

The Catholic Church of the
Immaculate Conception

2540 San Diego Avenue, San Diego, CA 92110 619 295-4141 FAX 619 295-4142
e-mail: parish@ic-sandiego.org Website: www.ic-sandiego.org

July 19, 2015

Rev. Richard L. Perozich, Pastor

[pastor@ic-sandiego.org](mailto:parish@ic-sandiego.org) 619-295-4141 x 11

Deacon Robert H. Fitzmorris

rfitzmor@diocese-sdiego.org; 858 490-8332

Liz Fielder, Manager, Serra Gifts

fielder@ic-sandiego.org 619-297-3426

Connie Rodriguez, Parish Secretary

parish@ic-sandiego.org 619-295-4141 x 10

Marsha Long, Music

music@ic-sandiego.org 619-295-4141 x 18

Parish Office Hours

Monday: Noon to 4:00 pm
Tuesday-Friday: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

Mass Schedule

Daily Mass: Monday - Saturday at 8:00 am

First Friday Mass & Devotion: 8:00 am

Sunday Masses **Msgr. Robert Ecker, weekend associate**

Saturday Vigil: 5:15 P.M.

Sunday: 8:30 AM, 10:00AM, 11:30 AM. 5:15 P.M.

Holy Day Masses: 8 A.M., 7:00 P.M.

Penance: For daily Mass goes 7:30 AM, For Parish on Saturday: 4:30 to 5:00 P.M., and by appointment

Baptisms & RCIA: *By appointment only.* Please email

Deacon Fitzmorris at rfitzmor@diocese-sdiego.org.

Weddings: By appointment only. Arrangements must be made at least **one year** in advance. Please contact the office

Funerals: *For arrangements, please call the parish office.*



History of Immaculate Conception Parish

It was here in Old Town that Father Junipero Serra celebrated his First Holy Mass in California on July 2, 1769, near the site of the present Immaculate Conception Church, and it was on the hill overlooking Old Town that he planted the cross which marked the site of the Mission and the Presidio.

In 1849, the first parish church was established in Old Town with the name of Immaculate Conception and was dedicated in 1858. It still stands and is known as the Old Adobe Chapel on Conde Street. The cornerstone to the present Immaculate Conception Church was laid in 1868 under the direction of Father Antonio Ubach. With the population swing toward the south, it was not until July 6, 1919, that the church was dedicated by Archbishop John J. Cantwell of Los Angeles.

WE PRAY

MASS INTENTIONS

20	8 AM	<i>St. Apollinaris</i> †Alexander & Jeanette Toczko	RP
21	8 AM	<i>St. Lawrence of Brindisi</i> †Rev. Alphonsus Maloney	RE
22	8 AM	<i>St. Mary Magdalene</i> Laurence Hunt, SI	RP
23	8 AM	<i>St. Bridget</i> †Maria de Jesus Carranza	RP
24	8 AM	<i>St. Sharbel Makhluf</i> Anne Martin, SI	RP
25	8 AM	<i>St. James</i> Priest's Intentions	RP
	5:15 PM	†Patricia Ann Sullivan	RP
26	8:30 AM	†Santana Espinoza & †Ana Orozco	RP
	10:00 AM	†William Kennedy	RE
	11:30 AM	James & Zula Brown Descendents	RE
	5:15 PM	People of Immaculate Conception	RP

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

July: Intentions of the Holy Father

Universal: That political responsibility may be lived at all levels as a high form of charity.

Evanglization: That, amid social inequalities, Latin American Christians may bear witness to love for the poor and contribute to a more fraternal society.

PRAY: SEMINARIANS IN THEOLOGY

4th	David Exner North American College Rome,
4th	Brian Frice Mt. Angel Seminary OR
2nd	Oscar Lopez, Mt. Angel Seminary OR
3rd	Nathan McWeeney Mt. Angel Seminary OR
2nd	Eric Tamayo North American College Rome
4th	Corey Tufford North American College Rome,
4th	Derek Twilliger Mt. Angel Seminary OR
3rd	Billy Zondler, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR

PRAY FOR OUR PRIESTS

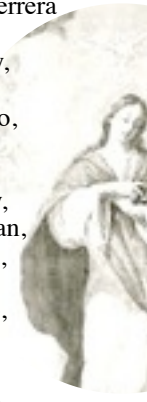
20	Rev. Giles Conwell
21	Rev. Brian Corcoran
22	Rev. Edward Corcoran
23	Rev. Gino Correa, OFM
24	Rev. Aquinas Costello, OP
25	Rev. Msgr. Edward Creighton
26	Rev. David Croisetiere

PRAY THE SCRIPTURES

Monday: Ex 14:5-18; (Ps) Ex 15:1-6; Mt 12:38-42
 Tuesday: Ex 14:21--15:1; (Ps) Ex 5:8-17; Mt 12:46-50
 Wednesday: Ex 16:1-15; Ps 78:18-28; Jn 20:1-18
 Thursday: Ex 19:1-20; (Ps) Dn 3:52-56; Mt 13:10-17
 Friday: Ex 20:1-17; Ps 19:8-11; Mt 13:18-23
 Saturday: 2 Cor 4:7-15; Ps 126:1-6; Mt 20:20-28

PRAY FOR HEALING

Jesus, we ask you to bring your peace and healing touch to those who are ill, afraid or worried. Amen

Esther Fitch, Lydia Castillo Herrera Margaret Kelly, Patricia Kennedy, Dorothy Kleint, Deena Marchiano, Dena Mendoza, Jean Miller, Patricia O'Grady, Mary Jane Tiernan, Marguerite Vorst, Marie Whitman, Martha Zamudio, Carlos Amaya, Fred Levine, Mike Rodriguez, Lisa Becerra, Maguire Fitzpatrick, Tony Jenkins, Peter Nalwalker, Bob Witt,		Frank Garay, Frances Garcia, Socorro Pacheco, Linda Lee, Amparo Valenzuela, Robby Witt, Phyllis Altomare, Denise Cooney, Alicia Ambrose, Shirley Pearson, Diego Cárdenas. Inez Cerda Bull Joanne Mangiameli Rose McBrien Cosmo Busalacchi Maria Casanova, Steve Stone, Laura Castillo, Edna Moore, Maria Esperanza Kramer Joan Busalacchi
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PRAY FOR OUR DEPLOYED MILITARY

Jesus, protect all who serve our country.

Sgt. Ahmed John Alexander, Natalie Augustine, Major Jerry Bloomquist, Col. Mike Bodkin, Danny Carpenter, USMC, LTJG Joseph Colangelo, USN, Cpl. Samuel James Comer, Daniel Dinglebeck, USN, PFC, David Eley, USMC, Micah Emery, Sgt. Christopher Escalona, Capt. Pedro Esquivel, 1Lt. Cortez Fabia, Juan Carlos Galazza, SSGT. Vincent Charles Lucario,	Robert Clinton Long, MC2, Sgt. Adriana Matizel, Wendell Miculob, LTJG Joe F. Morales, USN; LCPL Matthew A. Pena, Sgt. Richard Pierce, Sgt. William Paul Powers and Cinco, CPL Wilson Santiago; Alfred Tello, Ricky Thibeault, Tony Tulloss, PFC Travis Vliet; & 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. SCPO Desiree S. Hayes, USN
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†PRAY FOR OUR DECEASED†

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace Amen.

William Kennedy, Robert McMahon, David Diaz, Margie Gautier, Patrick Piggot, Rodney Serrano, Concepción Garza, Richard Solís Moreno, Laura Marks, Alvin Weaver, William Bethel, Lillian Sinclair, Olga Hritz, Imelda Hoeckelmann, Angelina Olivarez,	Alice Perry, Joseph Moreno, Louie Serrano, Gustavo Sosa, Floyd Watson, Iola Torre, Thomas Briggs, Emilie Graham, Angela Cordova, Ramiro Moreno, Alexander Toczko Jeannette Toczko José Teofilo Solorio Ray Jackson Betty Jackson
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**DIVORCED, REMARRIED CATHOLICS
NEED SUPPORT FOR CONVERSION,
NOT CHANGES ON COMMUNION**

FROM THE PASTOR Catholics who have divorced and remarried need help for the “difficult climb” of conversion and spiritual growth, not a change in Church practice on the reception of Holy Communion, a prominent cardinal said.

Cardinal Ennio Antonelli summarized the advice of Pope John Paul II, who encouraged pastors “not to lower the mountain, but instead help believers to climb it by leading the way.”

“For their part, the faithful should not stop trying to reach the summit; they must sincerely seek both what is good and the will of God. Only with this fundamental attitude is it possible to develop a positive path of conversion and growth, even though individual steps may be short and sometimes even deviant,” explained the cardinal, who is president emeritus of the Pontifical Council for the Family.

Cardinal Antonelli’s new 17-page booklet, “The Marriage Crisis and the Eucharist,” reflects on Christian marriage and critiques proposals to change Catholic practice in order to allow those who have divorced and remarried to receive Holy Communion.

“A major pastoral shift is strongly advocated by the media, the public and even many Catholics, including laity and clergy, largely expect this too,” the cardinal said.

The proposals, commonly associated with German Cardinal Walter Kasper, have been repeated for decades. They have again come to prominence ahead of the Synod on the Family, to be held at the Vatican this October.

Cardinal Antonelli countered these proposals, saying: “In the Catholic Church, the pastoral practice must be consistent with the doctrine of the faith.” The indissolubility of Christian marriage is “a firmly established doctrine,” he stressed, and a consummated sacramental marriage is indissoluble “by virtue of Christ’s will.”

Without penitence and sexual continence, he explained, the divorced and remarried “cannot be allowed to receive Holy Communion.” New unions of separated spouses are illicit and constitute “a persistent grave moral disorder.” These unions create a situation that “objectively contradicts the nuptial covenant between Christ and the Church, as signified and effected by the Eucharist.”

While the cardinal reiterated Catholic teaching, he acknowledged “widespread dissatisfaction” with this position among many people. Many couples perceive it as rejection and “total exclusion from the Church.” They are “tempted to leave the Church community and to lose faith.”

The cardinal stressed the need to help people in this situation through personal companionship and helping them participate in the life of the Church as much as possible.

He emphasized that exclusion from Holy Communion does not mean exclusion from the Church. Rather, people in irregular unions continue to be Church members. He said “other believers and pastors must welcome them with love, respect and care.”

At the same time, he stressed that Catholic practice is consistent and based in Scripture and the tradition of the Church.

The indissolubility of marriage is the “cornerstone” of these pastoral questions, he said, based on teaching is rooted in the words of Jesus Christ himself. Cardinal Antonelli cited several biblical passages, including “What God has joined together, no human being must separate” (Mt 19:6; Mk 10:9) and “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery” (Mk 10:11-12).

Jesus’ own words about adultery “must have seemed outrageous to many devout Israelites,” the cardinal said. “It is easy to understand that the teaching of the Gospel has encountered and continues to meet with considerable difficulties.”


Cardinal Antonelli cited the teachings of the Popes as well as the teachings of the Church Fathers and the ecumenical councils, such as the discussion of marriage in the Second Vatican Council document “*Gaudium et Spes*.”

More recent Church teachings on the subject include Pope John Paul II’s 1981 apostolic exhortation “*Familiaris Consortio*” and his 1984 exhortation “*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*.”

In a Jan. 21, 2000 address to the Tribunal of the Roman Rota, John Paul II said that a “ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved even by the intervention of the Pope.” That address said Catholic teaching on marriage is confirmed by “the Church’s centuries-old practice, maintained with full fidelity and heroism, sometimes even in the face of severe pressures from the mighty of this world.” - *ctd p 7*

AROUND THE PARISH

LOVE OUR PRIESTS Prayer Group




We invite you to join us for a special Mass honoring

REVEREND LUKE BUCKLES, O.P.
PROFESSOR DOMINICAN PONTIFICAL UNIVERSITY, ROME

I am the Good Shepherd, I know my sheep, and mine know me.
John 10: 7-10

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

DATE: SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2015
 TIME: 10:00 A.M.
 PLACE: ASCENSION PARISH
 11292 CLAIREMONT MESA BLVD.
 SAN DIEGO, CA 92124-1524



Father Buckles recognized very early the necessary bond that unites our Lord with our Lady. He believes Mother Mary guided him to conversion and then to the priesthood. Let's gather to hear his amazing story.

THE MASS WILL BE FOLLOWED BY AN INFORMAL POTLUCK LUNCHEON *Bring a friend & a dish to share!*



2015 Baptism Schedule

August 03 Class
August 09 Baptisms

(See ic-sandiego.org for more dates.)

LITANY OF THE MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us.
 Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.
 God the Father of Heaven, Have mercy on us.
 God the Son, Redeemer of the world, Have mercy on us.
 God the Holy Spirit, Have mercy on us.
 Holy Trinity, One God, Have mercy on us.
 Blood of Christ, only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Incarnate Word of God, save us.
 Blood of Christ, of the new and Eternal Testament, save us.
 Blood of Christ, falling upon the earth in the Agony, save us.
 Blood of Christ, shed profusely in the Scourging, save us.
 Blood of Christ, flowing forth in the Crowning with Thorns, save us.
 Blood of Christ, poured out on the Cross, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Price of our salvation, save us.
 Blood of Christ, without which there is no forgiveness, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Eucharistic drink and refreshment of souls, save us.
 Blood of Christ, river of mercy, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Victor over demons, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Courage of martyrs, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Strength of confessors, save us.
 Blood of Christ, bringing forth virgins, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Help of those in peril, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Relief of the burdened, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Solace in sorrow, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Hope of the penitent, save us.
 Blood of Christ, consolation of the dying, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Peace and Tenderness of hearts, save us.
 Blood of Christ, Pledge of Eternal Life, save us.
 Blood of Christ, freeing souls from Purgatory, save us.
 Blood of Christ, most worthy of all glory and honor, save us.
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, Spare us, O Lord.
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, Graciously hear us, O Lord.
 Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, Have mercy on us.
 V. Thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, in Thy blood, R. And made of us a kingdom for our God.
 Let Us Pray
 Almighty and Eternal God, Thou hast appointed Thine only-begotten Son the Redeemer of the world, and willed to be appeased by His Blood, Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may worthily adore this Price of our salvation, and through its power be safeguarded from the evils of this present life, so that we may rejoice in its fruits forever in Heaven. Through the same Christ Our Lord.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Have you been thinking of joining our parish? Don't hesitate! You don't have to live near Old Town. Our parishioners come from all parts of San Diego County. It's easy to register -- use the form in the bulletin, print out and complete the registration form on our website www.ic-sandiego.org, call the rectory or sign up on a Registration Sunday—the next one is August 9th. Parishioners interested in joining the Membership Committee and planning new parishioner welcome events, call 619-995-2963.

SPAGHETTI DINNER



July 19, 2015
 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
 Friends and Family welcome.

Tickets on sale in Serra Hall after Mass.
 Adults \$5, children \$2 (under 10 years of age)

AROUND THE PARISH

Gifts of Treasure

With gratitude for the gifts we have received,
parishioners and visitors made a joyful
return to the Lord.

July 12, 2015

Total Collection: \$4,889.75
Envelopes: \$3,239.00 Plate: \$1,650.75
Total contributing households: 92

5:15 Sat	\$ 738.73
8:30 Sun	\$1237.75
10:00 Sun	\$1394.28
11:30 Sun	\$ 695.32
5:15 Sun	\$ 478.67
Mailed	\$ 345.00

EXPENSES

July 6-10, 2015

Auto insurance (annual)	\$1100.00
Maintenance Supplies	\$57.74
Ministry Supplies	\$ 352.88
Music Ministry	\$ 600.00
Payroll (incl. tax)	\$3078.26
Payroll Service	\$46.45
Pension	\$372.52
Postage	\$ 100.00
Supply Priest	\$625.00
Telephone	\$242.73

Total: \$6,575.58

NEW HYMNAL

So far parishioners have dedicated 60 of the 200 hymnals for loved ones, living and deceased. Donations for dedication are \$20/hymnal Your name may be printed as donor (or it can be left blank) and you may have the name of a person living, or add a † if deceased. Submit name and donation to rectory or put into collection basket.

THANK YOU!

Holy Family School and Our Lady's School thank the Immaculate Conception parish community for the generous donation of \$1000 per school made through the Quarters and Cans program.

Catholic Charities also thanks the parish community for the gift cards received through Quarters and Cans. The cards totaled \$1,930 to assist families served by Catholic Charities.

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: LUMEN GENTIUM

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

That divine mission, entrusted by Christ to the apostles, will last until the end of the world, since the Gospel they are to teach is for all time the source of all life for the Church. And for this reason the apostles, appointed as rulers in this society, took care to appoint successors.

For they not only had helpers in their ministry, but also, in order that the mission assigned to them might continue after their death, they passed on to their immediate cooperators, as it were, in the form of a testament, the duty of confirming and finishing the work begun by themselves, recommending to them that they attend to the whole flock in which the Holy Spirit placed them to shepherd the Church of God. They therefore appointed such men, and gave them the order that, when they should have died, other approved men would take up their ministry. Among those various ministries which, according to tradition, were exercised in the Church from the earliest times, the chief place belongs to the office of those who, appointed to the episcopate, by a succession running from the beginning, are passers-on of the apostolic seed. Thus, as St. Irenaeus testifies, through those who were appointed bishops by the apostles, and through their successors down in our own time, the apostolic tradition is manifested and preserved.

Bishops, therefore, with their helpers, the priests and deacons, have taken up the service of the community, presiding in place of God over the flock, whose shepherds they are, as teachers for doctrine, priests for sacred worship, and ministers for governing. And just as the office granted individually to Peter, the first among the apostles, is permanent and is to be transmitted to his successors, so also the apostles' office of nurturing the Church is permanent, and is to be exercised without interruption by the sacred order of bishops. Therefore, the Sacred Council teaches that bishops by divine institution have succeeded to the place of the apostles, as shepherds of the Church, and he who hears them, hears Christ, and he who rejects them, rejects Christ and Him who sent Christ.

**WELCOME TO IMMACULATE
CONCEPTION!**

To register at the parish, please fill out the form below, and drop it in the basket or call the office at 295-4141.

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY/ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

PARISH & COMMUNITY

Parish Calendar

July

19	Parish Spaghetti Dinner	1:00 p.m.
21	Gentle Stretch Class	5:00 p.m.
22	I.C. Seniors-West Side Story	2:00 p.m.
	Choir Practice	5:30 p.m.
26	Building Fund Collection	
28	Gentle Stretch Class	5:00 p.m.

August

03	I.C. Seniors Luncheon	11:00 a.m.
	Baptism Class	7:00 p.m.
04	Gentle Stretch Class	5:00 p.m.
	Pastoral Council	6:00 p.m.
05	Choir Practice	5:30 p.m.
09	Parish Registration Sunday	
	Parish Pancake Breakfast	9:30 a.m.
	Baptisms	2:00 p.m.

FROM LAUDATO SI- Pope Francis

MAN WITH GOD, NATURE, NEIGHBOR

98. Jesus lived in full harmony with creation, and others were amazed: “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?” (Mt 8:27). His appearance was not that of an ascetic set apart from the world, nor of an enemy to the pleasant things of life. Of himself he said: “The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard!’” . He was far removed from philosophies which despised the body, matter and the things of the world. Such unhealthy dualisms, nonetheless, left a mark on certain Christian thinkers in the course of history and disfigured the Gospel. Jesus worked with his hands, in daily contact with the matter created by God, to which he gave form by his craftsmanship. It is striking that most of his life was dedicated to this task in a simple life which awakened no admiration at all: “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?”. In this way he sanctified human labour and endowed it with a special significance for our development. As Saint John Paul II taught, “by enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity”.

99. In the Christian understanding of the world, the destiny of all creation is bound up with the mystery of Christ, present from the beginning: “All things have been created through him and for him” (Col 1:16).

Rite of Christian Initiation

Each year on Holy Saturday during the Easter Vigil, thousands of people are baptized into the Catholic Church in the United States. Parishes welcome these new Catholics through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

If you are interested in becoming a baptized member of the Church, consider participating in the RCIA process which will begin in September.

For information, please contact the parish office, parish@ic-sandiego.org.

“Error, indeed is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced more true than truth itself.”

– St. Irenaeus of Lyons

Serra Gifts . . .

**Street Level of
Fr. Serra Hall
619-297-3426**



Open 7 days a week
Monday - Friday 9:30 -4:00
Saturday 10:00 to 4:00
Sunday 9:30 to 3:00

Serra Gifts offers a beautiful assortment of religious items for your home, for your family and friends.

New items arrive weekly.

Remember, your purchases help to support our parish.

See our online catalog at:
<http://www.ic-sandiego.org/gift-shop>

continued from page 3

Pope Benedict XVI confirmed Familiaris Consortio in his 2007 apostolic exhortation, *Sacramentum Caritatis*.

Cardinal Antonelli said any change in Catholic practice would risk compromising the credibility of consistent papal teaching and the authority of the Catholic bishops. He warned of the risk of “trivializing the Eucharist” and reducing it to “a rite of socialization.”

Proposed changes would indicate approval of sexual activity outside marriage, given that unmarried couples are “far more numerous” than the divorced and remarried. Contemporary culture “promotes self-justification, particularly in the emotional and sexual spheres,” when it is often necessary to change one’s life, the cardinal warned.

He also noted theologians who advocated recognition of “authentic human values” in irregular unions, such as affection, mutual help, and a shared commitment to children.

“However, one must avoid presenting such unions in themselves as imperfect values, since there are serious disorders,” Cardinal Antonelli said.

He warned of the danger of presenting evil as “an imperfect good.” Proposed changes would “lead to a separation of mercy and conversion” and would be “the only case of forgiveness without conversion.”

Exclusion of the divorced and remarried from Communion is comparable to “other situations of grave objective disorder and public scandal,” he added.

“Whoever has a habit of swearing should make serious efforts to correct himself; whoever has committed theft must make restitution; whoever has harmed his neighbor, whether materially or morally, needs to repair the harm. Without a real commitment towards conversion, there can be no sacramental absolution and admission to the Eucharistic Communion.”

Allowing those in irregular unions to receive Holy Communion would create an inconsistency that risks reducing the permanence of marriage to “an ideal, which may be beautiful, but attainable only for a fortunate few,” the cardinal said. Such a change could become generalized to a point where “it will be meaningless to talk about the indissolubility of marriage and the celebration of the sacrament of marriage will lose its practical relevance.”

Cardinal Antonelli stressed the power of Christian love, sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit. This love can “observe the commandments and even go beyond them.” Chastity, though difficult, is possible for all, including the divorced and remarried, he said.

For the cardinal, the main pastoral priority for the family and evangelization is the formation of “exemplary Christian families which are able to give concrete witness to the fact that Christian marriage is beautiful and possible to fulfill.”

“In order to illuminate and produce heat, the first thing to do is light a fire.”

THE COLLISION OF TWO RUNAWAY TRAINS

— *Michael Youssef*

... the one striking and overwhelming image I get is of two runaway trains moving in opposite directions. And yet, in some strange way, they are about to cause a global collision.

On one train, Islamists are violently demanding that the West bow to them as they seek to take the world back to the Arabian dark ages of the 7th century.

On the other, humanists, atheists, greens, and extreme liberals are pushing the West to abandon its historic morals and Judeo-Christian ethics. They demand that the West embrace a world of homosexual marriages, nature worship, environmental extremism, and godlessness.

Although I am a trained social anthropologist who is supposed to make sense of such things, I must confess that I am baffled on this front. How can two extreme movements, heading in opposite directions, be so perilously close to an unprecedented collision?

The one thing that both runaway trains have in common, however, is their hatred of Christians. To both, Christians represent a threat—although different types of threats.

To Islamists, the threat is theological. Christians believe that God became man, died on a cross to redeem the world, and rose again to justify everyone who would believe in Him. Every day, Muslims are turning their back on Islam and embracing the redemption that only Jesus offers. Through those conversions, the biggest fear of Islamists has come upon them.

To atheists, humanists, and environmental zealots, the threat is to their own consciences. They were created in God’s own image, and Christians represent a “photograph” of the life they were meant to lead. The liberal extremists cannot escape that image, and it burdens their inner guilt.

Thankfully, where social anthropology fails me, the Bible never does! It is only biblical knowledge that can make sense of the apparently senseless.

The Bible tells us that when sin increases, grace also abounds. Although I can’t promise Christians an easy time in life, based on Scripture, I can certainly assure them that God’s grace and light will shine brighter through them as the darkness increases.

Many of my friends would explain the current events in the world as the great “falling away” that will occur before the return of Christ. Certainly they have every reason to believe that. But I am in the business of reminding them that, regardless of this turmoil, our call is to lift up Jesus to all. And through lifting Him up, some may come to believe and be redeemed.

Not only is our God in control of history, He is the author and finisher of history. Therefore, He *will* have the last word.

So, my friends, *get busy lifting up Jesus. Take courage and look up. For the day of your redemption draws nigh.*