

St. Monica Catholic Community
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Mission Statement: TO FORM LOVING DISCIPLES WHO WILL TRANSFORM THE WORLD

Denomination: Roman Catholic congregation, Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Community Size: Congregation: 10,000+ households (approximately 18,000 people)
Elementary School: 280 students
High School: 570 Students

Demographics: The Rich kneel down with the poor

Our parish includes the former Governor of the state as well as the homeless who are our neighbors and everyone in between. The Westside of Metropolitan Los Angeles is an urban environment with a significant number of people of all ages working in high tech, entertainment (television, music, film), as well as many entrepreneurs in a variety of areas of the market.

Staff configuration:

Clergy: Three assigned ordained priests, one religious order priest in residence (with other full time responsibilities-religious film making).

Directors: Parish administrator; Faith Formation; Outreach and Pastoral Care; Communications; Worship, Music; Stewardship & Development,

Schools: President; Elementary School Principal; High School Principal

Parish Staff: Administration-7; Faith Formation-3; Outreach and Pastoral Care-3; Communications-2; Worship and Music-9; Stewardship & Development-1.

Description of Neighborhood:

The congregation campus is located on an entire city block within the city of Santa Monica, 7 blocks from the Pacific Ocean. This location has been the site of this Roman Catholic congregation for 130 years (founded in 1886). Contextually, we are joined in the urban neighborhood by Congregations from the Lutheran (ELCA), Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Coptic Orthodox, and 2 other Catholic congregations. In addition, we have Interfaith relationships with the neighborhood Synagogue, the Buddhist Sangha, the Unitarian Universalist Society, the Quakers and the Southern California Islamic Center. We are an integral part of the religious and civic fabric of our neighborhood and city.

Leadership Team Description

Monsignor Lloyd Torgerson, Pastor, Mr. Michael Mottola, Parish Administrator, Sr. Catherine Ryan & Ms. Delis Alejandro, Pastoral Associates, Dr. Dale Sieverding, Director of Worship

**When Dancing turns to Mourning:
Worshipping God in the Face of Violence
Yale Institute of Sacred Music
June 13-15, 2017
St. Monica Catholic Community, Santa Monica, CA**

Saint Monica has been faced with a number of tragic events over the past several years. Our community's response to these tragedies has been comprehensive through worship, pastoral care and follow up with the community. In the face of a mass shooting at Santa Monica College in 2013, our community not only reached out to the families of the victims, but to the community of first responders, and the college itself. Our pastor was called to pray with the family of the shooter because no other minister would come to pray with them. One year after, we brought the community together for a healing mass in remembrance, which brought healing and peace to many. It was hosted by the tri-parish Catholic communities of Santa Monica, but was an interfaith celebration involving clergy from Islam, Judaism and Catholic faiths. The focus of the celebration was compassion and forgiveness in the face of tragedy. (Printed materials)

Our community held a vigil on gun violence as an ecumenical outreach that called together families of gun violence victims. The ringing of the bell was a call to action as each person killed was remembered with a short reflection. The families provided materials for the creation of posters that called to mind the victims and their lives cut short. (Printed materials)

After the Orlando mass shooting in June 2016, our community prepared a prayer vigil, which included a video of pictures of all of the victims. It was live streamed and prepared by our worship and music staff along with members of our gay and lesbian ministry outreach. It brought healing and comfort to our community who felt deeply wounded by the tragedy.

www.stmonica.net/live

<https://livestream.com/stmonica90403/live-events/videos/127640114>

San Bernardino, December 2, 2015 – 14 people killed, 22 injured. Inland Regional Center.

A message from our pastor: Our prayers and support are with the victims and their families from the gun violence this week in Louisiana, Minnesota and Dallas. Please join us this weekend, or at your local church, for prayer and reflection on the violence in this nation, and in our world.

<https://www.facebook.com/StMonicaCC725/> (FB July 8, 2016)

Ongoing pastoral care, worship in the face of 09/11 – 24 hour prayer vigil, taking of the names, annual remembrance.

Our sacramental world view sees the church's life of worship as having the power to transform tragedy into an opportunity for compassion, healing and forgiveness.

Candle Light Vigil
Gun Violence Prevention
December 13, 2015
St. Monica Catholic Community

Presider: This afternoon we gather to pray for the victims of gun violence and their families. We pause to consider how we can help end this epidemic of violence and bring peace to our city, our neighborhoods and our country. Gun violence has become a public health epidemic. When it is impossible for us to find peace, we turn to our Lord, the Prince of Peace to show us the way. God calls us to be makers of peace as sons and daughters of God.

As the name of each victim is called, the bell will ring once in memory, ... the bell calls us together, it calls us to action, it calls us in joy and it calls us in sorrow.

Suzanne Verge will lead the reading of the names

Names are read with the bell ringing after each name.

Presider: Grant, O God, that we lie down in peace, and raise us up, our Guardian, to life renewed.

Spread over us the shelter of your peace. Guide us with Your good counsel; for your Name's sake, be our help. Shield and shelter us beneath the shadow of Your wings. Defend us against enemies, illness, war, famine and sorrow. Distance us from wrongdoing. For you, God, watch over us and deliver us. For you, God, are gracious and merciful. Guard our going and coming, to life and to peace evermore.

Presider: If you would like to join us for our liturgy, feel free to gather here with our community as we enter into the Holy Year of Mercy with a blessing of our doors and procession.

Keeping Gun Violence Prevention on the Front Burner: What You Can Do

ACTIVISM COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.

FIND WHAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU AND COMMIT TO DOING SOMETHING TODAY!

STORE guns safely: unloaded and locked, with the ammunition locked separately. Hiding guns from kids is not enough and telling them not to touch guns is not enough. A three year old child has the strength to pull a trigger. (1) It is the gun owner's responsibility to ensure that the gun does not pose a hazard to others, and, in California, an adult is criminally liable if a child gains access to his/her gun. (2)

REMOVE unwanted guns from your home to protect against misuse and theft. Most gun suicides are committed at home using the family gun. (3) Contact your local Police Department for the proper procedure to turn in unwanted guns.

ASK if there are guns at the homes where the children in your care visit. If there are, then make sure they are safely stored. Visit askingsaveskids.org for more information. About 40% of homes with children have guns, and many are loaded and unlocked. (4)

LEARN the facts about guns and gun violence. The US leads the world in civilian gun ownership, (5) but all those guns don't make us safer. Guns injure or kill 100,000 people in the US every year, (6) and the gun death rate in the US is higher than all other industrialized nations. (7)

SHARE information about guns and gun violence with your family, friends, colleagues, and social networks. Provide information and resources to those who are in a position to influence others such as health care providers, mental health providers, faith groups, educators, librarians, **Democratic clubs** and civic groups. **Invite one of our Chapter speakers to your next meeting to give a free presentation.**

TELL your elected officials that you support legislation to strengthen state and federal gun laws. Contact them by telephone, letter or email or by a personal visit. Contact them repeatedly at both their district and state/federal offices to voice your position. Attend Town Hall meetings. Keep the issue and your expectations before your elected officials. **Be sure to thank them when they support common sense gun laws because they will be receiving many negative comments from pro-gun activists.**

SUPPORT gun violence prevention advocacy groups with your time and/or money.

WRITE letters to the editor of your local paper. (letters@latimes.com).

VOLUNTEER in election years to campaign for a candidate of your choice.

CELEBRATE and build on incremental successes. Gun violence prevention activists just like you got involved and made a difference! California has the strongest gun laws in the nation. Between 1990 and 2010, California reduced its firearm mortality rate by 52 % - 24 percentage points better than in the rest of the nation. (8)

(1) Naureckas SM et al. Children's and women's ability to fire handguns. *Adolesc Med* 1995 Dec;149(12): 1318-22

(2) <http://smartgunlaws.org/child-access-prevention-in-california/>

(3) http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/files/2012/09/MeansMatter_Brochure.pdf

(4) askingsaveskids.com

(5) Small Arms Survey Research Notes No. 9. Estimating Civilian Owned Firearms. Sept 2011

(6) <http://smartgunlaws.org/category/gun-studies-statistics/gun-violence-statistics/>

(7) Bangalore S and Messerli F. Gun ownership and firearm-related deaths. *Am J of Med* (2013) 126;873-876.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amjmed.2013.04.012>

(8) Data source: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, WONDER online database.

Information courtesy of the Orange County Brady Campaign Chapter