



the soul & let your spirit fly

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

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Missionary disciples CHAMPION PEACEMAKING

Speaking to a crowd of disciples, delivering what is known as the sermon on the mount in Matthew's Gospel (5:1-11), Jesus offers beatitudes – *blessings* – upon conditions that many found perplexing. The times and circumstances of Jesus' day did not seem to justify *mourning* and *meekness*, *mercy* and *peacemaking*. The embrace of these myriad holy attitudes and virtues seemed far more like persecution!

Even today, it can be hard to comprehend Jesus' outpouring of grace upon disciples who heed these blessed messages.

Father James Mallon, author of *Divine Renovation* and *Thriving Faith, Discipleship in Uncertain Times*, writes about challenges and the necessity of parishes and individuals to embrace change – to transform, make sacrifices, and be “accountable to and for one another in responding to God's call to holiness and mission.”

That may sound like a tall order but it is nothing less than the work of a **MISSIONARY DISCIPLE-PEACEMAKER**. Peacemakers *make peace* by pursuing the peace of Christ

within themselves and then, giving it away to others! They recognize the supernatural powers of engaged listening, and heartfelt dialogue, committing to hearing the words, and the silence, of others. Father Mallon writes that disciples embrace change with an “embrace of the paschal mystery, a taking up of our communal crosses so that we might die to that which is no longer fruitful and begin to bear fruit in new ways.”

Put in another way, Pope Francis in his Solemnity of All Saints address in 2022, said to

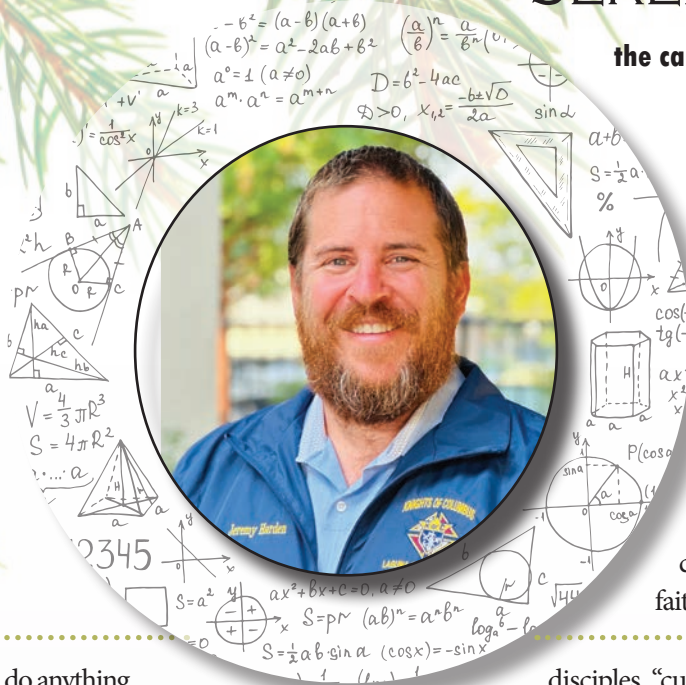
be a peacemaker, “one must disarm the heart” through works of justice and mercy, like the saints before us. Disarming, or resolving, one's heart begins with the question, “Are we peacemakers?”

“In the places where we live, study and work, do we bring tension, words that hurt, gossip that poisons, controversy? Or do we open up the way to peace: Do we forgive those who have offended us, do we care for those who are at the margins, do we redress some injustice by helping those who have less? This is building peace.”

Pope Francis

(Continue on page 4)





Jeremy Harden spends his days as a math professor at Folsom Lake Community College teaching his students formulas and proofs, and possibly talking a lot about things that just don't add up. Mathematically, that is.

But beyond logic and reasoning, Jeremy has a heart for justice, fairness and equity... *especially* in matters that don't always add up in life. For him, that vector plots a straight line to action.

"We *have* to act on that virtue of justice," Jeremy says, by chance paraphrasing St. James the apostle's message that faith must include works. James 2:14-24

"It's hard to do anything the way we're supposed to," he submits, not in defeat, but rather as a problem in need of a solution; a *way* to recognize God's boundless mercy, and then give back to God. Jeremy suggests, "Good Shepherd offers a plethora of opportunities for us to take part in" as solutions to injustice, indifference and inequity.

"The virtue of justice is a fundamental moral and ethical principle that involves giving each person their due, treating others fairly and doing what is right and just," the husband and father of two explains. With his wife, Fabiola, and his young children ages 13 and 9, Jeremy says, "service is my love language." The whole family, parishioners since 2009, commits to service at Good Shepherd and at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, where the children attend.

"I bring my kids out whenever I can," Jeremy says stressing his desire "to show them how to serve and be selfless."

In addition to acts of service, Jeremy notes other ways to "promote fairness, equity and well-being of others." He cites, "reading scripture, prayer, learning from our clergy, and community engagement" as intentional and virtuous actions of just

disciples, "cultivating a sense of justice in ourselves."

"It's the easiest way to show God that I love him," Jeremy professes listing the ministries and programs that mean so much to him.

The Knights of Columbus – "We help those in need, support charitable causes, and work to make the community a better place. We ensure that everyone has access to the support/assistance they require."

Into the Breach – "This is an Apostolic Exhortation by Bishop Thomas Olmsted that calls on Catholic men to embrace their role as leaders and protectors in society."

Adopt a Family – "This is a program that involves providing support to families in need. During the Christmas season, we buy, wrap and deliver gifts to these families."

Works of Mercy – "This is another year-round program helping those in need. We prepare and deliver meals and clothes to the homeless."

Exodus 90 – "This is the spiritual side of things. It is understanding how to be better at prayer, give up worldly pleasures and remind us that it's not all about us. The goal is to humble yourself."

Jeremy points to other virtues that support and strengthen both the disciple and the just acts, too. Compassion, honesty, humility, courage, forgiveness, love, integrity. "There aren't too many that are *not* associated with justice," he posits

explaining that, above all, there is a need to be loving and caring, not letting judgments or assumptions deter justice.

True to form, this math professor offers a few tips below for disciples striving to "do justice, love goodness, and walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

In prayer:

1. Start and end your day in prayer. Ask for guidance and strength and have an attitude of gratitude.
2. Pray for specific needs of those suffering, and ask for the wisdom to make just decisions in your own life.
3. Reflect on scripture. Read and meditate on scripture and reflect on how these teachings can be applied to your daily life.
4. Pray for the virtues. Ask God to help us cultivate the virtues on a daily basis.
5. Examine your conscience.

In service:

1. Be mindful of opportunities to serve others and promote justice.
2. Prioritize acts of kindness. Small acts go a long way.
3. Volunteer.
4. Support just causes. Contribute to these organizations that promote justice.
5. Practice fairness in relationships. Family, friends, colleagues.

Tips:

1. Set reminders to reflect and incorporate these ideas.
2. Daily affirmations related to justice will reinforce the commitments we have.
3. Join a community to be a part of like-minded individuals who prioritize justice.
4. Read and learn to continuously educate ourselves about justice issues.
5. Engage in regular self-reflection to see how your journey is coming along.
6. Seek accountability from a trusted friend or mentor.
7. Celebrate successes. This is hard work, enjoy!



FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT! DEC. 3!

As we initiate the season of good cheer, plan on another Good Shepherd movie night! Co-hosted with The Grove Youth Ministry, join us for a Christmas movie in the Father Philip Wells Hall with the option to purchase holiday refreshments before you settle in for the film. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets for comfort, if desired.

Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023
6:30 p.m.



Visit GSCCEG.org to learn more about upcoming events.



Year of Parish Revival
June 11, 2023—July 17, 2024

Advent by Candlelight: explore the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist



A beautiful evening (just for women) to bask in the light of Christ!

Just as Advent is a season recognized for its *holy anticipation* for the coming of the Lord, there can be anticipation *before* the anticipation! That is often the case for the women of Good Shepherd Parish who look forward to the beautiful tradition of **Advent by Candlelight**. This special evening signals the beginning of Advent like no other — twinkling lights and candles, a moving speaker, and light food fare shared with friends who are ready to prepare their hearts for Jesus and ready to lead their families and friends to do the same.

On **Saturday, December 2, 2023**, the Evangelization Outreach Ministry transforms the Father Philip Wells Hall to an illuminated venue. Hundreds of women will come together for fellowship at individually hosted tables, each uniquely "tablescaped," to listen to an inspirational, faith-filled speaker.

This year, Advent by Candlelight is part of the parish's program to highlight the National Eucharistic Revival which is well underway at the parish level across the country. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ and reflect on that time when Jesus will come again, we also confidently revere and adore Jesus' *continual presence with us in the Blessed Sacrament* and his promise, "... behold, I am with you always..." Matthew 28:20

Sign up to attend this spiritually significant event after all Masses on the week-ends of November 4/5 and November 11/12! For non-attendees, make a personal pledge to immerse yourself and your loved ones in the season of Advent as a new beginning – a new liturgical year *and* a new awareness of and reverence for Jesus in the Eucharist.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- **Nov. 5** – Fellowship/Pancake Breakfast
- **Nov. 5** – The Grove High School Youth Ministry night (Father Philip Wells Hall)
- **Nov. 11** – [Fiat Young Adult Ministry's "Glitz & Glamour Gala"](#)
- **Nov. 18-19** – [Knight's of Columbus Arts & Crafts Faire](#)
- **Nov. 25-26** – Bethlehem Olive Wood carvings sale (benefiting Christians in the Holy Land)
- **Dec. 3** – Family Movie Night (Father Philip Wells Hall)
- **Dec. 10** – Mariachis, "Las Mañanitas" and prayer before 7 a.m. bilingual Mass (followed by a celebration breakfast in the hall, all in advance of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Dec. 12, co-patron of the Diocese of Sacramento)
- **Dec. 10** – Kinderchurch Christmas Pageant (in the hall following the 11:00 Mass)



Please watch your mailbox for the annual Advent/Christmas letter!

In it you will find:

- Special seasonal worship
- Advent penance service
- Additional confession times
- All Mass times for:
 - The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)
 - Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God (New Year's Day)

Live peaceably with all.

Romans 12:18

IT'S WORTH NOTING...

FR. DIOGO BAPTISTA CHATS ON PEACEMAKING IN EVERYDAY RELATIONSHIPS

(Continues from page 1)

Father Diogo Baptista has long ministered to the Good Shepherd parish family. Initially, in somewhat of an adjunct capacity, he cheerfully stepped in as needed while serving full-time as the prison chaplain in Ione's Mule Creek Prison for 23 years. In recent years, although officially retired, he has continued to serve this parish community, celebrating Masses often, visiting classrooms, hearing confessions and participating in various ministries.



Father Baptista's good nature and certainly his years of prison ministry give him an ideal vantage point from which to discuss peacemaking.

"You know, I have worked in the prison," he begins softly, hinting and confirming at the same time, that the prison environment subtly and overtly instructs on peace and peacemaking. "I have witnessed a lot" he shares of conflicts and the aftermath of conflicts.

Take nothing

"When Jesus sends his followers into the world," Father Baptista explains, "he sends them empty-handed." No sack, no money, no sandals. No material "things." Instead, the disciples were to take

the "message of peace to whatever household, entering and saying 'peace' to this household," Father Baptista says.

He continues to point to how Jesus' first greeting to the apostles after the resurrection in the upper room was simply, "Peace."

"It is a great message that he asks *all of us* disciples to carry into the world," Father Baptista proclaims but in the same breath, there is disappointment. "Now, 2,000 years later, we've really not done a very good job...there's really very little peace," he concludes.

"I'm not speaking only of the absence of war," Father Baptista clarifies sighing, "There are also countless conflicts that erupt in our daily lives. Between husbands and wives, between parents and children, between neighbors and co-workers," he pauses before adding, "even between strangers on the street!"

Detachment from ourselves

Like Pope Francis' *Are we peacemakers* question, Father Baptista asks further, "do we strive to see Christ in the faces of those we do not understand or those with whom we disagree?" He suggests a hard look at the everyday conflicts and a move to "be Christ to others" because "that's what Christ is...a peacemaker!"

Father Baptista refers to the storytelling of 20th-century Jesuit priest, Father Anthony de Mello, who wrote of a man who sought the wisdom of a spiritual master for marital troubles. The master told him to go home and learn to listen to his wife. The man came back weeks later to report

he had learned to listen to every word that his wife was saying. The master then smiled and told him to go home and listen to every word she was *not* saying!

"I think if more of us did this, not just with our spouse, but with each other, it might be a beginning," Father Baptista offers with optimism. Proving there is no retirement from wisdom or spirituality, Good Shepherd's beloved auxiliary priest suggests not only thoughtful listening skills but also more pronounced abilities in considering what is *not* said.

"This is the first step in making peace," Father Baptista adds "because to listen this way means you don't have the last word." Instead, the last word is *peace* which in fact, makes Christ's first word, the last word. Peace.

"It takes a kind of humility and attentiveness to one another that Christ asks of us," he continues emphasizing the approach as a way of going into the world



PEACEMAKING IN THE CHURCH

Since 2021, the universal Church has engaged the world, "journeying together" for the Synod on Synodality. It aims to bring the Church together, emphasizing *communion*, *participation* and *mission*.

"Walk together. Question together. Take responsibility together for community discernment, which for us is prayer as the first Apostles did: *this is synodality, which we would like to make a daily habit in all its expressions*," the Holy Father, **Pope Francis** said during a general audience in September.

Listening and dialoguing represent the hallmarks of synodality, just as they signal authentic efforts of peacemaking. Last month, in October, bishops and special delegates met in Rome to begin to listen and to initiate dialogue on the topics that surfaced from parishes around the world in preceding years, including Good Shepherd Parish. They will meet again next October 2024.

with nothing *except what really matters*.

Father Baptista says, "The detachment that Jesus is demanding isn't just a detachment from things – *though that's a start* – it's a detachment from ourselves."

This detachment levels the field and tosses away any personal bias in favor of making peace.

"It is separating from our pride, our own ego, our own sense of entitlement, our own feelings that we always have to be right," Father Baptista says listing all that disciples must divest themselves of if they are to carry "one message in Christ's name, that is peace." ✠

ON INTERIOR PEACE — "YOU CANNOT GIVE TO OTHERS WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE"

Father Baptista recommends the work of Father Thomas Keating (1923-2018), a Cistercian monk, for help in deepening one's relationship with God, and developing the interior peace so vital for authentic peacemaking. In the process — in the presence of God — there will be healing and awareness leading to a "more balanced, more peaceful" being, Father Baptista says. Father Keating visited Mule Creek Prison several times during Father Baptista's tenure.

Of Father Keating's method of Christian silent prayer, Father Baptista says the focus is on "the indwelling presence of God" as a centering prayer before

Locally, the synodal way can be a valuable process, inviting people together to talk about plans and initiatives for the future, address challenging topics, and discern the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.



In the SPIRIT OF SYNODALITY

Good Shepherd invites your participation in these upcoming gatherings. Visit the [parish website](#) for more details and pre-event surveys – GSCCEG.org:

- **October 30, 2023 — A Parish in Motion, 6:00 p.m. in the church.** Join us for this **community forum** with architect Gary J. Gery, Registered Architect, to envision and plan for the future, welcoming YOUR input.
- **February 17, 2024 — Race & Grace listening session.** Please attend this important evening of listening and dialogue as the St. Josephine Bakhita Black Catholic Ministry hosts a gathering to share perceptions, experiences and hope for racial justice in our Church and throughout the nation.
- **Coming Soon! — Divine Renovation questions and conversation.** Please watch for news on this spiritual "town hall" event (now in planning stages) to pray and discern the spiritual mission of Good Shepherd Catholic church. Watch for details early next year.

NEW SMALL GROUP GATHERINGS — A FORUM FOR LISTENING, DIALOGUING, KNOWING JESUS

Good Shepherd plans to introduce a new small group study series to its community early next year!

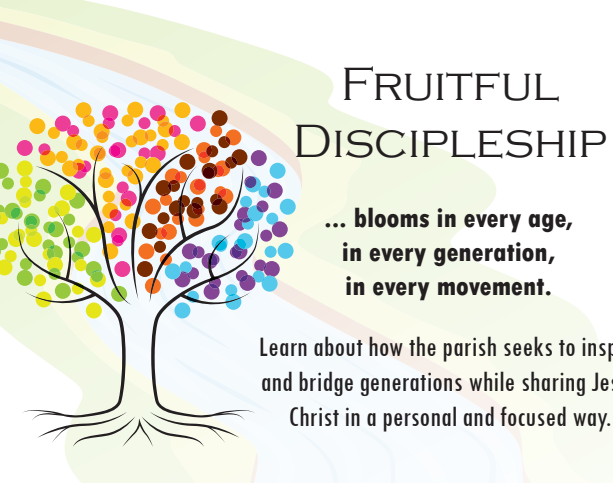
DO YOU HUNGER TO KNOW JESUS AND YOUR CATHOLIC FAITH MORE INTIMATELY? DO YOU FEEL CHRIST'S LOVE, KNOWING HE IS CALLING YOU TO "BEAR GOOD FRUIT," BUT YOU ARE JUST NOT SURE WHERE TO BEGIN?

Through the beauty of small group gatherings and structured content modules, the parish aims to offer a series of welcoming forums for faith-sharing and growth, but also a place where disciples can be **INSPIRED** and **ENCOURAGED!** It is in community where we thrive! As we break open the Gospel, listen, dialogue and learn, we equip ourselves to share the Good News with others — to do as Jesus asks, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matthew 18:19-20) Watch the bulletin and website for more details soon and let Jesus speak to the hearts and minds of others through YOU!

Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness, without which, no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14

contemplative prayer. "We can experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, even closer than consciousness itself, and that will help individuals" get to a place of great interior peace, he says. "If we're going to be peacemakers, we have to be peaceful inside. We cannot give to others what we do not have," he adds.

Father Keating and colleagues introduced a simple four-point method to guide the faithful in cultivating one's relationship with God, beyond words and thoughts. Visit contemplativeoutreach.org for more information.



FRUITFUL DISCIPLESHIP

... blooms in every age,
in every generation,
in every movement.

Learn about how the parish seeks to inspire
and bridge generations while sharing Jesus
Christ in a personal and focused way.

The Catholic homefront

Imagine your favorite image of the Holy Family. In every depiction, an aura of peace, love and joy can be sensed even though they endured trials and tribulations throughout their lives. **Jesus**, the "great sign of contradiction" to worldly ways, the **Blessed Virgin**

SINGLE DAD TRAVIS COLEMAN HOPES TO PASS ON HIS FAITH

Travis remembers growing up in Mobile, Alabama in the 1990s as a time "when families were still big and close," he says, emphasizing the importance placed on family bonds, church and being involved. He attended the Baptist and Lutheran churches of his parents and grandparents and felt grounded in faith.

"It seems different now," he worries, sensing that maybe family and church have slipped in importance today, 30 years later. Research on faith practices seems to echo what Travis noticed in his young adulthood – a concerning decline. Now at 37, this single dad of the "millennial generation" (1980-1996) looks back with disappointment in an apparent societal swing that introduced concepts and ideals that negatively influenced the stability of the family. "Certain government programs, music, TV, movies," he says, had an undermining effect on the family.



Living for a short time in Dallas,



Travis got involved with the 40 Days for Life movement. "I met a lot of great Catholic people," he shares continuing to stress "the greatest people ever, and they invited me to church."

When Travis moved to Sacramento, he attended St. John Vianney Church in Rancho Cordova. "The values and morals that I got from the Catholic Church...I wanted to be a part of that," he says. Relocating to Elk Grove, he made the decision to join Good Shepherd's Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in 2022, entering the Church fully at Easter 2023.

Months before his RCIA decision he also became a father to Tessa, now 18 months old. He shares custody and parenting with Tessa's mother and Travis emphasizes, "I definitely want to pass on the morals and values of the Church to Tessa."

"Finding that work/life balance," he admits represents one of his biggest challenges; needing to make an income and be present for his daughter. Educated as an architect, he experienced lay-offs post COVID-19. However, he recently found what he was looking for as a newly-minted Uber driver. "It's been going great for me," Travis relates, happy with the opportunity to manage his schedule and balance his life with Tessa.

Still, raising a baby alone is hard and Travis also yearns to incorporate his Alabama family into Tessa's life, too. He is grateful for the parish community and friends who he turns to now and then for advice and help, and of course to strengthen his own discipleship. Travis participates in Fiat Young Adult Ministry, the Knights of Columbus, St. Josephine Bakhita Black Catholic Ministry and a Bible study group made up of members from his RCIA class. ✕

GARY & CELESTE HICKMAN GRATEFUL FOR THE GIFT OF ADOPTION

Gary and Celeste Hickman, parents of two teen boys, describe themselves as "older" parents fitting into "Generation X" (1965 – 1980). The category is often labeled "forgotten" due to massive societal shifts that ushered in the beginnings of the rise in divorce and single-parent households which, indeed, was Gary's childhood experience. Celeste, a cradle Catholic, speaks of Gary's resolve and choice to learn about his faith on his own, pursuing the sacrament of confirmation at 19.



That same year, Gary and Celeste began dating having known each other since 8th grade. Today, their 23-year marriage is an endearing story of great witness, living their faith and making it a priority through the difficulty of infertility and in raising their adopted sons.

"Our Catholic faith really helped guide us," Gary explains as Celeste describes how they conscientiously veered away from "certain things and surrendered to God's plan." The plan for adoption became clear.



— Snapshots of families & parenting in 2023

... **Mother, Mary**, Queen of Peace, destined for heartache and sorrow, and **Saint Joseph**, Jesus' adoptive father and protector, patron of families and quiet strength — the **Holy Family** is the epitome of enduring faith, hope and love. Their perfect humility gives

... encouragement and example to families today as they embrace the love of Jesus and find grace in everyday discipleship!

"Being an adoptive family, we just feel even more grateful," says Celeste reminiscing about the calls they received when each boy was born. "We were given gifts," she affirms noting that each birth family said they chose Gary and Celeste *because* they are Catholic.



"Families are made in all different ways" the Hickmans insist and their devotion to their marriage, parenting and family puts faith at the heart of every day.

"You can't really expect your kids to live and follow the faith unless you set the example," Gary says pointing to how marriage and parenting are all about "illustrating" what you hope for them someday.

Garret, 15, and Jacob, 13, experience a household rich in love and faith. Amid hectic morning schedules, Celeste tells of Gary's faithful habits of blessing the boys, praying in the car, and goodbye hugs before they head off to school "even though we have a high schooler and a middle schooler," Gary quips, imparting that hugs know no age boundaries! Both teens attended Catholic elementary school and started public schools this year.

Mass is always a priority. When sports take them out of town, Gary consults *discover-mass.com* to find the nearest Mass. They may show up at 7 a.m., or whatever time works, often in uniform and much to the frustration of many a coach.

Gary and Celeste asked Garret and Jacob to reflect on their faith and share what has meant the most to them so far. Jacob noted, "What stands out is going to church together because I like the family time." Garret pointed to family rosary evenings as special times due to all the unique intentions — "whether for a relative, something on our hearts, or worries or challenges." ✚

CORY & REMY JONES HELP RAISE THEIR GRANDCHILDREN

Cory and Remy Jones, of the "Baby Boomer" generation (1948-1964), love to actively help their son, James, and daughter-in-law, Vanessa, bring up their children.

"We pull together to raise children," Cory says thinking it is more of a norm than people know, an understated reality of all the ages. Given the work demands of their son and daughter-in-law, it made perfect sense for them to step in and help as James commutes to the East Bay and, for a time, Vanessa worked in Davis.

Especially when the children were babies, Cory and Remy would care for the children "quite often," content to provide a home away from home.

Alani, 8, is in third grade and Kaicen, 4, started preschool this year. Both attend St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School due to the encouragement of Remy and Cory, and their parents "are very supportive." Cory and Remy take them to school and pick them up "when they're needed and we're usually available to do it," Cory shares indicating they also help with the kids' new soccer obligations.

"We love them, and we're pretty sure they love us," Cory teases revealing the heartwarming bond the couple shares with their grandchildren. They know and live well the great Biblical blessing to "live to see your children's children," and even more so to be devotedly engaged in their lives.

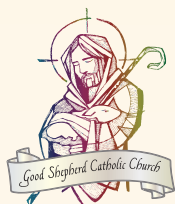


Cory relates the "instrumental" role of Remy and her loving, faith-filled inspiration to the children. He tells how Alani and Kaicen "may not be totally aware of it" but he sees it, particularly in his granddaughter.

"She is becoming more involved and understanding church, and she gets that from my wife," Cory says certain that Alani sees "the strong religious conviction and the prayer life" of Remy. "You can see the effect it has on her," Cory assures, deeply moved to participate in his grandchildren's lives but also to witness their budding faith.

Cory and Remy feel blessed to be able to help raise their grandchildren and they find them to be a source of great joy that brightens their days. They also speak of the mutual regard, love and affection they share with James and Vanessa who value their support.

"We respect one another's decisions, and they appreciate our guidance from time to time," Cory offers with gratitude, because families — *in every composition*— really are the frontline of discipleship. ✚



GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC CHURCH
9539 RACQUET COURT
ELK GROVE, CA 95758
Pastor: Rev. Michael Vaughan

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO.65
ELK GROVE, CA

CONTACT US:
916-684-5722
GSCCEG.ORG

Awaken Practice the faith ... THE SOUL

Gabriel and Carolina Klug believe “precious time must be prioritized” with focus on “God first,” letting everything else fall into place. This holds true for their philosophy on family entertainment, as the couple carefully chooses and monitors content for their three children, Valentina, 8, Victoria, 7, and Matias, 5.

Both lawyers, Gabriel and Carolina met in college and continued to Santa Clara University’s law school. But, when Valentina started Kindergarten and Matias was a newborn, Carolina favored homeschooling to the courtroom, maximizing parenting time and involvement with their children. The couple also serves as catechists for 2nd-grade First Holy Communion.

“They’re very socially engaged,” Gabriel says of his children noting soccer, musical theater and music as favorite pastimes. They enjoy the outdoors and travel, too. When the weather turns, “we focus on indoor activities like baking, reading, Legos/blocks and different hands-on building activities.” The Klugs advocate for “non-screen entertainment” as a means to deepen parent-child relationships.

“As home school parents, we have to be extra mindful for God-based and faith-based entertainment,” Carolina says suggesting that parents preview the books and films to ensure positive words and uplifting speech. In fact, these young parents deem these descriptors — *fun, positive* and *uplifting* — as “vital criteria for holy entertainment.”

“The world and culture are constantly fighting for our attention,” Gabriel observes pointing to a long list of secular messages, games and activities often at odds with Christian values.

Screen time is usually limited to weekends and viewed together as a family. “The less screen time the better,” Gabriel says recognizing it can be an “easy” option but it lacks when it comes to promoting independent or creative thinking. Further, in his law practice, often involved in “dependency law” and protecting children from abuse and neglect, Gabriel knows well what children and teens can be exposed to, “and it’s gotten worse,” he stresses.

Recognizing the dangers lurking on the Internet, social media, and Smart-phones, the Klugs emphasize these can



THE KLUG FAMILY
—on choosing wholesome entertainment for their family

be “unhealthy for young children and teens” since these platforms can often spur bullying and negative body perceptions or spread indecent pictures and written material. “We are temples of the Holy Spirit and we need to use our bodies to glorify God,” Carolina appeals with an unwavering “no thank you” to today’s digital mindset default. Instead, the Klugs stick with wholesome activities like planting fruit and ornamental trees, bucket farming and reading carefully-selected books.

Gabriel and Carolina’s respective German and Nicaraguan Catholic heritages factor in, too. Their revered memories and respect for their parents and loved ones translate to their own desire to hand on their faith and love. And at the end of the day, “our evening usually ends with a prayer,” Gabriel shares bringing full circle their aim to protect the souls of their children, and praying “to spend time with God for all eternity in heaven.”