



Awaken

the soul & let your spirit fly

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


Missionary disciples UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF A SOUL

CHRIST IS COUNTING ON YOU

In the darkness of the church on Easter Vigil, flickers of light can be seen in the back of the nave near the baptismal fount. Just minutes before, the priest blessed a small fire, started from a flint, outside on the plaza. From that flame, a candle was lighted. And from that candle, three tapers signifying the Holy Trinity. In due time, a procession moves forward toward the altar sanctuary with the deacon intoning at three intervals, "Light of Christ." The congregation responds, "Thanks be to God."

Soon, the Paschal candle, aglow from that original spark, illuminates the church and conveys the Risen Lord as the Light of the World! This very pillar of fire is thereafter plunged into the baptismal fount blessing and sanctifying its waters just as Jesus sanctified the waters of the Jordan River at his baptism.

When we hear the words "by virtue of baptism" our minds might swirl as we recall this imagery and our own baptisms. *Because* of baptism, supernatural grace stirs in us. From these holy waters, souls are sanctified and called to extend Christ's mission of salvation. Simply, as sharers of Christ's light, the baptized embrace a divine responsibility called discipleship, choosing to live intentionally for God. Christ is counting on you.



From Left: Father Diogo Baptista, Father Michael Vaughan, Father Abraham Chiu and Deacon Rommel Declines encircle the Easter candle and prepare to bring the Light of the World into the sanctuary.

Faith, Hope & Love

Theological Virtues Rooted in Baptism

"These virtues are being neglected now," says Eddie Saez referring to the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Eddie and his wife Ella have been Good Shepherd parishioners since its inception more than 30 years ago and they see a change in the world that saddens them.

"For us, the whole world is in chaos," Eddie observes citing an obvious disunity pulling at people and causing "children of God to be leaving the Church." They imply that many have forgotten or ignored these baptismal graces which enable them "to believe in God, to hope in him and to love him through the theological virtues; giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit... the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1266)

On Faith – The Saezs discuss how "the first thing we need to do is gather his people" and encourage people to learn more about God. Ella also senses that showing and demonstrating faith in action – *an active and living faith* – gives an attractive *visibility* to belief.

"We have to trust and believe that God gives us everything," Eddie insists, even when it means trials. Diagnosed with cancer nine years ago and managing three distinct forms of the disease, Eddie turns to the virtue of faith.

"I have faith in God, that he will take care of me," Eddie asserts sharing his ardent trust in God's will and his deepening strength that comes with a faith life filled with both joys and challenges.

On Hope – "I am a prayer warrior," Ella explains giving testimony to the virtue of hope. She realizes all her prayers – for healing, future success, family and the fulfillment of God's plan – represent her expectancy for God's grace and blessing.

Eddie and Ella talk about their long-held hopes for their children and grandchildren. "It sometimes makes me cry," Eddie comments moved by the reality of answered prayers.

They also mention their involvement with the Homebound Ministry, bringing communion to those unable to make it to Mass. "It really



touches me," Eddie explains of the seemingly coincidental connection with a gentleman who suffers from the same type of cancer that Eddie has. "We see hope when we pray," Ella concludes pointing to the mutual blessing enjoyed by Eddie and his homebound friend.

On Charity/Love – The couple talks about waking up and giving thanks each day, asking God to "help us to love others, in all encounters." Eddie shares a story of an encounter with a homeless person in Sacramento. He asked only for water. The Saezs bought him a meal, too. In their gesture of love, they explain, *they* were loved. "He said, 'God bless you,'" Eddie relays hinting how the virtue of love multiplies and gives back as only divine blessing can.

"We pray that people will be open to these gifts of faith, hope and love," Ella says convinced that deeper awareness of supernatural virtues animates all virtue.

Eddie & Ella recall their involvement with the Baptism Ministry in the earliest days of parish ministry. Here, they consider the infusion of grace and virtue poured out upon us in baptism...*we need only respond.*

CCC 1813 The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all the moral virtues. They are infused by God into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life. They are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being. There are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity.



LIVING A LIFE OF VIRTUE AS A PATHWAY TO FAITHFUL DISCIPLESHIP



Visit GSCCEG.org to learn more about upcoming events.



Myrna Sison, Lead Minister
Holy Spirit Novena Ministry

Since 2019, the **Holy Spirit Novena Ministry** has worked to enliven devotion to the Holy Spirit with the support of the pastor. Through prayer and worship, and by fostering attention and awareness of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, the ministry strives to build up the body of Christ.

The Novena to the Holy Spirit invites the faithful to engage in prayer for nine days before Pentecost, asking for the graces of light and strength and a renewal of the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit – *Fear of the Lord, Piety, Fortitude, Knowledge, Understanding, Counsel and Wisdom* – imparted at baptism and strengthened and sealed in confirmation. On the ninth day, the prayer beckons "*Come, O Divine Spirit, fill my heart with your heavenly fruits...*," that we may be fruitful missionary disciples.

The Novena to the Holy Spirit is the only novena officially recognized by the Catholic Church. There is great significance in its scriptural roots when Jesus directed the apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father – **the Holy Spirit.** (Acts 1:3-5) Sunday Mass on the Feast of Pentecost celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church.

Contemplating that time when the apostles waited to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" stirs the faithful to recall the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit within them, activating and receiving them anew. * *All Novena gatherings are held inside Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Elk Grove with various ministries leading the prayers over the course of the nine days.*

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Pentecost
Friday May 10	Saturday May 11	Sunday May 12	Monday May 13	Tuesday May 14	Wednesday May 15	Thursday May 16	Friday May 17	Saturday May 18	Sunday May 19
9:30 a.m.	4:00 p.m.	2:15 p.m.	9:15 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	9:15 a.m.	7:45 a.m.	6:15-7:59 p.m.	
*St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School	Legion of Mary	Homebound Ministry	Fatima/Santo Nino Ministry	Divine Mercy Ministry	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Ministry	Martha Ministry	Holy Spirit Ministry	Adoration, Praise & Worship with FIAT Young Adults Ministry and The Grove Youth Ministry	
*Day 1 of The Holy Spirit Novena commences with Father Michael leading the prayers in concert with the singing voices of the children from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School.									
									8 p.m. (evening) Novena prayer, Holy Spirit Ministry

Pentecost Picnic/BBQ Cook Off, May 19

Gather together on **Sunday, May 19, 11:00 to 4:00 p.m. for Good Shepherd's Pentecost Picnic!** Join us on the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton lawn for a truly memorable celebration of the birthday of the Church, hosted by Parish Life Activities (PLA) ministry and the Knights of Columbus! This year, gather your family and friends, bring your picnic, and celebrate community fellowship! Enjoy a BBQ cook off and taste the scrumptious BBQ entries vying for your votes! Plus, lively Corn Hole games, a pie-eating contest and so much more add to this festive atmosphere! Join in and immerse yourselves in sunshine and fun. Bring your lawn chairs and settle in for a glorious afternoon with friends and neighbors! **He is Risen, Indeed!**



COME *Holy* SPIRIT



The Holy Father dedicated
2024 a Year of Prayer
encouraging Catholics worldwide to
prepare for the coming
Jubilee Holy Year 2025,
Pilgrims of Hope.

I AM A MISSION ON THIS EARTH

...that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing. *Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 273*

“The salvation of souls,” Father Michael says, “is what the Church is all about.” This is THE mission statement indicating very high stakes, indeed; stakes shouldered by Jesus Christ on the cross.

“The value of one soul equals the death of Jesus Christ,” Father Michael adds. He explains that Christ’s saving mission continues as he draws his people to himself. “We can’t be in a status quo mode,” he implores, and “we *can* jeopardize eternal salvation.”

As pastor of one of the largest parishes in the Diocese of Sacramento, Father Michael places emphasis on prompting understanding over presumption. We have a role in God’s plan of salvation – a role of response enacted by free will and the everyday choice of ongoing conversion to holiness, and the “ground game” of discipleship. That is the mission – *going out to share the Good News and hope of eternity to those within our sphere of influence.*

“It’s not new, this missionary mandate,” Father Michael says, pointing to how “Popes have been asking this of us for de-

cedes” to recognize our unique gifts and allow Christ to use us in drawing others toward him.

“It’s a process that has to take place,” Father Michael says echoing terminology from the Lenten parish mission just a few months back with Catholic renewal speaker Tim Glemkowski. “Pre-evangelization, evangelization, catechesis and apostolate,” Father Michael repeats sensitive to not get caught up in the words as much as the stages of spiritual growth. He stresses the hope to remove obstacles that hinder encounters with Christ, either within ourselves or in others.

“It is our duty out of charity and love to enlighten people,” Father Michael challenges suggesting a deeply concerning problem “if we keep it to ourselves,” referring to our faith and the gift of salvation.

“On Sundays, we evangelize ourselves,” Father Michael says further implying how mission follows when we go out and share our true encounters with Christ experienced in the Mass, in the Eucharist and in the Body of Christ. We have to *give* Jesus.

HEROIC CATHOLICISM

Father Michael considers the urgency of missionary discipleship. Especially as the world moves from “Christendom” to “mission territory,” it will require heroic Catholicism.

“St. Catherine of Siena is noted for saying, ‘Be who you are and light the world on fire,’ ...the only way the Church will be renewed is by saints” who understand this, Father Michael maintains. It requires courage to transform the modern-day mindset to one that views Good Shepherd Parish, and *every* parish, as a “missionary outpost” in the words of speaker Tim Glemkowski.

Urging reflection on the “parish” as a community with extended boundaries beyond the church proper, Glemkowski noted that “the natural state of church, is mission... we must adopt a stance of mission.”

Some wrestle with the idea of being “sent” into mission territory, outside of their comfort zones. Yet, we are already there, no longer living in a Christian culture.



Sacramento

GOD HAS CREATED ME TO DO HIM SOME DEFINITE SERVICE; HE HAS COMMITTED SOME WORK TO ME WHICH HE HAS NOT COMMITTED TO ANOTHER.

I HAVE MY MISSION —

HE HAS NOT CREATED ME FOR NAUGHT. I SHALL DO GOOD; I SHALL DO HIS WORK; I SHALL BE AN ANGEL OF PEACE, A PREACHER OF TRUTH IN MY OWN PLACE, WHILE NOT INTENDING IT, IF I DO BUT KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.

...THEREFORE I WILL TRUST HIM.

CARDINAL JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

“It’s a cultural shift,” admits Father Michael recognizing that change and conflict pose difficult realities for any community but “we have to be in alignment with God.”

“How can we gloss over the missionary mandate?” he appeals immersing *himself* in mission so that the Holy Father’s phrase, “**I AM A MISSION**,” may resonate and live within every parishioner.

Meadowview



“As you go out, you grow. It’s proven and it only stops when you stop being generous.”

Father Michael



From the Pastor

OBSTACLES TO MISSION? TRY THESE.

- **Look at the crucifix.**
- **Pray. A lot.**
- **Ask for grace.**
- **Fast.**
- **Adore Christ during a Holy Hour.**
- **Work on human virtues.**
- **Work on spiritual virtues.**
- **Find what you lack.**
- **Give Jesus.**

Elk Grove

GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH

On the faith frontier, Good Shepherd's parish boundaries stretch between Interstate 5 and Highway 99, north to Calvine Road and south to Twin Cities Road. The parish includes everyone within this area, Catholic or not, and serves as an outpost of hope for salvation in Christ.

As missionary disciples, we are *missionaries of hope.*

Galt





**WRITE ABOUT YOUR FAITH:
PUT IT TO PAPER,
MAKE IT COME ALIVE!**

“We are writing with our lives,” says **JENNI BANICKI** paraphrasing the words of Father John Riccardo of actsxxix.org ministries. Jenni, a wife, mother, extraordinary minister of Holy Communion and active in the Cursillo movement, refers to Father Riccardo’s ministry to make a point. There is not a 29th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

Yet, “with *our* stories” the Holy Spirit *continues* to “write” the next chapters, Jenni says. She emphasizes that by taking this perspective we open our hearts to accept God’s bidding to be closer to him.

“It’s an invitation,” Jenni explains compelling disciples to “examine our *whys*” and enter more deeply into the meaning of our existence and mission.

“It’s not just a compulsory activity,” Jenni assures but rather writing down our faith stories gives evidence of God’s pursuit of his children... of *you*.

“I didn’t really grow in my faith until I understood how much he loved me,” Jenni reveals as she talks about her timeline approach to writing down how God moved through her entire lifetime. “You can see his hand the whole way,” Jenni conveys endorsing the effort of putting faith stories to paper.

“I think it’s very, very important for us to do,” Jenni posits whether writing down lifelong timelines or extracting specific “God-moments.” She also recognizes it may not be for everyone. She stresses, “We’re all different, there is no pressure, and no one else has to see” whatever method one takes to begin to jot down a faith statement or testimony. Even if the thought of trying to write about one’s faith journey seems impossible, she insists it can be cathartic.

“Sometimes things can be jumbled in my head and heart, but when I put them on paper, thoughts tend to become clearer,” she shares.

Jenni turns to journaling as a way to “work through things that are pending on my heart or maybe blocking grace.” She further describes how writing can be an effective means of wrestling with questions on a deeper level.

Jenni finds that giving ourselves “permission” to express our unique voices is part of the process of accepting God’s invitation to mission. “It’s finding what works for you,” she submits with the caveat to avoid “passing judgment on yourself or the events of your life.” Rather, Jenni echoes a phrase of Sister Miriam James Heidland, “*holy curiosity*,” advising a confident openness to explore your story, and “hold that before the Lord.”

“I pray while I’m journaling that the Lord will make things



**Blooming in you...
FRUITFUL
MISSIONARY
DISCIPLESHIP**

Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you in meaningful discipleship that BEARS FRUIT for the Kingdom of God.

clear and that he will show me what he wants me to see in that moment, so I do recommend starting with holy curiosity and journaling,” Jenni conveys. She highlights two questions that can be a starting point in journaling every day: *Where did I see God today?* and *What am I grateful for?*

“The whole purpose is to draw myself to Christ, to see God’s handiwork in my story,” Jenni says of journaling as part of a missionary disciple’s tool kit. It is “being aware of your own story which makes you open – *compassionate* – to other people’s stories.” †

**EXAMINE THE GIFTS
GOD HAS GIVEN YOU!**
As an active young adult parishioner, **ANDREW PASCUA** takes time to consider the gifts God has given him.

“I knew as I was getting older, I needed to do my part,” Andrew says of his enthusiastic participation in the life and ministry of Good Shepherd Parish. At 23, thinking back on his family’s 12 years here, he recalls, “My parents always were active.”

It inspired him to recognize first, his desire to get involved, and second, to know more deeply – *to discern* – what God has in mind for him.

As early as 16, Andrew devoted time to the pancake breakfasts. Then he volunteered with Confirmation preparation. Now he actively engages with The Grove youth ministry, and sometimes with the Works of Mercy homeless outreach ministry and lives-streaming Masses.

“God has done so much for me,” Andrew reflects noticeably moved by the promise of Easter and the Resurrection, “He died for me.”

“I want to give others a chance to feel the love of Christ,”



If the idea of
MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP
has you wondering
where to begin, here are

3 PRACTICAL NUDGES

Parishioners Jenni, Andrew
and Julie share their
enthusiasm and personal
experiences in growing as
missionary disciples.



Andrew says. He has learned a lot about himself.

"I have a love for people and I want to spread that

love," Andrew shares. "I'm a person who is willing to go out and do it," he explains of seeing a problem or a need and then wanting to help with a solution.

"I'm still discerning my gifts," Andrew admits sensing that God works within us to help us grow as disciples.

In his work with The Grove, Andrew benefitted from a ministry tool that helps assess one's gifts and talents and matches the respondee with saints sharing similar qualities.

"I got Blessed Pier Georgio Frassati," Andrew reveals pleased to find parallels with the young man whom Pope Saint John Paul II proclaimed "the man of the Beatitudes."

"We're all Eucharistic missionaries," JULIE DANIELSON says of baptized Catholics further defining what it means to be a missionary disciple. "Eucharistic" is not simply a grammatical modifier in this usage but a *life* modifier, transforming and renewing Catholics – *disciples* – to go out with missionary zeal.

Julie spends a great amount of her ministry time focused on the Eucharist and emphasizing its importance. Whether in helping inspire youth with a love for the Eucharist, participating with the Sacred Silence Adoration Ministry, or serving on the parish's Eucharistic Revival Committee, Julie sees devotion to Jesus

"He loved helping the Church," Andrew says, describing Blessed Pier as "going gangbusters" with his love for the Lord.

Andrew's results also delivered Saint Teresa of Calcutta. Andrew refers to her love for helping people with a spirit of mercy. "This has enriched my spiritual life," he says, "phenomenally so."

Andrew also took an online charism inventory that helps people discern possible charisms as expressions of God's grace. Andrew explored ManyPartsMinistries.com and found likely charisms of *encouragement, missionary, mercy and prophecy*, and was heartened at how these tools have reinforced the God-given gifts that he felt within himself.

"Being the hands and feet of Christ brings you so much closer to Christ," Andrew says with conviction. "You have to have that mindset that *'I'm doing this for others,'*" he says hinting that God's gifts are given *to be given away* in the imitation of Christ. †

CONSECRATE YOURSELF TO JESUS!



Julie shares how Kelly's book identifies "where we get lukewarm" and helps put readers on the

path to renewal. Most important, the book is presented as a consecration to Jesus in the Eucharist which is, in effect, a renewal of baptismal promises.

"You don't know until you study," Julie stresses advocating a new, Matthew Kelly book, [33 Days to Eucharistic Glory](#).

"It's a very easy read," Julie adds listing several companion pieces such as a study guide, a journal and a YouTube video. "This book turns up the heat," she continues describing a "spiritual pilgrimage" that allows readers to "revisit all the tenets of our faith" so they can delve deeper and more fully understand "the importance of the Eucharist in our lives, in our hearts and in our souls."

"Father Michael has said often, *'It is so easy to get lukewarm,'*" Julie mentions referring to the casual indifference to Jesus, and even indifference toward the beauty of the Catholic faith. Revelation 3:16 warns of this tepid state and aptly foreshadows the shrugs and "meh" utterances of a 21st-century world that is seemingly bored or oblivious to the glory of God all around.

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"Father Michael is supportive and indicates it is a *'renewing of the call to discipleship,'*" Julie explains while also restating how the book can be an ideal way to re-devote to the Lord, repent and affirm one's faith and baptism.

The [Eucharistic Revival](#) Committee plans to present a parish-wide opportunity for Good Shepherd parishioners to encounter Jesus in *33 Days to Eucharistic Glory*.

"To be consecrated to the Lord – *Jesus in the Eucharist* – is first and foremost," Julie says offering a reminder that in baptism, Catholic parents, or those at the age of reason, *decide* to consecrate themselves to Jesus. *What better time than now to reaffirm that decision?* †



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Awaken **Practice the faith ...**
THE SOUL

ROSE MARCELINO
 IN THE **STILLNESS**

Rose Marcelino finds a certain peace in the stillness and the quiet of the church. She credits a Bay Area friend who told her years ago about a church with 24-hour Eucharistic Adoration.

"He told me, *'Spend time with the Lord, spend time with him and your answers are going to come!'*" Rose shares repeating her friend's words and exclaiming, "he was right!"

Later, after moving to Elk Grove from San Francisco with her family, she prayed in her new parish home of Good Shepherd finding respite "especially when I needed grounding moments."

In the quiet of one particular day, her eyes were drawn to another woman, silently and reverently cleaning the wax drippings from the votive candles that surround the statue of St. Joseph.

"People don't know what they do for the church," Rose says of just a few women who devotedly clean some of the more intricate details of the church in an informal ministry of love.



"I asked, *'How do I sign up?'*" Rose remembers of the immediate bond she shared with the women having once balanced housecleaning and caregiving duties in her work life.

Rose learned that there was no official sign-up, but she felt moved to spend time helping in this way because "once you do it, it's an honor. Cleaning gave me time to think and get closer to God," Rose says.

Now she gives time to the Homebound Ministry, continuing in the ministry footsteps of her late father, who loved the Eucharist, and was devoted to 24-hour adoration. Rose brings the peace of the Eucharist to many who suffer silently, in a stillness that yearns for God.

"I ask the Holy Spirit to guide me and I play music after our communion service," Rose recounts of her visits to care homes. She invites meditation in the stillness...in the presence of the Lord. Tears may flow as they hum to *Amazing Grace*, or *The Old Rugged Cross*.



"No words can describe it," she says of the certain "contentment, love and grace" experienced among those she visits.

Rose returns to church often, beyond Sunday Mass, whether for formal Eucharistic Adoration or sometimes to "visit his home, even for just 15 minutes," she says affirming, "I know God is always listening... Thank you, Lord Jesus."

In those quiet moments, Rose says, "I sing to Jesus... music speaks in a way my soul cannot express with words."