

Awaken

the soul & let your spirit fly

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

THE HEAVENS ARE TELLING THE GLORY OF GOD

NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL points to deeper – more important – realities



The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops launched a **National Eucharistic Revival** last June on the Feast of Corpus Christi. The launch marked the beginning of a three-year movement to

restore understanding and devotion to the Eucharist.

Emphasizing that the Eucharist offers a real, merciful encounter with the Risen Christ, Diocese of Sacramento **Bishop Jaime Soto** wrote in [Catholic Herald Magazine July/August 2022](#), “The real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist invites us to be truly present to him. Faith reveals his presence to us. The nearness of his divine charity compels a humble reverential presence from us.”

In this first year, the **Dioc-**

san Revival phase prepares and equips the diocese to lead the faithful forward through the Revival. From June 11, 2023, to July 17, 2024, the grassroots **Parish Revival** phase will delve deeper into Christ’s Real Presence amid a culture often at odds with faith. It will strive to “foster Eucharistic devotion at the parish level, strengthening our liturgical life through faithful celebration of the Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, missions, resources, preaching, and organic movements of the Holy Spirit.” The third year brings the **National Revival** to the forefront with the National Eucharistic Congress in July 2024 in Indianapolis, Indiana initiating a year of mission to share the gift of the Eucharistic Lord with the world, and leads us to the Church’s Jubilee year of 2025.

National Revival chairperson Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Bishop of the Diocese of Crookston in Minnesota, describes the revival as a “return to the source and summit of the faith...the foundation from which everything flows and to which everything returns.”

During a “Living the Call” podcast interview, Bishop Cozzens explained why the Revival came to be, citing a 2019 Pew Research study as the impetus. The study showed that nearly 70 percent of Catholics do not believe in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist either because they do not know about this core teaching of the Catholic faith, or because they fundamentally reject it.

“The bishops saw a crisis in belief, and they wanted to

(Story continues on page 4)

The heavens declare
the glory of God;
the firmament proclaims the
works of his hands. Day unto
day pours forth speech;
night unto night whispers
knowledge.

Psalms 19:2-3



To Hear Jesus
To Love Jesus

Towards an ever-deepening
relationship with Christ

THRESHOLDS of Conversion

Initial Trust - A positive association with Jesus Christ, the Church, a Christian believer, or something identifiably Christian. The bridge of trust moves people closer to God.

Spiritual Curiosity - A sure intrigue with Jesus, his life and his teachings, with varying intensities from simple awareness to powerful desire.

Spiritual Openness - An openness to the possibility of personal and spiritual change.

Spiritual Seeking - A pronounced movement from passively seeking God to actively seeking to know God.

Intentional Discipleship - A decision to "drop one's nets," committing to follow Jesus in his Church, reordering life accordingly.



GETTING TO TRUST — Sue Kong shares her story "I didn't know what love is"

Sue Kong easily recalls her first instincts of trust in Christ and his Church. "I

remember a holy card of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane," she says of childhood memories of growing up in Hong Kong, attending Catholic school.

"Being at church in the sanctuary," she explains, offered a contrast to the city with its peacefulness. In the quiet of the church, she admired the statues and the Stations of the Cross.

Sue's family was not Catholic but that early exposure to the Church lived in her and "manifested in a way that I have not forgotten," she shares acknowledging a "back-of-mind" trust, albeit "superficial."

She moved to the United States at the age of 18, married and raised two daughters. She points to struggles as she tried to participate with her daughters at a neighbor's Christian church. "There was no harmony in the house," she says recounting her solitary effort to go to church.

By 2013, Sue attended a Baptist church for four or five years enjoying her friends and community. But a providential 2017 return

visit to Hong Kong led Sue to a profound threshold of conversion, an open door to grace.

"In a personal, one-to-one conversation with a former teacher, she reminded me of the Church that Christ established," Sue says still moved by the turning-point moment that was witnessed by her daughter and relatives.

"It was overwhelming, and I was anxious," Sue says revealing how she had "felt unworthy because I left the Church behind, and all those who taught me" for over 40 years.

Upon her return to Elk Grove, she attended daily Mass and "trusted" to introduce herself to then parochial vicar Father Edgardo Garcia. She was the last person in line to greet him.

I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

Matthew 25:35

"I told him I was new and that I would like to be baptized," she remembers. "He was so happy," Sue says, describing the moment and how he immediately connected her with the RCIA leader.

Sue prepared for many months before

it was time to join other catechumens in the formal Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) preparation. She met many parishioners who encouraged her and helped her in her faith journey.

"I was so blessed to have met them," Sue confides revealing how individuals taught her prayers and welcomed her.

"They showed me that Christ is love and mercy in our lives," she imparts admitting "I didn't know what love is." Thinking back on those days, Sue realizes "love is a decision to help others...it is compassion for others."

Sue exudes gratitude for her experiences and opportunities to "see Christ in others."

"Others have helped me to get to know them," Sue says of the open and hospitable nature of parishioners who are good listeners, understanding and willing to celebrate life with others. "I was able to draw close to God by praying with them," Sue says with appreciation for "everyone, all the friends."

"Let God accompany you," Sue advises with peace in her heart. "I feel my faith much more than before," she affirms. Today, Sue participates in an online rosary group, and the St. John Caregiver, Divine Mercy and St. Josephine Bakhita ministries. She also serves as a 6th-grade assistant catechist and helps with RCIA.



Faith is the realization
of what is hoped for
and evidence of things
not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

Revere, Adore, Encounter CHRIST

(Continues from page 1)

address that crisis,” Bishop Cozzens shared also stressing “a kind of crisis across our culture where it’s a difficult time to be a Christian in our country and... as Catholics, to be strengthened in this time... to focus on what’s at the heart.”

Initiatives & tools seamlessly coalesce

Good Shepherd Catholic Church’s journey continues and its commitment to *missionary discipleship* seamlessly dovetails with the Church’s *Eucharistic Revival*.

“Now, we’re working on the spiritual” enrichment of the faithful says Father Michael Vaughan of the parish’s intentional efforts to move beyond “maintenance mode” to a Christ-centered *stewardship* focus.

The Eucharistic Revival also calls the faithful to holiness and further accentuates the documents of Vatican II and the message of Sacramento diocesan [Bishop Jaime Soto’s Call to Holiness pastoral letter of April 2021](#). The terminology of the Church today presents initiatives and tools which seamlessly coalesce and help transform us – *convert us* – along a continuum toward spiritual reality.

“It’s a reminder to *not* take the Lord out of the conversation,” Father Michael emphasizes suggesting that the world tempts and coaxes humanity. Instead, he poses a perspective that “*sees* the exterior *and* the interior, the natural *and* the supernatural.”

Why a Eucharistic Revival?

- **Address** the crisis of non-belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
- **Confront** the crisis across a culture where it is a difficult time to be a Christian in our country
- **Strengthen** Catholics and help them to focus on what is at the heart of our faith – *the Eucharist*

“We may think [our faith] is crystal clear,” Father Michael suggests subtly alluding to a “spiritual blindness, a spiritual deafness” that can undermine our response to God’s call. Instead, intentional work to grow interiorly and in relationship with Jesus takes us to the spiritual heights promised by Christ.

A sacramental worldview enlivens spiritual reality

Bishop Cozzens cites Psalm 19 – *the heavens are telling the glory of God* – indicating that human life and human experiences point to deeper,

more important, invisible realities. He goes further to say, “the body reveals the soul” and the soul “can be known.”

Yet, to his disappointment, the culture increasingly has a “way of viewing the world as a separated reality from God” and God is “outside of reality.”

Sacramental living and Eucharistic living **reorient** the faithful to purer, ever-intensifying belief. Indeed, a sacramental worldview strengthens and makes new the spiritual reality for which this earthly reality exists.

For more information on the National Eucharistic Revival, and to sign up for *Heart of the Revival* emails, visit: www.eucharisticrevival.org/

For information on the Diocesan phase, visit: www.scd.org/eucharist

Read and learn more about the Eucharist by consulting these Church documents:

- The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church (www.eucharisticrevival.org/learn-resources)
- [Sacramentum Caritatis of the Holy Father Benedict XVI](#)
- [Ecclesia de Eucharistia of His Holiness Pope John Paul II](#)

Real Presence,
Real Life

Did you know?

The monstrance is a sacred liturgical vessel dating back to the 13th century. From the Latin word “monstrare,” which means “to show,” the monstrance displays the consecrated host for adoration and veneration.

Over time, the monstrance design took the shape of sun rays “to highlight and draw attention to the king of kings, Jesus Christ, present in a real and substantial way under the appearances of bread. This is why a monstrance is typically gold and ornamented in a special way, in recognition of the divine mystery it holds and reveals.”

Source: Aleteia, June 2017

**THINK OF WHAT IS ABOVE,
NOT OF WHAT IS ON EARTH.**

Colossians 3:2

IN THE EUCHARIST



Real Presence, Real Life

**Valerie Ramos co-chair of
DIOCESAN PHASE OF
Eucharistic Revival**

Good Shepherd parishioner Valerie Ramos serves as co-chair of the Diocesan Eucharistic Revival committee with Father Michael O'Reilly, Rector of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

Valerie says the diocesan Revival theme of *Real Presence, Real Life* brings “focus to Jesus’ true presence in body, blood, soul and divinity in the Eucharist” and also indicates the importance of being “Eucharistic people, living it in every area of our lives.” Three subthemes will help guide parishes during the parish phase:

1. *An encounter with Christ*
2. *The sacrament of charity*
3. *A welcoming Church*

Valerie is thrilled that Good Shepherd Parish has already formed a committee. Their work marks an early start to educating parishioners in preparation for the Parish Phase of the Revival which begins next June 2023.



Parish Eucharistic Revival Committee from left to right: Leela Mattathil, Ninfa Campomanes, Marbe Agmata, Donna Gutierrez and Julie Danielson

PARISH FORMS EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL COMMITTEE (ERC)

Just weeks after the official launch of the Eucharistic Revival last June, Father Michael formed a committee devoted to leading the parish through the Revival. Ministry leads from the Sacred Silence Adoration Ministry, the Vocations Ministry and the Evangelization Outreach Ministry have been tapped to collaborate and coordinate in bringing meaning and education to parishioners regarding the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Their work offers a perfect example of ministries working together to build up the Kingdom of God.

For example, just recently in August the committee brought “*The Eucharistic Miracles of the World Exhibit*” by Blessed Carlo Acutis for five days. This significant event gave parishioners a chance to familiarize themselves with real Eucharistic miracles from around the world while also venerating the first class relic of the “holy millennial” who dedicated his life’s work to cataloging the miracles before he died of cancer at the young age of 15.

The ERC will arrange at least two Eucharistic processions in 2023 on Holy Thursday and the Feast of Corpus Christi. Processions give public witness to the veneration of the Eucharist and signify the spiritual journey to eternal life. The ERC also plans to introduce several programs to help Catholics understand core teachings on the Eucharist. Follow the parish website and bulletin for details!

- A series of five episodes of “*Presence - The Mystery of the Eucharist*,” presented by Formed
- The “*Amen*” app for download and easy access to special topics and media specific to the Eucharist, offered by Augustine Institute
- A *free, two-hour online course* presented by Bishop Cozzens, chair of the National Eucharistic Revival, intended to help people understand the new USCCB document on the Eucharist. Presented by Revive Parishes with Augustine Institute.

Jesus said to them,
“Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son
of Man and drink his blood, you
do not have life within you.
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks
my blood has eternal life, and I will
raise him on the last day. For my
flesh is true food,
and my blood is true drink.
Whoever eats my flesh
and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him.
Just as the living Father sent me
and I have life because of the
Father, so also the one who feeds
on me will have life
because of me.”
John 6:53-57

Fruitful Discipleship

... blooms year-round in Good Shepherd's ministries.

Learn more as we feature one of our ministry alliances in each issue.



What does it mean to be Spiritual?

Catholic spirituality is described in many ways but all schools of spirituality recognize a central purpose: **to grow in holiness.**

In an article for *Our Sunday Visitor* by writer/editor John Collins, he implores, "We must understand that our spiritual growth comes from one source, that we grow spiritually in one way alone: by accepting the infinite outpouring of love and grace offered to us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"For the Catholic, spiritual growth can be nothing but a continual turning to Christ. In this we come to understand an astonishing truth, that spiritual growth is really a growth in relationship, a constant deepening of our relationship with Christ."

Read John Collins's feature at: osvnews.com/2010/09/01/what-every-catholic-needs-to-know-about-spiritual-growth/

He further writes how turning to Christ and growing in spirituality involves essential Catholic pathways including:

- True participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
- Experience of Christ's loving embrace in confession
- Love of the Blessed Mother as our constant companion
- A life of prayer
- Encountering Christ in Scripture
- Study the holiness of saints and pray for their intercession
- Grow in love for others

"...the life of a Catholic makes no sense unless it is a life of constant spiritual growth. To cease to grow in our spiritual lives is to become indifferent to God, dead to Christ's constant loving call to us. It is our duty — and it should be our joy — to strive to grow toward Christ in the way that a flower grows toward the sun."



HOW CAN I GET CLOSER TO GOD?

Helping the faithful grow in their spiritual lives



A timeless question – *how do I get closer to God?*

"You have to look deeper into yourself and make an assessment," suggests Len Beltran chair of the Spirituality Alliance. As the point of connection for eight ministries focused on growing spiritually, Len talks candidly about how individuals can examine their own needs.

Len indicates that an honest look at "what you need personally" is required and an "openness to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit."

Len concedes that it can be a difficult journey when "we experience desolation and vicissitudes," but a commitment to grow in faith brings us closer to Christ and ever-closer to who we are called to be.

"There is not one concrete answer," Len cautions in a world of quick remedies. God's plans are custom-made for every individual. "Some are enlightened with an event," Len explains while for others, spiritual growth is a "gradual process."

A devoted prayer life must exist, and Len describes prayers as "the practice of communication with God, person-to-person." She says there is no "one size fits all" formula but rather a range of prayer types and methods.

Trying and participating in spiritual ministries "at least once" can help one explore the depths of their heart. "Attend one session and see if God is calling you to the ministry," Len advocates.

"If you don't experience [them], you will not know and if you do not know, you cannot share [your faith]," Len says stressing the critical aspect of missionary discipleship – *sharing one's faith.*

Participating in ministry is analogous to living water irrigating seeds. Spiritual ministries nourish the soul and "all are Christ-centered," Len says.

The quest for a deeper spirituality and relationship with God should be strengthened with regular scripture reading and biblical prayer as this is "listening to God." Len also recommends accessing the free **Formed** media platform through the parish website for inspirational and informative content. "There are a lot of online resources," she adds.

Spiritual direction may also be right for many. Len encourages talking with the pastor to determine if it is the right path, and ensure that "a good daily prayer life" has rooted in one's life.

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in company with scoffers. Rather, the law of the LORD is his joy; and on his law he meditates day and night.

He is like a tree planted near streams of water, that yields its fruit in season; Its leaves never wither; whatever he does prospers.

Psalms 1:1-3

Spirituality

MINISTRIES AND MOVEMENTS OF PRAYER, DEVOTION AND INSPIRATION

Several Good Shepherd ministries give participants opportunities for growth in prayer life with special devotions to Christ, the Holy Spirit, or the Blessed Virgin Mary. *Divine Mercy Charismatic Group*, *Holy Spirit Novena*, *Our Lady of Fatima Prayer Group*, *Our Mother of Perpetual Help Devotion*, and *Santa Nino Prayer Group* all focus on prayer – novenas, vocal recitation and intercessory prayer – as ways to grow and discover the Lord’s will. Other ministries can be defined as movements, fraternal orders and spiritual communities committed to fellowship, support and spiritual growth. These include *Cursillo*, *St. Josephine Bakhita Black Catholic Ministry* and *Soldiers of St. Michael the Archangel*. All spiritual ministries are highlighted below. [Visit the parish website for more details!](#)

Divine Mercy Prayer Group

– Catholic Christian families dedicated to bringing Christ to families and families to Christ through praise and singing. The group also engages participants in bi-weekly Bible study and plans to coordinate a “Life in the Spirit” seminar September 17. They also coordinate the Divine Mercy Novena and the Feast of Divine Mercy on the Sunday following Easter.

Holy Spirit Novena

– This ministry promotes devotion to the Holy Spirit through prayer and worship, and attentiveness to the experience of the Holy Spirit within us. Every first Saturday at 8:40 a.m. in the church, the ministry offers prayers to the Holy Spirit. Ministry members also actively inspire, make known, receive, impart, and activate the gifts, fruits, works and fellowship of the Holy Spirit every second Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Youth Room. The group also leads the annual Novena to the Holy Spirit leading up to Pentecost at the conclusion of the liturgical season of Easter. Next year the Novena occurs May 19 – May 27, 2023. And always, this ministry interacts with the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry in building up the body of Christ.

Our Lady of Fatima Prayer Group

– With a mission to “propagate and spread devotion to Our Lady of Fatima through novenas, the rosary and prayers,” this ministry guides the faithful in responding to Our

Lady of Fatima’s urgent desire for all to “pray daily for the salvation of poor sinners and for the whole world.” Participants acknowledge the “challenge” of Mary’s message but emphasize it is an invitation to “go deeper, to pray often and with great fervor.” This group welcomes everyone to join together in prayer on the 13th of every month following the scheduled Mass of the day.

Our Mother of Perpetual Help Devotion

– This group promotes devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help with novena prayer after every Wednesday morning Mass and a spirit of joy in all ministerial work. Prayers focus on special needs, and the sanctity of marriage, asking for Our Mother’s intercession and help. The Feast day is June 27.

Santo Nino (Infant Jesus)

– This ministry celebrates the Feast of Santo Nino

in January annually. Mass and a procession of the Santo Nino occur with fellowship following. Throughout the course of the year, participants encourage and invite friends to bring the Santo Nino image into homes for one week with a family commitment to a daily rosary and a collection of recommended prayers, intended to deepen a family’s spiritual awareness and devotion to Jesus.

Cursillo – The Cursillo Movement is an international movement founded in Spain in 1940 by Eduardo Bonnin. Three core principles – *Christ, the person and friendship*– shaped his life and writings, and influenced what would become the Cursillo Weekend. The weekend is described as spiritually transformational inviting participants to recognize Christ as the center of their lives and discern on how the Holy Spirit calls us to use God-given gifts and talents to be Christ to others. The

monthly Swahili Mass, and special liturgies for Black Catholic History Month in November and Black History Month in February. Through fellowship the ministry strives to deepen relationships with Christ and others.

Soldiers of St. Michael the Archangel

– One of the parish’s newest ministries, this men’s fraternal order emphasizes brotherhood and calls men to be models of faith as they live out their lives as husbands, fathers and young men. The ministry also launched *Exodus90* and *Into the Breach* in 2022 to encourage men in their faith journeys and guide them to know and serve God. Attuned to the spiritual chaos of the world, ministry members are committed to daily conversion and missionary discipleship.



Ministry leads from left: Ninfa Campomanes, Len Beltran, Monica Small, Tony Cua, Myrna Sison, Reggie Steward, Susan Gonzales, Michael Patrick, Carmen Cua, Rhuel Lucina

Cursillo motto, “*Make a friend · Be a friend · Bring a friend to Christ,*” exemplifies a spirituality steeped in missionary discipleship and responsive to the call to holiness.

St. Josephine Bakhita Black Catholic Ministry

– This ministry honors Black Catholic history and culture and seeks to serve as educators and leaders in the parish while growing in faith and spirituality. Small group meetings allow for reflections, Bible study, prayer and the exchange of ideas through conversation. The ministry also is active in organizing the



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

Practice the faith ...

Awaken THE SOUL

“God MUST be above all, at the center of our family, our marriage, and our individual lives. My husband and I start each day on our knees, praising God, giving Him thanks and asking Him to dress us in His armor and equip us with His faithful tools. It is so important to us that our knees hit the ground first, before our feet do, because we want our steps to be prepared to walk in the light of Christ. We teach our children to do the same.

“As a family, we pray together either in the morning, afternoon or evening and before every meal. We teach the children to pray when they are feeling worried, anxious, and especially when they feel blessed. We also teach them to pray for others.

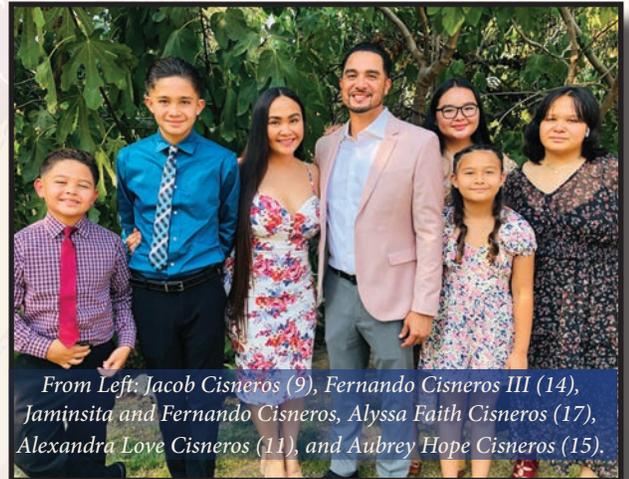
“There are nights before bed, we have discussions about worldly issues, politics and uncomfortable topics in the news or social media, and we compare it to the Word

of God. God gives us a duty as parents to make sure our children keep Him at the center of their lives, regardless of what direction this world may try to pull them.

“It is so important that our children know who Jesus is, and that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We have to stay on top of this because we care for their precious souls and we are called to teach them to lead others in the light of Christ.

“Before we rest our heads, my husband and I get on our knees together, talk to each other to see how we are doing and give it all to God in prayer. We give thanks, we give praise, we ask for forgiveness for any way we’ve fallen short in our day, we pray for our families, friends, our special intentions, and we ask for God to cleanse our feet and purify our minds, bodies, souls, hearts and

THE CISNEROS FAMILY *Christ in their hearts every day*



From Left: Jacob Cisneros (9), Fernando Cisneros III (14), Jaminsita and Fernando Cisneros, Alyssa Faith Cisneros (17), Alexandra Love Cisneros (11), and Aubrey Hope Cisneros (15).

spirits, before our heads hit the pillow. If He blesses us with another day, we awaken renewed with intentions to do better the next day. We are not perfect, but we aim to stand strong in our faithful convictions in everything we do and with everyone we come across everyday.

“Blessings to all and may we all strive to be more like Jesus and less like ourselves. All Glory to God!”

Jaminsita Cisneros