

The Catholic Voice

MARCH 2023 • VOLUME 61 • ISSUE 3

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Editor's note

There's good news for people – like me – who like to browse archives.

The Catholic Research Resources Alliance, based at the University of Notre Dame, now has an online, searchable archive of *The Catholic Voice*, from 2009 to January 2023.

The plan is to digitize *The Catholic Voice* archive all the way back to its founding in 1963. That's going to take a while. Decades of issues are in bound volumes that will have to be painstakingly scanned.

Access to the archive has become simpler, too. At oakdiocese.org/catholicvoiceoakland you will find a button that will transport you to the archive.

Be prepared to stay awhile.

Thank you to those who keep us up to date on changes of names, addresses or parishes. It helps us get the magazine in your hands. And that's what we like to do. You can do this online at the website above, send me an email at mjurich@oakdiocese.org or call 510-419-1075. If you're leaving a message, spelling everything helps so much!

Gratefully,

Michele Jurich, Editor, *The Catholic Voice* ●

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Saving the Mothers

HOMILY OF MOST REV. MICHAEL C. BARBER, SJ, BISHOP OF OAKLAND, AT THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND MASS FOR LIFE ON JAN. 21, 2023, AT THE CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE LIGHT.

Why is the Catholic Church Pro-Life and Pro-Moms? Because we believe that human life begins at conception. That it is a child – a human being, a baby, there in the mother’s womb – that is the victim of abortion.



BY BISHOP MICHAEL C. BARBER, SJ

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

We do not believe this like we believe in the Immaculate Conception, or in the same sense that we believe Jesus is the Son of God, or that we believe bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Mass.

No.

We believe that human life begins at conception in the same way we believe that the Earth is round, not flat; that the water molecule is

composed of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen; that the heart has four chambers; and so on.

The correct answer to the question of when human life begins is not a matter of faith; it is a matter of scientific fact.

The product of human conception, an embryo with a unique genetic character, is “a whole living member of the species *Homo sapiens* in the earliest stage of his or her natural development” (to quote two leading scientists).

You and I were at one time that embryo, that fetus, that fully formed yet unborn baby.

A lady named Mrs. Sonya Curry was pregnant and

seriously considering having another abortion (after aborting her first child). But this time she asked God for guidance and decided to follow through with having her baby. And she gave birth to her child. And loved him. And raised him. And his name is Steph Curry, our famous Warriors basketball star.

Planned Parenthood, some politicians and other Promoters of the Abortion industry claim that the “Catholic belief” that life begins at conception is a religious claim with no scientific foundation.

That is objectively, demonstrably false, and to make that argument is to traffic in a lie. Some tell this lie deliberately. Others, including those in high public office, tell it out of ignorance, stupidity or political convenience. Whatever the motivation or cause, the argument is scientifically ignorant: the equivalent of claiming that astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin really landed in the Arizona desert on the Apollo 11 mission, and not on the moon.

Our Faith does inform how we respond to the fact that millions of children are killed through abortion each year in our country, and in our local communities.

We as disciples of Christ tried to influence the laws of the state of California to protect unborn children. But we have failed – like those Christians who opposed slavery failed to convince the governments of Louisiana

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



and Georgia and other Southern states in 19th-century America. Which eventually led to the Civil War.

But we do not give up.

As believers and members of Christ's Family, we want to save the thousands of innocent children who are being executed by the very people whose profession and mission should be to heal and protect life. The truth is that we can save those babies only by saving the Mothers.

When the mothers experience God's loving mercy in a community that cares about them, then they will become capable of showing mercy to their children. The Pro-Life Movement has to be about saving Mothers. We need to focus on the women and try to understand what they are suffering.

“

AS BELIEVERS AND MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S FAMILY, WE WANT TO SAVE THE THOUSANDS OF INNOCENT CHILDREN WHO ARE BEING EXECUTED BY THE VERY PEOPLE WHOSE PROFESSION AND MISSION SHOULD BE TO HEAL AND PROTECT LIFE. THE TRUTH IS THAT WE CAN SAVE THOSE BABIES ONLY BY SAVING THE MOTHERS.



That is why our Church supports Walking with Moms in Need. It's a program that helps and supports mothers to choose life for their children. We want to show our love for these mothers who have a crisis pregnancy. Who may be out of work. Or in school. Or have nowhere to turn for help, except the false promises of Planned Parenthood.

We, as Christians, are here to help. That's why we support pregnancy centers to let women know there are other choices than abortion. That's why we have the Malta Free Medical Clinic here at the cathedral. That's why we support Catholic Charities with their rent assistance and job assistance programs. That's why we support St. Vincent de Paul with their food and clothing drives.

The Catholic Church, and the Diocese of Oakland, stand ready to help mothers in need.

Pregnant women are not alone. Parishes in our

Diocese of Oakland have redoubled their efforts to accompany women and couples who are facing unexpected or difficult pregnancies, offering them loving and compassionate care.

Thank you, my friends and fellow Christians. I know it's not easy. If they said of Jesus, "He is out of his mind," they will certainly say that of us. But take courage. Jesus has overcome the world. ●

I am grateful to Cardinal Sean O'Malley and author George Weigel, who provided background for this homily.



They came by bus, BART, multi-passenger vans and carpool. Parkas protected them from the early-morning chill. Walking shoes were the footwear of choice and necessity. They had miles to go. But first they came to the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland, bearing messages and to hear a message. Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ celebrated Mass on the morning of Walk for Life West Coast. He was accompanied at the altar by Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, SJ, Archbishop emeritus of Ottawa, a dozen priests of the Diocese of Oakland and three deacons. "We'll see you later, on the streets of San Francisco," Bishop Barber told the faithful at the conclusion of Mass, as they headed to the Walk for Life West Coast.

PHOTOS BY DOMINIQUE GHEKIERE-MINTZ



CELEBRATING BISHOP CUMMINS' BIRTHDAY AND ORDINATION

The Most Rev. John Stephen Cummins celebrates his 95th birthday on March 3.

Bishop Cummins, a native of the East Bay, served as the second bishop of the Diocese of Oakland from 1977 to 2003.

But his birthday is not the only milestone he is celebrating this year. On Jan. 24, Bishop Cummins celebrated the 70th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

Two Masses marked the happy occasion for the longest-serving priest of the diocese.

During a visit with Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ, on Jan. 20 at Mercy Retirement & Care Center in Oakland, Mass was

celebrated for two priestly jubilarians: Bishop Cummins and Father Owen Carroll, a resident of Mercy Center and priest of Archdiocese of Ottawa, who is celebrating 50 years a priest this year. Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, SJ, emeritus of Ottawa, joined in the Mass.

In his first assignment after his ordination, then-Father Cummins served at Mission Dolores. Among the babies he baptized was the one we know today as Bishop Barber.

How do you celebrate the 70th anniversary of your ordination to the priesthood?

If you're Bishop Cummins, it's Mass, words of gratitude, the company of longtime friends and music by Jesse Manibusan.

Among those celebrating with Bishop Cummins were Father Paul Vassar and Father George Crespín. Sister Rosemarie Hennessy, OP also participated in the Mass. ●



Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ; Bishop John S. Cummins; Father Owen Carroll and Archbishop Terrence Prendergast, SJ. (Photo courtesy of Bishop Barber)



A small group of friends joined Bishop John S. Cummins to celebrate the 70th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. (Photo by Carolyn Steele)

Father Paul Vassar, Sister Rose Marie Hennessy, OP and Bishop John Cummins at Mass.



◀ Father George Crespín, Bishop John S. Cummins and Father Paul Vassar.

(Photos by Carolyn Steele, clergy care manager)



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SERRA CATECHETICAL INSTITUTE FORMS CATECHISTS TO SHARE THE FAITH

BY RICHARD MURRAY



There are many great educational resources in the Diocese of Oakland. One of these is the Serra Catechetical Institute. Its mission is to teach and form catechists for the diocese, especially for the many parishes.

To do this, the SCI brings in a wide array of teachers: Dominican brothers in priestly formation are among the most beloved teachers, as are smart diocesan priests, and very bright lay people.

The classes are superb. The students read a set of carefully chosen readings (not too long) before the day of classes each month, and the lectures and discussions in the ensuing classes are exciting and very meaningful.

I graduated in mid-January, and happily took lots of notes in each of the classes. We all learned a great deal.

Additionally, the students form small groups that plan a shared presentation. Each small group has a couple of meetings to plan the presentation, and these meetings produce camaraderie and shared insights. One very skilled speaker in my small group gave me some invaluable knowledge about public speaking. I am grateful for that.

When we made the presentations, all of us students gained helpful experience in being teachers and presenters back in our home parish. This will help us to bring what we have learned back to all the people of our parish, and present the material more skillfully.

The Serra Catechetical Institute graduated its most recent class on Jan. 14. The institute has both Spanish and English classes; 31 graduated from the English class, and 21 from the Spanish class.

Among the graduates, 16 are candidates for the permanent diaconate. Father Jimmy Macalinao, diocesan director of Faith Formation and Evangelization, presided at the graduation Mass and ceremony. He encouraged all the graduates to continue their ongoing formation.

While this Mass was very multi-cultural, the presence of the large family of diaconal candidate Sevuloni Ratabumusu, who comes to the Diocese from Fiji, gave the Mass and graduation a special and loving Fijian emphasis.

The leadership of the SCI has transferred from Gena McGowan, who is now principal of Our Lady of Grace School in Castro Valley, to Scarlett Salaverria. Scarlett was the director of religious education at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Concord before being asked to become coordinator of catechetical formation for the diocese.

Scarlett has worked with the Diocese of Oakland since 1996. She is a Master Catechist, a School of Pastoral Ministry graduate with SCI certification, and also a graduate of the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley. She holds a BS in business administration.

I spoke with Scarlett in the first week of her new job; she will be in charge of two schools, the SCI, and also, the School of Pastoral Ministry.

She graciously provided a more full explanation of the two schools she's now leading:

What is the Serra Catechetical Institute (SCI)?

The SCI is a one-year formation process for parish and Catholic school catechists, parents and all adults who want to know their Catholic faith better and develop the skills to hand it on more effectively. Participants will receive a solid introduction to the Catholic Faith in 60 hours of basic catechetical formation, including: spiritual development (our own relationship with Jesus), doctrinal formation (Sacraments, Creed, and morality), and catechetical process and methodology (how to teach the Faith).

Students who complete the program will be eligible to receive the Basic California Catechist Certificate. Our SCI program meets once per month on Saturdays from January to November, with a vacation in July.

Although the year's teaching began in February, students may join the program at any time of the year, as the same classes are taught at the same time each year. This makes planning flexible and responsive to the student's scheduling needs. There is a modest fee to attend SCI, but this can be reduced, or erased, with financial assistance.

What is the School of Pastoral Ministry (SPM)?

The Saint Francis de Sales School of Pastoral Ministry aids the formation of the Faithful of the Diocese of Oakland to realize the universal call to holiness. Centered on the Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, and shaped by the vision of Pope Francis for the New Evangeliza-

◀ Graduate Richard Murray (left) and Father Jimmy Macalinao (right) at the graduation for the Serra Catechetical Institute. (Photo by Rich Anderson LucidPic Photography)

tion, this integrated set of courses is newly designed to form students to be “missionary disciples.” It gives formation in Christ-centered spirituality and prayer, teaching that flows from, and inspires, transformation in Christ, and missionary outlook focusing on witness to the Gospel in our families, parishes, and the wider world.

The courses of the three-year program complement and build upon each other. In Year One, students deepen their knowledge of God and human existence through an exploration of Biblical revelation. And there is initial formation in Christian spirituality and prayer. Year Two explores the theological tradition and worship of the Church. Year Three prepares students to embrace the mission of evangelization within and about their parish communities.

The SPM and the SCI meet one Saturday per month at the beautiful Holy Names High School in Oakland. At each meeting, the SPM and the SCI share Mass together. Both programs offer a promise of great growth in the Faith, lively discussions, theological reflection and community building.

Who should apply?

Individuals or couples who wish to grow in missionary discipleship as they encounter Jesus Christ through prayer, study and service. Lay ministers, Catholic school teachers, and catechists are prime candidates.

With both the SCI and the SPM, all graduates return to the world to share their knowledge and evangelize in their parishes and in the world. Through the work of these empowered teachers, much good fruit has been gathered for the Kingdom of God. Let's keep learning and growing.

Richard Murray, a parishioner at Most Holy Rosary Parish in Antioch, is a candidate for the permanent diaconate for the Diocese of Oakland. Both the adult faith formation and diaconate training receive support from the Bishop's Ministries Appeal.



MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Serra Catechetical Institute email Scarlett at ssalaverria@oakdiocese.org or visit oakdiocese.org/adult-faith-formation.



YOUR GIFTS TO THE BISHOP'S MINISTRIES APPEAL SUPPORT:

Religious Education and Faith Formation

The Faith Formation and Evangelization staff led, coordinated and produced a highly participatory diocesan Synod process, with enthusiastic responses of more than 11,624 participants from parishes, schools and service organizations.

There were 628 graduates of Serra Catechetical Institute and 365 graduates of the School of Pastoral Ministry from 2000 to 2023.

In 2022, FFE has resourced and consulted 32 youth ministers/confirmation coordinators, both paid and volunteer; facilitated trainings for youth ministry teams at 16 parishes; and assisted in planning and facilitating of six youth retreats for parishes in need.

In 2022, FFE has resourced and consulted the formation of five young adult groups and one campus ministry group.

More than 300 couples received marriage preparation this past year from our programs in English and Spanish.

Families in several parishes joined in faith, formation, service and fun, as we launched Celebrate Catholic Family Life.

Our diocese has one of the first regular podcasts expanding the Natural Family Planning conversation: Charting Toward Intimacy, now with a following all over the country and hosted by a parishioner of Holy Spirit in Fremont.

Clergy Formation and Support

From initial formation into retirement, the diocese provides support for our priests. Additionally, your gift to the Bishop's Ministries Appeal supports continued updating and renewal for priests and deacons who faithfully serve our people.

Permanent Diaconate

Formation to the permanent diaconate prepares deacons to minister as “Jesus the Servant,” engaging parish communities to live their baptismal call to serve one another, performing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy through outreach ministries to those in need. Deacons are financially self-supported,

however the Bishop's Ministries Appeal provides formation assistance.

Sixteen men were ordained permanent deacons in September 2020; one was ordained in 2022. Currently, 16 candidates are entering their third year of formation, leading to ordination in 2025. A discernment period has begun for the Formation Class 2023-2027.

Seminarians

The Vocations Office is so blessed to accompany 12 men in their formation to the priesthood, which includes their retreats, Spanish and English Language Immersion in Mexico City and other opportunities for pastoral training.

We hope to have one ordination to the priesthood and two to the diaconate this year. In 2022, one man was ordained to the priesthood and one to the diaconate.

We will be conducting discernment sessions and parish missions on vocations. We are blessed to have 10 or more discerners.

Vision: Vocation is Everybody's Mission in the Diocese.

Retired priests

Bishop Barber has the obligation to take care of our priests from the time they make their vows through retirement. Clergy Care Manager Carolyn Steele works with the retired priests of the diocese, assisting with transitions.

Currently there are 53 retired priests; 6 retired in 2022.

Eight were hospitalized in 2022; 20 were hospitalized in the past three years.

Eleven moves/transitions were made to assisted living/board and care homes in the past three years.

Three priests died in 2022; 11 have died in the past three years.

Support for Catholic Schools and Parishes in Need

Each year, our schools and parishes are faced with emergency repairs or budgetary shortfalls. The diocese provides assistance as needed. ●

“I am with you always”

BISHOP'S MINISTRIES APPEAL



BY FATHER ANTHONY HUONG LE
 Father Anthony Huong Le is
 pastor of St. Joseph/Mission
 San José Parish in Fremont.

My life and priestly ministry have always been associated with St. Joseph. My dad told me that the Saint saved me at the age of 3. I was too small to remember how that happened. My father insisted that he prayed to St. Joseph, and I was healed from pneumonia.

Many years later, on Nov. 15, 2014, I was among the first group of men ordained a deacon at Mission San José/St. Joseph Parish, Fremont. Built in 1797, the 14th Mission church remains a gem and the spiritual heart of the city of Fremont and Diocese of Oakland.

Bishop Michael Barber wanted to remind us that we are called to share good news of Jesus to all, as were the early missionaries, who planted the seed of Christianity here.

On Sept. 1, 2015, I returned to St. Joseph Parish as an associate. I served for two years and went away for a different parish assignment. I returned to St. Joseph Parish as its pastor Jan. 1, 2021.

As I connect the dots, I value even more the presence of St. Joseph in my life and the life of the Church.

In the last decades, the Church has been actively promoting St. Joseph and his role in the plan of salvation, both in the context of liturgy and devotions. Pope Francis has inserted the name of St. Joseph to Eucharistic Prayers so that we could acknowledge and appreciate his role as the protector of the Church and Holy Family. We can also pray to him as our spiritual father who always looks out for us.

Pope Francis also promotes an incredibly beautiful devotion to Sleeping St. Joseph. During his 2015 visit to the Philippines, he explained, “I have great love for St. Joseph, because he is a man of silence and strength. On my table I have an

St. Joseph, pray for us

NAMESAKE PARISH IN FREMONT TO HOST MARCH 18 PILGRIMAGE



image of St. Joseph sleeping. Even when he is asleep, he is taking care of the Church. ... When I have a problem, a difficulty, I write a little note and I put it underneath St. Joseph, so that he can dream about it! In other words, I tell him: Pray for this problem!”

In 2021, the Holy Father asked the entire universal Church to honor St. Joseph as the protector of the Church with heartfelt prayer and devotion, encouraging all to take his virtuous life as model.

This year, as a diocese we focus on the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Along with Blessed Mother, St. Joseph understands and appreciates the profound mystery of the real presence of the Lord in the Holy Eucharist because he lived with and adored him daily!

As a parish we have initiated different events and devotions to the Holy Eucharist with St. Joseph as our guide. We want to invoke St. Joseph and seek his intercession and guidance. Thus, we would like to invite all of you to join us these devotions at Mission San José / St. Joseph Parish, Fremont.

First Wednesday

In our Catholic tradition, Wednesday is dedicated to honor St. Joseph. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote of St. Joseph, “our holy patron St. Joseph has the power

to assist us in all cases, in every necessity, in every undertaking.”

And St. Teresa of Avila wrote of St. Joseph, “Our Lord would have us understand that as He was subject to St. Joseph on earth – for St. Joseph, bearing the title of father and being His guardian, could command Him – so now in Heaven Our Lord grants all his petitions.”

To facilitate better appreciation and devotion to St. Joseph, we celebrate the first Wednesday Mass in honor of St. Joseph. At this Mass, our community comes together in the Mission church and celebrates him, his story and glory.

Total Consecration to St. Joseph

We want to model our lives after the holy life of St. Joseph. He could help us become open to God’s will, faithful and courageous in fulfilling what God is asking of us. That is the reason we want to totally consecrate ourselves to the Saint.

Every year, leading up to the feast of St. Joseph, on either March 19 or May 1, we gather for 33 days preparing ourselves to learn, meditate, pray and ask him for intercessions so that we can love and honor him as he deserves. In turn, St. Joseph will lead us closer to his adopted Son, Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

If you are interested, please contact us.

“

As a parish ... we want to invoke St. Joseph and seek his intercession and guidance. Thus, we would like to invite all of you to join us for these devotions at Mission San José/St. Joseph Parish, Fremont.

SAVE THE DATE!

FIRST ANNUAL ST. JOSEPH PILGRIMAGE

March 18, 2023

Inspired by the people’s great devotion to St. Joseph and his role in the life of the holy family and the church, we believe that the church community and all people of goodwill will become better as we love him and cultivate a strong devotion to him. This annual pilgrimage will be a wonderful opportunity for all to learn, pray and celebrate the spiritual father of Jesus, the protector of the Church, and the husband of Mary. The stronger devotion to St. Joseph, the stronger the Church will be.

There will be conferences in English and Vietnamese. Both Confession and Adoration are available. Our own Bishop Barber will celebrate the solemn Mass in honor of St. Joseph. For more information or to register for this free conference, go to www.saintjosephmsj.org or call the parish office at 510.656.2364.

First Annual St. Joseph Conference

Hosted by St. Joseph Parish / Old Mission San José
Saturday, March 18, 2023

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
8:00 AM	Mass	Mission
8:30-9:15 AM	Registration & Continental Breakfast	Church Hall
9:15-10:30 AM	Faith-based activities for children	
9:30 AM	Conference with: • Fr. Matthew Spencer, OSJ (English) • Fr. Anthony Huong Le (Vietnamese)	Church Mission
10:30-11:20 AM	Eucharistic Adoration & Private Reconciliation	Church
11:30 AM	Solemnity of St. Joseph Eucharistic Celebration, Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ presiding followed by the procession to Holy Family Picnic Area, blessing of the Sleeping St. Joseph statue, lunch	Church
1-4 PM	Self-guided tour of Mission San José	Mission



First Dream



Third Dream

Sleeping St. Joseph Devotion

To commemorate this first pilgrimage, we also have a special additional event. Our community has brought the largest Sleeping St. Joseph statue in the world home and has it on a beautiful Mission land. When you visit St. Joseph Parish, you will not only encounter the historical Mission Church and Museum, but also the Saint himself. This monument of the Sleeping St. Joseph serves both as a token of our love for him and a reminder of what he has done and capable of doing for the Church and all people.



Second Dream



Fourth Dream

St. Joseph does not speak in the Gospels, but he dreams of heaven and acts decisively according to God's divine plan. There are four dreams that capture his story. These dreams are painted on the walls around the monument of the Sleeping St. Joseph.

First, he dreams of an angel telling him to take Mary home as his wife because the child was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20–21). Second, he dreams of an angel telling him to leave Bethlehem and flee to Egypt because Herod wanted to hurt them (Matthew 2:13).

Third, in his dream, the angel told him to return to the

land of Israel (Matthew 2:19–20). However, in his fourth dream, he was asked to take them to Nazareth and make it home so that the prophecy will be fulfilled that Jesus shall be called a Nazorean (Matthew 2:22).

Certainly, St. Joseph knows how to rest in God! He rests with a divine plan in mind and acts with a divine inspiration. We can certainly learn from him how to rest in the middle of our busy lives and work hard according to God's plan so that we do not run the risk of acting busy for things that do not matter much eternally.

As our Holy Father said, we can also bring our intentions

and ask him to pray for us, as he is our spiritual father. Here is the prayer to the Sleeping St. Joseph: Oh Saint Joseph, You are a man greatly favored by the Most High. The angel of the Lord appeared to you in dreams, while you slept, to warn you and guide you as you cared for the Holy Family. You were both silent and strong, a loyal and courageous protector.

*Dear Saint Joseph,
As you rest in the Lord,
confident of His absolute power
and goodness, look upon me.
Please take my need...
(mention your request here) ...
into your heart, dream of it,
and present it to your Son.*

Help me then, good Saint Joseph, to hear the voice of God, to arise, and act with love. I praise and thank God with joy. Saint Joseph, I love you. Amen.

May St. Joseph intercede for us and protect our families always. May he guide and lead us closer to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. ●



MORE INFORMATION

To schedule an individual or group pilgrimage, visit www.saintjosephmsj.org or call 510.656.2364.



Catholic School Educator and Ministry Job Fair

Saturday, March 4th | 10 a.m.–12 noon

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an act of love; it is like giving life." —POPE FRANCIS*



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SAVE *the* DATE

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SPANISH LANGUAGE TRACK

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRACK

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HOA BINH HA ... IN VIETNAMESE HIS NAME MEANS "PEACE." SUCH A HOPEFUL NAME FOR THE CHILD BORN A MONTH AFTER THE FALL OF SAIGON. AND A HOPEFUL NAME FOR A MAN ORDAINED TO THE TRANSITIONAL DIACONATE A WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY MICHELE JURICH



Ordination

At that Mass in the Old Mission San José, Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ told his newest deacon that when he would be writing a letter about five months later, requesting ordination, the bishop would be looking carefully at how Deacon Binh

had performed the duties of a deacon, to serve the poor, feed the hungry and other service.

A call to St. Isidore Parish in Danville in early January, as storms were raging the Bay Area, received this reply. I can take a message for Deacon Binh, the kindly secretary said. He's bringing Communion to the nursing homes.

Rain that had been stopping the Bay Area in its tracks did not daunt the deacon. There were

people, most of them elderly, waiting for him to bring The Body of Christ to them. They would not be disappointed.

Deacon Binh knows quite a bit about the elderly. After graduating from Cal State East Bay with a degree in recreation therapy, he designed recreation programs that helped improve cognitive, social and motor functioning at a senior healthcare and wellness center.

Some days, the patients would be reluctant – too tired, for example – to participate in the day's activity. But Binh Ha found another way.

"I understand some days they don't feel good," he said. "You need to be patient with them."

Patience is a hallmark of Hoa Binh Ha's journey, from Vietnam to the United States, as well as to the priesthood.



PHOTOS BY DOMINIQUE GHEKIERE-MINTZ

on to the diaconate

The next step in the journey of Hoa Binh Ha

The eighth of nine children born to parents of humble means but great faith, he recalls his parents went to church twice a day, to attend Mass or pray the rosary. They modeled the faith by living it, encouraging their children, when facing a difficult decision, to pray to the Holy Spirit.

He recalled that when seminarians came to his church, seeking support, his mother always had something to give them.

Binh began to discern the priesthood as a teenager; asking himself if it was God's will and how he could make this happen.

His parents could not afford to educate all of the children;

some ended their schooling to work to support the family.

Binh was fortunate to attend college, and connected with the Catholic Student Association there. He attended Mass and prayed with his fellow students. He visited a nearby seminary to learn about formation.

After graduation from college, he moved to Saigon, where he wrote for a Catholic publication.

In 2008, he immigrated to the Bay Area, where he went to live with his elder brother. He chose St. Anthony Parish in Oakland, where he joined

the Trieu Dang choir. He volunteered to teach RCIA and Vietnamese courses, and became involved in the parish's annual Vietnamese Lunar New Year celebration.

Binh continued his studies in the United States, embarking on learning a new language, first at adult school and progressing to Chabot College in Hayward. After Chabot, he entered California State University East Bay, where he earned his bachelor's degree in recreation therapy.

In 2018, he sought admission to the seminary to become

a priest for the Diocese of Oakland. He was admitted to Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary, near Boston.

The seminary is dedicated to preparing seminarians age 30 and older. Binh was not the youngest, but his youthful appearance, had his fellow seminarians thinking he was.

He speaks of his classmates, highly educated men, doctor and dentist among them. Some had studied theology; Binh was a beginner.

He navigated the seminary as he did his college education in California: being unafraid to ask questions and seek help when he needed it. He built community not only with his classmates, but also with other Diocese of Oakland

“

I TRY TO BE THE PRIEST THAT I IMAGINE AND AS GOD WANTS ME TO BE.”

seminarians studying in Boston. Father Jimmy Macalinao and Father Mark Ruiz were completing their studies the year Binh arrived, and offered their friendship. Father Mac Lingo, studying at the Archdiocese of Boston's Saint John's Seminary, also became a friend.

Boston was another new environment for a man born in Vietnam who later spent almost a decade in California. He brought with him a light jacket, which might have sufficed in a Bay Area winter, but was no match for Boston.

A brother seminarian took him to Walmart and bought him a winter jacket – the kind we don't see in California, he noted.

Among his experiences was a summer spent in Fresno, attending chaplaincy training. "When I finished the chaplaincy program," he said, "I hope I can be very helpful to people, to help bring them closer to God."

He showed signs of that already in his training, said a supervisor of the training program, who came from Fresno to attend the ordination.

His chaplaincy training took place during the pandemic, when front-line workers were understandably stressed. When people in staff meetings expressed overwhelming frustration, for example, Binh offered the question, "Where is your joy?"

That question still pops up at staff meetings, a stop-and-take-stock moment that is valued as part of his legacy.

Last August, Binh returned to Vietnam to visit his mother, who lives under the care of his older siblings.

His mother told him, he said, "I'm OK but only one thing: I can't walk to church."

She had walked to church twice a day, he recalled.

Binh speaks thoughtfully and gratefully of his classmates.

"My classmates have become priests already. At first, I thought I'm behind a little bit. But I know I am going in the right direction."

That direction has taken him to St. Isidore Parish, where he is spending a pastoral year. He has served at Masses, including Mass for the school-children. He gave the homily at the 9 o'clock Mass the morning after his ordination.

That Sunday also found him back at his chosen parish when he first came to the United States.

"I drove to St. Anthony to serve and give the homily in Vietnamese," he said.

"People ask me, 'Are you nervous?' A little bit, but not much."

At St. Isidore, the deacon finds himself the oldest person in the rectory; both the pastor and parochial vicar are younger.

As a deacon, he has baptized a baby, noting, "She was very nice to me." There hasn't been a wedding, but he has assisted at funerals, meetings of parish organizations and the visits to

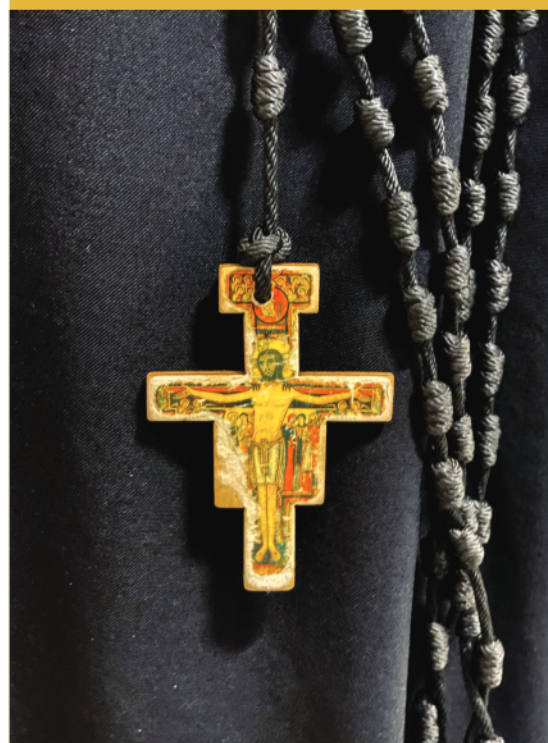
the homebound. He was looking forward to showing the film "The Chosen" to RCIA.

Near Christmas, the priests celebrated Mass at a nursing home. "They were so happy," the deacon reports of the residents.

His service at St. Isidore helps him answer the question asked of him during his formation: Do you imagine what kind of priest you will be?

"Being a priest in the future is a wonderful, wonderful gift God gave me," he said. "I try to be the priest that I imagine and as God wants me to be." ●





Hoa Binh Ha's Journey

Born: 1975, Vietnam

Sacraments:

Baptism, 1975; First Communion 1983; Confirmation 1985, Long Xuyen Province, Vietnam

College:

1994, moved to CaTho to study for four years

Work:

1999-2008, wrote for a Catholic publication

Immigrated:

2008 to the United States, joined family in San Lorenzo

Church:

2008 joined St. Anthony Parish in Oakland; led Vietnamese cultural event

Education:

2008 began attending adult school; 2013 earned A.A. in biology with emphasis in allied health; 2016 earned B.A. in recreation therapy at California State University, East Bay

Entered the seminary:

2018 Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary, Weston, Massachusetts

Graduated: 2022

Pastoral Year:

2022-23 St. Isidore Parish, Danville

Ordination to the Transition Diaconate:

Dec. 17, 2022, Old Mission San José

Service to poor families and children

SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY CELEBRATE 150 YEARS OF MINISTRY

BY CHARLOTTE HALL

Charlotte Hall is the author of "A legacy of caring: The impassioned mission of Sisters of the Holy Family: in commemoration of their 125th jubilee, November 6, 1997."

CURRENT PHOTOS BY CHARLOTTE HALL

ARCHIVAL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ of the Diocese of Oakland, Bishop Myron J. Cotta of the Diocese of Stockton and nine priests honored the Sisters of the Holy Family at a Mass celebrating their 150 years of ministry.

In his homily at the Nov. 5 Mass at St. Joseph Church in Fremont, Father Gerald D. Coleman, PSS recalled how the Sisters have been an important part of the history of the Church in California, how the Sisters' homes have provided a safe place for thousands of children of the working poor since 1880, and how the Sisters have exemplified Christ's love everywhere they went.

Sisters of the Holy Family were founded in 1872 in San Francisco, when the city was a wild frontier town exploding with an influx of people, many who were living in great poverty. In that atmosphere



▲ In keeping with their charism as gleaners, Holy Family Sisters established tent cities to provide for victims of 1906 earthquake in San Francisco.

▲ Children at a Day Home of the Sisters, early 1900s.

▲ Sisters of the Holy Family have always "gone to where the people were" and in the early years became known as "the Sisters who drove," which means they also fixed flat tires.



LEFT: Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ of the Diocese of Oakland, Bishop Myron J. Cotta of the Diocese of Stockton and nine priests honor Sisters of the Holy Family at a special Mass.

BELOW: Leadership Team of Sisters of the Holy Family, left to right: Michaela O'Connor, Kathy Littrell, Sandra Ann Silva and Gladys Guenther.

two young women, Dolores Armer and Teresa O'Connor, with the support of Archbishop Joseph Alemany and Father John Prendergast founded Sisters of the Holy Family, dedicated to relieving the suffering of poor families and children.

Among their first concerns were poor children, who were often left at home alone. In 1878, the Sisters opened a Day Home to care for young children while their parents worked, often at menial jobs. It was the first such facility in San Francisco and the Sisters very soon were opening more Day Homes, including St Vincent's in Oakland, which they established in 1911.

Their Day Home ministry spread to other cities in California and Nevada. Eventually the Sisters were providing care and love to more than 1,000 children every day.



“

... FOR 150 YEARS, WE MEMBERS OF THE SISTERS OF THE HOLY FAMILY HAVE BEEN COMMITTED TO THE VISION OF OUR FOUNDERS: 'TO SEEK OUT AND ADVOCATE FOR THE POOR AND NEEDY ESPECIALLY FAMILIES.' THAT SEEKING HAS FOUND US SERVING IN PLACES AND WITH PEOPLE WE COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED.”

— SISTER GLADYS GUENTHER



Many parishioners remember a favorite Sister of the Holy Family who taught them religious education, especially children who went to public school and who received religious education through the release-time program.

The Sisters of the Holy Family moved their Motherhouse to Fremont in 1958 and became part of the Oakland diocese when it was formed in 1962. Among the offices created in the new Diocese was the Office of Catechetical Ministries, known as the CCD.

Almost immediately, in recognition of the Sisters' work in religious education, the CCD Director, Father Lucid, wrote to the Superior General of the Sisters and asked for a Holy Family Sister to work for the diocese and be responsible for training courses and workshops for adults.

The Holy Family Sisters became innovators and leaders in developing new



Sister Guenther, president of the Sisters of the Holy Family, welcomed family and friends to their celebration.

education programs, many of them holding positions at diocesan offices throughout California. They were also leaders in offering spiritual services to the developmentally disadvantaged.

During her message at the Jubilee celebration, Sister Gladys Guenther, president of the Sisters, said gratitude best signified her feelings that day, knowing that "for 150 years, we members of the Sisters of the Holy Family have been committed to the

vision of our founders: 'to seek out and advocate for the poor and needy especially families.' That seeking has found us serving in places and with people we could never have imagined."

Decorating the church for the celebration was a display of their "Cloud of Witnesses," a collection of almost 400 individual photos of all the Sisters and Associates who have been part of their Sisterhood since 1872. ●



Sister Michaela O'Connor hangs photos in the "Cloud of Witnesses" display that included individual photos of most of the Sisters from 1872 until present day.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Sisters of the Holy Family
PO Box 3248
Fremont, CA 94539
holyfamilysisters.org

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➤ *In Memoriam* ⇐



FATHER RICHARD GAGLIARDI

When asked when he was the happiest, Father Richard Gagliardi always replied, “When I’m celebrating Mass.”

Father Gagliardi, who had been a missionary in Africa, a pastor in the Midwest and a religious provincial before coming west to study at the Graduate Theological Union and later being incardinated in the Diocese of Oakland, died Dec. 7.

A priest for 60 years, Father Gagliardi was 95.

At his golden jubilee in 2012, Father Gagliardi offered this reflection on his vocation:

“It is who I am. I don’t think of being anything other than a priest. When I’m at the altar, I feel I belong there; that’s where I want to be. I love living here [in retirement at St. Joseph Parish in Pinole], where I can be next to the church, because that is who I am. It will always be the most important part of my life: to celebrate Mass and be one with the People of God. I am happiest when I am celebrating Mass.”

Father Richard Gagliardi was born, raised and educated in San Jose. During his college years at San Jose State, he joined the US Army and served for 364 days. He returned to college, but was drafted into the US Navy as had served one day less than a year.

He returned and finished his education while serving as president of the Newman Center at San Jose State. There he felt the calling to the priesthood as a missionary.

He joined the Consolata Missionary Fathers and was prepared for ordination in Fatima, Portugal; Turin, Italy; and the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC.

While in Washington, DC, he was asked to go to the airport to pick up two nuns from India. Much to his surprise, one of the nuns was Mother Teresa.

Father Gagliardi was ordained to the priesthood on Feb. 10, 1962, in Washington, DC.

His first assignment was to a parish and secondary school in Kenya, where he served for five years. He taught high school physics, chemistry, mathematics and religion during the week and celebrated Mass on weekends in the outlying missions.

Upon his return in 1967 to the United States, the Consolata Missionary Fathers named him vocation director, director of the Catholic Information Center and pastor of a parish in Muskegon, Michigan. Later they chose him as their provincial in the United States.

In Muskegon, Michigan, he served as pastor and director of the Catholic Information Center.

His mother had lived in Oakland for many years. As her health declined, he received permission to join the Diocese of Oakland.

He was incardinated in the diocese in 1984.

Father Gagliardi served at St. Bernard and St. Benedict parishes in Oakland before becoming pastor of St. Callistus Parish in El Sobrante in 1991. He retired in October 1997, and moved to nearby St. Joseph Parish in Pinole.

As he entered retirement, Father Gagliardi said he looked forward to continuing to celebrate Mass.

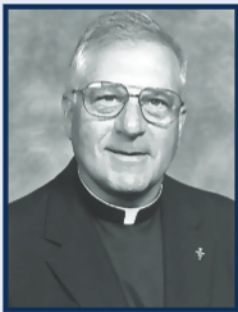
“You can’t retire from who you are,” he told *The Catholic Voice* at the time. “I enjoy and love celebrating Mass. People say they see that, feel that. I would never be comfortable never saying Mass.”

When asked if he had advice for those discerning a vocation, he said a love for Jesus and the desire to serve others was necessary. “To think of others, not yourself.”

Father Gagliardi spent the last few years of his life living at two Nazareth Houses for Seniors, one in San Rafael and the other in Fresno.

“He was truly a happy, kind and joyful person who always brought his deep faith, big smile and his beautiful singing voice along with him as he served his people with his great love of Christ,” said Rita Figueira, a longtime friend.

The Vigil for Father Gagliardi was held Dec. 18 at St. Joseph Church in Pinole; the funeral Mass followed the next morning. Inurnment followed at St. Joseph Cemetery in San Pablo. ●



FATHER VINCENT R. BRYLKA

Father Brylka found his greatest joy at the altar, celebrating the Eucharist.

On the 57th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, Dec. 18, 2022, Father Vincent R. Brylka died at Summit Hospital in Oakland. He was 83.

"It has been a life-rewarding experience, showing me the deep faith and love of God which can be found in the lives of the faithful," Father Brylka wrote in a reflection on priesthood 40 years after his ordination.

"A personal sense of fulfillment comes from being able to be the Lord's servant in a very literal sense. In so many of life's experiences do people need, want, search for or rejoice in the presence of the Higher Power. I am humbled to have received the gift of this vocation to the priesthood, so that through the ministry of the church, the life of God might touch the lives of humankind."

Ordained in the Seminary Chapel of the Seraphicum Pontifical College in Rome, Father Brylka began his ministry as a Conventual Franciscan.

After serving in teaching, pastoral and provincial ministry, he arrived in the Diocese of Oakland on Aug. 15, 1989. He was in residence and assisted at St. David of Wales Parish in Richmond before being assigned as parochial vicar at St. Leander Parish in San Leandro.

He served as parochial vicar at St. Anne Parish in Union City from 1992 to 1994.

Father Brylka went to St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Martinez as parochial administrator in 1993 and was named pastor in 1997.

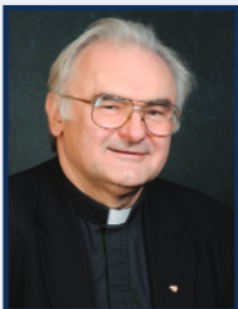
He was incardinated to the Diocese of Oakland in 1996.

In 2001, Father Brylka was named pastor of St. Clement Parish in Hayward, where he served until his retirement in 2007.

In retirement, he lived at Bishop Begin Villa in Oakland.

The native of Chicago is survived by his siblings, Sister Barbara Marie, CSSF; James (Diane); and Thomas (Maureen) and by his nieces and nephews Steven, Jill, Douglas, Maria and Timothy. He is fondly remembered by 13 great-nieces and great-nephews and many cousins, relatives and friends.

Father Brylka's last parish, St. Clement, hosted the Vigil service on Jan. 11 and his funeral Mass on Jan. 12. Burial took place at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, also in Hayward. ●



FATHER STANISLAW ZAK

"Pastoral ministry was my biggest joy in my life."

Father Stanislaw Zak, who was born in Poland and joined the Diocese of Oakland in 1997, died Jan. 8. He was 72.

Father Zak retired in 2015 and lived at Bishop Begin Villa, where he celebrated Mass on the morning he died.

A member of the Society of Christ, he was ordained a priest on May 14, 1975, at the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul in Poznan, Poland.

"Since my early childhood, I wanted to be a priest," he wrote in a reflection on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his priestly ordination. "Pastoral ministry was my biggest joy in my life."

"God rewarded my priesthood when 15 of my students in Poland entered the seminary and 12 of them became priests. Every day I am praying for new vocations to the priesthood and Religious life."

After serving as parochial vicar in his native country for 3½ years, Father Zak went to England, where he worked for a dozen years in London, Putney, Manchester, Ashton-under-Lyne and Southampton.

In 1988, he received permission from the Congregation of the Oriental Churches to celebrate liturgies in the Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Rite.

Father Zak arrived in the United States on Dec. 12, 1990. After working briefly in Los Angeles, he was appointed pastor of St. Brother Albert Chmielowski Polish Pastoral Mission in the Diocese of San Jose. He served there until April 1996. He attended the Vatican II Institute for Clergy Formation in Menlo Park.

On May 1, 1997, Father Zak came to the Diocese of Oakland. After working and residing for two months at St. Perpetua Parish in

Lafayette, he was appointed parochial vicar of Queen of All Saints Parish in Concord.

In addition to his parish duties, Father Zak served the Catholic Polish Pastoral Center in Martinez and also assisted Ukrainian Catholics in Sacramento. Father Zak served as parochial vicar at St. Isidore Parish in Danville from 1999 until his final assignment in 2004.

On Dec. 1, 2004, he was appointed pastor at St. Margaret Mary Parish in Oakland, where he served until his retirement in 2015.

After a Vigil service on Jan. 22, Father Zak's funeral Mass was held Jan. 23 at St. Margaret Mary Church in Oakland.

Father Zak was beloved by the Polish Catholic community, Deacon Witold Cichon, director of the Polish Pastoral and Cultural Center, said.

"He influenced all of us in many ways," Deacon Cichon said. In serving the Polish community during his time at Queen of All Saints, Father Zak traveled between Martinez, where the pastoral center is located, and Union City, where Mass was celebrated at the old St. Anne Church. He also served as chaplain for the Polish Scouts, and prepared the children of the Polish community to receive the sacraments.

"He grew up in western Poland," Deacon Cichon said. Some of his siblings had been born in Ukraine. He inherited his spirituality from his Ukrainian grandmother, Deacon Cichon said.

In the last 15 years, Father Zak made several trips to Buszcze, Ukraine. The church had fallen into disrepair over the years of life under the Soviet Union. "When he went a few times, he decided to rebuild it."

"Father Stan asked the faithful in America to donate to the cause," he said.

"That church is thriving," Deacon Cichon said.

Among his other contributions to the diocese was bringing the icon of the Black Madonna to the Cathedral of Christ the Light; his willingness to listen to problems and help resolve them; and the hospitality he offered. "Father Stan loved to cook," Deacon Cichon said, recalling Polish Wigilia, feasts prepared by the priest.

"I'm sure he earned a place in heaven for all the good things he has done," Deacon Cichon said. ●

OFFICIAL SCHEDULE

February 26-March 3

Retreat for the Presbyterate of Los Angeles,
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

March 4

11 a.m. Rite of Election, Cathedral of Christ the Light, Oakland
5 p.m. Mass Celebrating 70th Anniversary of St. David of
Wales Parish, Richmond

March 7

Pastoral Visit, San Quentin State Prison, San Rafael

March 10

7 p.m. Celebration of the Rite of Confirmation for
SPRED Friends, St. Paschal Church, Oakland

March 12-14

USCCB Committee on Doctrine Meeting,
Washington, DC

March 16

10 a.m. Priest Personnel Board Meeting
1 p.m. Presbyteral Council Meeting

March 18

Noon Mass in Celebration of the Feast of St. Joseph,
Old Mission San José, Fremont
6 p.m. Knights of Columbus Vocations Dinner in support
of Seminarians, Carondelet High School, Concord

March 19

11 a.m. Mass, Cathedral of Christ the Light, Oakland

March 22

3 p.m. Benedict XVI Institute Board Meeting,
Archdiocese of San Francisco

March 24

St. Oscar Romero Feast Day Mass with Seminarians,
St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park

March 25

Mass for Eucharistic Revival Steering Committee Retreat,
Lafayette Retreat Center

March 28

10:30 a.m. College of Consultors Meeting

Assignment

The Most Rev. Michael C. Barber, S.J., Bishop of Oakland,
has made the following clergy assignment:

Father Modestus Osi Mgbaramuko is appointed Parochial
Vicar at St. John Vianney Parish, Walnut Creek, effective
Feb. 11, 2023.

Lunar New Year

Lunar New Year was celebrated
on Jan. 28 at the Cathedral of
Christ the Light. After the Mass,
Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ
gathered with the faithful for a
group portrait. Scan code to view
the Mass online. (Courtesy photo)



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**2023 BISHOP'S
MINISTRIES
APPEAL**



Please support the 2023 Bishop's Ministries Appeal

**ALL FUNDS RAISED HELP SUPPORT THE WORK AND VITAL
MINISTRIES PROVIDED TO THE PARISHES AND FAITHFUL OF
THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND.**

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 teaching them to observe all that have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (MT28:16-20)

www.oakdiocese.org/bishops-ministries-appeal