The **JOY of the GOSPEL**

EMBRACING THE POPE’S CALL TO ‘GO OUT TO THE PERIPHERIES’

6

Father Fredy Angel receives 2015–2016 Lumen Christi Award 24
When in Rome ...

Marking its 110th anniversary and its 105th anniversary as a papal society, Catholic Extension organized a pilgrimage to Rome to deepen its long-standing bonds with the pope and the Vatican.
Your mission, should you choose to accept it

OPE FRANCIS’ RECENT VISIT to the United States was a wonderful moment of encouragement and joy for us American Catholics and the missionary movement of Catholic Extension in particular. As you can see on this month’s cover and the photo on this page, during a Catholic Extension pilgrimage to Rome, we also had an extraordinary opportunity to meet the pope just a few weeks before his trip to this country.

The photo captures the moment right after I showed Pope Francis our Flat Francis image. I have to admit that when we first started this social media campaign, I was a little nervous that some people might misconstrue our lighthearted approach as irreverent, but when the pope saw it, he threw his head back and broke into a huge belly laugh.

Captured by many different news photographers in St. Peter’s Square that day, it made its way into print and digital media all around the world (even including Time and People magazines and CNN). It seemed to perfectly capture this pope’s wonderful, down-to-earth sense of humor and his profoundly joyful message of mercy and love that is at the core of the good news that we proclaim.

To learn more about Catholic Extension’s recent pilgrimage to Rome, please read the story beginning on page 6.

With this issue, we are taking a closer look at what it means to be missionaries. As a papal mission society, we are taking inspiration from the Church’s new saint of mission (page 32). Franciscan Friar Junipero Serra gave up a comfortable life as a professor to travel to the farthest “peripheries” of his day and dedicate his life
to proclaiming the Gospel to Native Americans in the New World.

Serra was a man compelled by his missionary dream. And similarly today, there is another man who has a missionary dream for the Church, and that is Pope Francis. In “The Joy of the Gospel,” he writes, ‘I dream of a ‘missionary option’ ... capable of transforming everything.” The pope says he wants to make everything in the Church “more mission-oriented” and to inspire a “constant desire to go forth.”

While we don’t sail to distant shores to bring Christ to places where He is not known, our missionary charge at Catholic Extension today is to “go forth” to this country’s margins to serve Catholic faith communities and help them to proclaim the risen Christ in their communities and society.

That call from Pope Francis to become more mission-oriented connects with our baptismal call as Christians to give witness to the transformative presence and action of the risen Christ in every one of us. We cannot be Catholic Christians without being missionary; and we cannot be a Catholic parish without being mission-centered and mission-driven. Going out of the gathering of the Christian community “to love and serve the Lord” is essential to the Eucharist.

By calling all of us to be “missionary disciples,” Pope Francis is bringing together the two commandments of loving God and loving our neighbor. As disciples we experience the love of God for us and we respond to the love of God by following Christ’s commandment to love our neighbor, to bond our lives with those in need.

Taking inspiration from Father Serra’s missionary example, we invite you to learn more about what we are calling today’s “California missions”—the many ongoing, wonderful and faith-building church communities in that state with whom Catholic Extension is privileged to partner (page 36).

And finally, we are delighted to introduce you to Catholic Extension’s 2015-2016 Lumen Christi Award recipient: Father Fredy Angel, a true missionary priest, who actually has traveled from the distant shores of Colombia to serve, unite and inspire a great rural Catholic community in southern Georgia (page 24).

A warm, genuine, pastoral, self-giving, hope-filled and joyful priest in the Pope Francis mold, Father Fredy truly brings the “light of Christ” to his community and beyond. I was honored to present the award to him and his community during a Nov 8 celebration in Ray City, Georgia.

We are taking a closer look at what it means to be missionaries. As a papal mission society, we are taking inspiration from the Church’s new saint of mission, Franciscan Friar Junípero Serra.

I hope that this issue of Extension magazine will move you to rededicate yourself to our joint mission of doing God’s work in the world. Just as Jesus sent out His disciples two by two, we too are called to walk together. What Catholic Extension does is to create that opportunity to walk two by two. As inspiring as Father Fredy is, he can’t do it alone. Let us join hands and walk with Father Fredy and the many other people with whom we work, who are the personal and palpable presence of Christ in their communities. They need us. And we need them.

Wishing you many blessings for the coming Advent and Christmas season, peace,

Rev. John J. Wall
PRESIDENT, CATHOLIC EXTENSION
Catholic Extension President Father Jack Wall and Chancellor Archbishop Blase Cupich recently led a spiritual pilgrimage to Rome. The pilgrimage marked Catholic Extension’s 110th anniversary and our 105th anniversary as a papal society.

On Sept. 2 the pilgrims met with Pope Francis. They had an opportunity to tell him that the movement of people that Catholic Extension represents is embracing the pope’s call to go out to the ‘peripheries’ and is bringing his message of hope and joy to those marginalized in the United States.

During the audience Archbishop Cupich presented Father Junípero Serra’s personal crucifix to Pope Francis (see related stories on pages 32 and 34).
Father Wall also introduced the pope to “Flat Francis,” and, as can be seen on this issue’s cover photo, the pope got a big laugh out of encountering his cartoon counterpart. More than 5,000 Catholics from all parts of the country participated in Catholic Extension’s Flat Francis campaign as a means to welcome Pope Francis to the United States.

Archbishop Cupich showed the pope the Fall 2015 issue of Extension magazine, which featured Pope Francis on the cover.
During an exchange with Franciscan Sister Katarina Schuth, one of the pilgrims, the pope made a special point of expressing his gratitude for U.S. women religious. He said, “Tell all the sisters in the U.S. that I think that they are doing an excellent job.” He then added, “Be sure to get some rest.”

Other pilgrims specifically mentioned the plight of migrants and refugees to the pope. Bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona, thanked Pope Francis for his strong advocacy on behalf of refugees. “He kept saying, ‘Pobrecitos, pobrecitos’—those poor struggling people,” Kicanas said. “He put his head down with sadness considering the plight of so many people fleeing dangers in their home country.” The pope acknowledged the pilgrims’ request for his prayers for refugees.

Both Pope Francis and his secretary of state, Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, blessed symbols the pilgrims brought to the Vatican from communities that Catholic Extension supports. The symbols were selected to represent some of the cultural and regional diversity of American Catholics.

They were: original artifacts from St. Junípero Serra’s mission (including his cross), representing ministry among California’s poorest communities; a special African cloth that is used by many African American communities for celebrations; water drawn from the Rio Grande river in holy water bottles bearing an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, representing the Catholic communities that serve the poorest of the poor at the U.S.-Mexico border; and beaded crosses handmade by Lakota people, symbolizing the nation’s Native Americans, whose communities Catholic Extension supports in more than 20 dioceses.

During the presentation of the symbols at a Mass with Cardinal Parolin, Father Wall recalled, “It was our Holy Father who said so pointedly that ‘the worst discrimination that the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care.’ These
words give great inspiration to our work as we accompany the poor in their faith journey. We firmly believe that the poor have much to teach us.”

Since the return of the pilgrims from Rome, Catholic Extension has been sharing those symbols with Catholics across the country.

Father Wall explained that the goal of that effort is “that they may be more united with the Holy See, and know of the Holy Father’s compassion and concern for them.”

Father Wall also gave Cardinal Parolin a report on the work of this papal society and after the Mass presented him with a composite photo mosaic made up of the Flat Francis photos American Catholics have shared with Catholic Extension (see page 41). Father Wall asked the cardinal to show the image and a photo album with some of the Flat Francis submissions to Pope Francis. The cardinal assured the pilgrims he would do so.

The pilgrimage occurred three weeks before the pope’s historic visit to the United States, and Father Wall expressed the hope that the pope’s time in this country be a “great moment of evangelization for our country.”
OUR FOUNDER, Father Francis Kelley, first envisioned Catholic Extension when, during lecturing tours across the United States, he discovered places and communities that were struggling to keep the Catholic faith alive. One experience in particular prompted him into action: his visit to Ellsworth, Kansas, where the rectory was a “little ‘shanty’ in the West, patched and desolate, above whose creaks and cracks the blizzard moans and chills;” and where the Catholic church was but a “shaky,” “tawdry” box.

Following the example of Protestant extension societies, the Catholic Church Extension Society was founded 110 years ago to help what Kelley called the “little outposts” and the “wings” of the Catholic Church. His vision became reality at a meeting in Chicago, which he recounted in his book The Story of Extension:

“One the 18th of October, 1905, nineteen men gathered in the home of the Archbishop of Chicago.” They were two archbishops, two bishops, eight priests and seven laymen. “They came from as far South as the Carolinas, as far West as the prairies, from as far Southwest as New Mexico, from as far North as the Great Lakes, and from as far East as the Atlantic. The laymen were lawyers, manufacturers, editors, captains of industry. ... They were united in their ardent love
for the Church.... The Catholic Church Extension Society was born of the generosity and zeal of these men.”

Over the next 110 years, Catholic Extension contributed more than $500 million ($1.2 billion in today’s dollars) to under-resourced mission dioceses across the United States—places where faith is thriving but resources are scarce.

Today we continue Father Kelley’s vision by building faith, inspiring hope and igniting change in the 94 mission dioceses we support.

During this anniversary year we will mark our 110 years in this magazine and on our website at www.catholicextension.org/110 by sharing unique items from our history. We will bring you historical photos, old Extension magazine content, inspiring stories, fun facts from our history, videos and much more.

Following on the heels of our successful Flat Francis social-media campaign, we are also launching a new social-media campaign called #Extend110 to attract new donors by encouraging them to “extend one 10” (one $10 bill) through Facebook, Twitter, and our website. Spread the word by inviting your friends to #Extend110 at give.catholicextension.org/110.
Offer the warmth of the love of Christ

From your great coastal cities to the plains of the Midwest, from the deep South to the far reaches of the West, wherever your people gather in the eucharistic assembly, may the pope be not simply a name but a felt presence, sustaining the fervent plea of the Bride: ‘Come, Lord!’ …

Perhaps you will be challenged by [the immigrants’] diversity. But know that they also possess resources meant to be shared. So do not be afraid to welcome them. Offer them the warmth of the love of Christ, and you will unlock the mystery of their heart. I am certain that, as so often in the past, these people will enrich America and its Church.

—Meeting with the bishops of the United States, Washington, Sept. 23

Jesus is joy

Keep smiling and help bring joy to everyone you meet. It isn’t always easy. Every home has its problems, difficult situations, sickness, but never stop dreaming so you can be happy. All of you here, children and adults, have a right to dream. … Wherever there are dreams, wherever there is joy, Jesus is always present. … Because Jesus is joy, and He wants to help us to feel that joy every day of our lives.

—Meeting at Our Lady Queen of Angels School, Harlem, New York, Sept. 25

Penrose

Happiness is one of God’s most precious gifts. … I ask you to become ‘missionaries of joy,’ even when you do not feel like it. I like to laugh a lot. It helps me feel closer to God and closer to other people. When we laugh with each other and not at each other, God’s love is present in a special way. Share your jokes and your funny stories: the world will be better, the pope will be happy and God will be the happiest of all.

—Message sent to jokewiththepope.org, Quoted at People.com, Sept. 24
Good news from around the country

Sisters Luz María Velázquez Araju, María Lourdes Estrada, María Eva Plasencia Flores and Rosario Flores Moreno from Mexico serve immigrant communities in California. Gallery on page 18.
DIOCESE OF BOISE
IDAHO
$95,000 to establish a campus ministry development position to work with three Catholic student centers toward sustainability through fundraising.

DIOCESE OF GALLUP
NEW MEXICO
Support to the Office of Youth Evangelization to sponsor the bishop’s second annual Southwest Catholic Youth Conference. Attendance grew from 600 to 1,000 this year.

DIOCESE OF BAKER
OREGON
$95,000 to educate six seminarians—the most ever studying concurrently in the diocese—three of whom are bilingual; one will be ordained in 2017.
HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS IN MISSION DIOCESES

**DIOCESE OF CHARLOTTE**
NORTH CAROLINA
Salary and operations subsidy of $17,500 for St. Andrew the Apostle and Sacred Heart Mission Church—the only Catholic presence for 800 square miles.

**DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO**
MICHIGAN
$10,500 to fund a diocesan Trauma Recovery Program for adult Spanish-speaking survivors of childhood abuse or severe neglect.

**DIOCESE OF SUPERIOR**
WISCONSIN
The four-year Catholic Schools Management Initiative received $40,000 for training to help 15 Catholic elementary schools become more financially sustainable.

**DIOCESE OF ST. THOMAS**
U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
$45,000 to assist the diocesan Catholic Television, Catholic Radio and Catholic Islander newspaper, allowing the four islands of the diocese to stay connected and evangelize jointly.

**DIOCESE OF BILOXI**
MISSISSIPPI
Support for supplies and sign language interpreters to engage the deaf and hard of hearing in daily Mass, retreats, Bible studies, weddings and funerals.

**DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO**
MICHIGAN
$10,500 to fund a diocesan Trauma Recovery Program for adult Spanish-speaking survivors of childhood abuse or severe neglect.
Hispanic Lay Leaders gather

Thirty-one members of Catholic Extension’s Hispanic Lay Leadership Initiative from across the United States gathered in Chicago for their annual meeting on Sept. 10-11.

“Our Hispanic Lay Leaders represent the Church’s compassionate outreach to so many communities in need, particularly immigrants,” said Father Jack Wall. “They work tirelessly and selflessly to uplift the growing numbers of Hispanics who bring so much to our Church.”

The impact of these lay leaders throughout Catholic communities in mission dioceses is impressive. In the Diocese of Shreveport, Louisiana, the number of seminarians continues to increase, in part because of the presence of lay ministers. Currently there are nine seminarians—a diocesan record.
Father John Jenkins, CSC, president of the University of Notre Dame, received this year’s Spirit of Francis Award at a dinner event in New York City in October. Father Jenkins was honored for partnering with Catholic Extension in educating and preparing young Catholics for leadership in Church and society. This award is named for St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis and Father Francis Clement Kelley, Catholic Extension’s founder.

Participants from nearly 94 mission dioceses attended the International Catholic Stewardship Council Conference in Chicago in October. The annual conference brings together 1,200 people to discuss development and stewardship strategies. Catholic Extension hosted a reception and led two sessions. Since 2009, Catholic Extension has offered scholarships to mission dioceses to participate. This year we sponsored an all-time record of 52 attendees.

Pastoral workers from 13 dioceses participated in an Oct. 18–23 course in health ministry in Woodstock. They received practical education for responding to health needs in their communities and earned certificates in parish health and wellness ministries. This was the first event made possible by a new partnership of Catholic Extension with the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University Chicago and through an anonymous gift from a foundation.

On Sept. 22, the day Pope Francis landed in the United States, many Chicagoans stopped to take a photo with a life-size version of Flat Francis in Daley Plaza, in the heart of the city. Catholic Extension staff were there to greet visitors. All the major Chicago media outlets covered the event.

Since the Flat Francis campaign launched in April, more than 5,000 Catholics from around the country have posted photos with a Flat Francis cutout.
Although the only Catholic Church in Perris, California, is called St. James “the Less,” these days everything about it is about “more.” The parish in the San Bernardino diocese has more parishioners than pews to accommodate them, and it’s making efforts to reach even more people.

Built in 1907 on a small downtown lot to hold 300 people, the church has more than 10,000 registered families, with standing-room-only Masses and people spilling out its doors. Now the parish has acquired a 12-acre site for a new sanctuary, community center and religious education buildings and hopes to start construction soon.

There are still more people in the surrounding neighborhoods that the parish wants to reach out to, many of them living in poverty.

Last year the church received a big boost in its evangelization efforts. As part of Catholic Extension’s U.S.–Latin American Sisters Exchange Program, four sisters from the Mexican congregation Eucharistic Evangelizers for the Poor arrived to help. They immediately rolled up their sleeves—and not only because the days are sunny and scorching in Perris. Now they gather a group of 30 parishioners to go visit neighborhoods—several times a week—knocking on door after door, telling people about the good news of the Gospel and inviting them to St. James.

The sisters are making a big difference in the streets of Perris and making people realize anew that “less is more.”

—PHOTOS BY RICH KALONICK
“With these visits we want to create small communities of families, who would come together to pray and learn. And then we can come back to help them,” said Sister María Eva, who led a group to visit houses on a dusty road.

Sister Rosario doesn’t mind stopping passing vehicles to tell them about the Church.

Despite the chain link barrier, Sister Luz passes information about the Church to a resident.
“We are responding to Pope Francis’ call that we stop being a sleeping Church and wake up and go to the outskirts where they need our presence as Catholics,” said Sister María Lourdes, who led parishioners in song before they set off to evangelize.

St. James the Less Parish, in Perris, California, is bursting at the seams with parishioners who fill not only all the pews, but also worship outside the building.
To learn how you can add Catholic Extension to your will or estate plan, contact Melissa Babcock at 1-800-842-7804, or MBabcock@catholicextension.org or mail the form below.

Your generosity lives on, building faith, inspiring hope and igniting change in poor Catholic communities across America for years to come.

Please include Catholic Extension in your will or estate plan today.

Please cut along the dotted line and mail to:
Catholic Extension, 150 South Wacker Drive, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Birth Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have made Catholic Extension a beneficiary of my estate in the following manner:

I would like to know more about making a lasting gift through my estate plan. I’m interested in:

- [ ] gifts by will or living trust.
- [ ] gifts that provide me and/or my family with lifetime income.
Father Fredy Angel, a Colombian-born pastor working in rural south Georgia, is this year’s recipient of the Lumen Christi Award.

Feature on page 24.
In rural Georgia
Father Fredy Angel,
this year’s Lumen Christi Award recipient,
is growing and uniting
a diverse Catholic community

It was close to 100 degrees on a Saturday afternoon in August when Father Fredy Angel gave visitors a tour at the construction site of the impressive new church his parish is building outside of Ray City, Georgia. Wearing a white hard hat with blue lettering coming down its front spelling “FR ANGEL”—the “A” topped by a little halo—the Colombian-born missionary priest was accompanied by Juan Salazar, a parishioner who has been leading a crew of volunteer workers in the construction of St. Anthony of Padua Church.

The previous weekend the volunteers had finished their work on the exterior walls. The next step was to build the trusses for putting up the roof. The bell tower, its shell already assembled, sat on the ground in front of the church, waiting for that roof so it could be hoisted on top.

Seeds of faith

During his tour Father Angel stopped at the concrete steps where the altar will be constructed. A few months earlier, he explained, the parish community had gathered at this very spot. “I asked them to bring a religious article that [had special meaning] in their lives.” It could be a rosary, a saint’s statue, a crucifix, a medal or a book—anything that could be a symbol of their faith.

Parishioners brought their religious articles to a plastic-lined hole in the
A MIRACLE IN THE SOUTH
Father Angel leads the Sunday morning catechism class in a lively song with hand gestures about the sign of the cross.

By teaching catechism to Hispanic kids, longtime parishioner Mary Ann Woody found “that the love is there, the faith is there. It doesn’t matter who you are or where you come from, the hug is all you need.”

ground. Father Angel opened the ceremony with prayer and placed a broken statue of Mary into the hole. Next were old chalices, patens, sacramentaries and missals. Then, Father Angel said, he placed one of his albs and a stole into the hole, “representing not just my priesthood, but that of all the priests who have worked here in the parish, and for the future priests, too.”

Finally, it was the parishioners’ turn to plant their own “seeds of faith.” At the very end, Sharon Walter, a former parishioner who had traveled from Atlanta, placed a copy of the Shroud of Turin on top.

Believed by many to be the burial shroud of Jesus, it was a powerful reminder to the parishioners that they are the body of Christ, and that if their community is to grow, they too have to be part of the death and resurrection of Christ.
How Catholic Extension Has Helped

Catholic Extension has supported Father Fredy Angel’s ministry from the time he arrived in the Diocese of Savannah. From 2001 until 2005, the years during which Father Angel was a seminarian with the diocese, Catholic Extension subsidized the tuition costs of all seminarians there with support totaling $214,000.

Since he was named pastor of Queen of Peace and its missions, Catholic Extension helped pay for his ministry with salary subsidies for the parish totaling $21,720. And just this summer Catholic Extension approved a $50,000 1-to-1 matching challenge for the construction of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Ray City.

Catholic Extension’s involvement with the Diocese of Savannah started in 1909, only four years after Catholic Extension was founded. Its first support in the amount of $2,000 ($52,000 in today’s dollars) went to help with the building of an earlier St. Anthony’s in the nearby city of Valdosta—a chapel that is no longer there. With several new projects approved this summer, Catholic Extension’s total support for the diocese passed the $7 million mark ($16 million adjusted for inflation).

Bishop Gregory Hartmayer of Savannah, pictured here, said, “I am most grateful to Catholic Extension and their benefactors and donors for the help they have given to us over many years. They have made it possible for us to educate our seminarians and to enhance our Hispanic ministry and create a Hispanic ministry office. They have been able to subsidize the work of our priests in parishes that cannot afford to keep going on their own.”

A Catholic ‘revival’

The construction of St. Anthony of Padua Church, scheduled to be dedicated in early 2016, is a dream-come-true for Catholics in this area of southern Georgia near the city of Valdosta.

Retired Bishop Kevin Boland of the Diocese of Savannah, in which Father Angel works, said, “What you see happening in Lakeland and in Adel, in Nash-ville and in Ray City, in all of that part of south Georgia, that’s kind of a miracle in the South. The reason why the Church there is able to accomplish this— with the help of Catholic Extension and others—is the vibrancy of the faith of the Catholic people.”

For the past eight years Father Angel has been the pastor of St. Anthony of Padua’s predecessor parish—Queen of Peace in Lakeland and its missions—which covers a large geographical area spanning initially four and today three counties. In that role he has been the energetic, tireless and enthusiastic shepherd, teacher, motivator and guiding force behind what one of his parishioners called a “revival” among Catholics there.

“Jn the Protestant Churches here, they talk about revival week,” said parishioner Chris Chammoun. “But with us it’s been a revival of eight years. We’ve been reviving our spirit and bringing in new people who are excited about coming to Church.”

Chammoun added, “Since Father Fredy has been leading us on this new journey, we’ve seen a lot of growth. Sunday Mass here is overflowing. People have to sit outside, which can be rough in the 100-degree weather. But people still do it and sweat because they want to be here for Mass.”
In the process of that revival, the pastor has also bound a diverse community of African-American, white, Latino and Asian-American Catholics closer together; has planted, grown and nurtured a deeper faith among his parishioners; has motivated and educated children, youth and adults; has earned the respect of the area’s larger, non-Catholic community; and now leads the parish in the building of their new church. Undertaking such an ambitious construction project has instilled pride and great expectations in its members and is already resulting in a more prominent and visible presence of Catholicism in an area where Catholics are only a small minority.

**Light of Christ**

During a celebration on Nov. 8, Catholic Extension presented Father Angel with its 2015–2016 Lumen Christi Award. “Lumen Christi” is Latin for “Light of Christ.” The award honors an individual or group who demonstrates how the power of faith can transform lives and communities. Recipients are honored not only for the light and hope they bring to forgotten corners of the country, but for inspiring others to be “Lights of Christ” as well.

Catholic Extension President Father Jack Wall said, “We are honoring Father Fredy Angel for the inspiration he gives not only to the growing Catholic population in southern Georgia, but to all American Catholics. Father Fredy embodies the service and courage of America’s missionary priests who are playing a critical role in building up the fabric of our Church and of this nation.”

Bishop Gregory Hartmayer of the Diocese of Savannah, who nominated Father Angel for the award, said that from the first time he met him in 2011, “Father Fredy impressed me with his genuineness, his simplicity, his enthusiasm, his joy. He seemed to be a man who was really in love with what he was doing.” The Franciscan bishop added, “Father Fredy was named properly in having been given the family name ‘Angel,’ because he is an ‘angel,’ a messenger of God to the people he serves. He brings them hope, joy and the presence of Christ in the sacraments, so he is truly a light of Christ.”

**Proud to be Catholic**

Eight years ago, when Father Angel became the parish’s pastor, Lauren Salazar—Juan and his wife Lourdes’ daughter—was only 8 years old. But looking back, she choked up as she remembered, “When Father Fredy came here, you knew things were going to change. We were so small, and not many people came to Church. But things have changed for the better.” She said, “Father Fredy has that aspiration to make us grow, to make our religion stronger and make it help people.”

Salazar, just like her brother, Manuel, has been an altar server for many years. She said, “Being Catholic is the best thing. It’s something my parents taught me, but we have that choice to keep believing or not.
I like being Catholic. I'll always be Catholic.”

As is common in this part of southern Georgia, Salazar often gets put on the spot by her peers for being Catholic. “In high school when I tell others that I’m Catholic, they go ‘Whoa. You’re Catholic?’” She said, with Catholics being a small minority, people don’t have much exposure to or understanding of Catholicism. “They say, ‘Oh, they worship statues,’ so it’s strange to them.” Father Angel’s catechesis and homilies have helped her answer those challenges and questions from her classmates.

The parish youth group she tries to keep going has been hampered by being “so scattered,” with teens living far from each other, and also by the lack of suitable space for youth activities. “With the new church,” Salazar said, “I’d like us to have more regular activities and talk about the faith. Hopefully, with the central location and new facilities, we can bring more people to the youth group.”

Another teen, Natalie Rojas, said she too is looking forward to having more space for youth activities. As an avid soccer player, she particularly likes that two soccer fields will be built next to the new church and that the parish is planning to hold tournaments there.

Growth spurts

Within the 90 counties of the Diocese of Savannah, Catholics are fewer than 3 percent of the population, and in rural areas like St. Anthony of Padua’s Berrien, Lanier and Cook Counties the percentage is even lower.

But over the past two decades, southern Georgia has seen a considerable influx of Latino immigrants, most of whom work in the area’s cotton, pecan and peanut fields or the poultry industry. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the percentage of Hispanics in the parish’s three counties has risen from 1.7 percent in 1990 to 5.3 percent in 2011. That increase has also led to growth among the Catholic population.

In 2007, when Father Angel arrived as pastor of Queen of Peace in Lakeland, the parish had three missions: St. Margaret Mary in Adel, St. Mary in Nashville, and San José, a Spanish-language mission.
in Twin Lakes. Constantly driving between those four locations for Masses and pastoral work, he put an average of 30,000 miles per year on his car.

All of the communities had been struggling and were in poor repair. The rectory was run down and infested with mildew, and the church buildings, Father Angel remembered, “weren’t really spaces to worship the Lord.”

But rather than despair, Father Angel got to work. “Father Fredy is a cleaner,” noted Bishop Hartmayer. “Everything has to be immaculate. His house is clean, his rectory and his office are clean, his churches are clean because that’s the way he needs it, and so he cleans and cleans, and he gets his people to do the same. **When they see him sweeping and scrubbing floors and wiping down pews, they join him because he does it first.**”

At the verge of burnout, in 2009 he wrote a letter to Bishop Boland. “I got to a point where even the celebration of the Eucharist became empty. It made me sad and frustrated.” He knew it wasn’t serving his parish either. “I told my bishop that I was getting tired and losing my vocation. We need to do something to unify the churches.”

The diocese responded by reassigning San José Mission to a parish in Valdosta, and Father Angel began to work with his parishioners toward consolidating, rebuilding and reviving the remaining three sites into a combined new and stronger Catholic faith community.

Mary Ann Woody was one of the parishioners who initially had a hard time accepting the closing of St. Mary’s. “The church I grew up in was part of a very small community. To me, rural means being close like a family—schools are small, the town is small, and the church is small, but there’s love. It’s taken a lot of praying,” she acknowledged, “but we’re getting there. Father Fredy has been very strong in helping us get through those transitions.”

Since February 2014, when St. Margaret Mary Mission in Adel closed, the parish has been celebrating Mass at two locations—on Sundays at the “mother church” in Lakeland and on Saturdays at the United Methodist Church in Ray City, whose congregation generously provides its worship space free of charge.

**The building project**

Thanks to Father Angel’s leadership, eventually parishioners got excited about building a new larger church. What got the ball rolling was one parishioner’s generous donation of 16 acres of land at a central location near Ray City that would be no more than 20 miles from any of the four main towns.

Retired General John Folkerts said he once “mentioned to Father Fredy, almost in passing, ‘Father, if needed, I can probably provide the land.’ I don’t think he forgot that. Then the bishop came,” he added with a laugh, “and he was talking about it, too. You don’t say no to that.”

Folkerts, who chairs the parish’s building committee, said, “There’s been a role for everyone. For those who can contribute money, there is a role, and for those who can provide labor, there is a role. We have been blessed to have a contractor who made it possible to build our church in this way with the volunteer labor.”

Although the work of Juan Salazar’s team of volunteer workers has allowed the parish to save money on the construction, financing it is still a daunting
challenge. “We get worried sometimes about raising the money,” Chris Chammoun said, “but Father Fredy makes us feel that we can reach our goal. He’s the glass-half-full kind of person.”

United in faith

Father Angel clearly is a gifted teacher, and his parishioners look forward to the dialogue homilies he engages them in while moving up and down the center aisle. “Father Fredy is a teaching priest,” said Gary Amiot. “I’ve heard these same readings, it seems like for 100 years, but he brings them to life.” Amiot even credits Father Angel with bringing his brother back to the Church. While they went fishing, Amiot kept telling his brother things he’d learned from the homilies. That made his brother come check things out for himself, and now the two of them drive the 20 miles to Church together. “He would say, ‘Father Fredy was directly talking to me.’ I have felt the same thing, and many others have, too.”

Steven Mancuso, the parish’s director of religious education, said, “I wouldn’t be in formation for the permanent diaconate if it wasn’t for Father Angel.” He added that “from the first time we walked in here, it was impressive, because a lot of the South is very divided. For example, you have white Baptist churches and you have black Baptist churches. But we walked in here, and it was pretty well mixed. You had African-American Catholics in here, white Catholics, Latinos, and Asians.”

Many parishioners cite the bilingual Masses and potlucks on the first weekend of each month as key in building bridges between the English- and Spanish-speaking parishioners. The monthly events are important to Father Angel, who works hard to “make it nice” and to encourage his parish. “I’ve told the Anglos, ‘You don’t have to speak Spanish, just say hola.’ When we’re in the supermarket, we need to recognize each other. And I’ve told the same to the Spanish-speaking community, ‘You can say hello. That’s all the English you need to know.’”

Parishioner Ana Beltrán said, “Here in southern Georgia, a lot of people have that division: The Latinos hang out more with the Latinos, and the Anglos with the Anglos, and the African-Americans with the African-Americans, but once we come through that church door, we are one, we are family, just one Catholic community.”

Longtime parishioner Michael McCrae said he has been coming to Queen of Peace Church since he was 2 or 3 years old. “When we first started in 1941, the parish was all black except for one family, the Johnsons, but over the last few decades that has changed. Now everybody enjoys everybody, even though we have different people and different cultures.” He added, “When he preach on Sunday morning, you all might have heard an ‘Amen’ in there, which in a Catholic Church in this area, you don’t hear.” That’s his wife, he said. “She’s not Catholic, but she still likes it in this Catholic church.”

Perhaps it is Juan Salazar’s wife, Lourdes, who summed up best why Father Angel is this year’s Lumen Christi Award recipient: “Father Fredy is a person filled with God, and everyone who listens to him is filled with joy. He has united our community.

“God has sent him to us,” Salazar added, “I want to thank him not just for the construction of the new church, but also for the construction of our hearts, which little by little has led to changes in our lives. Father Fredy was the one who planted the mustard seed. I know this seed will bear many fruits, and we are those fruits, all of us who have been coming here.”

©
Junípero Serra becomes a saint

Canonization highlights Catholic Extension’s partnership with Monterey diocese

Catholics from all over the country, including a group from Catholic Extension, gather in Washington for the Sept. 23 canonization Mass.

The Caravaca cross of St. Junípero Serra.

RIGHT During the Catholic Extension pilgrimage to Rome, Pope Francis kisses the personal cross of St. Junípero Serra, presented to him by Archbishop Cupich.
During the recent Catholic Extension pilgrimage to Rome (see page 6), Archbishop Blase Cupich, Catholic Extension’s chancellor, brought the personal cross of St. Junípero Serra to Pope Francis.

Catholic Extension had obtained the cross—known as a Caravaca cross—from the Diocese of Monterey, California. Serra had brought the Caravaca cross (a Spanish double-cross-barred crucifix) with him when he set out from Mallorca, Spain, to become a missionary in the New World.

For 169 years it had been buried with Serra. During the exhumation of Serra’s body in 1943, it was found on his chest and since then has been in a museum at the Carmel Mission in California.

When Archbishop Cupich showed the cross to the pope, he was very moved. He kissed and blessed it and requested that it be on the altar during Serra’s canonization ceremony.

In an interview with Vatican Radio, Archbishop Cupich connected the missionary labors of St. Junípero Serra, a Franciscan friar, with Pope Francis’ visit to the United States. Now, he said, we have “this new Francis, this new Franciscan, come again to bring the Gospel to the United States, and being in touch with that initial impulse of the Franciscan order in sending Father Serra, bringing it really to full circle.”

Serra is the first Hispanic saint who ministered on land that is today part of the United States. He also is the first saint to be canonized in the United States.

As requested by Pope Francis, Monterey Bishop Richard García brought Serra’s cross to the Sept. 23 canonization Mass outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. It was present on the altar, along with a new reliquary containing relics of the saint, which also incorporated the shape of his Caravaca cross.

Catholic Extension for many decades has supported churches, ministries and leadership formation in the Diocese of Monterey, where eight of the 21 original California missions are located.

The total funding provided for the diocese over the years amounts to more than $4 million ($8.6 million when adjusted for inflation).

Bishop García invited Catholic Extension President Father Jack Wall to attend the canonization Mass in Washington. And in September and October, Catholic Extension helped fund three diocesan events that celebrated the canonization at the Mission and Shrine of St. Junípero Serra in Carmel, California.

Among them was an Oct. 24 Mass and reception that was attended by some 600 people, including 16 bishops from California and the papal nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò.

During the reception, Native Americans who are members of the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe of the Ohlone Nation performed traditional dances at the Carmel Mission in Carmel, California during celebrations of St. Junípero Serra this year.
Franciscan Friar Junípero Serra lived a successful, comfortable 18th-century life as a scholar and university lecturer on the Spanish Mediterranean island of Mallorca, where he preached a theology of God's incredible, unreasonable love. Saint Junípero Serra abandoned that life, taking with him only the certainty that God was calling him to discipleship, to be a witness of God's love.

On Sept. 23, during his recent visit to the United States, Pope Francis canonized Serra, saint of missions and patron of vocations, in Washington, D.C. The pope has described Serra as one of the “founding fathers” of the United States, a protector of the native peoples, devoted to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and “the embodiment of ‘a Church which goes forth.’”

“The pope is calling us to live a new way of life, to take risks ourselves,” said Deacon Bill Ditewig, diaconate director for the Diocese of Monterey, California. “He’s telling us to model this aspect of Serra’s life, calling on us to be the hands of God’s mercy in the world.”

Ditewig added, “The pope wants us to have the courage that Serra had, to leave behind our own comfort zone and proclaim Christ to the modern world.”

Catholic Extension President Father Jack Wall said that Serra’s canonization should prompt Catholics to “awaken our mission spirit in the United States. His missionary dedication is an inspiration for our own missionary efforts.”

Serra was born on Mallorca, Spain, in 1713, entered the Franciscan Friar Junípero Serra lived a successful, comfortable 18th-century life as a scholar and university lecturer on the Spanish Mediterranean island of Mallorca, where he preached a theology of God's incredible, unreasonable love. Saint Junípero Serra abandoned that life, taking with him only the certainty that God was calling him to discipleship, to be a witness of God's love.

On Sept. 23, during his recent visit to the United States, Pope Francis canonized Serra, saint of missions and patron of vocations, in Washington, D.C. The pope has described Serra as one of the “founding fathers” of the United States, a protector of the native peoples, devoted to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and “the embodiment of ‘a Church which goes forth.’”

“The pope is calling us to live a new way of life, to take risks ourselves,” said Deacon Bill Ditewig, diaconate director for the Diocese of Monterey, California. “He’s telling us to model this aspect of Serra’s life, calling on us to be the hands of God’s mercy in the world.”

Ditewig added, “The pope wants us to have the courage that Serra had, to leave behind our own comfort zone and proclaim Christ to the modern world.”

Catholic Extension President Father Jack Wall said that Serra’s canonization should prompt Catholics to “awaken our mission spirit in the United States. His missionary dedication is an inspiration for our own missionary efforts.”

Serra was born on Mallorca, Spain, in 1713, entered the Franciscant
can order when he was just shy of 17, and became a brilliant scholar and lecturer. He sailed to Mexico in 1749.

After a brutal 99-day crossing, he landed in Veracruz and chose to walk to Mexico City. He was following an older Rule of St. Francis, which discouraged travel by horseback or carriage. During his walk Serra was tortured by mosquito and spider bites, and his legs and feet swelled and ulcerated. At times over the rest of his life, he would sometimes be unable to stand.

The pain, however, didn’t stop him from eagerly volunteering to serve away from the more sheltered life at the college, instead working as a missionary in the Sierra Gordas, mountains northeast of Mexico City. The area was an especially difficult and unpopular assignment. Missionaries sickened in its humid climate. Serra’s zeal, however, inspired others and the Sierra Gordas were re-evangelized.

In 1769, Serra traveled to what would become the state of California. From 1769 until 1782 he founded the first nine of California’s 21 beautiful Franciscan missions, institutions inseparable from Serra himself.

When hundreds of Kumeyaay Indians attacked the San Diego Mission in 1775 and killed two Christians and a priest—a friend of Serra’s—the Spanish military governor captured several of the Kumeyaay warriors and intended to execute them. Serra appealed to the viceroy. “As to the killer, let him live so that he can be saved,” Serra wrote, “for that is the purpose of our coming here and its sole justification.” He saved the Kumeyaay’s lives.

Rubén Mendoza, an archeologist of tribal descent and a professor at California State University, Monterey Bay, also traveled to Washington to attend the canonization. He said, “If you analyze Pope Francis’ message, it’s one of faith, charity, hope and humanity—which is the work of the missionary.”

Missionaries, both yesterday and today, he continued, go into communities wrecked by poverty and crime, and they go in with both the news of redemption and faith and also with the hope of bettering life for their adopted community. “That’s what Serra represents,” said Mendoza.

Speaking to American seminarians earlier this year, Pope Francis praised Serra’s zeal. Serra, he said, was part of a missionary corps who “went out to all the geographical, social and existential peripheries” of their time to proclaim the Gospel. “Such zeal excites us,” the pope said.

During the canonization Mass, the pope recalled Serra’s motto, “Siempre Adelante” (Always Keep Moving Forward). “He kept going forward to the end of his life,” the pope said. “Today, like him, may we be able to say: Forward! Let’s keep moving forward.”

![LEFT St. Junípero Serra holds a cross and walking stick and is surrounded by the nine California missions he founded. His robe shows a map of the California coastline with the locations of the nine missions.](image1)

This tapestry of Junípero Serra was displayed at the saint’s Sept. 23 canonization in Washington.

Serra wrote, “for that is the purpose of our coming here and its sole justification.” He saved the Kumeyaays’ lives.

Rubén Mendoza, an archeologist of tribal descent and a professor at California State University, Monterey Bay, also traveled to Washington to attend the canonization. He said, “If you analyze Pope Francis’ message, it’s one of faith, charity, hope and humanity—which is the work of the missionary.”

Missionaries, both yesterday and today, he continued, go into communities wrecked by poverty and crime, and they go in with both the news of redemption and faith and also with the hope of bettering life for their adopted community. “That’s what Serra represents,” said Mendoza.

Speaking to American seminarians earlier this year, Pope Francis praised Serra’s zeal. Serra, he said, was part of a missionary corps who “went out to all the geographical, social and existential peripheries” of their time to proclaim the Gospel. “Such zeal excites us,” the pope said.

During the canonization Mass, the pope recalled Serra’s motto, “Siempre Adelante” (Always Keep Moving Forward). “He kept going forward to the end of his life,” the pope said. “Today, like him, may we be able to say: Forward! Let’s keep moving forward.”

![This tapestry of Junípero Serra was displayed at the saint’s Sept. 23 canonization in Washington.](image2)
SAN LUIS OBISPO MISSION CHURCH, SAN LUIS OBISPO, founded by Father Serra in 1772, DIOCESE OF MONTEREY

ST. ANDREW’S CHURCH, CARLSBAD, DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO
Extension grant 1927

ST. JAMES MISSION CHURCH, CEDARVILLE, DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO
Extension grant 1928

ST. ANNE’S CHURCH, SEAL BEACH, DIOCESE OF ORANGE
Extension grant 1922

ST. PATRICK’S CHURCH, CARLSBAD, DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO
Extension grant 1927

ST. PATRICK’S CHURCH, SEAVERVILLE, DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO
Extension grant 1924

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, SEASIDE, DIOCESE OF MONTEREY
Extension grant 1949, 2015

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO, ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO
Extension grant 1918

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER MISSION CHURCH, HOOPA, DIOCESE OF SANTA ROSA
Extension grant 2007, 2008

ST. ANNE’S CHURCH, SEAL BEACH, DIOCESE OF ORANGE
Extension grant 1922

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH, SEASIDE, DIOCESE OF MONTEREY
Extension grant 1949, 2015

ST. JAMES MISSION CHURCH, CEDARVILLE, DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO
Extension grant 1928

ST. ANDREW’S CHURCH, CARLSBAD, DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO
Extension grant 1927

ST. PATRICK’S CHURCH, CARLSBAD, DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO
Extension grant 1927

ST. PATRICK’S CHURCH, SEAVERVILLE, DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO
Extension grant 1924

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, SEASIDE, DIOCESE OF MONTEREY
Extension grant 1949, 2015

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO, ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO
Extension grant 1918

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER MISSION CHURCH, HOOPA, DIOCESE OF SANTA ROSA
Extension grant 2007, 2008

ST. ANDREW’S CHURCH, CARLSBAD, DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO
Extension grant 1927

ST. JAMES MISSION CHURCH, CEDARVILLE, DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO
Extension grant 1928

ST. ANNE’S CHURCH, SEAL BEACH, DIOCESE OF ORANGE
Extension grant 1922

ST. PATRICK’S CHURCH, CARLSBAD, DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO
Extension grant 1927

ST. PATRICK’S CHURCH, SEAVERVILLE, DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO
Extension grant 1924
THE OTHER MISSION CHURCHES OF CALIFORNIA

In six dioceses, Catholic Extension helps fund today’s “California missions”

THE ORIGINAL MISSION CHURCHES of California—21 in total—were established by Franciscan friars from Spain between 1769 and 1823. Newly sainted Father Junípero Serra founded the first nine of them—an achievement for which he is sometimes called the “founding father of California.” These original missions, most of which still serve as churches, are located on or near California’s coastline, along what was once called “El Camino Real” (The King’s Road). Segments of this road are now part of Highway 101.

Inspired by these mission churches and by the new saint of mission, Catholic Extension has supported Catholics in California over the past 104 years, starting in 1911 with assistance to St. Patrick’s Church in Alturas. Funding to the state totals more than $13 million ($32 million inflation adjusted) with grants to all the dioceses, including the six that are currently mission dioceses.

Today parts of California continue to struggle with a great deal of poverty, and with Catholic Extension’s support, the Catholic Church in the six mission dioceses serves many of their needs. Today Catholic Extension continues to fund churches and church facilities—the actual buildings—but we also fund people and ministries who go beyond the four walls and further the Church’s mission in many different settings.

Four of our California projects are featured in this issue—three on the following pages and one in the photo Gallery on page 18.
For Brenda Noriega being missionary is not a choice. “There’s no other way to live in Christianity,” she said. “We cannot stay in our house or within the four walls of our parish. We have to go out. It’s our Catholic identity.”

In the Diocese of Fresno, California, where she coordinates the Hispanic Ministry Program, her willingness to reach out is greatly appreciated. The diocese relies heavily on committed lay leaders.

As part of the diocese’s youth and young adult ministry, Noriega conducts spiritual retreats and formation classes to teach teens to “see, judge and act” as Catholics.

Noriega also manages the Migrant Ministry. For the six months each year when migrant farmworkers live in the diocese, she wants to keep them close to Christ. When they come to this country, they are looking for hope. And when they find a church, she said, they find not only hope, but also a family and a community.

She collaborates with a migrant center that offers food, clothing and contacts for social services. “Our faith has to be comprehensive. To be missionary is to work with the whole person—spiritually and socially,” she said.

While Pope Francis tells us to go to the peripheries, she said, those peripheries do not have to be far away. And while she herself served as a missionary in Colombia, she finds the same kinds of needs here in her own diocese that she found abroad. “I see so many groups that are marginalized, including those facing poverty, the elderly, prisoners and at-risk populations right in our neighborhoods,” she said.

“He says our parishes should focus less on a narrow membership base and think more about constantly renewing, expanding and cultivating disciples.”

Noriega’s salary is funded by Catholic Extension. So far she has worked in about 30 of the 89 parishes in her large diocese, which covers 35,000 square miles and comprises 1.2 million Catholics. Although the farthest parish is six hours from her office, she intends to reach all of them. “We cannot stay static,” she said. “We have to take the good news to the people—that Jesus Christ is risen, that He is a person in our lives and that God is merciful.”
Father Joshy Mathew, a Carmelite of Mary Immaculate from India, understands the importance of a church building. “When people are thirsting for God, a church gives them a foundation and a place to gather,” he said.

As parochial administrator of two rural parishes and a mission church at the far northern end of California in the Diocese of Sacramento, he travels hundreds of miles weekly between Holy Family Church, his home parish in Weed; Our Lady of Good Counsel, a mission church in Dorris; and Holy Cross Church in Tulelake. In 19 months, he has traveled 53,000 miles. His parishioners, spread all over the countryside, make the same commitment to travel great distances to be part of a Church community.

“A church allows us to go back to our rootedness as Catholics,” he said. “And brings God to the center of our lives.”

He believes that faith begins and is renewed continuously in the family. And if we give families a place to come together to pray, Church becomes a part of daily life.

Throughout the region, populations of migrants are growing. Most have large, bustling families. They come for ranching and agriculture—horseradish, onions and potatoes—but they also want to build communities.

Father Mathew works relentlessly to help them build faith communities. At Holy Cross Parish, with about 250 parishioners, he has established weekly prayer groups, retreats, a music program, CCD classes, a home visit program and a teacher training for catechists, which now has 30 participants.

In addition, he is repairing the church physically. It has a leaky roof, faulty wiring and windows and needs a new water heater. During winter months, it is cold inside. To support this parish, which has a weekly collection of only $200, Catholic Extension has extended a grant for these repairs.

Uli Schmitt, director of clergy and advanced lay formation for the diocese, is overseeing the Holy Cross Church renovation. He explained that Sacramento Bishop Jaime Soto launched a revitalization project in the northern part of the diocese to engage migrants, who are devout Catholics, and harness the energy that they bring to the Church. “Migrants are young and strong,” he said. “They are pillars of hope for our Church.”

“We have a vision,” said Father Mathew. “We want to foster the vitality of our parishioners and give them a sense of community and a place to deepen their faith.”
Our Lady of Guadalupe procession brings together diverse cultures

Every year on Dec. 12, the Diocese of Stockton, California, explodes with enthusiasm for Our Lady of Guadalupe. More than 12,000 people of all ages and many cultures—Hispanic, Filipino, Asian and Anglo—and several parishes throughout the diocese attend this event. They process among dozens of semitrucks hauling meticulously decorated floats that slowly make their way down the streets as parishioners sing hymns, perform indigenous dances in colorful costumes and dress in character to act out scenes from the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe appearing to Juan Diego in Mexico.

The procession is about a mile in length and ends at the Stockton Arena, an indoor sports stadium, where the bishop celebrates a Mass.

It is a joyous celebration of tradition, renewal and profound devotion to Mary—the mother of all and a powerful symbol of unity among diversity.

“Mary was the first evangelizer to bring the good news that God loves us and that He is with us,” said Arturo Chávez, president of the Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio. When she appeared to Juan Diego as Our Lady of Guadalupe, she spoke his language, dressed like his people and had the face of a mestiza or woman of mixed race. “When we see her image, we see a reflection of who we are,” Chávez said.

Although she appeared almost 500 years ago, he believes the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe is still relevant today for the Church in America. “As missionaries and evangelizers, we are called to be like Mary and to have a deep respect for others and their cultures. She reminds us to be welcoming and to extend a sense of belonging to others—to not just preach the good news, but to be the good news, to not just go to Church, but to be the Church,” he said.

The procession—which has been held annually in Stockton for 35 years—now involves 350 volunteers. Digna López, who works for the diocese and received Catholic Extension’s Lumen Christi Award in 2013 along with her husband, José, coordinates the event. Catholic Extension has financially supported the procession for the last five years.

“The procession is very inspiring, especially for young people,” López said. “Our Lady of Guadalupe brought Jesus Christ to the Americas and the message that human dignity is a universal value. As Pope Francis says, in the ‘culture of encounter,’ we have to be open and inclusive. Our Lady of Guadalupe brings a missionary spirit and a message of hope.”
Making a difference

Mosaic assembled with over 5,000 photos taken by individuals with Flat Francis and sent to Catholic Extension. Connect on page 46.
Every priest has to be a missionary

Father Wall: Seems like only yesterday that you and I first met—you were an aspiring seminarian and I was the vocations director.

Bishop Barron: You were the door that led me to the seminary, the priesthood and where I am today.

How important is seminarian education for the future of the Catholic Church?

I can’t imagine a better way to invest in the future of the Church than to invest in seminarians. If you’re forming a future priest, you’re forming someone who’s going to influence the Church enormously, for say, the next 50 years. Think of all the ways that a single priest radiates outward—preaching, teaching, evangelizing, working with the poor, visiting the sick—and multiple that by the 600 priests that [Catholic Extension is] forming. That has a massive impact on the life of the Church. You have a special task of cultivating a heartfelt missionary zeal in men studying to become priests. How are you doing that?

Extension has shown the way. If you think back to the Catholic Church’s immigrant period in the big cities, you could assume that Catholics would come to our institutions to be evangelized. They came to our parishes, schools and seminaries. We could count on that. Now we can’t.

About 75 percent of Catholics don’t go to Mass. The largest growing religious group in America is the “nones”—those who have no religion. The second largest group, if you counted it that way, would be ex-Catholics. We can no longer assume people will come to our institutions.

I tell the seminarians, we can’t think of parish priesthood as
Bishop Robert Barron is a theologian, an educator, a documentarian and a leader in social media.

maintaining the life of a parish and simply caring for those who come, as important as that will always be. Every priest in every parish has to see himself as a missionary.

When you’re assigned as a parish pastor, you’re not just assigned to that church, you’re assigned to care for all the people in that geographic region—Catholics, non-Catholics, believers and non-believers. Therefore, the missionary call is built right into the call to be a priest. That is the summons of our time. And I remind the students all the time that when they leave this place, they enter mission territory wherever they go.

We have to do what Catholic Extension has always done. You’ve always had a missionary sensibility of going out and evangelizing. Now we all have that mission. That’s exactly what Pope Francis understands.

Priests are scarce, especially in rural communities that may see priests only every couple of months. Yet it’s precisely in these places where the priesthood is most treasured. You’ve been involved in the formation of priests for more than 20 years. How do you explain this deep appreciation for priests and the priesthood?

It goes right to the beginning of the Church when people sensed the importance of the priesthood. That’s felt even more now with the rising tide of secularism—which is an ideology that says, “This world is all there is, you can find your ultimate happiness here.”

Secularism denies what St. Augustine said: that our hearts are restless until they rest in God. Things of this world—money, power, pleasure—can be good, but they don’t satisfy us. They can’t. We’re destined for more. A priest is someone who in his very person reminds people vividly of the sacred, the sacred dimension of life, the God dimension of life. When that shuts down, the human heart shuts down. And a great sadness overwhelms people.

Priests play an odd role to challenge us—to challenge the assumptions of what makes us happy. A priest is witness to a transcendent sacred dimension, and that’s where we—all of us—find our joy. Thank you for the work that you do.

At Mundelein Seminary, we have been so grateful to you and your donors. Many students who come here from the mission dioceses would not be able to earn advanced theological degrees without your financial help. Those degrees then allow them to become valuable theological resources in their dioceses. It’s a great gift of Catholic Extension and your donors. We couldn’t do it without you. 🙏
Tell us about your faith journey.

I was born and raised in the Philippines in a Catholic family with 11 children. Growing up, I went to Mass, but I did it mainly for my mother. Faith was not a big part of my life. In fact, during my high school years, I got into some trouble and was part of a gang. But I did keep a small connection to the Church. I was an altar server and I used to accompany a priest to do Masses in rural areas.

One Saturday morning, we drove two hours in pouring rain to a village. The priest said, “These people have an opportunity to attend Mass in their village only once a year. We need to be there for them.” This really impressed me. A seed was planted that maybe this vocation was for me.

So you become a missionary?

I wasn’t ready to become a diocesan priest, but my mind was open. In 1997, brothers from a religious congregation called Missionaries of the Poor, based in Jamaica, came to visit my high school. I had no idea where Jamaica was and had to go to the library to find it on a globe, but I was intrigued. At age 17, I decided to leave my family and homeland and join the order in Jamaica.

Then you wanted to become a priest?

Yes. I loved my seven years in Jamaica, working with the poorest of the poor, but I had a deep down desire to be a priest. A friend from the United States suggested that I apply to the Diocese of Stockton, California. It is a very diverse diocese with many cultures—Filipinos, Hispanics, Africans—there are even two Vietnamese seminarians. I like the richness that these ethnic groups bring to the diocese.

Your missionary zeal continues?

Absolutely. I am now studying the history of American Catholics—about the influx of Catholic immigrants here. They came with a mission. They wanted people to know that Christ died for a reason and that His life had meaning. Just like those missionaries in the 1700s, we have to spread the faith by the way we live. We have a message.

How does Pope Francis inspire you?

He brings the Church to the people. He said we should meet people at their level, to smell like the sheep and not wait for people to come to us. I like his simplicity and how he preaches through his life. He takes selfies with people and hugs people that don’t seem huggable. He crosses barriers of all sorts.
Engaged in education

Texas family foundation strengthens Catholic schools

FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS, the Strake Foundation has partnered with Catholic Extension to support Catholic schools and campus ministries in mission dioceses across Texas.

The Strake Foundation was formed in 1952 by the late George W. and Susan K. Strake. One of their most noteworthy charitable gifts helped fund the excavations beneath St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome, where the tomb of St. Peter was found. Today visitors to St. Peter’s can tour the excavation site, made possible by the Strake Foundation’s gift. The Strakes’ strong Catholic faith and commitment to charitable giving lives on as the Strake Foundation continues to make an impact on the lives of Catholics in Texas and beyond.

Today the Strake Foundation is run by their son George W. Strake Jr., who continues the family legacy of generosity and charity. The Strake Foundation donates to Catholic Extension year after year because “Catholic Extension supports rural areas where the Catholic Church has fewer resources,” he said. “These places are largely overlooked.”

Most recently the Strake Foundation supported Catholic Extension’s Catholic Schools Sustainability Initiative in the Diocese of Beaumont, Texas. The initiative seeks to strengthen Catholic schools so they can gain a solid financial footing, continue to provide solid academic experiences and foster students’ spirituality and religious identity. With funding from the Strake Foundation, the diocese’s struggling Catholic schools received four years of training and consultation from Catholic School Management, Inc. The schools were able to increase enrollment, exceed fundraising goals and keep youth in Catholic schools as they transitioned from eighth grade to high school.

“I am proud that we are able to fund programs that foster traditional Catholic thought, especially in schools,” reflected George W. Strake Jr. “Education is the future of this country, and good education brings about a better environment for everyone.”

The partnership with the Strake Foundation is just one example of Catholic Extension’s many such opportunities with a wide range of charitable foundations.  

Photo: David Shuttts
Dear Catholic Extension,

THANK YOU FOR your support with the Financial Management Workshop initiative. Bishop Braxton and our new Chief Financial Officer, Mike Gibbons, recognized the need for this type of training for our priests, and Mike is excited about his participation in the two days, which will allow him to offer it in subsequent years.


Dear Catholic Extension,

THANK YOU FOR all your support and grant for the healing ministry in the Diocese of Amarillo. This healing ministry helps patients revive their faith and strengthen their prayer life to come closer to God, especially during their pain and suffering. We distribute the Bibles and prayer books, administer the sacraments and offer prayers. The patients and family members are being comforted and consoled and healed through the Word of God and the sacraments.

God bless your wonderful service.

Rev. Lawrence John | Chaplain-Hospitals and Hospices, Diocese of Amarillo, Texas

Dear Benefactors of Catholic Extension,

AS I BEGAN another year of seminary, I wanted to thank all of you in writing for the opportunity to attend the Institute for Priestly Formation this summer in Omaha.

It was truly a blessing—a gift which continues to be present and manifest itself in the daily rigor of seminary formation.

The chance to develop my prayer life and relationship with God this summer will bear fruit throughout my entire
Dear Catholic Extension,

I WOULD LIKE to take this opportunity to thank you for your generous gift. We were able to complete our baptismal font project and celebrate its use as part of our 50th year as a parish. As part of our gratitude, we have documented the journey this project has taken and would like to present it to you in this written account. In this journal you will find a pictorial history along with commentary from the past and present parishioners. We hope you enjoy our story as much as we enjoyed preparing it for you.

Father Tom Hoffman SJ | Acting Pastor, St. Jude Parish, Alamogordo, Diocese of Las Cruces, N.M.

Dear Catholic Extension,

I WOULD LIKE to express our gratitude for your generous matching grant of $25,000 toward the building of our church. As you know, worshiping in a community center, we have been dreaming of a church we can call our own for 40 years. Be assured of our thoughts and prayers for your organization and all the parishes you have aided over the years. We are blessed to be numbered among them.

Father Tim Clancy, SJ | Our Lady of the Lake Parish, Suncrest, Diocese of Spokane, Wash.

Dear Catholic Extension,

THE THEME THIS YEAR for our faith formation program is Family Prayer. We compiled a packet of items we felt would help deepen or begin a daily prayer routine for our families. Basing our packets on Pope Francis, we felt your fall magazine was a great way to get families reading and thinking about starting something themselves. Each family received the Extension magazine, a Daily Devotional based on Pope Francis’ Faith and Family Prayer Card for Families, a letter from us about Eucharistic Adoration and calendar.

Blessings and thank you so much for your gift of the Extension magazine for our parish families!

Mary Schumacher | St Ignatius Catholic Church, Annandale, Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minn.

life—God willing, as a priest.

My prayers and a heart full of gratitude are with all of you as you continue to spread the peace and joy of the Gospel.

In Christ our Hope,

Jonathan Howell | Seminarian, Pontifical College Josephinum, Diocese of Birmingham, Ala.

Dear Catholic Extension,

A NOTE OF THANKS for the continued, faithful, generous support Catholic Extension provides for our ministry at Holy Spirit Newman Center on the campus of Bemidji State University. Each year funds from Catholic Extension keep our doors open, and the students coming through those doors stay connected with Christ and His Church! Thank you for the sacrifices of all who support your mission work!

Father Don Braukmann | Holy Spirit Newman Center, Diocese of Crookston, Minn.

Dear Catholic Extension,

I WOULD LIKE to express our gratitude for your generous matching grant of $25,000 toward the building of our church. As you know, worshiping in a community center, we have been dreaming of a church we can call our own for 40 years. Be assured of our thoughts and prayers for your organization and all the parishes you have aided over the years. We are blessed to be numbered among them.

Dear Catholic Extension,

CATHOLIC CHARITIES of Central and Northern Missouri, an agency of the Diocese of Jefferson City and I as prison chaplain express profound gratitude to Catholic Extension Society for your generous grant in support to our prison ministry. Our work involves celebrating Holy Mass, bringing the sacraments to prisoners and visiting those who cannot participate in Mass because they are in segregation. We also provide Bibles and other suitable literature.

Father Pat Dowling | Chaplain, Prison Ministry Catholic Charities, Diocese of Jefferson City, Mo.

Dear Catholic Extension,

A NOTE OF THANKS for the continued, faithful, generous support Catholic Extension provides for our ministry at Holy Spirit Newman Center on the campus of Bemidji State University. Each year funds from Catholic Extension keep our doors open, and the students coming through those doors stay connected with Christ and His Church! Thank you for the sacrifices of all who support your mission work!

Father Don Braukmann | Holy Spirit Newman Center, Diocese of Crookston, Minn.

Dear Catholic Extension,

I WOULD LIKE to express our gratitude for your generous matching grant of $25,000 toward the building of our church. As you know, worshiping in a community center, we have been dreaming of a church we can call our own for 40 years. Be assured of our thoughts and prayers for your organization and all the parishes you have aided over the years. We are blessed to be numbered among them.

Dear Catholic Extension,

CATHOLIC CHARITIES of Central and Northern Missouri, an agency of the Diocese of Jefferson City and I as prison chaplain express profound gratitude to Catholic Extension Society for your generous grant in support to our prison ministry. Our work involves celebrating Holy Mass, bringing the sacraments to prisoners and visiting those who cannot participate in Mass because they are in segregation. We also provide Bibles and other suitable literature.

Father Pat Dowling | Chaplain, Prison Ministry Catholic Charities, Diocese of Jefferson City, Mo.
‘Over the Hill Gang’ builds church in rural Virginia

Longtime Extension donor keeps paying it forward

John Pelissier wants to be very clear: This isn’t about him.
It’s about a group of Catholic friends who, through hard work and dedication, built a lively, active church from the ground up in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

When the professional construction crew was delayed, eager residents started the project themselves.

“I don’t need any glory or anything,” he said. “There was a team of us.”

But Pelissier was, and at age 90 still is, a big part of the story.

Pelissier was born and raised in France as an atheist. He came to the Catholic Church at age 17 when he was baptized after being inspired by a professor. Shortly after World War II he came to the United States with his wife, Emma.

But this story starts after Pelissier retired to rural Amherst County, Virginia.

There was just one problem:
skilled,” he said. “Particularly me, I was the least qualified of the group.”

They worked through the winter.

“We had a wonderful time, and we got to become very close friends,” he said. “There was a team of us, and nobody was doing it for our own glory.”

Instead, the group was working for the glory of God.

“It’s incredible what laypeople can do if given a chance,” he said. In May 2004 the church was completed. The group had contributed about two-thirds of the labor, including most of the carpentry.

The project is now done, but the bonds haven’t severed. Several years ago Pelissier moved to a retirement community in Lynchburg. Each week one member of the Over the Hill Gang picks him up and makes the two-hour roundtrip to Mass at St. Francis of Assisi in Amherst.

Pelissier has donated to Catholic Extension for more than 25 years. In the spirit of paying it forward, he recently donated money to help build two more churches, one in Texas and another in Kentucky.

“I love what Catholic Extension does to build faith communities,” he said. “This work is so important to our whole Catholic Church.”

There was no Catholic church in this county of about 32,000.

“There was no Catholic presence at all,” he said. “There were a few Catholics here and there, but they would all go to Church in neighboring counties.”

In the 1990s, when Pelissier heard that Bishop Walter Sullivan of Richmond was coming to Amherst, a group arranged to have the bishop celebrate Mass at the local Anglican church. Moved by the gesture, the bishop offered to help build a Catholic church. He said that the group could be called the Catholic Community of Amherst and that they could open a bank account. “It was the birth,” Pelissier said.

Pelissier had received a book from a Presbyterian minister on how to build a church, which specifically recommended choosing “a visible and accessible location.”

The group found a piece of land in the middle of town, “within a block of the one traffic light that we have,” he said. It was perfect.

They started raising money and working with an architect on the building design of what was to be St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Catholic Extension gave $50,000 to the project.

As construction on the Amherst church began in October 2003, volunteers signed up.

“We were all retired people, so we called ourselves the Over the Hill Gang,” he said. “We had all the time in the world to work on the church.”

Shortly after the foundation was laid, there was a delay. The framer wouldn’t be available for several weeks, so they decided to try their hands at construction.

“We got started building the frame, and then we kept going,” he said. The group was mistaken at least once for a contracting crew.

“We were just a bunch of volunteers, few of us were very skilled,” he said. “Particularly me, I was the least qualified of the group.”
We'll show you how! When you invest in a Catholic Extension Charitable Gift Annuity, you are investing in your future and the future of the Catholic Church. Lock in our great rates, secure your income for life and receive tax benefits. Best of all, your gift will directly help 13 million Catholics in poor mission dioceses experience faith through building projects, vibrant ministries and the support of ordained and lay leaders.

Lock in a payout rate today and know that you are securing more than just your income — you are securing the future of our faith.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>ANNUAL PAYOUT RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55 - 59</td>
<td>4.0 - 4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 64</td>
<td>4.4 - 4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 69</td>
<td>4.7 - 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 - 74</td>
<td>5.1 - 5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 - 79</td>
<td>5.8 - 6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 84</td>
<td>6.8 - 7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 - 89</td>
<td>7.8 - 8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90+</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum age is 55

The Catholic Extension Charitable Gift Annuity program is one of the largest, oldest and strongest of its kind.

Learn more by contacting us at 800-842-7804, emailing annuities@catholicextension.org or sending in the form below.

Catholic Extension
Building Faith • Inspiring Hope • Igniting Change

Please contact me.

Please send a sample charitable gift annuity proposal for $__________________________

Name(s)__________________________ Age(s)__________________________

Address__________________________

City__________________________ State__________________________ Zip__________________________

Phone__________________________ Email__________________________

Please cut along the dotted line and mail to: Catholic Extension, 150 South Wacker Drive, Suite 2000, Chicago, IL 60606
O Mother of the True God and Mother of the Church, grant peace, justice and prosperity to our people; for we entrust to your care all that we have and all that we are.

Our Lady and Mother, hold us always with your loving hand. Virgin of Guadalupe, Mother of the Americas, intercede with the Lord that he may instill a hunger for holiness in the whole people of God.

Grant to our homes the grace of loving and respecting life in its beginnings with the same love with which you conceived in your womb the life of the Son of God.

Mother of Fair Love, protect our families and bless the upbringing of our children.

Our hope, look upon us with compassion, teach us to go continually to Jesus and, if we fall, help us to rise again.

Most holy Mother, with our hearts free from evil and hatred, we will be able to bring to all true joy and true peace, which come to us from your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

—POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II, 1979

On Dec. 12, in churches all across the United States, Catholics joyously celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patroness of the Americas, and commemorate her appearance to Juan Diego on the hill of Tepeyac in Mexico City.

While those celebrations are deeply rooted in the Mexican Catholic tradition, Arturo Chávez, the president of the Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio, explained that the message Guadalupe had for Juan Diego was universal: “I am your mother, and I am the mother of all the people from all the different cultures and races,” she told him. Her message of respect for differences and striving for what unites us is very timely, Chávez said.

“She is a symbol and a mother for all,” he said. “When we see this image of Guadalupe, it has a force beyond words. If she is my mother, I must be somebody, I must have a place in society, I must have dignity.”

The Our Lady of Guadalupe statue in this photo is from St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Lakeland, Georgia, where this year’s Lumen Christi Award recipient Father Fredy Angel is pastor. The parish is a living example of the kind of unity in diversity the patroness of the Americas envisioned (see story on page 24).
Join us and together we can:
• Fund building projects
• Educate seminarians
• Support priests, women religious and lay ministers
• And so much more!

PLEASE GIVE TODAY.
give.catholicextension.org
or 1-800-842-7804

Catholic Extension
Building Faith | Inspiring Hope | Igniting Change