



the soul & let your spirit fly

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

CULTIVATING A FOREVER FAITH

First things first: it begins (*and must continue*) with Jesus

Handing on faith
to our
children –
from one
generation
to the next –
seems to be
more challenging
these days than
even just a few
decades ago.

We lament a world of external and transitory values which seriously threatens to rob hearts and souls of deeper spiritual fulfillment found only in relationship with Jesus.

How can we nurture and fortify our relationships with Jesus? In the youngest hearts, teen hearts, young adult hearts, maturing hearts and aging hearts? Like any relationship, it requires a commitment to search for intimacy with God.

“Faith is the solution” amid a sea of worldly distractions and competing priorities says Confirmation Preparation Coordinator Elizabeth Pott. “Excluding faith is not the answer,” she adds with hope that all families might recognize the singular importance of prioritizing their faith life above all else.

Religious Education Coordinator Menchie Cabrera agrees as she describes the breadth of formation offerings at Good Shepherd Catholic Church. “Not all parishes offer instruction for all grades,” she mentions stressing how families have resources at their disposal that provide support “from womb to tomb.”

“Support,” however, is a key word. Both Menchie and Elizabeth distinguish parish programs as complementary and supplemental to the sacred work of the “domestic church” where faith dwells. The Church teaches that parents are the first and primary educators of their children and that “Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith.” CCC 2226

Marci Greene, principal of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School echoes a similar message insisting that “once God is first, everything follows.” She makes this adage paramount among the teachers and staff who instruct over 300 students enrolled in the fully accredited school which serves Good Shepherd parish as well as St. Joseph and St. Maria Goretti parishes with preschool through eighth grade.

Marci also cites the importance of deploying a common language of virtue on campus and at home to foster a commitment to live the life that God wills for us. She shares her favorite St. Elizabeth Ann Seton quote to accentuate her point. “The first end I proposed

THE BODY OF CHRIST *The People of God*

Good Shepherd parish's clergy team includes three deacons, all of whom give selflessly in their ministries serving the people of God. Here, they share perspectives on how they perpetually renew their ENCOUNTERS with Christ.

Ordained June 30, 2018

Deacon Rommel Declines Sr.

“ In the Cursillo lay movement we are reminded to search for Christ in our environment. Each week I try to find Christ in prayer, in studying our Catholic faith in articles, books or various media and in the actions or activities which I am involved each week.



I encounter Christ as I pray for people in our parish. In saying the Liturgy of the Hours, Christ reminds me that we are not orphans or alone in our struggles, but that he carries the load of the world when we are weak.

I renew my encounter with Christ and his grace in the sacraments. . . by being present to those in front of me... whether it be my own family or those that God put in front of me each day. I often stop and reflect on the encounters each day to ask... “Christ was that you?”

“If you take the time to stop and reflect each day and ask the question, ‘where have I seen you today Christ?’ you will be surprised at the number of times you may have seen him.” – Dcn. Rommel

Ordained June 30, 2018

Deacon Al Llenos

“ I perpetually renew my encounter with Christ through prayer, contemplation, and reading texts that further strengthen my knowledge and faith. I pursue a truth that exalts Christ, and I pray for a humility that embraces the truth. When I find myself face-to-face with the poor, the marginalized, the widowed, the homeless, the abandoned... when I see their struggles, but also their hopes, that is when I personally encounter Jesus.

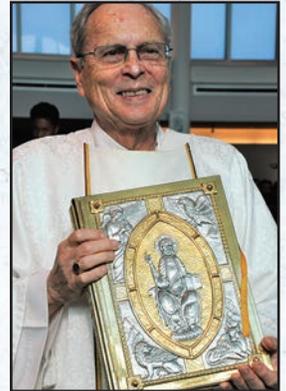


“I invite parishioners to go to church and listen to the Word of God; not just to listen by ear, but to read and ponder on it; to form the habit of meditating on it and opening their hearts to Jesus. And in all that they do, to pray, pray, PRAY that the Holy Spirit will renew their minds so that they may come to desire and accept the will of God. Serve God both in and out of the church: as a lector or an extraordinary minister of holy Communion; by attending a fundraising event for the parish; with volunteer work like feeding the homeless or donating for the less fortunate. When one imitates the Lord, he becomes more like the Lord, and we can get a glimpse of the love He has for us, and the friendship He offers us if we but take His hand.” – Dcn. Al

Ordained June 10, 2000

Deacon Bill Sousa

“ Renewing my personal encounter with Christ must include others as well.



The deacon proclaims the gospel, but must live it in his daily life. It is not just me and Christ, but others and Christ. The Eucharist is the key because it is the love Christ crucified to be shared; it is our example of the outpouring of love. *“Do this in memory of me.”*

My personal encounter hangs on my releasing the love of Christ and sharing it with others... and “washing the feet of my sisters and brothers.” And the great privilege of baptizing our new members of the Church (curtailed for me during the pandemic and afterward). I do encounter Christ by myself but with the help of others ... the poor, those who are prejudiced against, the dying ...

The deacon proclaims the Gospel, is a voice for the powerless and marginal, a witness to the Good News in the marketplace, a leader of public prayer, and sacrament of the Lord Jesus Christ who came not to be served but to serve. The deacon, in the image of Jesus, is called to wash the feet of his sisters and brothers. ~ from Dcn. Bill's ordination card, 2000

Remembering DEACON ED SMITH



“Deacon Ed was a people person,” says Doloris Smith his beloved wife of 64 years. “His faith meant everything to him,” she adds describing a man with a “Franciscan heart” who lived Matthew 25:35-45 fully.

Ed served Good Shepherd Church faithfully from its earliest days in the 1990s when Mass was celebrated at Foulks Ranch Elementary School. He journeyed through every step of its growth anticipating the day when the permanent Church would be dedicated.

With the encouragement of then pastor Father Philip Wells, Ed pursued the diaconate ministry and was ordained in 2004 serving the parish for over 16 years as a treasured clergy member and friend.

Doloris, who also served the parish in countless ministries and as sacrament coordinator for many years, reflects on the characteristics well-known by the parish community. “He was so caring and led by example,” she says citing his 12 years working at Loaves and Fishes in Sacramento at Friendship Park. He also volunteered for the Consortium of Hospitals giving relief to hospice caregivers, and in prison ministry in Folsom. Doloris laughs as she tells how often the incarcerated would jokingly ask if he might hear their

Let's Gather

AND AWAKEN THE JOY!

In the smiles and greetings of brothers and sisters in Christ, we gather with joy, in faith, hope and love, ready for fellowship, fun and hospitality! Mark your calendars with gratitude and praise God as we gather.

Thank you Alejandro Marquez!

Parishioners welcomed

seminarian Alex in early summer months as he immersed himself in parish life and previewed his future priestly vocation. He participated in Masses and *Let's Gather* activities lending his help for Movie Night and Let's Make a Splash pool party. Please keep Alex and all seminarians in your prayers as they discern their vocation! Alex returns to his college studies at Mount Angel Seminary in Oregon. Learn more about vocations and diocesan seminarians at scd.org/vocations.



Family Movie Night & Dinner

– This June event was a hit! Hundreds of parishioners gathered on the plaza to watch Disney's "Abominable" under the stars and enjoy a hot dog dinner. Kids lounged in inflatable kiddie pools while "kids-at-heart" brought lawn chairs and blankets. The

popcorn, of course, made it extra special – just like the theater! There were big smiles and no complaints. Everyone enjoyed being together and reuniting after a long absence from such gatherings. Most important, attendees offered generous donations – 8 boxes – of school supplies for Mustard Seed School, a free private school for children who are currently homeless and whose parents are accessing services through Sacramento's Loaves and Fishes.

Let's Make a Splash – The July parish pool party at Laguna Creek Sports Club offered families a chance to cool off amid hot summer temperatures, and enjoy snacks and games, too. Some kids even had adults dodging water balloons – all in good fun! Attendees shared great comments of appreciation recognizing the Club staff for their kindness and helpfulness during this first-of-its kind neighborly splash event. In solidarity with the homeless guests of Loaves and Fishes enduring the heat, parishioners donated refillable water bottles, bottled water and sunscreen.

**For most Let's Gather events, parishioners are invited to participate in a corresponding charitable endeavor – as St. Teresa of Avila reminds, be the hands and feet of Jesus, encountering Him in each other.*

"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world."
– St. Teresa of Avila

COMING UP NEXT!

Sunday, September
26
2021

Ministries
in Motion

Reminiscent of Good Shepherd's annual festival, Ministries in Motion brings back carnival booths and games! Our valued ministries will take charge and deliver oodles of fun with lots of prizes. A family friendly event on the plaza from 10 to 3 p.m. Free lunch!

Saturday, October
30
2021



Trunk or Treat

A family-friendly event especially for children (ages 2 - 12) to trick-or-treat in a safe/fun environment. Sign up to have a decorated trunk and hand out candy! All minors must be accompanied by an adult. Food and drinks available. After the 5 p.m. vigil Mass.

Check the bulletin and parish website for details as events approach.

Save these dates!		12 2021
CALENDAR <i>of upcoming events</i>		"Make & Take" Craft Event
December Joy 2021 Adopt-A-Family	Friday, January 14 2022 Game Night/ Bingo	Friday, February 11 2022 Date Night
Saturday, March 26 2022 March Madness	Sunday, April 10 2022 Easter Egg Hunt	Saturday, May 21 2022 Let's Gather at the Table Family Dinner

“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

(Continued from page 1)

Matthew 19:14

in our daily work is to do the will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner he wills it; and thirdly to do it because it is his will,” she reads aloud confident in the advice of the school’s patron. Recognizing the will of God translates to Christ-like actions at school, at home, in life.

The Office of Religious Education and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School leaders and catechists work tirelessly and collaboratively to instill and inspire authentic faith throughout the community.

Encountering Christ in Catholic Faith Formation (CFF)

At every level, catechists strive to present age-appropriate instruction and activities which cultivate faith and position youth to encounter Christ in personal and meaningful ways. From late September through the end of May up to 900 youth move through the springtime of their personal spiritual journey.

- *Kinderchurch* introduces our youngest parishioners (18 months to Kindergarten) to simple faith concepts with an intensive parent collaboration component. “Through prayer, song, crafts and play, children begin to encounter the love of Christ” in their interactions and activities Menchie explains.

- *Children’s Liturgy of the Word (CLOW)* continues this mission with the option for all children in grades 1 through 4 attending 9 a.m. Sunday Mass to hear the gospel in words and language suitable for their spiritual development.
- *Students in Grades 1-6* participate in formal religious instruction once a week. Trained catechists align class material to sacramental preparation, creed, prayer and morality in age-appropriate contexts.
- *One Eight/Edge* programs for students in grades 7 and 8 combine preparation for the sacrament of confirmation (One Eight) with youth ministry (Edge). Transforming acts of service and heightened awareness of discipleship intensify during these two years.

Menchie reflects on preparing children for the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist. The two year commitment in grades 1 and 2 are “their first moments of grace,” she observes every year without fail. She watches little ones’ first encounters with Jesus, as they receive Him in their hearts, experiencing and internalizing the emotion, even shedding tears as they comprehend the magnitude of their First Communion. Returning to their pews they read a prayer in silence, initiating a life-long practice of reverence and love of Jesus and his sacrifice.

“The first year focuses on each child’s

relationship with God,” Menchie says with emphasis on creating a friendship and the necessity of building upon that relationship. She describes the second year content as sharing the beauty of a merciful God in the context of learning to forgive and asking for forgiveness. The mystery of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist marks the centerpiece of preparation for first Holy Communion.

The journey to a more noticeable spiritual maturity continues in grades 3 through 6. These years are as imperative in one’s formation as is the day-to-day awareness of Christ in our lives at home, school, play or work. They remind a student – *and the whole family* – that the seed of faith requires ongoing cultivation if it is to be a forever faith.

Preparing for the sacrament of confirmation honors the development of young teens and the responsibility they will assume for their continued spiri-

Prayer After Communion

*You have come to my heart, dearest Jesus,
I am holding You close to my breast;
I’m telling You over and over,
You are welcome, My Dearest Guest.
I Love You, I love You, my Jesus,
O please, You must know that I love You,
But I am sure that you like to be told.
I’ll whisper, “I love You, my Jesus.”
And ask that we never may part;
I love You, O kind, loving Jesus
And press You still nearer my heart.
And when I shall meet You in Heaven,
My soul then will lean on Your breast;
And You will recall our fond meetings,
When You were my Dearest Guest.*

tual growth. "One Eight comes from Acts 1:8," Elizabeth explains associating the scripture verse to the program name but more so to the new mission of the confirmandi. She prays that the meaning and power of the sacrament will resonate throughout teens' lives, and that it may also reignite the spirituality of those around them as they witness and "see" the face of Christ while carrying out acts of service and works of mercy within the community.

But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses...

Acts 1:8

Encountering Christ at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic School

As principal, Marci views her vocation as essential in forming and supporting teachers and staff. "I make sure they are all comfortable in their own faith," she says knowing how they become active witnesses to students. And when they live and share their personal encounters with Christ, it prompts awareness and greater understanding of the treasury of faith for everyone.

The school also facilitates – and cultivates – lifelong faith in its students with its Disciple of Christ Education in Virtue™ program. Created by Dominican sisters and mandated by the Diocese of Sacramento for its Catholic elementary schools, the Virtue program expounds on the Catechism's attentiveness to human virtue.

"Forming kids in virtue fosters discipline," Marci suggests indicating that "a little person is developing and learning what God wants us to do." The environment acknowledges struggle

and mistakes but seeks the path of virtue to resolve issues. Further, the Virtue program integrates well with school-wide learning expectations and academic curriculum weaving grace and virtue into all aspects of life.

"It gives them the language to be disciples," Marci affirms further connecting virtue to Catholic Christian identity and the way of Christ. Every month after a designated all-school Mass, teachers and staff members highlight virtuous actions, calling attention to students or adults who demonstrate virtue by presenting them with certificates. In doing so, the school reinforces Christ-like, virtuous behavior and by extension, opens up endless possibilities for encountering Jesus.

*"Children in turn contribute to the growth in holiness of their parents."
CCC2227*

"The first end I proposed in our daily work is to do the will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner he wills it; and thirdly to do it because it is his will."

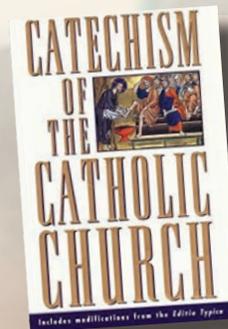
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Not just for kids

Across the church grounds and school campus, smiles beam and hearts leap with joy at the sight of blossoming faith in youth and adults. When faith is embraced as a life-long adventure with Christ, it shows.

"How we model our faith is important," Elizabeth suggests. Marci, too, intimates how all faith role models inspire the spirit of a young disciple in living a life of Christian faith, hope and love.

Cultivating a forever faith is not just for kids. It takes commitment and a willingness to be awed by the mystery of Christ's love, enamored with his availability and presence, and awareness of his generosity and grace.



The Catechism of the Catholic Church is an INDISPENSIBLE resource for families!

Here are key sections related to this story:

CCC 2201 – 2233 - *The family within God's plan*

CCC2214 - *The duties of children*

CCC2221 - *The duties of parents*

CCC2223 - *Parents as first and primary educators*

CCC2226 - *Education in the faith*

CCC2227 - *Children contribute to parents' growth in holiness*

CCC1810 - *Human virtue*

By their Fruits

Highlighting the good work and “fruits” of our parish ministries and parishioners.

YOU WILL KNOW THEM

IS JESUS IN YOUR VISION?

Rethinking ministry, inspiring fruitful engagement



Gary Watson
Ministry Coordinator

A healthy parish relies on healthy parish ministries; fruitful parish ministries inspired by the Holy Spirit and co-active in leading people to encounter Jesus.

“...it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him, not the same thing to walk with him as to walk blindly, not the same thing to hear his word as not to know it, and not the same thing to contemplate him, to worship him, to find our peace in him, as not to. It is not the same thing to try to build the world with his Gospel as to try to do so by our own lights.” – Pope Francis

In his first months at Good Shepherd parish, Father Michael recognized how the pandemic had dismantled any sort of ministry network and literally knocked the spiritual fruits from the proverbial tree of life. That’s why he tapped long-time parishioner Gary Watson to lead a new charge as Ministry Coordinator and to rethink ministry structures and opportunities. His aim? To put Jesus squarely in every parishioner’s vision and inspire ministries which facilitate authentic missionary discipleship.

“He is very centered on this,” Gary says of Father Michael’s big picture thinking. He recalls his compelling homily message just a few month’s back – *do we really*

want to just stay the same? In the wake of COVID-19 how can we grow, improve and answer Christ’s call?

Candidly, Gary reflects on an imperfect mindset of seeing Sunday Mass attendance as *enough*. Certainly, Sunday Mass is crucial but Gary asks rhetorically, “are we engaged with the community? With Christ?”

Gary sees ministry as the means for every parishioner to hone their personal encounter with Christ.

Last July, a series of gatherings for ministry leaders occurred to begin to rethink how Good Shepherd ministries might collaborate and work together to introduce parishioners to ministry encounters that ultimately 1) strengthen one’s own faith and spirituality, 2) revive a spirit of evangelization, and 3) build up the Kingdom of God in the family, the

church and the community.

Parishioners will see some changes as ministry leaders think “outside the box,” re-aligning and revisioning as Gary encourages formation, inclusivity and the meaningful “good that comes from participation.”

At the core of Gary’s work as ministry coordinator is a powerful if not convicting question. “Is Jesus in your vision?”

HELPING YOU PUT JESUS SQUARELY IN YOUR VISION!

Ministries are striving to be:

Time-aware – Finding ways to value your time and needs so you can make time for ministry.

Inclusive – Eliminating “silos,” and creating small, spiritual and committed communities of purposeful missionary disciples.

Welcoming – Inviting and engaging each other in the joy of faith.



MADE ANEW
 GOD MAKES ALL THINGS NEW
 Rev 22:1

Young Adult Ministry

**FIAT MEMBERS OFFER
 RESOUNDING YES TO
 CHRIST'S INVITATION**



*Theresa Maalouf
 FIAT co-lead*



Parishioner
Theresa Maalouf,
 26, reveals her
 love for Christ
 with every word.

There is a warm exuberance in her voice which speaks devotedly about her faith. She grew up attending Good Shepherd Church and received her sacraments here. Her refreshing faith lens seems to defy alarming *statistics about upcoming generations' disaffiliation with the Church.

And while the numbers appear to be true, Theresa and fellow FIAT ministry leaders know the truth of Christ. They want to share it widely with young adults and possibly change those statistics in our little corner of the world. These young missionary disciples offer a shining example of evangelization and a hope that their peers will find fellowship, community and encouragement in their company.

* A Pew Research Center study reports that 79% of those who drift away from faith leave before the age of 23. A Notre Dame study suggests as few as 7% of young people raised in the Church practice their faith.

Theresa talks about long-time friends and co-leaders Gabriel Manela, 29, and AJ Alvarado, 32, with great admiration. There is a deep respect among them.

"FIAT evolved from a more general diocesan young adult ministry," Theresa explains detailing the group's initial focus on quarterly "Theology on Tap" programs in Sacramento. But earlier this year during Lent, with the world still locked in the grip of pandemic, FIAT centered its focus in Elk Grove, meeting on Wednesday evenings and beginning their gatherings with confession and adoration – "to be in Christ's presence."

By June, the group approached Father Michael to propose FIAT as a formal ministry of Good Shepherd parish. With his blessing, they recommitted to the Wednesday program launched during Lent which stresses the beauty of encountering the Lord weekly, followed by dinner, games, meditation, or various other activities to move participants closer to Christ. Each week they welcome about 15 young adults – high school graduates to age 39 – to their non-threatening environment where hearts are made anew. Their doors are open.

As friendships develop, people want to stay "and pursue holiness," Theresa suggests. She senses a yearning and an "authentic vulnerability" among young adults keenly aware of "something missing" in their lives – something found only when encountering Christ.

FIAT advocates personal holiness through five pillars: *holistic formation, authentic friendships, intentional discipleship, vocational discernment and a deeper encounter with Christ.*

Father Michael recently appointed Theresa to the parish council. She will represent the voice and perspective of young adults seeking Christ and a meaningful faith life.

✉ fiat.ya.eg@gmail.com
 📷 @fiat_ya
 📘 "Fiat - Catholic Young Adults"





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 TO MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST ?

Missionary discipleship always *begins* with an authentic encounter with Christ. Our own personal encounters prepare us to *lead others* to encounter Christ.

✝ **Through the Church**, we experience Christ in all types of prayer, the sacraments and especially the Eucharist, adoration, scripture, and works of mercy.

✝ **Within the family**, we learn how to live a Christian life of prayer, love and forgiveness in communion with other families and society.

✝ **In others**, we reach out and share faith, witnessing Christ and our experience of him to proclaim the Good News!

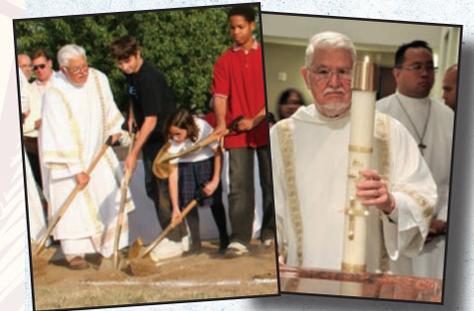
As members of the Church, we also intentionally connect our encounters to all of salvation history, recognizing more fully our personal call to missionary discipleship.

“This encounter must be constantly renewed by personal testimony, the proclamation of the kerygma (the message of salvation of the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ), and the missionary action of the community.”

*Living as Missionary Disciples
 USCCB evangelization resource 2017*

For you

- Visit the Good Shepherd parish website and the [“Missionary Discipleship”](#) drop down menu for resources. GSCCEG.ORG
- Establish a free account for [“Formed”](#) (on our website’s Quick Links). Unlock an extensive on demand library of Catholic media for family formation and entertainment.



(Cont... from page 2) confessions. Ed would quip back in good fun, “Sure, but it will cost you \$5!”

Within parish life, Ed was a long-time member of Knights of Columbus, sat on the parish council and various other committees, and provided his expertise, insight and history to major events and festivals.

Indeed, his humor, initiative, commitment, and caring for his fellow brothers and sisters endeared Ed to everyone who knew him. He blessed Good Shepherd parish community with his whole being.

Ed passed away last November after fighting cancer and Parkinson’s disease.

*Deacon Edward Smith (1937-2020)
 forever in our hearts.*