



Awaken

the soul & let your spirit fly

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

DISCIPLE-MAKING

*Yet, LORD, you are our father;
we are the clay and you our potter:
we are all the work of your hand.* Isaiah 64:7

The “missionary discipleship” conversation continues at Good Shepherd now two years since the introduction of the parish prayer in the spring months of 2021. Parishioners have come to know well the meaningful descriptor – *missionary disciple* – as it is heard weekly after communion when we pray together.

For many these two words **RESONATE** and sink into hearts and minds defining the baptismal call more clearly than ever before. Still, others **GRAPPLE** with what discipleship means and how this phrase fits into one’s faith practice and vocabulary. Many more place themselves **SOMEWHERE ALONG A CONTINUUM** easily identifying with the ideas to “share in the life and ministry” of Jesus and to be part of an intentional community “committed to go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.” Nevertheless, uncertainty lingers and questions wonder. *Am I a true disciple? Am I an ardent follower of Jesus Christ destined for eternity?*

Calling upon the eloquent Biblical images of clay in the hand of the potter (*Isaiah 67, Jeremiah 18*), disciples formed by the hands of God are beautiful earthen vessels of all types and measures, purposed and repurposed unceasingly for the mission.

But how? How are disciples made? Expanding on the metaphor, Good Shepherd Parish is our modern-day potter’s house. Imagine God at the potter’s wheel, shaping and “throwing” the clay. As it gently spins, the parish’s myriad ways, experiences and encounters become God’s tools encouraging parishioners as they grow in their relationships with Jesus, and respond to his will.

(Story continues on page 4)



Growing in Virtue

Living a life of virtue
as a pathway to faithful discipleship

"WE WANT TO BE DISCIPLES AND THROUGH VIRTUE WE CAN GET THERE!"

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School teaches virtue
as the foundation of holiness, discipleship

Students at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School (SEAS) – our Catholic elementary school serving Good Shepherd, St. Joseph and St. Maria Goretti parishes in Elk Grove – have extensive knowledge of what it means to practice virtue.

It is part of the school culture, “incorporated throughout the school and implemented in every classroom,” says parishioner and *vice principal* Sara Brilz who also serves as *educational achievement specialist*.

Thanks to the diocesan-endorsed *Disciple of Christ Education in Virtue™* program, the school community uses a “common vocabulary” to reflect on and learn virtuous actions and behaviors. Developed by the Dominican Sisters of Mary Mother of the Eucharist, the program aims to cultivate virtue as a means to a life in Christ.

Human virtues acquired by education, by deliberate acts, and by perseverance ever-renewed in repeated efforts are purified and elevated by divine grace. With God's help, they forge character and give facility in the practice of the good. The virtuous man is happy to practice them. (CCC 1810)

“We all focus on following Jesus,” Sara explains sharing how students understand the goal “to be the best versions of themselves.”

Knowing the words and learning what the virtue is, as well as the opposing traits of a given virtue, happens throughout the school day. A new “focus virtue” takes center stage every week. Student leaders share it with morning prayer over the intercom, teachers build virtue content into lesson plans, and both children and adults put virtue into action at rest, work and play. Every month, following a school Mass, students and teachers are recognized for modeling virtuous actions.

Circumspection. Humility. Magnanimity. Responsibility.

These are just a few of many meaning-packed virtues that flow easily from disciples-in-training who practice and associate the spectrum of words to God's gifts received at baptism. Dozens of virtues are highlighted and rotated throughout the school year and presented by age level, so students grow with increasing awareness of faith, hope and charity (theological virtues)

and human virtue (cardinal or moral virtues) year after year.

“I feel *Education in Virtue™* is creating disciples,” Sara says, confident in students’ ability and strength to recognize virtue in others and see that practicing virtue is *how* we grow in holiness and respond to God's will.

“We want to be disciples and through virtue we can get there,” Sara says.

"Thy will be done!"
— What a comfort and support those four little words are to my soul. I have repeated them until they are softened to the sweetest harmony.

—St. Elizabeth Ann Seton



Sara Brilz
Vice Principal
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School
(standing before statue of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton on school grounds)

Let's Go

GROW IN FAITH
& DISCIPLESHIP!

Visit GSCCEG.org to learn more about upcoming events.

WELCOME FATHER ABRAHAM CHIU New Parochial Vicar, effective July 1, 2023



Good Shepherd Parish welcomes Father Abraham Chiu as its new parochial vicar. Father Abraham served at St. John the Evangelist Parish in Carmichael. He also serves the Sacramento Chinese Catholic Community at the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament. Father Abraham came to the United States from Hong Kong in 2021 at the invitation of Bishop

Jaime Soto. He speaks Mandarin, Cantonese and English.

Join us at a reception of welcome on: **SUNDAY, JULY 16,** following the 1:00 p.m. Mass.

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT! Friday, July 21, 2023

This outdoor event transforms the plaza to a perfect theater, ready to accommodate your portable picnic/sports chairs so the whole family can gather around for *The Super Mario Bros. Movie*. A simple hot dog dinner will be available for purchase. Watch the bulletin for more details!

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

Year One of the National Eucharistic Revival gave dioceses across the country the opportunity to introduce the purpose and vision for the National Eucharistic Revival – to help you learn more "about the reality of Jesus in the Eucharist" and to fall deeper in love with the Lord.

As Year Two takes shape at the parish level, Good Shepherd Parish invites your participation in a year-long series of regular opportunities to encounter the "source and summit" of our faith. Avail

yourself to know Jesus like never before!

RECAP: So far, many parishioners have received free books to inspire their journey.

- *Holy Moments* - Matthew Kelly
- *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* - Brant Pitre
- *This is My Body/A Call to Eucharistic Revival* - Bishop Robert Barron

The **Eucharistic Processions** after the Mass of the Last Supper and on Corpus Christi gave public witness of the veneration of the Eucharist

PASSING ON THE FAITH: THE PAIN & THE PROMISE! PARENT WORKSHOP—THURSDAY, AUGUST 3 (Open to grandparents, relatives & all interested parties)

This workshop takes a hard look at a reality that strikes a chord within every Catholic heart. Where has everyone gone?



Guest speaker Bob McCarty, D. Min., a pastoral ministry consultant, joins us **August 3, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.** in the church to address the challenge facing the Church, and families everywhere who want nothing more than to see their loved ones encounter Jesus and embrace the Church with love.

Bob stresses it is a challenge to take seriously! His presentation aims to help families **navigate the pain** of disaffiliation and explore the issue candidly and practically. A panel of parents and their families will share experiences, moving through a range of topics, e.g., *attending Mass and parish activities; faith practices at home; how parental roles change as children become teenagers and young adults; successes and needs; and more.*

Bob will guide the discussion and follow with practical strategies to equip families with the tools they need to actively and lovingly pass on their faith to their children, relatives and friends, and to **see the promise** of their efforts!



NATIONAL Eucharistic Revival

and heralded the coming parish events. "**12-hours of Adoration**" on

the first Friday of June focused the faithful on time with the Lord. "**Spiritual bouquet**" cards (gifts of prayer) are being distributed at Wednesday Adoration to share with loved ones your prayerful intentions.

Check the weekly bulletin and parish website for events and updates as the year unfolds!



SAVE THE DATE! SEPT. 30/OCT. 1

Mark your calendars to attend a truly special event with **Father Leo Patalinghug!**

Father Leo hails from Baltimore and is recognized for his **Plating Grace** ministry and many TV appearances and special events around the world.

On **Saturday, September 30** and **Sunday, October 1**, Good Shepherd welcomes Father Leo for a special evening dinner event highlighting the Eucharist, followed by a breakfast event on Sunday. Tickets go on sale in August. Don't miss this chance to experience the significance of the banquet in relationship to our Lord's invitation to the banquet feast we celebrate at Mass with the Eucharist.

I went down to the potter's house and there he was, working at the wheel. Whenever the vessel of clay he was making turned out badly in his hand, he tried again, making another vessel of whatever sort he pleased.

Jeremiah 18:3,4

Earthen VESSELS

Father,

(Continues from page 1)

You invite each of us to share in the life and

The parish as the “potter’s house” opens up endless possibilities for the work of God’s hands here.

Pope Francis puts it clearly as he describes the parish setting significantly in his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*:

What great potential exists at Good Shepherd Parish in shaping disciples into all that God desires! What great collaborative work the parish has before it in the important footsteps of Jesus and his legacy of disciple-making!

“The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for **hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.**

When Christ formed his Church, he said “Go, make disciples.” The parish is THE place to make that happen — the place to facilitate, inspire and send out disciples “teaching them to observe all” that Jesus commanded.

In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach.”

(*The Joy of the Gospel/Evangelii Gaudium, no. 28*)

Here, parishioners talk about their experiences of growing in discipleship. With the Holy Father’s “categories” as a guide, each considers the full scope of the “potter’s wheel” and identifies the meaningful ways that the parish encourages and trains disciples.

Ongoing and lifelong formation of disciples requires *elastic clay* made with an array of fine elements. When properly wetted with living water, earthen vessels are shaped by God’s generosity found in the beauty of community and parish life.

“The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being.”

Gen. 2:7

Catechism of the Catholic Church

2179 “A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop.” It is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ’s saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love:

You cannot pray at home as at church, where there is a great multitude, where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great heart, and where there is something more: the union of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity, the prayers of the priests. (St. John Chrysostom)

* Catechism of the Catholic Church
@ www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/catechism

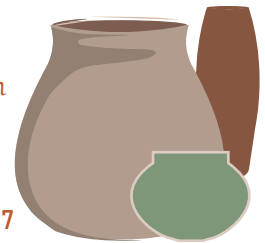


SELLS

made for discipleship

But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us.

2 Corinthians 4:7



Victoria Bilstad

Proclamation of Jesus' passion, death, resurrection, ascension and promise of salvation

"I always feel a strong spiritual connection with Jesus when I go to the parish," says Victoria eager to share how "when under its roof, I feel the spirit of Jesus...It's all about Jesus." For Victoria, this connection translates her baptism to discipleship. "My growth with my belief in Jesus Christ has given me direction," she says. "I want to continue to follow and to learn more about my faith and the Catholic Church," she convinces, powerfully expressing her desire to share her faith and build trust in others, making them comfortable as she introduces herself. She wants nothing more than to share "the Word of Jesus, and salvation, with others... these are the answers to the Kingdom of heaven."

Brock Thayer

Charitable Outreach
(justice, service, love of neighbor)

"We are all called to be a light in the darkness," Brock asserts maintaining that charitable works are "the opportunities the Lord presents to us," that invite us to love our neighbors as missionary disciples. "Our world is hurting," Brock says grieving to see those who are less fortunate, suffering through homelessness or living without the most basic of needs. Helping and giving back represents a powerful way to "spread the Gospel and, if necessary, use words," he offers, echoing the adage often attributed to St. Francis of Assisi. "When the Works of Mercy ministry was established, it spoke to my heart," Brock shares of his commitment to the ministry's action-oriented, charitable work. "We're all related as brothers and sisters, as sons and daughters of God," Brock attests, renewed by these relationships and by the chance to "give back" to build up the Kingdom of God.



Linda Rodriguez

Worship & Celebration

(Eucharist, liturgy, sacraments, prayer, devotions)

"Every Sunday that I receive the Eucharist, I feel Jesus' love...that he is watching over me and keeping me safe," Linda insists, confident in God's grace. As a lector, extraordinary minister of holy Communion (EM) and faith formation teacher over the years, Linda points to

how each ministry imparted special graces and an awareness of Jesus' presence in her life. She cites miracles — her own recovery from cardiac arrest and multiple surgeries, and her husband's recovery from a stroke last December — as trials that strengthen her to "serve God." "As a lector and an EM I feel that I am able to evangelize," Linda says stating, "I feel Jesus standing next to me as I say, 'the body of Christ.'" Empowered through worship and celebration — through Jesus, Linda feels, "I am fulfilling the mission of discipleship."

Jason Wagster

Hearing/Learning God's Word

(Faith Formation)

Jason credits "a loud" nagging feeling after praying his first rosary as the message that "God wants me to be Catholic." He entered the RCIA program in pursuit of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults three years ago to learn the faith. "I never felt the Holy Spirit move me" the way it did when engaging in faith formation. "Jesus led me to RCIA," Jason assures and knows that by "God's grace," following Jesus would lead him to "put my life in the Lord's hands." Today, Jason shares his recovery story — a story of surrender. He sees how faith teachings align with his 12-step program and encourage him to follow Christ, even when the world tells him otherwise. "It's mind-blowing," he says describing "a freedom" when surrendering to God's will. "It may seem like we're giving up," but "we are gaining so much," when following Christ the teacher.



Connie Mariscal

Growing in Christian Life

(community, virtue, hospitality, holiness)

"We all navigate this journey called life," says Connie reflecting on how much she appreciates parish gatherings and social events. "They bring us together," she adds mentioning that "with our mutual and shared faith," familiar faces, friendly chats and fellowship make

it comfortable to open up and grow in discipleship. "We become instruments of God," Connie suggests inferring that a strength comes when people connect and encourage each other to "turn to Christ and follow God's will." For example, seeing people at Mass, casual conversations at a pancake breakfast, or even calling a faith-filled friend for clarity on faith teachings — all can lead to growth in Christian living. Whether struggling or strengthened, "we're all in this together," Connie assures and parish life spills over abundantly into personal and professional reality, in a good way.

Lynn Strong

Meaningful Dialogue

(listening/hearing one another through ministry, bearing burdens, encouraging brothers & sisters)

"Engaging in dialogue is the measure and strength that leads to renewal," Lynn Strong upholds and she maintains "it must be carried out in the Church." Through ministry and in small groups she finds opportunities for meaningful dialogue and discussions "on various topics, our religious learning and where to turn for additional information on faith-building," she says appreciative of conversations that encourage reflection "on what is common and different in our experiences" as we journey to the fullness of faith and "live as brothers and sisters in Christ." Lynn looks to ministry — whether leading or participating — as "real ministry" to each other, exchanging the gifts imbued through baptism. "I have grown as His disciple by bringing light, blessings and healing in service to others."





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.

HOW DO WE NURT

Passing forward the faith is the mission of every disciple. And nurturing our children to know and love Jesus is part of that mission so that they, too, grow *into* discipleship ready and willing to share their faith.

Katie Prejean McGrady, Catholic mom, speaker and host on Sirius XM's *The Catholic Channel*, talks a lot about the generations and how to encourage engagement, especially among millennials and Gen Zs. As an expert trainer for *Revive Parishes*, she dissects the data to get to the real point. **It's about the relationship — relationship with Jesus.**

Even among our littlest disciples – *toddlers through elementary /middle school years* – introducing them to Jesus, and inspiring faith and belief, requires consistent attention throughout childhood.

The parish and school support parents and families with a range of ministries and specific content designed to help children invite Jesus into their hearts and minds.

LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME

Coordinator of religious education Menchie Cabrera conveys an overarching philosophy for children's faith formation.

selves in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



"It is life-long learning about God," she explains emphasizing, "it is a lifestyle."

Menchie converses about ways to echo Jesus' "*come to me*" invitation through parish offerings for children. Teachers create faith experiences at all grade levels, encouraging our Catholic faith as *a way of life*, she explains.

JESUS LOVES ME – By the time a child enters first grade and on through fourth grade, parents can choose to have their children attend Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) during selected Masses. Father invites the children forward for a blessing and dismisses them from Mass for a short time. They go to hear the Gospel in age-appropriate lessons, encountering Jesus in his Word.

RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE – Formal Children's Faith Formation (CFF) classes introduce prayer and faith teachings, and prepare children to receive sacraments. Year after year, first through sixth grade, children learn more about Jesus gradually—*how our faith is a beautiful response to God's love.*

SERVICE – Children in fourth grade and above may be trained as altar servers. For many, it is their first calling to service in the faith community. Training brings children closer to Jesus and his Real Presence in the Eucharist as they learn the rites and rituals of the Mass.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS – At the earliest ages when families bring their children to Kinderchurch, toddlers and children through the age of four are "busy" playing and singing while parents attend Mass. Activities vary but the staple learning in these precious times is the Sign of the Cross. Children sense the reverence and the presence of Jesus as they bless them-

"They begin to know Jesus on a personal level," Menchie says sharing how children start to understand *who* Jesus is to them, on the playground, with friends or in their families. The idea of "relationship" becomes clearer.



"Every year builds upon the prior year," Menchie stresses. Non-consecutive enrollment hinders a child's ability to make their relationship with Jesus truly a way of life.

Service opportunities aligned with middle school years expose children to parish service ministries like Works of Mercy, Adopt-a-family and St. Vincent de Paul and initiate a mindset of outward discipleship serving brothers and sisters in Christ.

FAMILY CATECHESIS – Families with children enrolled in grades one through six have the added gift of Family Catechesis, or faith instruction. Parents and siblings witness and model their love for Jesus together as they participate in

URE OUR LITTLEST DISCIPLES?

TALKING TO JESUS



For students attending St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, religious education, liturgical celebrations and faith traditions are woven through the curriculum just as is the concentrated effort to practice virtue in all aspects of life. The practice of religion, indeed, is a natural *human* virtue that transforms the *supernatural* virtue of FAITH into relationship with Jesus.

Vice principal Sara Brilz comments, "We want to help bring about a personal relationship with Jesus." She describes built-in time every day to talk with Jesus.

"We implemented a **DAILY EXAMEN**," Sara says of the 1:40 p.m. pause on the school campus signaled with chimes over the intercom.

"It's a few minutes with the Lord," Sara says adding that children know the personal time is met with reverence, stillness and quiet "to build friendship with Jesus." Sara shares how these periods of grace are reinforced by teachers and staff members using clear language to convey to students, "you are talking to Jesus now" for

guidance, to give thanks, for "whatever you need at that moment."

As the Daily Examen helps students connect with Jesus and build their spiritual selves, Sara indicates they also move to an ever-growing understanding and image of discipleship. It ties intricately to service.

"We teach that **SERVICE** is lifelong," Sara mentions pointing to the service projects for all grade levels as a way to bring to life the fullness of a "servant heart." Students, with their families, put into action everything that their relationships with Jesus urge them to do, serving those in need with compassion. The students make presentations on their service work creating additional teaching moments so that the impressions of discipleship permeate throughout the school. Beyond these presentations, Principal Marci Greene may ask spontaneously during assemblies, "*Can you think of a time when you've practiced virtue?*"

"We hope to show what discipleship looks like," Sara says of the school culture, pleased that little disciples are everywhere. †

Family Catechesis Nights several times a year. As children participate in their classes, parents meet separately on the same selected topic. Everyone comes together to share a meal and engage in a project that reinforces the lesson.

"Last year, the focus was prayer and bringing Christ into your home," Menchie describes. She tells how families made candles, a prayer plate, a cross and a rosary for their prayer space at home.

The annual theme for family catechesis changes every year within a six-year cycle.

AT-HOME CATECHESIS –

Last year marked the beginning of "take home" lessons to engage the family further without an onsite expectation. Some lessons occur solely at home with parents and children working together on a topic.

Menchie applauds the "home" component as another way for parents to engage and witness faith to their children.

"Reinforcement is at home, not here," she explains, giving families a chance to share in the language of faith, understand the love in their hearts, and the fingerprint of God.

THE SPIRIT WITHIN US –

Preparing for the sacrament of confirmation in the 7th and 8th -grade years, youth unpack a deeper understanding of their faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit. With greater spiritual maturity, children take their faith to a new level, listening to Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit. †



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Practice the faith ...
Awaken
THE SOUL

THE HINTON FAMILY
On vacation WITH GOD

Lisa and David Hinton never leave home without God. As they raised their four children over 25 years, whether on family vacations, out-of-town soccer matches, or road trips and visits to colleges, God was, *and is*, there traveling with them — *ever-present, on their minds, as central to their life and time "away," as when at home.*

"We always look up the closest Catholic church to where we will be," Lisa says of their travel routine or, in the case of return visits to their favorite spots, they know well their parish "home" away from Good Shepherd.

"Just last weekend, we visited our family cabin," Lisa recalls fondly referring to Our Lady of the Sierra in Arnold, California within the Diocese of Stockton. They love the quaint mission parish and its interface with nature. The church's small size accommodates overflow in a serene outdoor area adjacent to the Nave.

When they visit their older children, now in college, the Hintons pack up for some interstate travel and amaz-

ing Catholic churches. In Phoenix, Arizona, they attend both Ss. Simon and Jude Cathedral and St. Mary's Basilica. In Portland, Oregon, they make a point to visit the beautiful Mount Angel Seminary.

On past trips to Southern California, the family planned visits to St. Michael's Abbey (Norbertine Fathers) in Orange County and the Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, a Benedictine Monastery. Any time the Hintons go through California cities with any one of the state's 21 historic missions, they sidetrack to tour and see these longstanding edifices of faith — such as Carmel Mission Basilica, Mission San Rafael Arcángel, Mission San Fernando Rey de España and Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

"It's interesting to notice the differences and dynamics of other dioceses," Lisa shares expressing the beauty of a universal Catholic faith practiced everywhere but also the vibrancy and uniqueness of other

regions and states.

Whether attending a Mass, visiting for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament or seeing the grounds of Catholic churches, seminaries and sites, it is "a time to pause and be present," Lisa conveys.

The Hintons also ensure other faith routines are practiced as usual while on the road.

"Of course, prayer before meals

and at bedtime," Lisa says before she describes what can be up to 12 hours in the car.

"They all know that if they're in the car with me, the radio is tuned to *Relevant Radio*," she quips appreciating the range of Catholic radio programming. The whole family engages as they listen to compelling content and lively podcasts. *And time flies. . .because God travels with them, always in the driver's seat.*



The Hinton Family enjoying God's creation in Arnold, CA where they find respite, togetherness and Christ's presence attending Mass at Our Lady of the Sierra mission parish while on vacation.