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*Sisters of Notre Dame  
of the United States*

California Region

*Mission Advancement Egram*

February 27, 2026

**One Heart. One Hope. One Mission.**

## MESSAGE FROM MISSION ADVANCEMENT

*... "experiencing a spiritual Disneyland"*

Dear Friends,

Last weekend, I was privileged to be among thousands of individuals who attended the 70th annual Religious Education Congress sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Once again, it was held at the Anaheim Convention Center. The location's proximity to Disneyland prompted Sr. Val Roxburgh to once remark that it was like going to a "spiritual Disneyland."



The presentations, prayer services, liturgies and exhibits all contributed to a **renewal** and **celebration** of our faith. But perhaps even more powerful was meeting and chatting with so many friends from my schooldays and various ministries. As Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:20) This event validated Jesus' message and made me appreciate the value of being together in Jesus' name. Especially in tough times, being together can **renew** us and help us **celebrate**.

Some have probably attended Congress over the years. As you reflect on past enriching community **experiences**, may you feel the happiness and joy of a "spiritual Disneyland." And thank you for providing us with the spiritual and financial resources we need to foster spiritual **renewal** and to bring **celebrations** of our faith into the world!

Wishing you many Lenten graces,  
Sr. Lisa Megaffin, S.N.D.  
Director of Mission Advancement Services

## FROM THE CALIFORNIA GRAPEVINE

### Valentine's love and gratitude at Our Lady of Peace School gala

Valentine's Day evening found a celebration of love--a celebration of Catholic love as found at Our Lady of Peace School in North Hills. The honorees included Sr. Louise Marie Hlavac, Ms. Alma Gomez, and Deacon Ray and Lally Guiao. The parish and school community recognized their devotion to the students in many different capacities.

Sr. Louise has been a faculty member at OLP for the last five years, teaching religion and preparing students to receive the sacraments. As a Master Catechist for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, she is a team member in training adults who wish to become catechists. She also plays the flute for student and parish liturgies. We are very proud of her dedication to proclaiming God's goodness!





The Sisters of Notre Dame offer heartfelt congratulations to all of the honorees and best wishes to Ms. Joanne Testacross, principal, and the entire OLP school community.

### *Mission Moment*

#### **Meet Sr. Teresita Keliher ~ Catholic Charities Volunteer Extraordinaire**

Over the years, Sr. Teresita Keliher has given hundreds of hours of service at Catholic Charities, previously in Ventura and currently in Moorpark. She recently shared her experiences.

*The Moorpark Food Pantry Plus ministers to low-income families. Weekly, families can apply for food boxes with food supplied by programs in the neighboring areas, always including a box of produce from local farms. The pantry also offers seasonal items such as Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day gifts, and back-to-school essentials like backpacks and shoes. Diapers and baby food are also greatly needed!*



*On Saturday mornings, I distribute food with 10 other volunteers. We also sort clothes, stock shelves and receive various donations. This ministry is so meaningful because it has been a chance for me to witness so many grateful people leaving with smiles and a bit of encouragement. Although by any standard it might not look like much, it is supplementary and gives families a chance to use their income for other needs.*

*Mission Moment will become a regular column in our monthly egram. We will feature SNDs, Associates, and ministry partners who exemplify the SND spirit and mission. To make suggestions and provide testimonials, please email [infoca@sndusa.org](mailto:infoca@sndusa.org).*



#### **Remembering Sr. Mary Deborah Carlin 1935 - 2026**

The lives of many young ladies were touched by Sr. Mary Deborah Carlin, a teacher at Notre Dame Academy from 1962 - 1966. Originally from the Chardon province, Sr. Deborah had a warm, welcoming and understanding spirit! These SNDs who were her students remember her well...

From Sr. Joyanne Sullivan: How well I remember her saying "You California girls are only interested in the beach and boys"...and she was totally right!

From Sr. Antoinette Moon: "Sr. Deborah had a twinkle in her eye and was very approachable. willing to listen to our girl-stuff stories, trials and tribulations. She taught us history and civics, but with a sociological twist. She helped us learn to love the people who made history, the movers and shakers of history, instead of simply the dry facts."

Although her years in California were brief, she had a love for California! [Follow this link](#) to learn more about her life and ministries in a full tribute to Sr. Deborah. May she rest in peace and always intercede for her former students...

## **CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS**

*...living with one heart, one hope, one mission*

**Friday, Mar. 13 - 5:00 p.m. (Pacific time)**  
Online

#### **Young Adult Faith Sharing**

Join young adults from across the country to reflect and share on the Sunday Gospel on the second Friday of each month. All young adults are welcome. And feel free to share this invitation with any young adult in your life seeking meaningful connections rooted in prayer. To register, contact Sr. Val Roxburgh via [email](#) or text to 805-452-9699.



**Friday, Mar. 20 - 12:15 - 1:45 p.m.**  
St. Mary Magdalen Church  
Camarillo

**How Do You Embrace God's Light  
When You Are Experiencing Darkness?**

Come join Sr. Val Roxburgh unpack the richness of John 1:5: "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." At this talk which is part of The University Series, participants will be invited to experience a spiritual pilgrimage through scripture, relevant literature, and real-life inspirational stories of faith.



[Follow this link for more information](#) and to register.



**Tuesday, Apr. 7 - 7:30 p.m.**  
St. Monica's Parish  
Santa Monica

**How Do You Embrace God's Light When You Are Experiencing Darkness?**

All young adults are welcome to attend Lent at YMA which will include the presentation given by Sr. Val Roxburgh as described above. [Follow this link](#) for more information.

**Saturday, Apr. 18 - 9:00 - 12:30**  
repeated on  
**Sunday, April 19 - 1:00 - 4:30**  
Notre Dame Center

**Friendship with Jesus Retreat**

This retreat will be an opportunity to reflect on images of God as well as the dynamics of human and divine friendship. The same content will be provided on both Saturday and Sunday. [Follow this link](#) for complete information and please note that the registration deadline is April 10.



**Friday, Apr. 24 - Sunday, Apr. 26**  
Serra Retreat House  
Malibu

**Women's Retreat ~ Keep Your Eyes Fixed on Jesus**

Sr. Antoinette Marie Moon and Fr. Larry Gosselin, OFM will be the presenters for this retreat. It will include conferences, liturgies, confession and much more. [Follow this link](#) for more information and to register.



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