

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](mailto:parish@ic-sandiego.org) Website: [www.ic-sandiego.org](http://www.ic-sandiego.org)

**June 12, 2016**

**Rev. Richard L. Perozich, Pastor**

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

**Deacon Robert H. Fitzmorris**

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**Liz Fielder, Manager, Serra Gifts**

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**Marsha Long, Music**

[pictures@marshalong.com](mailto:pictures@marshalong.com)

**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

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@sdcatholic.org](mailto:rfitzmor@sdcatholic.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 Saint Junípero 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

13	8 AM	<i>St. Anthony of Padua</i> †Virginia Moraga Saracho	RP
14	8AM	<b>Weekday</b> †Marcelaine Smith	RE
15	8 AM	<b>Weekday</b> †Miguelita Moraga Rubio	RP
16	8 AM	<b>Weekday</b> †Maribeth Methot	RP
17	8 AM	<b>Weekday</b> †Roger M. Ibarra	RP
18	8 AM	<b>Weekday; BVM</b> Takiko DeMarino, SI	RP
	5:15 PM	†Martin Morris	RP
19	8:30 AM	†Anne White	RP
	10:00 AM	Novena for Fathers	RE
	11:30 AM	†William Kennedy	RE
	5:15 PM	All Souls	RP

### APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

#### JUNE: Intentions of the Holy Father

**Universal:** That immigrants and refugees may find welcome and respect in the countries to which they come.

**Evangelization:** That the personal encounter with Jesus may arouse in many young people the desire to offer their own lives in priesthood or consecrated life.

### PRAY: SEMINARIANS IN THEOLOGY

1st	Manuel Del Rio, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo
4th	David Exner, North American College, Rome
4th	Brian Frice, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR
2nd	Oscar Lopez, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo
3rd	Nathan McWeeney, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR
1st	Raymond Napuli, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR
1st	Michael O'Connor, 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

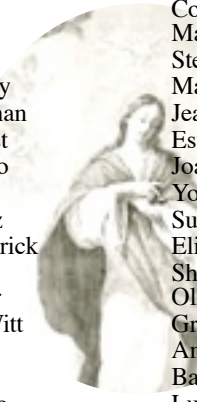
13	Rev. Leo Brogan
14	Rev. Richard Brown, SJ
15	Rev. William Brunner
16	Rev. Ronald Buchmiller
17	Bishop Neal Buckon
18	Rev. Sebastian Bukenya
19	Rev. Scott Burnia

### PRAY THE SCRIPTURES

Monday: 1 Kgs 21:1-16; Ps 5:2-7; Mt 5:38-42
Tuesday: 1 Kgs 21:17-29; Ps 51:3-16; Mt 5:43-48
Wednesday: 2 Kgs 2:1-14; Ps 31:20-24; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18
Thursday: Sir 48:1-14; Ps 97:1-7; Mt 6:7-15
Friday: 2 Kgs 11:1-4, 9-20; Ps 132:11-18; Mt 6:19-23
Saturday: 2 Chr 24:17-25; Ps 89:4-34; Mt 6:24-34
Sunday: Zec 12:10-13:1; Ps 63:2-9; Gal 3:26-29; Lk 9:18-24

### PRAY FOR HEALING

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

Patricia Kennedy Dorothy Kleint Dena Mendoza Jean Miller Patricia O'Grady Mary Jane Tiernan Marguerite Vorst Martha Zamudio Carlos Amaya Mike Rodriguez Maguire Fitzpatrick Tony Jenkins Peter Nalwalker Bob & Robby Witt Frank Garay Frances Garcia Socorro Pacheco Linda Lee Amparo Valenzuela Phyllis Altomare Alicia Ambrose	 Inez Bull Cosmo & Joan Busalacchi Maria Casanova Steve Stone Mark Brandon. Jeanne Pontius Esther Salazar Joane Anderson Yolanda Garcia Susan Rykowski Elias Barajas Shirley Ilog Olivia Ingram Grace Mulvanity Angelica Ortega Barbara Driscoll Lucille Miller Reginald Custodio Victoria Cardenas Linda Hastings Dominic Castagnola
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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 1Lt. Cortez Fabia Juan Carlos Galazza SSGT. Vincent Charles Lucario	Robert Clinton Long, MC2 Sgt. Adriana Matizel Wendell Miculob LTJG Joe F. Moralez, 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 Gil Perez, US Navy
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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.*

Alice Perry Joseph Moreno Louie Serrano Gustavo Sosa Floyd Watson Iola Torre Emilie Graham Angela Cordova Ramiro Moreno Alexander Toczko Jeannette Toczko José Teofilo Solorio Ray & Betty Jackson Denise Cooney Joanne Mangiameli Edna Moore	Paul Ramirez Maude Laracy Helen Peña Lydia Castillo Herrera Bertha Lockwood Salvador Rivera John Cervantes Daniel Don Florence Messina Arthur Wilbur Martinez Jesse Benitez Margaret Kelly Martha Jane Hotchkiss Janet Meyers Hector Morales Carol Raiter
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## FORMS OF LAY SPIRITUALITY

By Howard Kainz

## FROM THE PASTOR

Many people, including Catholics and ex-Catholics, seek “spirituality” in Buddhism, Yogic meditation, New Age Movements, the Cosmic Consciousness movement, and other such sources. For me, one of the saddest developments in spiritual “exploration” emerged in a letter from the former Jesuit Provincial of Wisconsin, a good friend for many of us at Marquette University, who became Pastor at Creighton University for fourteen years. Now an octogenarian, he wrote to fellow Jesuits and friends that he had decided to leave the Jesuit priesthood and all “hierarchies,” to attain “unity with the cosmos.” He wrote, “It is time for the Church to turn her attention from saving face to saving the earth, from saving souls to saving the planet.”

Feelings of “transcendence” have been common to human beings around the globe from time immemorial, and have given rise to whole religions. But in Catholicism the study of spirituality (ascetical theology) is far advanced beyond basic religious experiences and even the systematic Eastern meditative practices.

The traditional presentation of the spiritual stages, found in the works of John of the Cross, Bonaventure, Bernard of Clairvaux, and others, is often in terms of three stages – the “purgative, illuminative, and unitive” states – although some writers like St. Theresa, who speaks of seven “mansions,” incorporate subdivisions.

The *Purgative* stage is characterized by conversion, a firm resolve to avoid sin and the near occasions of sin, the practice of regular prayer, and in some cases sensory consolation or delight in spiritual things.

The *Illuminative* stage leads to deeper prayer, often accompanied by trials and temptations and/or occasional experiences of divine presence, and rarely some special gifts (visions, dreams, etc.). Some spiritual writers use the figure of a sculptor working on a block of wood or marble, with much exertion and little-by-little accomplishment, to create a Christ-like figure.

The *Unitive* stage brings about the constant, even sensible, experience of the presence of God, which God the Father describes for St. Catherine of Siena in her *Dialogue*: “To such of these is granted never to feel my absence. I told you how I go away from others (in feeling only, not in grace) and then return. I do not act thus with these most perfect ones who have attained great perfection and are completely dead to every selfish impulse.” Souls in this stage are impervious to attacks from the devil, and don’t fear suffering. Reading this, I think of St. Paul’s words: “And I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me” and “with Christ I am nailed to the cross.” (Gal. 2:19-20).

At a recent retreat at a Trappist monastery, I decided to refresh my memory of the three stages by reading Ralph Martin’s hefty and excellent book, *The Fulfillment of All Desire*, which features quotations from the saints I’ve mentioned as well as Thérèse of Lisieux and Francis de Sales.

Aside from realizing that I hadn’t got very far in my spiritual journey, my reading stimulated two main lines of thought:

1) What about Mother Teresa? No sense of the presence of God for about the last fifty years of her life? How do we explain what seems to be a tremendous exception to the “rule” of spiritual progress? Perhaps differences related to her personality, temperament, inner strength? Perhaps a reflection of the tremendous darkness of faith in the contemporary world? At least we get the impression that there is no cut-and-dried formula for attaining spiritual perfection.

2) What about *lay* persons? What about people like me, with bumbling attempts at prayer, work schedules, family issues, breakdowns of cars, computers, plumbing, persistent health problems, and, for the most part, a strongly secular environment? Throughout Martin’s 500-page book, all of the discussions (except those based on St. Francis de Sales) were relevant only to consecrated religious.

Are there any recent *lay* saints who have approximated what the doctors of ascetical theology call the “unitive” state. I can think only of a few recent women saints like Gemma Galgani (1878-1903) who probably did reach that stage, but no men. (That may be due to my lack of hagiographical knowledge.)

But not to worry. St. Louis de Montfort is on the layperson’s side.

In *Friends of the Cross*, Montfort addresses courageous lay Christians: “You are a group of crusaders united to fight against the world, not like those religious, men and women, who leave the world for fear of being overcome, but like brave, intrepid warriors on the battlefield, refusing to retreat or even to yield an inch.”

St. Thomas Aquinas would almost certainly disagree. He argues in the *Summa* that those who join religious orders to save their souls were doing the most prudent thing, fleeing the temptations and distractions of the world. Montfort’s equivalent to the “unitive stage,” in contrast, is simply the grace to keep fighting for Christian truth and goodness, and to prudently and courageously deal with the crosses that come in our life – even the ones that we have brought upon ourselves.

But Montfort’s fulsome praise of the cross is best taken in the context of his lifelong advocacy of “total consecration” to Mary, as spelled out in his book, a Montfort criticizes spiritual writers and directors who are influenced by the traditional analogy (in the “illuminative” stage) of the sculptor painstakingly chipping off parts of a block to create a Christ-like figure. With total consecration to Mary, he asserts, the chisels and picks can be tossed away, since they are replaced with a mold that gradually and accurately re-creates the image of Mary’s divine Son.

The crosses are tailor-made, apportioned with a motherly touch to the capacities of Mary’s clients. This, claims Montfort, is the “quickest and easiest” way to attain perfection.

“Easy” and “quick” are strong inducements, if perhaps relative terms. So we shouldn’t get easily discouraged. Those who take this path to spiritual perfection won’t have knowledge of what “stage” they’re at. But they’ll know, for sure, that they’re in good hands.

**AROUND THE PARISH**

**19 JUNE ... QUARTERS & CANS SUNDAY**

Please drop your Quarters and Cans envelopes in the regular collection next Sunday or the following Sunday. All money collected will be used here at Immaculate Conception to assist our brothers and sisters who come to us in need. Your generous donations will continue to be used to help feed, and in some cases assist those who are in need of our help with rent and utilities. The parish also provides gas and grocery cards. Resource information is also available so people can access public and private agencies that can help with their needs.

Food items collected will be taken by our volunteers to the Catholic Charities Food Resource Center. Please make sure these items are in non-breakable containers, unopened, and the dates have not expired. There is always a need for the following items:

- ◆ Canned goods including vegetables, fruit, chili, tuna fish, spam, chicken, beef, beans, soups, and spaghetti sauce;
- ◆ Peanut butter, jelly, and honey;
- ◆ Cereals, pasta, rice, and beans;
- ◆ Any paper goods such as toilet paper, paper towels, paper plates, cups, napkins, Kleenex tissues, baby wipes;
- ◆ Hygiene items such as shampoo, soaps, toothpaste, tooth brushes, dental floss, mouthwash, disposable razors, shaving cream, lotions and feminine products;
- ◆ Plastic, paper or reusable grocery bags for carrying the above.

**Thank You**

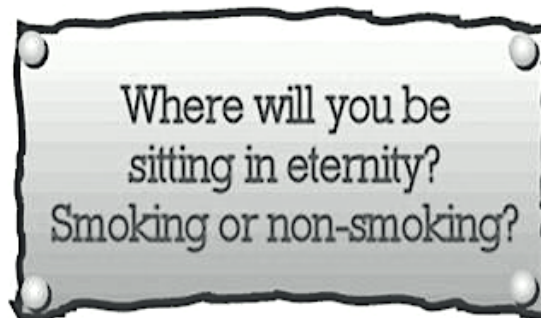
On behalf of the entire Quarter and Cans Committee and Father Richard we thank you for your continued support of these important programs as we try to follow Our Lord's command and put the Holy Gospel into action.


**25 June ...Step Up for Life Walk**

CAPS Pregnancy Clinics  
Walk at Liberty Station, NTC Park

Register & Info @ CAPSwalk.org  
or call 619-337-8080

Help raise \$10,000 to train nurses in ultrasound  
Register now to secure your CAPS gift! Appreciation drawing & opening prayer at 9 am.





**2016 Baptism Schedule**

<b>July 12</b>	<b>Class</b>
<b>July 17</b>	<b>Baptism</b>

Schedule is available on the parish website ([ic-sandiego.org](http://ic-sandiego.org)).

**15 July...Italian Night Parish Dinner**

6:30 to 8:30 pm -- Serra Hall

Dinner includes Green Salad, Chicken Marsala, Fettuccine, and Spumoni  
No-host beer and wine

Tickets on sale soon.

**Father's Day Novena ...**

**June 19-27**

Mass intention envelopes for the Father's Day Novena are available in the pews and in the vestibule

Remember your father and other men who were father figures in your life with the gift of a novena.

**Are you going to be hospitalized?**

If so, be sure to register with the hospital as a Roman Catholic. By doing so the Diocesan priest assigned to the hospital will be informed that you are there as a patient. He will then make every effort to visit and/or bring Holy Communion to you.

**22 July ... Divine Mercy Retreat**

Join retreat speakers, Fr. Richard Perozich & Dcn. Patrick Byrne, at Prince of Peace Benedictine Abbey on Friday, July 22, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Cost is \$20 per person (includes lunch).  
Reservations must be made in advance.  
Call Jan Donovan 760-440-9905 or email [jandonovan@cox.net](mailto:jandonovan@cox.net)

**AROUND THE PARISH**

**Gifts of Treasure**

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

**June 5, 2016**

**Total Collection: \$5,032.48**  
**Envelopes: \$3,985.00 Plate: \$1,047.48**  
**Total contributing households: 85**

5:15 Sat	\$ 995.00
8:30 Sun	\$1077.86
10:00 Sun	\$ 774.20
11:30 Sun	\$ 540.92
5:15 Sun	\$1115.00
Mailed	\$ 529.50

**EXPENSES**

May 30-June 3, 2016

Cable/Internet	\$177.01
Copier Lease	\$291.81
Diocesan Tax	\$2,395.25
Health Insurance	\$1,530.42
Music	\$625.00
Supply Priest	\$775.00
Telephone	\$274.96
Waste Disposal (2 mo.)	\$584.63
Workers Comp	\$132.76

**Total: \$ 6,786.84**

**Annual Catholic Appeal**

**Goal: \$24,000**

Paid: \$20,873.50

Pledged: \$28,763.50

**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

**FATHER'S DAY, JUNE 19**

Remember your father with a special gift. Rosaries, religious medals, prayer books, and religious items are available in the gift shop.

Do you have a Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, or Wedding to attend? If so, consider visiting the Serra Gifts for that special gift.

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

**AMORIS LAETITIA  
ON LOVE IN THE FAMILY  
OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS**

14. Let us once more take up the song of the Psalmist. In the home where husband and wife are seated at table, children appear at their side "like olive shoots" (*Ps* 128:3), that is, full of energy and vitality. If the parents are in some sense the foundations of the home, the children are like the "living stones" of the family (cf. *1 Pet* 2:5). Significantly, the word which appears most frequently in the Old Testament after the name of God (*YHWH*, "the Lord"), is "child" (*ben*, "son"), which is itself related to the verb "to build" (*banah*). Hence, Psalm 128, in speaking of the gift of children, uses imagery drawn from the building of a house and the social life of cities: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain... Lo, sons are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate" (*Ps* 127:1, 3-5). These images reflect the culture of an ancient society, yet the presence of children is a sign of the continuity of the family throughout salvation history, from generation to generation.

**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**

**JUNE**

12	Parish Breakfast Baptisms	8:30 AM 2:00 PM
15	Choir Practice	6:00 PM
18	Quilting Group	9:30 AM
19	Father's Day Quarters & Cans Sunday	
22	Choir Practice	6:00 PM
25	Quilting Group	9:30 AM
26	Peter's Pence Special Collection	
29	Choir Practice	6:00 PM

*FROM MISERICORDIAE VULTUS - Pope Francis*

**BULL OF INDICTION OF THE  
EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY**  
*FRANCIS*  
*BISHOP OF ROME SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS  
OF GOD TO ALL WHO READ THIS LETTER,  
GRACE MERCY, AND PEACE*

... 24. Chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, Mary, from the outset, was prepared by the love of God to be the Ark of the Covenant between God and man. She treasured divine mercy in her heart in perfect harmony with her Son Jesus. Her hymn of praise, sung at the threshold of the home of Elizabeth, was dedicated to the mercy of God which extends from "generation to generation" (Lk 1:50). We too were included in those prophetic words of the Virgin Mary. This will be a source of comfort and strength to us as we cross the threshold of the Holy Year to experience the fruits of divine mercy. At the foot of the cross, Mary, together with John, the disciple of love, witnessed the words of forgiveness spoken by Jesus. This supreme expression of mercy towards those who crucified him show us the point to which the mercy of God can reach. Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception. Let us address her in the words of the Salve Regina, a prayer ever ancient and new, so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes towards us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her Son Jesus.

**Ascension Catholic Church  
2016 Summer Speaker Series**

Begins June 21 and ends August 30  
7:00 p.m.  
Free Admission

See flyer in the bulletin board located in the hall.

**30 July ... Faith & Family Night**

SD Padres vs Reds  
5:40 p.m. -- Petco Park

To purchase tickets,  
please visit [PADRES.COM/FAITH](http://PADRES.COM/FAITH)

See flyer in the bulletin board located in the hall.

**Courtyard Bricks ...**

Bricks in honor or in memory of loved ones are available for purchase in the Gift Shop or visit the parish website. (See bulletin.)

Over and over, wrong and wrong again; with the Church not speaking to the world from her wisdom, but the world teaching the Church a lesson in its foolishness, and the Church going along, like the puny kid in the schoolyard who sucks up to the bully and learns to cheer when the bully beats up the kid's own brothers.  
— *Anthony Esolen*

**JOINT DECLARATION OF POPE FRANCIS AND PATRIARCH KIRILL OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA  
2/12/16**

17. Our gaze is also directed to those facing serious difficulties, who live in extreme need and poverty while the material wealth of humanity increases. We cannot remain indifferent to the destinies of millions of migrants and refugees knocking on the doors of wealthy nations. The unrelenting consumerism of some more developed countries is gradually depleting the resources of our planet. The growing inequality in the distribution of material goods increases the feeling of the injustice of the international order that has emerged.

**'IN YOUR NATION, GOD IS BEING ERODED,  
ECLIPSED, LIQUIDATED'**

—Robert Cardinal Sarah

(CNSNews.com) -- "In your nation, God is being eroded, eclipsed, liquidated," African Cardinal Robert Sarah told hundreds of prominent Catholic clergy and lay people attending the 12th annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast Tuesday morning in Washington.

In what he called "portentous times" for the Catholic Church and for the world, the cardinal - who was appointed as Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments by Pope Francis in 2014 - strongly condemned same-sex marriage, transgender bathroom laws, and attacks on the family as "demonic".

"All manner of immorality is not only accepted and tolerated today in advanced societies, it is even promoted as a social good," the African cardinal said. "The result is hostility to Christians and increasingly, religious persecution."

"This is not an ideological war between competing ideas," Sarah told the D.C. gathering. "This is about defending ourselves, children and future generations from the demonic idolatry that says children do not need mothers and fathers. It denies human nature and wants to cut off an entire generation from God."

"The entire world looks to you, waiting and praying to see what America resolves on the present unprecedented challenges the world faces today. Such is your influence and responsibility," said the archbishop emeritus of Conakry, Guinea,

"I encourage you to truly make use of the freedom willed by your founding fathers lest you lose it," he warned his American audience.

Quoting St. John Paul II that "the future of the world and the Church pass through the family," Sarah pointed out that "this is why the Holy Father openly and vigorously defends Church teaching on contraception, abortion, homosexuality, reproductive technologies, the education of children, and much more."

"The generous and responsible love of spouses made visible through the self-giving of parents who welcome children as a gift of God makes love visible in our generation. It makes present the perfect charity of eternity. 'If you see charity, you see the Trinity,' wrote St. Augustine," the cardinal noted.

However, a broken family can also be the source of deep psychological wounds, he said.

"The rupture of the foundational relationship of someone's life through separation, divorce or distorted imposters of the family such as co-habitation or same-sex unions is a deep wound that closes the heart to self-giving love into death, and even leads to cynicism and despair. These situations cause damage to the little children through inflicting upon them deep existential doubt about love....

"This is why the devil is so intent on destroying the family. If the family is destroyed, we lose our God-

given anthropological foundations, and so find it more difficult to welcome the saving good news of Jesus Christ: self-giving, fruitful love."

"Sadly, the advent of artificial reproductive technologies, surrogacy, so-called homosexual marriage, and other evils of gender idolatry will inflict even more wounds in the midst of the generation we live with," said Sarah, who is also the author of *God or Nothing* [3].

"Advanced societies including, I regret, this nation, have done and continue to do anything possible to legalize such situations...This is why it is so important to fight to protect the family, the first cell of the life of the Church in every society."

The cardinal warned that "hidden" forms of religious persecution are just as damaging to believers as physical attacks.

"Even in this yet young 21st century of barely 16 years, one million people have been martyred around the world because of their belief in Jesus Christ. Yet the violence against Christians is not just physical, it is also political, ideological and cultural.

"This form of religious persecution is equally damaging, yet more hidden. It does not destroy physically, but spiritually... This is the will of the Evil One: to close Heaven out of envy.

"Do we not see signs of this insidious war in this great nation of the United States?" Sarah asked.

"In the name of tolerance, the Church's teaching on marriage, sexuality and [the] human person are being dismantled. The legalization of same-sex marriage, your beginning to accept contraception within healthcare programs and even bathroom bills that allow men to use the women's restroom and locker rooms.

"Should not a biological man use the men's restroom? How simpler can that concept be?" the cardinal asked to applause and laughter from the audience.

"How low we are sinking for a nation built on a set of moral claims about God, the human person, the meaning of life and the purpose of society, even by America's first settlers and founders....

"George Washington wrote that the establishment of civil and religious liberty was the motive that induced him into the field of battle. Today we find ourselves before the battle of sickness.... I call this sickness the liquidation, the eclipse of God."

The Church's challenge today is to "fight with courage and hope... and not be afraid to raise her voice to denounce the hypocrites, manipulators and the false prophets" who would lead the faithful astray.

"The battle to preserve the roots of mankind is perhaps the greatest challenge the world has faced since its origins," Sarah said.

"Be prophetic, be faithful, pray" for the soul of America and to "help stem the tide of evil that is spreading throughout the world," the cardinal exhorted. "For in the end, it is God or nothing."

<http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/barbara-hollingsworth/african-cardinal-american-catholics-your-nation-god-being-eroded>