

Catholics in California join in effort to consecrate state to Mary

SAN DIEGO — An effort is underway to consecrate California to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

And all California Catholics are invited to take part.

Many will gather in prayer from noon-2 p.m. local time Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, at several participating parishes statewide. The basic schedule calls for Mass to be celebrated at noon, followed by a walk to a designated location where the rosary and special consecration prayers will be recited.

The organizers of this statewide effort are seeking Mary's intercession to combat several moral evils they see as prevalent in the state.

The effort has a website, www.consecratecalifornia.com, which lists parishes that are signing on to participate in the campaign. Those unable to make it to a participating church are encouraged to recite the rosary and prayers provided on the website either on their own or as a group.

One of the prayers available on the website includes a request "to be spared the just punishment for our souls that our state deserves from killing our unborn, sick, elderly, unwanted, and for the violence, sex abuse, drugs, alcoholism and sex trafficking."

That prayer goes on to ask for Mary's protection from natural disasters and war, as well as for her help to defeat the culture of death and "to bring back God and the concept of family in our life."

The campaign to consecrate California is the brainchild of Angelo Libutti, a resident of Glendale and a veteran of the film industry. A story artist and writer of 33 feature films, Libutti came up with the idea late last year, while spending time in front of the Blessed Sacrament after a tense day at work. Earlier that day, he had been roundly criticized by co-workers after expressing his pro-life views.

Libutti, who had personally consecrated himself to Mary and experienced “radical changes in my life” as a result, felt that a statewide consecration was just the remedy to the immorality, secularism and hostility to traditional values in California.

Within a month and a half of having the idea, Libutti went on to stage the first statewide consecration of California last December. The Dec. 8 event on Dec. 8 will be the second.

As Libutti sees it, both this year’s and last year’s events are primarily expressions of the laity’s desire for their state to be consecrated to Mary and of their unity in this cause. Making it official will require California’s two metropolitan archbishops, Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles and Salvatore J. Cordileone of San Francisco, to support the effort and for one of them to personally consecrate the state.

Libutti has personally spoken with both archbishops. They like the idea of the consecration, he said, and he remains hopeful that their schedules will permit their participation this year.

Father Jay Bananal, pastor of St. Pius X Parish in Chula Vista, sees the consecration of California to Mary as a worthy cause.

“There are a significant number of cities and places in California bearing names that testify to her Catholic foundation,” he told The Southern Cross, newspaper of the Diocese of San Diego. “Sadly, some bad legislation has passed in recent years that is especially harmful for families, the elderly and the unborn. Hoping to once again

dedicate our beautiful state to Our Lord, through Our Lady, Catholic Californians can pray in unison for God's mercy upon us and for His guiding hand to steer us, especially our lawmakers, in the right direction."

He hopes that the fruits of this statewide endeavor will include "a renewed spirit and understanding of family, church and the need for societal engagement."

"In entrusting ourselves to Mary's maternal care and protection," he said, "we benefit from her intercession, joining our feeble efforts to her powerful prayers and her closeness to her Son, Jesus."

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