *recognized her calling*

Elaine Magtoto remembers praying to God, “Please help me to find someone I can raise a family with.” At that point, about 20 years ago, exhaustion beat her down as she raised her infant daughter, following a breakup.

“I was raised Catholic... I’m a cradle Catholic... but my family didn’t make it to church as often as we should have,” she recalls of her childhood. Her parents migrated from the Philippines and a mix of variables factored in. She learned her faith and memorized prayers, but something was missing – *a relationship with Jesus.*

“I went back to church by myself, to St. Charles Borromeo and it changed me for the better,” Elaine testifies, knowing her prayer for a faithful family man to join her on her journey was “big.”

God provides. Elaine and Mark Omar married, civilly, and welcomed three children together. Each was baptized and continued to receive their sacraments as they grew, attending every grade of Children’s Faith Formation (CFF), whether or not a “sacrament prep” year.

When Elaine’s second daughter, Akahana, began participating in The Grove Youth Ministry and preparing for confirmation in the One Eight (1:8) Confirmation Program (referring to Acts 1:8), Elaine and Mark Omar recognized the importance of the parent-volunteer component.

“It became my journey, too,” Elaine says upon hearing about “Gove Nights” and various volunteer needs.

“I got my own group of middle school kids,” she shares of the group leadership opportunity and how she felt “honored that kids wanted to be in

my group!” She wonders if her young age made her “relatable” or if her skill in “speaking their language” made her approachable. But it didn’t really matter.

“I recognized my calling, and I ended up falling in love with ministering to youth,” Elaine says, unable to contain her enthusiasm and connection to the youth ministry. After Akahana received her sacraments, she wanted to return as a peer minister, and today, mother and daughter continue to offer their hearts and love so that young people can experience the love of Jesus.

“I could see when kids didn’t have Jesus in their home life,” Elaine mentions, conveying a new sense of purpose, “to help them find Jesus in me and to remember me, because I remember them. I want to be someone who can relate to them.”

Elaine and Mark Omar’s son, Makai, now attends The Grove and begins year 2 of confirmation preparation this fall. He also started altar serving with his cousin. Their youngest son, Kanoa, made his First Holy Communion last year and enters fourth grade this fall.

In the midst of working hard to raise disciples in love with their faith, Elaine and Mark Omar noticed that they “were growing stronger” in their faith, too. Jesus, in their hearts, was drawing them to himself.

By 2025, Elaine “promised God” she would herself formalize her full initiation into the Church. She joined the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults

“I ended up falling in love with ministering to youth!”





(OCIA) and received her sacraments on Easter Vigil 2026. The couple convalidated their marriage on All Saints Day 2025.

"The Holy Spirit is here," Elaine says emotionally, filled with joy for how God answered her prayers. "Everyone in our family has their sacraments," she says softly through tears, overwhelmed with gratitude for God's work in their lives. "My kids see this, too," she adds.

"It just changes your life, living your faith and giving everything to God," Elaine mentions, describing a life of grace, zero stress and a desire to share Jesus. More than a disciple-maker with The Grove Youth Ministry and

in her own family, Elaine doesn't hesitate to speak of Jesus with co-workers and friends, even sharing the joy of her faith life online. She is thrilled when her faith invites questions

and conversations, and when friends "notice" the difference faith has made in her family.

"If that means others are getting to Christ, that's what I want," she says.

Elaine shares how their large extended family never misses Saturday Vigil Mass. Speaking of their sons, Makai has "totally memorized the whole parish prayer" and Kanoa is "always ready to read it."

"That prayer sticks," Elaine confirms, knowing well we are called "to go and be missionary disciples in Christ."

"The Holy Spirit is here"



Photos clockwise from far left: Altar servers Makai and his cousin Micaiah; the whole family celebrating the 50th anniversary of Mark Omar's parents —Kaelyn Angeles, Akahana, Elaine, and Mark Omar with Kanoa and Makai in front; Mark Omar and Elaine sending Akahana to Youth on a Mission (YOAM) for four days; the family celebrating Mark Omar and Elaine's convalidation ceremony; Easter Vigil 2025 when Kanoa brought up the Chrism Oil.





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& DISCIPLESHIP!

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It is God who is at work within
YOU...shine like stars
in the world. *Philippians 2:13, 15*

In Community, we flourish

Welcome Father Joshi

On July 1, 2026, Good Shepherd parish community welcomes Father Joshi Paliakara as our new parochial vicar. Father Joshi comes to us from the Diocese of Irinjalakuda, in Kerala, India. He was ordained in January 1998. He attended seminary with Good Shepherd's outgoing parochial vicar, Father Davis Koottala where they established their lifetime friendship.



in Catholic education and in foreign missions in Kenya. He completed advanced studies at Pontifical University of Urbania receiving a licentiate in pastoral theology of human mobility. Previously, Father Joshi earned a master's degree in psychology. He is fluent in English, Italian and German.

Father Davis is pleased that Father Joshi will be received into the Good Shepherd parish family.

1st Annual St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School Legacy Golf Tournament

Love golf? Love your faith? Celebrate both for a good cause! Your participation on August 18, 2026 at Valley Hi Country Club helps to support the mission of our Catholic school ministry while investing in its perpetual strength to serve Catholic students and their families. Be a Living Light on the golf course and prosper hearts, souls, and minds.

Visit: stelizabetheg.org/golf/

For over 25 years, Father Joshi has served in various capacities and most recently as parish priest with St. Mary's Church in Cheloor while concurrently serving as dean for the Edathuruthy Deanery. He also served as vice rector of Irinjalakuda's minor seminary, director of altar ministers, director of vocations, finance office for St. James Hospital in Chalakudy,

Children's Faith Formation and Confirmation Registration

Families who plan to enroll their children in children's faith formation, grades one through six, or One Eight Confirmation Preparation, can access enrollment forms online on the parish website. *Deadline for submission is July 31, 2026.*

