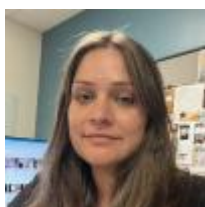


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Neighborhood residents gather before an altar set up in a carport at a low-rise apartment complex

Neighborhood residents gather before an altar set up in a carport at a low-rise apartment complex for a "Misa Del Barrio," or "Neighborhood Mass," in Campbell, California, Aug. 21, 2026. A statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe stands behind the altar. (Marissa Nichols)



by Marissa Nichols

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Campbell, Calif. — August 28, 2026

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One Saturday a month, in a central Silicon Valley neighborhood, residents stop to read handmade signs taped to poles: "*Misa del Barrio. ¡Todos son bienvenidos!*" Neighborhood Catholic Mass. You are very welcome."

These posters advertise outdoor pop-up Masses, known as *Misas del Barrio*, which pair the liturgy with community listening sessions.

"Community, forming bonds, ritual: These have always been important to the church," said Fr. Rick Rodoni, pastor of the community's parish, St. Lucy. "At the *Misas*, we have the opportunity to listen to each other, to offer change and to express our faith in a neighborhood, where literally, at 9 a.m. in the morning, we're singing and praising the Lord in a parking lot."

At residents' request, Masses are held in low-rise apartment parking spaces, where more than 50 folding chairs face a makeshift altar. Volunteers from multiple parishes

contribute music and hospitality. Tables are also set up where the neighbors can express concerns to community leaders during the Mass, following the Liturgy of the Word.

Handwritten signs invite residents to monthly pop-up Masses, known as Misas del Barrio, which

Handwritten signs invite residents to monthly pop-up Masses, known as Misas del Barrio, which pair liturgy with community listening sessions in a central Silicon Valley neighborhood. (Marissa Nichols)

The *Misas*, which existed before the COVID-19 pandemic, relaunched following the tragic death of an 8-year-old in 2022, which brought community concerns to city leaders through an organized [March for Safety](#). Since then, ongoing face-to-face dialogue with elected officials during the listening sessions has kept safety needs on the City Council's agenda. Successful neighborhood improvements so far include the installation of crosswalks, streetlights, stop signs, renter protections and assistance for low-income essential workers.

These pop-up Masses have also impacted Mass attendance at St. Lucy. There the 1 p.m. Sunday Spanish Mass has grown from a few hundred to nearly 1,000 worshipers each week, representing the parish's largest increase in Mass attendance since the pandemic, according to the diocese. Several new parishioners have told Rodoni that attending a pop-up Mass spurred their return to the church.

About 40 people attended the Aug. 21 *Misa*.



A group participates in a neighborhood Mass, which is held in a low-rise apartment carport in Campbell, California, Aug. 21, 2026. About 40 people attended the monthly service that day. (Marissa Nichols)

Solidarity and subsidiarity

The unique liturgies are the work of Ivonn Rivera, recipient of the [2023 Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award](#) from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the anti-poverty program of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The CCHD provides grant support to local nonprofits such as Silicon Valley Allied for the Common Good, which trained Rivera in community organizing at St. Lucy's.

The concept of these Masses has roots in the United Farm Workers movement of the 1960s, where liturgical sites were set up in sheds and fields to bring the sacraments and support to laborers. Rivera's motivation is more personal, as her community has faced high rates of vandalism and the tragic 2022 death of 8-year-old Jacob Villanueva, who was fatally hit by a car where there were no stop signs.

Rivera has seen how the *Misas* create a tangible sense of solidarity between the church and the greater community. Because the Mass is brought to people, "It is a very encouraging way to create trust and make others feel that they are not alone,"

she said.

Ivonn Rivera watches Fr. Rick Rodoni celebrate a pop-up Mass Aug. 21, 2026, in Campbell, Ca

Ivonn Rivera watches Fr. Rick Rodoni celebrate a pop-up Mass Aug. 21, 2026, in Campbell, California. Rivera received the 2023 Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award for organizing the "Misas Del Barrio." (Marissa Nichols)

Sr. Cecilia Calva, a Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, encourages attendees to openly share concerns. "*Misas* bring people together to share what they are going through, and they empower them to do something about it," she said. "I have really seen things happen. I think *Misas* should be done all the time."

A place to be heard in the time of ICE

"These Masses are important particularly now because of the immigration crackdowns that are happening indiscriminately," Rodoni said. Community members — those unafraid to attend, that is — voice current fears while receiving training on their legal rights and resources.

Misa volunteer Jorge Jaramillo, who helps facilitate small group discussions, sees the pop-up Masses as a ministry other parishes could adopt. "The *Misas* allow us to focus on our local church area where people need to hear the Word of God. Right now they are afraid," he said. "This is a beautiful form of evangelization: mobilizing people, so they draw closer to God and feel that He is right there with them."

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This is highly encouraging, according to Stephanie Aguilar, a leader with Silicon Valley Allied for the Common Good, who also assists during the listening sessions. "We've talked with families, and they are so afraid of even taking the kids to school," she said. When they see a suspicious car they get frightened. Fear is now felt throughout the whole community."

Ivonn said people see her posters "and express their surprise that Mass exists in their communities. They ask me how much we charge for admission, and I tell them, no, it is free!"

Within the San Jose Diocese, the pop-up Masses at St. Lucy parish are unique. When he officiates, Rodoni is constantly surprised by the turnout, "And I'm there just wondering what the neighbors might think of us. Sometimes they are just walking by and seeing what we're doing and many times, it's just like: OK, we're here. The church is here."