

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

AUGUST 21, 2016

Rev. Richard L. Perozich, Pastor

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

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@sdccatholic.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

22	8 AM	<i>The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> †James DiEdoardo	RP
23	8 AM	<i>St. Rose of Lima</i> †Eleyna Toni Villanueva	RE
24	8 AM	<i>St. Bartholomew</i> †Janet Meyers	RP
25	8 AM	<i>St. Louis; St. Joseph Calasanz</i> †Helen Smith Driscoll	RP
26	8 AM	<i>Weekday</i> †Joe & Olivia Vorst	RP
27	8 AM	<i>St. Monica</i> Marguerite Vorst, SI	RP
28	5:15 PM	†George Driscoll	RP
	8:30 AM	†Rev. David Carvalho, OSB	RP
	10:00 AM	†Jorge Gonzalez Haro	RE
	11:30 AM	†William Kennedy	RE
	5:15 PM	†Alex Lariviere	RP

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

AUGUST: Intentions of the Holy Father

Universal: That volunteers may give themselves generously to the service of the needy.

Evangelization: That setting aside our very selves we may learn to be neighbors to those who find themselves on the margins of human life and society.

PRAY: SEMINARIANS IN THEOLOGY

Ord	Derek Twilliger, Priestly Ordination June 24
Ord	David Exner, Priestly Ordination June 24
Ord	Corey Tufford, Priestly Ordination June 24
1st	Manuel Del Rio, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo
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
3rd	Billy Zondler, Mt. Angel Seminary, OR

PRAY FOR OUR PRIESTS

22	Rev. Stephen Dunn
23	Rev. Msgr. Robert Ecker
24	Rev. Manuel Ediza
25	Very Rev. Mark Edney
26	Rev. Earl Eggleston
27	Rev. Charles Eis
28	Rev. Raymond Elam, OSA

PRAY THE SCRIPTURES

Monday: 2 Thes 1:1-12; Ps 96:1-5; Mt 23:13-22
Tuesday: 2 Thes 2:1--17; Ps 96:10-13; Mt 23:23-26
Wednesday: Rv 21:9-14; Ps 145:10-18; Jn 1:45-51
Thursday: 1 Cor 1:1-9; Ps 145:2-7; Mt 24:42-51
Friday: 1 Cor 1:17-25; Ps 33:1-11; Mt 25:1-13
Saturday: 1 Cor 1:26-31; Ps 33:12-21; Mt 25:14-30
Sunday: Sir 3:17-29; Ps 68:4-11; Heb 12:18-24; Lk 14:1-14

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 Frances Garcia Socorro Pacheco Linda Lee Amparo Valenzuela Phyllis Altomare Alicia Ambrose Inez Cerda Bull Cosmo & Joan Busalacchi Maria Casanova		Steve Stone Mark Brandon. Jeanne Pontius Esther Salazar Joane Anderson Yolanda Garcia Elias Barajas Shirley Ilog Olivia Ingram Grace Mulvanity Angelica Ortega Barbara Driscoll Lucille Miller Reginald Custodio Victoria Cardenas John Hobbs Lauretta Watts Robert Rolli Eleanor Anderson Marie Whitman Pat Haase Deirdre Rigney
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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.

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 Albina Farrie Stephanie Anzelone Fred Levine Eleanor Maycan
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THE SUPREME LAW OF THE CHURCH

— *Most Rev. Alexander Sample*
Archbishop of Portland

FROM THE PASTOR

I hope our readers will pardon a little wading into the Code of Canon Law, the system of law that governs the Catholic Church. I can't help it — after all, I am a trained canon lawyer! Jesus teaches us in the Gospel that the two greatest commandments are love of God and love of neighbor, for sure.

But what is the greatest love we show for God and neighbor? Is it not to see as many people as possible, including ourselves, come to know the love and mercy of God and be with him one day forever in heaven?

The Church's Code of Canon Law contains 1,752 laws covering everything from the structural organization of the Church as the people of God, the teaching of the Faith, the sacramental life of the Church, the administration of the material goods of the Church, and even penal and procedural law. But lest any of us (especially canon lawyers) forget the purpose of all of this body of law, the very last law (or "canon") states that the "salvation of souls", which must always be the supreme law of the Church, must be kept before our eyes.

The salvation of souls. How often do we hear this language in the Church today? Not very often, I am afraid. And yet that is the very mission of the Church! To emphasize this very point, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (# 776), quoting the Second Vatican Council, states: "As sacrament, the Church is Christ's instrument. 'She is taken up by him also as the instrument for the salvation of all,' 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' by which Christ is 'at once manifesting and actualizing the mystery of God's love for men.' The Church 'is the visible plan of God's love for humanity,' because God desires 'that the whole human race may become one People of God, form one Body of Christ, and be built up into one temple of the Holy Spirit.'"

Why am I emphasizing this point, you may ask? Because I sincerely think that we are in danger of losing our focus in fulfilling the mission that Christ has entrusted to all of us in the Church. Our ultimate mission is to bring as many people as possible into the one People of God, to incorporate them into the one Body of Christ, and be built up as the temple of God, animated by the Holy Spirit. The gift of eternal salvation is the greatest gift God has given to us, a gift that was purchased at a great price, the blood of his only begotten Son.

Jesus began his public ministry by boldly proclaiming, "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel." His last words to the Apostles of his Church before his Ascension were, "Go forth and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The message is clear. Repent, believe, go forth and baptize. The essential mission is spiritual, focused on bringing people to life in Christ.

Throughout the Gospels Jesus speaks of the dangers of losing the gift of salvation, missing the moment of his redemption, and risking eternal punishment by rejecting the offer God has given us in the death and resurrection of his Son. One of Jesus' most startling statements is: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matthew 7:13-14)

It seems our current environment cultivates the opposite view. Our culture seems to tell us that the way to life is easy and wide, and most people find it, while to find the road to destruction is narrow and hard, and really very few people end up there. I go by our blessed Lord's words.

Part of the reason I think that we are in danger of losing the essential and primary message of salvation of souls is based on how I see many people defining what it means to be a good Catholic. Many people have reduced being a good and faithful Catholic to being nice, tolerant and doing good works. They think if we do service projects for the poor and needy, and don't make any judgments about human behavior and sin, then we are fulfilling the Gospel mandate.

While it is a good and even essential thing that a disciple of Jesus care for the poor and seek justice for the oppressed in this world, there is so much more to the message of redemption in Jesus Christ. We must follow the Ten Commandments, avoid sin, and repent and seek forgiveness when we fail. Our eternal salvation depends on all these things, as Jesus himself taught. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

God's mercy extends to all of us when we have sinned and repented. There is no limit to this mercy. It is infinite. But we must seek it. If we say we are not sinners and are not in need of God's mercy, we make God a liar. "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:5-10)

True mercy goes beyond justice. But mercy does not oppose justice. Our mission is, only by the grace of God, to seek the salvation of our souls, and to bring as many with us to Heaven as we can, again only as God uses us as his instruments of grace and mercy. The supreme law of the Church is the salvation of souls.

AROUND THE PARISH

NEW DATES: Sept. 8-11 ... Photo Sessions for Parish Directory--Parish Centennial

Sign up now for an individual or family portrait that may be included in our parish directory as we mark our centennial as a parish. Each household will receive one complimentary 8" x10" photograph and a free copy of the printed directory.

Sign up in the parish hall this weekend or online through parish website.

16-18 SEPT ... AFTER-ABORTION HEALING RETREAT

... for Catholic women (or Catholic-friendly) given by Rachel's Hope. Held at the Diocesan Pastoral Center, 3888 Paducah Drive, San Diego. Cost \$45; partial scholarships available. Confidentiality maintained. Limited housing available. For information/ registration call Rosemary (858) 581-3022 or Rachels_Hope@juno.com. Visit us on our website: www.RachelsHope.org

LETTER TO WOMEN

Church of St. Mary Magdalene invites you to attend an evening women's study. We will be taking an in-depth look at **Pope St. John Paul II's groundbreaking work, Letter to Women.**

Every Thursday beginning Aug. 25, 2016 – Oct.13, 2016 from 6:30 – 8:00 PM
 Where: St. Mary Magdalene Church Conference Rm.
 Cost: \$29.95 (includes shipping and handling)

For registration information: diane.kenney@att.net

SAVE THE DATE ... OCTOBER 15

What is HUMAN TRAFFICKING what's being done about it -- what you can do to help

Social Action Committee invites you to reserve Saturday, October 15, 2016 - Time 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcalá

(In California Room behind Mission in the lower level of the St. Francis Center)

Free event, free parking, light refreshments provided.

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.)



2016 Baptism Schedule

September 20	Class
September 25	Baptism

Schedule is available on the parish website (ic-sandiego.org).

28 AUG ... QUARTERS & CANS SUNDAY

Please drop your Quarters and Cans envelopes in the regular collection next 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 ...
 for your continued support of these important programs as we try to follow Our Lord's command and put the Holy Gospel into action.

Remember to Support Our Advertisers

Our bulletin is an important way for us to communicate with you. The parish does not pay for the printing, saving us hundreds of dollars each year. The J.S. Paluch Company arranges for the bulletin to be supported through the generosity of the businesses that advertise on the back cover.

AROUND THE PARISH

Gifts of Treasure

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

August 14, 2016

Total Collection: \$5,986.73
Envelopes: \$4480.00.00 Plate: \$1,506.73
Total contributing households: 77

5:15 Sat	\$ 821.00
8:30 Sun	\$1351.27
10:00 Sun	\$1783.00
11:30 Sun	\$ 734.41
5:15 Sun	\$ 740.05
Mailed	\$ 557.00

EXPENSES

August 8-12, 2016

Music	\$625.00
Janitorial Supplies	\$82.99
Pest Control	\$110.00
Postage	\$200.00

Total: \$ 1,017.99

10 SEPT ... National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children...

Rachel's Hope - Escondido/San Diego, San Diego Silent No More and North County 40 Days for Life, in cooperation with Citizens for a Pro-Life Society, Priests for Life and the Pro-Life Action League will co-sponsor the fourth annual National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children, calling on pro-life Americans to honor our aborted brothers and sisters. ALL (secular and non-secular) are invited to join us at **1:00 p.m. at St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church, 6628 Santa Isabel St, Carlsbad, in remembering the innocent children lost to abortion.**

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 _____

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

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

Rosaries, religious medals, prayer books, and other religious items are available in the gift shop.

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

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

33. On the other hand, "equal consideration needs to be given to the growing danger represented by an extreme individualism which weakens family bonds and ends up considering each member of the family as an isolated unit, leading in some cases to the idea that one's personality is shaped by his or her desires, which are considered absolute". "The tensions created by an overly individualistic culture, caught up with possessions and pleasures, leads to intolerance and hostility in families". Here I would also include today's fast pace of life, stress and the organization of society and labor, since all these are cultural factors which militate against permanent decisions. We also encounter widespread uncertainty and ambiguity. For example, we rightly value a personalism that opts for authenticity as opposed to mere conformity. While this can favor spontaneity and a better use of people's talents, if misdirected it can foster attitudes of constant suspicion, fear of commitment, self centeredness and arrogance. Freedom of choice makes it possible to plan our lives and to make the most of ourselves. Yet if this freedom lacks noble goals or personal discipline, it degenerates into an inability to give oneself generously to others. Indeed, in many countries where the number of marriages is decreasing, more and more people are choosing to live alone or simply to spend time together without cohabiting. We can also point to a praiseworthy concern for justice; but if misunderstood, this can turn citizens into clients interested solely in the provision of services.

PARISH & COMMUNITY

Parish Calendar

AUGUST

24	Choir Practice	6:00 PM
27	Quilting Group	9:30 AM
28	Quarters & Cans Sunday	
31	Choir Practice	6:00 PM

SEPTEMBER

03	Quilting Group	9:30 AM
05	Labor Day Holiday Parish Office & Serra Gifts Closed	
07	Choir Practice	6:00 PM
10	Quilting Group	9:30 AM
11	Parish Breakfast Family Catechesis	8:30 AM 9:45 AM
12	IC Seniors Bingo & Lunch	11:00 AM
14	Choir Practice	6:00 PM

FROM FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO
- Pope John Paul II 1981

*ON THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY
IN THE MODERN WORLD 1981*

**The Influence of Circumstances on the
Consciences of the Faithful**

7. Living in such a world, under the pressures coming above all from the mass media, the faithful do not always remain immune from the obscuring of certain fundamental values, nor set themselves up as the critical conscience of family culture and as active agents in the building of an authentic family humanism.

Among the more troubling signs of this phenomenon, the Synod Fathers stressed the following, in particular: the spread of divorce and of recourse to a new union, even on the part of the faithful; the acceptance of purely civil marriage in contradiction to the vocation of the baptized to "be married in the Lord", the celebration of the marriage sacrament without living faith, but for other motives; the rejection of the moral norms that guide and promote the human and Christian exercise of sexuality in marriage.

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.

**NEED BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION,
COMMUNION?**

Family Catechesis for parents with their children 6 years and older and for adults who need sacraments begin September 11 in the parish hall at 9:45 am sharp, right after the 8:30 Mass. Call Fr. Perozich to register: 295-4141 x 11 or email pastor@ic-sandiego.org.

"Today, having a clear faith based on the Creed of the Church is often labeled as fundamentalism. Whereas relativism, that is, letting oneself be "tossed here and there, carried about by every wind of doctrine", seems the only attitude that can cope with modern times. We are building a dictatorship of relativism that does not recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one's own ego and desires."
— Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

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

28. In the contemporary world, which is both multiform yet united by a shared destiny, Catholics and Orthodox are called to work together fraternally in proclaiming the Good News of salvation, to testify together to the moral dignity and authentic freedom of the person, "so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21). This world, in which the spiritual pillars of human existence are progressively disappearing, awaits from us a compelling Christian witness in all spheres of personal and social life. Much of the future of humanity will depend on our capacity to give shared witness to the Spirit of truth in these difficult times.

CONVERSION: HOW FAR DOES IT GO?

— *Bevil Bramwell, OMI*

St. Paul's dramatic story of conversion makes conversion sound instantaneous and all encompassing. Strangely, some cradle Catholics also have a skewed sense of conversion as something that only happens to others. Perhaps cradle Catholics have, despite all appearances, already arrived?

Arrival is a very misleading notion in the context of conversion. Excluding rare cases like St. Paul, we all start on a *road* of conversion – cradle Catholics included. As some theologians have argued, on the natural level, we're all bound by natural law to seek the true religion, embrace it when found, and conform our lives to its principles and precepts. There is the whole of conversion in a nutshell.

Supernaturally, there is God's grace. It starts and sustains the process that "is not to be reduced to outward forms or to vague intentions, but engages and transforms one's entire existence beginning from the center of the person, from the conscience." (Pope Francis) And through this experience, the pope continues, we "remind ourselves that we are creatures, simply put, that we are not God." But we need God.

Then there is the Church: "It is [the Church's] duty to give utterance to, and authoritatively to teach, that truth which is Christ Himself, and also to declare and confirm by her authority those principles of the moral order which have their origins in human nature itself." (Vatican II) So among other things, the Church confronts people with the truth of nature and the truth of Christ.

Now, we can analyze some of the bizarre things that Catholics get up to in the conversion department. First, there is the classic case of the Catholics who "pray on their knees on Sundays and prey on their neighbors the rest of the week."

They have converted but only to the point of converting some of their time to participating in the Eucharist. As far as other things go, however, perhaps they underpay their workers, or demand too much overtime, or charge too much rent. Further conversion means that they have to learn to follow the principles of Catholic social justice, shedding parts of current culture and the practices of their social class. Perhaps they have to leave these groups completely in order to fulfill their conversions.

Secondly, a common commitment in the West: I convert up to the point that my political party permits. I have decided that the party is more authoritative than my religion. This is, to speak frankly, a resurgence of the pagan notion of the

divinity of the state. So if, in power, the party funds abortion then I go along with that. It funds harvesting baby organs, so I go along with that too. And so on. Never mind conversion as taking on the mind of the Church; the party is the new repository of truth.

In the United States, many Catholics seem to exhibit something that I can only call self-loathing. They claim to be Catholic, yet support a party that actively undermines the Church. They are "devout" Catholics active in a party that contradicts every Church teaching. Here is the problem: if Church teaching is being held to be untrue, then what is the individual's act of faith, crucial to conversion? Real faith has content based on revelation. Denying the content means no faith, at least as the Catholic community understands it.

Another unwelcome consequence is that, because Christian anthropology is true, it is the unsurpassable worldview that is optimum for everyone. This puts the party under God. This is where the act of conversion goes, leading to the converted individual shouldering the mission of the Church to the world.

Yet notwithstanding these things, dioceses hire staff with the same contrarian attitude. Religious orders are in the same boat. The majority of their members vote this way too. Catholic colleges and parishes do the same. Why do Catholic individuals and dioceses and institutions hobble themselves like this?

The problem is that, under U.S. law, there is no taking back parts of the act of voting, taking back what is one's blanket support (by vote) even for deadly policies. Despite this decisive public act, many individuals claim to be pro-life. But this claim does not direct the activity of the nation. So it is just wishful thinking, empty of real commitment.

The spiritual conversion process starts when one decides whom one will serve. We recently read at Mass that God even had to reprimand King David, at that point at the very peak of his power: "You have looked down on me." (II Samuel 12:10) This was monumental. The anointed King, David had gotten his priorities horribly wrong and committed heinous crimes as a result. Through these crimes, he had presumed to look down on God. Apparently, the king was supposed to defer to the morality required by God – and not vice versa.

The process of conversion has vast consequences both for individuals cooperating with grace and for communities that flourish to the degree the individual converts believe.

Of course, the opposite is also true. Conversion anyone?