

Love both mother and child

Next to the crucifix, the most identifiable symbol for the Catholic Faith is the image of the Madonna and Child. Indeed, many people are drawn to join our Church because they discover Mary's love for them, and want to join a religion that honors the Mother of God.



I'm not an art historian, but in visiting many art museums in Europe it seems the number one image chosen by painters and sculptors for depiction is that of Mary holding her son Jesus.

Both the crucifix and the Virgin and Child are images of God's sacrificial love – for us.

In the past weeks, we've been remembering Our Lady's role in our salvation: Her Immaculate Conception on December 8; Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, on December 12; the Nativity of Jesus Christ

“born of the Virgin Mary;” and the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on January 1.

The best definition I ever heard for the word “mother” is “someone who gives her life so that someone else might live.”

Mary certainly did that for her son Jesus. And since we are now members of The Body of Christ through baptism and Holy Communion, Mary is there to give her life for us, too.

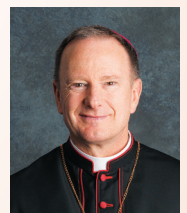
And many of our own mothers have devoted their entire lives to taking care of their children. My mom certainly did. In the love of

mother and child, we can experience some of the tenderness of the love God has poured out on us. And we give thanks to God for the gift of our lives.

In 2022, we had the good news of Roe v. Wade being overturned by the Supreme Court, only to be followed by the sad news of California enshrining the right to abortion in the California Constitution.

We disciples of Jesus Christ stand up for all human life, from the moment of conception until natural death.

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BY BISHOP MICHAEL C. BARBER, SJ

Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ has been bishop of the Diocese of Oakland since May 2013.

Our devotion to Mary teaches us “mother and child belong together.” The difference between the pro-abortion side and the pro-life side is not that they favor the mother’s rights and we favor the baby. Not at all. The difference is that the pro-abortion side thinks you can separate the mother from the child, and we say you cannot. The pro-abortion lobby thinks you can love the mother while killing the child. The pro-life position is that you cannot harm one without harming

the other, and you cannot love one without loving the other. The essence of the pro-life position is to love both mother and child.

That is why the Church and our diocese in particular have a program for “Walking with Moms in Need.” That is why we support interfaith pregnancy counseling centers. It is why we support the Order of Malta Free Medical Clinic at the cathedral. We want to do

everything we can as disciples of Jesus Christ to love both the mother and her child.

When I landed at the Oakland airport a few weeks ago and took BART back to the cathedral, I saw a new billboard outside greeting all arriving passengers: “Welcome to California – Home of Abortion Rights.” I found it highly offensive. That billboard does not represent me, or many of you. Would that it said: “Welcome to California – Where We Love both Mother and Child.”

If you feel as I do, I invite you to join me in a diocesan Mass to Celebrate Life on the Saturday morning of the Walk for Life West Coast – January 21 at 9 a.m. at the Oakland Cathedral. Then join me in going to San Francisco – on BART or your parish bus – to join thousands of our brothers and sisters for the Walk for Life West Coast, which begins at the S.F. Civic Center.

Every participant counts.

Every life counts. ●



UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 1

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Observed on Sunday this year

Jan. 6, 7 and 8

“GINA’S JOURNEY”

“Gina’s Journey” will be presented at St. Columba Parish in Oakland as a fundraiser to benefit the St. Columba Youth Group’s journey to World Youth Day. The documentary film “Gina’s Journey: Search for William Grimes” will be presented. Regina Mason, author and subject of the film, and Sean Durant, producer and director, will meet the audience. (See Regina Mason’s story in the August 2021 issue of *The Catholic Voice*.)

Buy tickets (\$15 each) at ginasjourney-kpc127.eventbrite.com or on Sundays after the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Masses at St. Columba Church, 6401 San Pablo Ave., Oakland. Call Andrew for phone orders 510.681.6559.

The Jan. 6 showing is at 7 p.m., with doors opening at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 7 showings are at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. with doors opening 30 minutes before showtime. The Jan. 8 showing is at 1 p.m. Doors open 30 minutes before showtime.

This event is sponsored by The Knights and Ladies of Peter Claver.



Pictured: What began as a fifth-grader’s assignment on origins and ancestry has grown into a lifelong journey for Regina Mason that led her to her great-great-great-grandfather, who wrote his autobiography, *Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave*.

Jan. 8

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Jan. 14

SEW-FEST 2023

Dress a Girl Around the World hosts its first Sew-Fest of 2023 at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Livermore. Other dates: Feb. 25, April 1, May 6, June 10



**How can we help? Let us know.
510.267.8334**