News



Father Matthew De Leon, pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Uvalde, Texas, prays during the Sept. 6, 2024, opening and dedication ceremony of a new counseling center to provide ongoing community healing and support following the 2022 mass shooting at Robb Elementary School. (OSV News/courtesy of Catholic Extension)

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"Uvalde, Texas" — September 17, 2024

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Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Uvalde has opened a new, onsite counseling facility to provide ongoing community healing and support following the 2022 mass shooting at Robb Elementary School.

The school held a grand opening ceremony Sept. 6, celebrating with key community partners and leaders in attendance, including representatives from partner organizations supporting the new center such as Catholic Extension Society, the Children's Bereavement Center of San Antonio, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, William and Salome Scanlan Foundation, and Carlos Lopez & Building Management Group.

Dedication of the facility occurred immediately following the celebration of a community-wide Mass.

"We are humbled and honored to support this new center for healing in the Uvalde community," Father Jack Wall, president of Catholic Extension Society, said in a statement. "We pray that it will be a source of hope to those who receive services here, reminding them that they are not alone or abandoned in their search for peace."

A Chicago-based nonprofit, Catholic Extension was founded in 1905 to build up Catholic faith communities in underserved regions. According to a news release, Catholic Extension, which "has a rich and long-standing history with the Uvalde community and helped build Sacred Heart Catholic Church and school over a century ago, provided funding for the facility."

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The counseling facility "will be made available to the entire Uvalde community as families and individuals continue the long process of healing" in the wake of the mass shooting that took the lives of 19 children and two teachers, "and left countless other bystanders, families and friends of the victims physically and psychologically wounded," the release said.

Methodist Healthcare in San Antonio assisted with furnishing the facility. The Children's Bereavement Center in San Antonio will donate up to 25 hours a week of licensed staff, consisting of on-site, full-time counselors at the school, which will support Sacred Heart's full-time counselor.

Sacred Heart Church in Uvalde "has played a pivotal role" in helping the community heal since the mass shooting, according to Catholic Extension.

To date, the Chicago-based nonprofit has awarded 30 full scholarships to children of Robb Elementary who sought to transfer to Sacred Heart Elementary in 2022 as means to heal. Additionally, Catholic Extension has partnered with the Uvalde-based Teresian nuns to support camps for children, therapeutic programs and outreach to families in Uvalde.