# Witness to Mercy

## Description

**Garden Grove, Calif., (Nov. 12, 2019) –** The newly-dedicated Christ Cathedral will host a landmark event celebrating public service by Catholics across Orange County.

“Witness to Mercy: Celebrating Service and Justice in the Diocese of Orange” will feature local nonprofit organizations and individuals committed to serving those in need.

The day-long celebration will happen at Christ Cathedral at 10 a.m. on Saturday, November 16. Dedicated in July, Christ Cathedral is the spiritual home of Orange County’s 1.3 million Catholics.

An opening worship service kicks off the day, followed by a keynote address by Kimberly Mazyck, senior manager, Engagement and Educational Outreach at Catholic Charities USA. Mazyck will encourage and inspire guests to spread peace and justice to society’s poor and most vulnerable people.

“Following the dedication of Christ Cathedral, this is a wonderful moment for Catholics and other people of good will across Orange County,” explains Greg Walgenbach, director of the diocese’s Office of Life, Justice and Peace. “Witness Mercy is a unique opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the mission of justice and mercy, community engagement, and the social mission of the Catholic Church.”

After the keynote address, participants will share a meal, after which a series of social service and justice organizations will offer education and opportunities at a series of booths located in various stations on the cathedral grounds, says Walgenbach.

“Each day, priests, nuns, parish staff members and Catholics across the Diocese of Orange work to help those in need in ways large and small, ,” Walgenbach says. “We believe there is no substitute for seeing our work and connecting with similar organizations so that people can get involved directly and be more effective in their work to help others.”

“Witness to Mercy” participants will have the opportunity to connect with others doing the work of service and justice, Walgenbach says, as well as the chance to reflect on the importance the Catholic Church gives such work.

Bishop Vann will recall a specific part of the Dedication Day prayer in which the community is sent out to help the poor find mercy, the oppressed attain true freedom and all people be clothed with dignity. He will commission those gathered to continue to go out and live the Gospel invitation to share the Good News of Jesus and to meet him, as Pope Francis consistently reminds us, on the peripheries.


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“We’ll be harkening back to that prayer in a sense, and experiencing what that means for us as a church,” says Walgenbach, whose office furthers Catholic social teaching across the Diocese of Orange through public policy, prayer, education and pastoral care.

Spiritual and secular groups focusing on the issues of hunger, homelessness, women with unexpected pregnancy, human trafficking, immigration, foster care, mental health and more will be represented, including organizations such as the County of Orange’s Social Service Agency, Catholic Relief Services, the Diocese of Orange’s Detention Ministry, Human Options, Mercy House, St. Vincent de Paul, CalOptima, the Salvation Army, La Habra Life Center, NAMI and St. Joseph Health.

“All the agencies involved are working with the poor and vulnerable in some way,” notes Walgenbach. “Together we will be celebrating service and justice and thanking God, rejoicing for the great work of Catholics and other people of faith and good will across Orange County to help those in need.”

The booths will present visitors with ways they can engage in service, he says. “As folks go to each of these stations, they will be asked to learn, take action and take something back to their families, parishes, and communities to engage in new ways.”

*For more information, contact the Office of Life, Justice and Peace at (714)282-3000.*

**About the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange**

With 1.3 million Catholics, 57 parishes, 5 Catholic centers, and 41 schools, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange is one of the largest, and most diverse faith communities in the United States. The Diocese empowers Catholics across Orange County to have an active life of faith that is integrated and woven into the fabric of their daily lives through the community and sacramental life of the Church. Under the leadership of Bishop Kevin Vann, the Diocese works to establish and support dynamic, vibrant parishes and schools welcoming all to live the Gospel with faith, joy, charity and unity. Christ Cathedral, the spiritual home of the Diocese, was dedicated in July 2019.

Learn more about the Diocese of Orange at https://rcbo.staging.wpengine.com.

**MEDIA PASS REQUIRED**

**If photographing or covering this event, please email tkincaid@rcbo.org for a media pass**.

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