



Serving Carlsbad Since 1943

**3821 ADAMS STREET
CARLSBAD, CA 92008
(760) 729-2866**

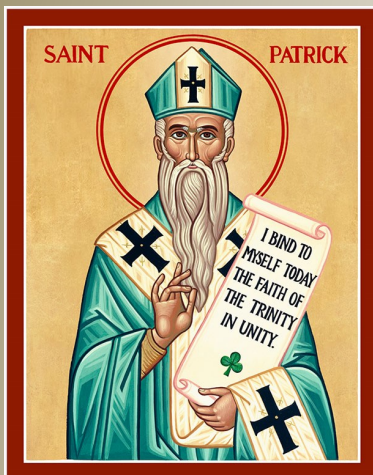
WWW.STPATRICKCARLSBAD.COM



**St. Patrick
CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**3820 PIO PICO DRIVE
CARLSBAD, CA 92008
(760) 729-1333**

WWW.STPADDYS.ORG



**FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS /
SERVICIOS FÚNEBRES:**

Please call the Funeral Ministry Office at
760-729-6366.

*Favor de llamar al 760-729-6366 para hacer
arreglos fúnebres.*

**BAPTISM AND MARRIAGE /
BAUTISMO Y MATRIMONIO:**

Please call the parish office for information.

*Favor de llamar a la oficina parroquial para
más informes.*

September 20, 2026 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Rev. George G. Perez CJM, Pastor

Rev. Ronald Bagley CJM, Associate Pastor

Rev. William Rowland CJM, In Residence

Rev. Ben Drapeau CJM, In Residence

Miguel Enriquez Deacon

Michael Frazee, Deacon

Richard Pomphrey, Deacon

Rev. Gerard Lecomte CJM, Ministry

MASSES / MISAS:

Saturday / Sábado

4:30 pm (English)

7:00 pm (Español)

Sunday / Domingo

7:30 am (English)

9:00 am (English)

11:00 am (English)

1:00 pm (Español)

5:00 pm (English)

Monday-Friday 7:00 am & 8:00 am (English)

Saturday - 8:00 am (English)

- Individual confession/confesiones

Wednesdays/miércoles at/a las, 8:30 am and/y 6:00 pm.

In the body of the church./en la Iglesia.

Rosary:

Weekdays after 8:00am Mass & Saturdays at 8:30am & 4:00pm.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament/Adoración del Santísimo

Sacramento: Tuesdays/Martes from/de 2:00pm - 6:00 pm.

First Friday/primer viernes del mes: 6:30pm – 9:00pm



Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK

MONDAY - Sept 21 -

7:00 am - James F. Ryan (d)
8:00 am - Crystal Langford (d)

TUESDAY - Sept 22 -

7:00 am - Josefina Villagomez (d)
8:00 am - Margaret Rose Keane (d)

WEDNESDAY - Sept 23 -

7:00 am - T.J Frazee (d)
8:00 am - E. Grace & Family (int)

THURSDAY - Sept 24 -

7:00 am - Susan Johnson (d)
8:00 am - Michael John Curtius (d)

FRIDAY -

7:00 am - Mary Ann Hughes (d)
8:00 am - Jerry Ralph (d)

SATURDAY - Sept 26 -

8:00 am - Jimmey Coronel Family (int)
4:30 pm - Ann Chen (d)
7:00 pm - Virgilio Alonzo (d)
Citlali y Daria Pastrana (int)

SUNDAY - Sept 27 -

7:30 am - Charles & Mary Kay Benner (d)
9:00 am - Judie Huelsman (d)
11:00 am - Chuck Steimle (d)
1:00 pm - Leonor Hernandez (d)
Jesus Maldonado (d)
5:00 pm - Yondre Perez Basulto (d)



PASTOR'S NOTES -

Fr. George G. Perez CSM - Pastor
XXV Sunday in Ordinary Time

This Sunday, the Word of God invites us to look at life through the eyes of God rather than through the standards of the world. In the

Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the workers in the vineyard. Some begin working early in the morning, while others are called later in the day. Yet, at the end of the day, the landowner gives them the same wage. Those who worked the longest become upset and question his generosity.

At first, their reaction seems understandable. We often think in terms of fairness: I worked harder, I gave more, I sacrificed more, so I should receive more. But Jesus challenges us to recognize that God's generosity cannot be measured by our human calculations. The first reading reminds us: **"My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord."** God sees things differently. His mercy is greater than our expectations, and His love is not something we earn by competing with others. The Kingdom of God is not a reward for being better than someone else; it is a gift of grace.

How easy it is for us to compare ourselves with others. We may look at another person's blessings, ministry, family, talents, opportunities, or success and wonder, "Why them and not me?" Sometimes even within the Church, we can fall into comparison, jealousy, or resentment. But the Lord calls us to rejoice when another person receives God's blessing.

The vineyard belongs to God, and each of us has been invited to work in it. Some are called early in life; others discover Christ later. Some serve publicly, while others serve quietly. Some have many years of ministry behind them; others are just beginning. What matters is not when we entered the vineyard, but that we said yes to the Lord.

This Gospel is also a beautiful reminder that it is never too late to turn toward God. No matter how much time we believe we have lost, God's invitation remains open. His mercy does not depend upon our past. A person who comes to Christ late in life is not less loved by God than someone who has followed Him for many years. As we celebrate this Sunday, let us ask for the grace to let go of comparison and possessiveness. May we learn to rejoice in God's generosity toward others and recognize our own lives as gifts of grace.

The Lord continues to call each of us into His vineyard. May we respond with grateful hearts, trusting that **God is generous, merciful, and faithful**, and that His ways are always greater than our own.

The Word of the Week...

This week's word: Eremit

An **eremite** is a hermit or religious recluse who lives in solitude, often in a remote place or a desert, to focus on spiritual prayer and devotion. This person withdraws from society for religious contemplation or strict asceticism (self-denial).

Marriage in the Catholic Church

Are you Catholic but you were not able to get married in the Church (or chose not to)? Sometimes people don't understand that a decision made years ago not to get married in the Church can still be rectified.

Fr. Ron Bagley, our associate pastor, is available to help couples who would like to explore the possibility of recognizing their marriage as Catholic. Contact

Fr. Ron to discuss this further. Don't assume that it is not possible. The conversation will be totally private and without judgment of any kind. Contact Fr. Ron at rmbagley@yahoo.com or 760-729-2866.

TRUNK OR TREAT

CANDY, COSTUMES & COMMUNITY FUN

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

3:30-5:00 PM

ST. PATRICK CHURCH
3821 ADAMS ST, CARLSBAD

DECORATED TRUNKS • CANDY • GAMES

FREE ADMISSION • EVERYONE INVITED

FOR MORE INFORMATION SCAN THE QR CODE OR EMAIL erinangelo@gmail.com



NOTAS DEL PÁRROCO –
P. George G. Pérez, CJM - Párroco -
XXV Domingo Ordinario

Este domingo, la Palabra de Dios nos invita a mirar nuestra vida con los ojos de Dios y no solamente con los criterios del mundo. En el Evangelio, Jesús nos presenta la parábola de los trabajadores de la viña. Algunos comenzaron a trabajar desde temprano en la mañana, mientras que otros fueron llamados más tarde. Sin embargo, al final del día, el dueño de la viña les dio a todos el mismo salario. Los que habían trabajado durante más horas comenzaron a quejarse, porque consideraban que no era justo.

Su reacción puede parecernos comprensible. Muchas veces pensamos: *“Yo trabajé más, sacrifiqué más y di más; por lo tanto, merezco más.”* Sin embargo, Jesús nos muestra que la justicia y la generosidad de Dios son mucho más grandes que nuestros cálculos humanos.

La primera lectura nos recuerda: **“Mis pensamientos no son los pensamientos de ustedes, ni sus caminos son mis caminos, dice el Señor.”** Dios ve nuestra vida de una manera diferente. Su misericordia no se puede medir, y su amor no es un premio que ganamos al competir con los demás. La vida en el Reino de Dios es, ante todo, un regalo de gracia.

Con qué facilidad podemos caer en la comparación. Miramos las bendiciones, talentos, oportunidades, familias o ministerios de otras personas y pensamos: *“¿Por qué ellos y no yo?”* Incluso dentro de la Iglesia podemos experimentar celos, competencia o resentimiento. Pero el Señor nos invita a alegrarnos cuando otra persona recibe una bendición de Dios.

La viña pertenece al Señor y cada uno de nosotros ha sido invitado a trabajar en ella. Algunos son llamados desde pequeños; otros encuentran a Cristo más adelante en la vida. Algunos sirven de manera visible, mientras que otros realizan su servicio silenciosamente. Algunos tienen muchos años de ministerio, mientras que otros apenas comienzan. Lo importante no es cuándo entramos en la viña, sino que respondamos **“sí”** a la invitación del Señor.

Este Evangelio también nos recuerda que **nunca es demasiado tarde para volver a Dios**. No importa cuánto tiempo pensemos que hemos perdido ni cuántos errores hayamos cometido. La invitación del Señor permanece abierta. Su misericordia siempre nos ofrece un nuevo comienzo.

Al celebrar este domingo, pidamos la gracia de abandonar las comparaciones y los celos. Aprendamos a reconocer que todo lo que tenemos es un regalo de Dios y a alegrarnos por las bendiciones que Él concede a los demás.

Que podamos confiar en la generosidad del Señor y recordar que **su gracia no se agota, su misericordia no tiene límites y su amor siempre nos llama a trabajar en su viña.**



Oficina de Catechesis y
Ministerio Familiar
 760-434-9099
 lramirez@stpatrickcarlsbad.com

HORAS DE OFICINA DE CATEQUESIS

Lunes, martes y viernes: 10:00am a 1:00pm
 Miércoles, Jueves y viernes: 3:00pm a 7:00pm
 (Sábado y domingo con cita solamente)

INSCRIPCIONES PARA CATEQUESIS

Hemos iniciado la Catechesis pero seguimos aceptando registraciones durante el mes de Septiembre.

Puede registrar de la siguiente manera:

- **En línea**, completando el formulario correspondiente que se encuentra en el website de St. Patrick's.
- **De manera presencial**, acudiendo a la oficina de catechesis para llenar la solicitud en formato impreso.

ORDEN DE INICIACION CRISTIANA

Papás que tienen niños de 7 años o mayores y aún no han sido bautizados los invitamos a registrarlos para que inicien su proceso de preparación Sacramental. Puede registrarlos en-línea a través del sitio web de St. Patrick's o pasar a la oficina de Catechesis para registrarlos personalmente. Si aun no ha registrado aun esta a tiempo, ya que daremos **inicio el primer viernes de Octubre.**

CATEQUESIS con niños de PREESCOLAR

Invitamos los padres de familia con niños de 3, 4 y 5 años a registrarlos para el programa de Preescolar. Mientras usted está en Misa, su hijo/a estará escuchando el Evangelio, y aprendiendo sobre el mensaje de Jesús. También incluiremos actividades que favorecen su desarrollo físico, cognitivo, emocional, social y de lenguaje. Puede comunicarse a la oficina de Catechesis para obtener mas información e ir al sitio web de St. Patrick para llenar la inscripción. **Este programa comenzará el primer domingo de octubre**



CATEQUESIS FAMILIAR

Adicional a la Catechesis tradicional este año estamos ofreciendo el modelo de **Catechesis Familiar**. En este modelo los padres asumen un papel más activo y directo en la educación religiosa de sus hijos.

Los padres que opten por este método pagarán solo una porción de la inscripción y asistirán a la sesión dos veces al mes solamente.

Para más información por favor comuníquese a la oficina de Catechesis.

Las sesiones comienzan en octubre.





Oktoberfest Dinner Dance

Has been canceled
without further notice.



Altar Servers Training

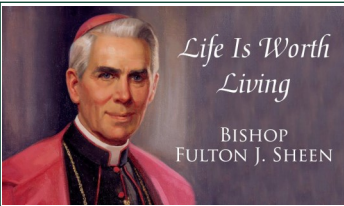
We will be conducting training for altar servers on Monday and Wednesday afternoons beginning on September 21 at 3:00 pm in the

church. Students from St. Patrick School will be brought over to the church after dismissal time and returned to the school at 5:00 pm. Students from other schools should be brought directly to the church.

The following requirements must be met:

- Child should be baptized, received First Communion and in the 4th grade or higher
- Be available to serve parish Masses. Altar servers from our school may not choose to serve only at school Masses.
- Attend the training sessions
- Have permission of their parents

To sign up for the training sessions, send an email to joinaltarservers@gmail.com



*Life Is Worth
Living*

BISHOP
FULTON J. SHEEN

Fulton J. Sheen: A Model of Modern Holiness

The Church celebrates with great joy the upcoming beatification of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, one of the most beloved and influential Catholic evangelists of the modern era. His clear teaching, gentle

humor, and deep devotion to Christ reached millions through radio, television, preaching, and writing.

Born in 1895 in El Paso, Illinois, Sheen was ordained a priest in 1919 and soon became known for his brilliant intellect and pastoral warmth. His media apostolate—especially the television program *Life Is Worth Living*—brought the Gospel into homes across the nation, drawing audiences of more than 30 million viewers each week. His message was always centered on Christ, the Eucharist, and the dignity of every human person.

After being declared Venerable in 2012, Archbishop Sheen's cause advanced when the Vatican recognized a miracle attributed to his intercession: the remarkable recovery of a newborn who had no pulse for over an hour. This miracle opened the way for his beatification. The Beatification Mass will take place on Thursday, September 24, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. Central Time at The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle will preside as the pope's representative, and tens of thousands of faithful are expected to attend. Archbishop Sheen's legacy reminds us that holiness is possible in every age. His daily Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament, his love for Our Lady, and his tireless zeal for evangelization offer a powerful example for all Christians seeking to grow in faith.

As we prepare for the joyful proclamation of Blessed Fulton J. Sheen, let us ask for his intercession for our parish, our families, and our own witness to Christ.



September Prayer Intention from Pope Leo XIV

Water is a sacred gift that sustains life. We see a sign of God's generosity in water. It quenches our thirst and makes the earth fertile. In Baptism, it becomes a symbol of his renewing grace. Taking care of water is also a form of safeguarding life and of recognizing that this resource belongs to everyone, without distinction.

In his prayer intention for September, Pope Leo invites us to pray that water be protected so that we might learn to appreciate it with gratitude, justice, and moderation, and so that we might know how to defend the right of every brother and sister to have equal access to drinkable water.

You are not alone. By praying, you join the millions of people who belong to the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network who, from every corner of the world, are praying for humanity's challenges and the Church's mission. Take a moment, pray with the Pope.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LhsgE7-AJQ>

Pope Leo XIV Continues His Weekly Teaching on Vatican II

At his September 9 audience, Pope Leo XIV reflected on *Gaudium et Spes* (Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), highlighting the God-given dignity of every human person as the foundation of Christian life and social responsibility. He reminded the faithful that dignity is not earned by achievements or status but is an indelible gift rooted in being created in God's image. The Holy

Father cautioned that modern culture often distorts this truth through self-centered individualism, and he called Catholics to rediscover the relational nature of the human person—created for communion with God, with one another, and with creation. Upholding human dignity, he said, means living as a gift for others, fostering solidarity, and resisting anything that diminishes the image of God in our neighbor.



Soup
Supper

Soup Suppers Are Delicious!

Dear parishioners & friends:

Join us for delicious homemade soup & dessert in the parish hall starting at

4:30 - 6pm every Thursday.

This Week **Thursday Sept. 24th**

We will feature *Wedding Soup* with bread & dessert!

No cost to join us for food, conversation & music!





Religious Education & Family Ministry (PreK – 8th grade)

Weekly Classes

Sunday classes: Sept 20, 27 & Oct 4

Monday classes: Sept 21, 28 & Oct 5

Tuesday classes: Sept 22, 29 & Oct 6

25th Sunday of Ordinary Time

God's love is unlimited, powerful, and available to all people – no matter when they discover it. We do not need to worry about the amount of love allotted to us. In God's abundance, we all get what we need.

Prayer Intention: for our (parish) family: Give us the grace to be generous to others with love and kindness.

Registration for Religious Education is still open

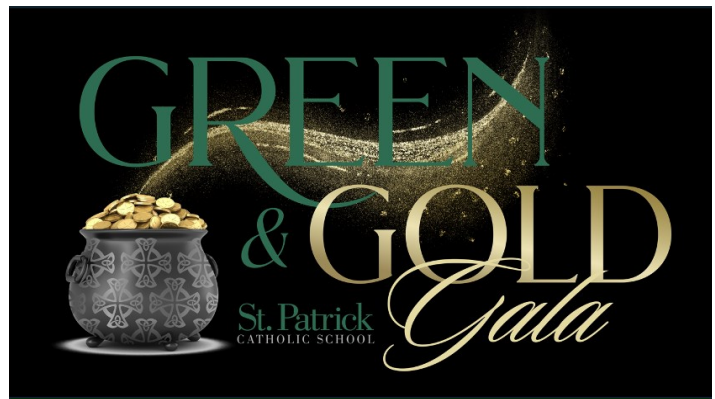
The weekly classes are held for children in preschool and students in Kindergarten up to 8th grade that attend a public school. We offer early faith formation, preparation for First Holy Communion (and Baptism if needed) and continuing faith formation. The classes are on Sunday mornings, Monday, and Tuesday afternoons. Families choose one class time that works best for their schedule.

Online registration: www.stpatrickcarlsbad.com Click on Religious Education, then Preschool – 8th grade. You may also contact us at MDornisch@stpatrickcarlsbad.com or 760-729-8442 to sign up in person.

Blessings, Margit Dornisch, Office for Religious Education & Family Ministry 760-729-8442 or mdornisch@stpatrickcarlsbad.com



Many of you have admired and purchased articles from the *Altar Society Boutiques* held each year. As the Christmas Boutique is quickly approaching, the ladies of the Altar Society are looking for gently used Christmas decorations and household items that will make this year's event a success. Your donations can be dropped off at the church office any day during the week; just indicate that they are for the Altar Society. Our Christmas Boutique will be held this year on the weekend of **November 21st and 22nd**, be sure to mark your calendar so you don't miss out on all the surprises we have in store. Also, we have heard from the North Pole just recently, and Santa will be at our Boutique on Sunday to meet all the little and big kids. We will also have a Santa's Workshop again for the kids to make and take home a craft project.



October 10, 2026

To Support K - 8 Education, Scholarships & Enrichments

The St. Patrick Catholic School Green & Gold Gala is our premier annual fundraiser a high-energy evening that needs your support! Partner with us as a sponsor or donate to help continue our tradition of educating the hearts and minds of Carlsbad's youngest students. This gala is more than dinner, it is a collective promise to our children.

From the creative spark fueled by our enrichment classes to scholarships, your partnership provides the world-class tools our students need to dream bigger, reach further and thrive!

To secure your sponsorship or to donate an item contact Gala Chair, Natasha Goodwin @ greengoldgala@stpaddys.org



Yom Kippur and Catholic Solidarity with the Jewish People

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish year—a solemn “Day of Atonement” devoted to repentance, fasting, and seeking God's forgiveness. It is a day of deep reflection, reconciliation, and renewal of the covenant with God. These themes resonate strongly with Catholic life, especially our own practices of repentance and mercy. *This year it is September 21st.* Catholics honor our Jewish brothers and sisters on Yom Kippur because:

- **Our faith is rooted in theirs.** The rituals of Yom Kippur come from the Book of Leviticus and form part of the religious world Jesus Himself lived.
 - **Its themes echo in our sacramental life.** Atonement, repentance, and reconciliation—central to Yom Kippur—are fulfilled in Christ and celebrated in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.
 - **The Church teaches profound respect for Judaism.** The covenant with Israel remains a living reality, and Catholics are called to honor the Jewish people as partners in God's saving plan. All forms of antisemitism are an affront to God. Saint John Paul II expressed this beautifully during his historic 1986 visit to the Great Synagogue of Rome, calling the Jewish people “our elder brothers.” His words remind us of the unique spiritual family bond shared by Catholics and Jews.
- Yom Kippur invites us to appreciate our shared spiritual heritage, to honor the Jewish community with respect and love, and to recommit ourselves to the work of reconciliation that God desires for all His people.**



STEVEN A. BEULIGMANN, D.D.S. INC.

Cosmetic & Family Dentistry

PARISHIONER
SINCE 1989

1299 CARLSBAD VILLAGE DR., CARLSBAD, CA 92008 • 760-729-5964



FLOOD
SOLUTIONS, INC.
LIC 991103

Joey Montijo
Parishioner

760-532-3266

WATER MITIGATION MOLD REMEDIATION
24 HOUR EMERGENCY SERVICES
floodsolutionsd.com



LIC: 939850

Daniel Montijo

President • Parishioner

(760) 644-0714

www.dmbuildinginc.com



WILLIS ALLEN
REAL ESTATE
SINCE 1914

Forbes
GLOBAL PROPERTIES

St. Patrick Alumni, with 62 combined years of
San Diego Real Estate experience.

15% OF PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT ST. PATRICK PARISH.



Debra Dewhurst
REALTOR®
DRE# 01010740
760.685.2621
debra@willisallen.com



Ken Baer
REALTOR®
DRE# 01334769
619.248.4200
kenbaer@willisallen.com

**Mary Elizabeth
Accardi, LMFT**



MFT LIC #20751

(760) 304-4522

161 Thunder Drive Ste. 102
Vista, CA 92083

The Shops

1030 La Bonita Dr. Suite 130
Lake San Marcos, CA 92078



**CARIN
de RiA**
FRESH FILIPINO GOODNESS

**FILIPINO FOOD AT
DOWNTOWN ENCINITAS**

Family Friendly
Dining | Catering | Events

FIND US AT 124 W. 1ST ENCINITAS

**We are open everyday
11:30 am - 8 pm**

THECARINDERIACOMPANY.COM

(760) 557-4873

Let Go.
Let God.

IF YOU LIVE ALONE

MDMedAlert!

✓ Ambulance ✓ Police/Fire
✓ Family/Friends ✓ GPS & Fall Alert*

CALL NOW! 800.809.3570

md-medalert.com

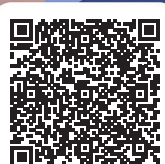
**\$1 Less Than
a day**



**Never
miss our
bulletin!**

Get this bulletin
delivered straight to
your inbox every week.

Scan to subscribe on
parishesonline.com



Mother-Centered.
Family-Focused.

MIDWIFE

Experienced, personal care for
pregnancy, birth & postpartum

Birth Local Midwifery
(619) 289-7696

www.birthlocal.com | Carlsbad



**Advertise in Our
Church Bulletin!**

Contact Gaylord Phillips

gphillips@4LPI.com
(800) 950-9952 x4547



Download our Free Helpful
Funeral Pre-Planning Guide



(760) 231-8445

sanluisrey.org

Support Our Advertisers!



For ad info. call 1-800-950-9952 • www.4lpi.com

St. Patrick Catholic Community, Carlsbad, CA

05-4242

Bergmann's
FINE JEWELRY
Fine Jewelry & Watches
630 Grand Avenue
760.729.1895
PARISHIONER

HOLY CROSS
CATHOLIC CEMETERY
& MAUSOLEUM

45th & Hilltop Drive, San Diego, CA 92102
No Interest Budget Plan | Up to 5 years to pay

Call 264-3127 Se Habla Español

Morgan Stanley



Mark A. Lucia

Senior Vice President
Financial Advisor
5796 Armada Drive, Suite 200
Carlsbad, CA 92008

760-602-3516

mark.a.lucia@morganstanley.com
fa.morganstanley.com/mark.a.lucia

© 2018 Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC.
Member SIPC. CRC 2187362



THE HACIENDA
MISSION SAN LUIS REY
EXTRAORDINARY SENIOR LIVING

**VOTED BEST OF
NORTH COUNTY**

Call 503-205-3083 to schedule
your community tour.

**GOT
MEDICARE?**

Navigating Medicare's newest rules takes time.

- ✓ Get the latest updates
- ✓ Call today to learn more

ROCK MEADOW INSURANCE SERVICES
ANTHONY HOWE | CA LIC #4281027

760-512-8896



Advertise Here!

Engage with consumers in
your neighborhood.



Carlsbad Real Estate - PATRICK KELLETT, GRI

760.890.1100

RealCarlsbad.com

St. Patrick Parishioner | Alumni St. Patrick's | LMU (BA) • USD (MA)

realblue
PROPERTIES
Broker #01242153

Curtis E. McRae, D.D.S., Inc.

General / Cosmetic / Implant Dentistry

3601 Vista Way, Suite 205
Oceanside, CA 92056

(760) 757-5057

www.drmcrae.net

**Support Our
Advertisers!**

**Assisted Living
Locators**
Your local senior living advisor

**Specializing in Helping
Families Navigate the
World of Senior Living**
**No Cost Referral and
Placement Service**
Independently owned & operated



760-815-2987 • susan.c@assistedlivinglocators.com

**FREE AD
DESIGN WITH
PURCHASE OF
THIS SPACE**

Call 800.950.9952



Encounter Soul Fine Art

**Bring Faith, Beauty
& Inspiration Into
Your Home**



**Original artwork and prints
created to uplift the heart
and nourish the soul.**

View the Collection

www.EncounterSoul.com
hello@encountersoul.com

Elder Law, Trusts and Estates

JOHN ZARCARO

Protecting the People and Values you Cherish

**Home appointments available
Free consultation**

760.918.0929 • Local Parishioner

30 Years Experience

www.zarcaro.com



Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year A

First Reading

Isaiah 55:6-9

God's ways are far beyond the ways of human beings.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 145:2-3,8-9,17-18

God is near to those who call upon him.

Second Reading

Philippians 1:20c-24,27a

Paul tells the Philippians to live for Christ.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 20:1-16

In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, Jesus teaches about God's generous mercy.

Background on the Gospel Reading

In today's Gospel, Jesus moves from Galilee to teach in Judea where he is sought out by great crowds and tested by the Pharisees on issues such as marriage and divorce. Jesus also encounters a rich young man who is unable to accept Jesus' demand that he leave his possessions to follow him. Jesus' response to the rich young man sounds very much like the conclusion we will find in today's Gospel: the first will be last and the last will be first.

On the surface, the parable of the workers in the vineyard appears to be an offense to common sense. Those who work a longer day ought to be paid more than those who work just an hour or two. When viewed in this way, the landowner seems unfair. That is because we are reading into the parable our own preconceived notions of how fairness and equality should be quantified.

A close read shows us that the landowner paid on the terms that were negotiated. The landowner, it seems, has acted completely justly. The parable goes beyond that, however, and we come to see that the landowner is not simply just, he is exceptionally just. He is radically just. He has given those who labored in the field for a full day their due pay. But he has also given a full-day's wage to those who worked only a single hour. No one is cheated, but a few receive abundantly from the landowner just as we receive from God more than what is merely justifiable or due. God, like the landowner, is radically just and abundantly generous. The workers who complain are made to look foolish as they lament the fact that landowner has made all workers equal. Indeed, what more could one ask for than to be treated as an equal at work or anywhere else?

The parable reminds us that although God owes us nothing, he offers abundantly and equally. We are occasionally tempted to think that our own actions deserve more reward, more of God's abundant mercy, than the actions of others. But God's generosity cannot be quantified or partitioned into different amounts for different people. When we think that way, we are trying to relate to God on our terms rather than to accept God's radically different ways.

