

Church offers photo IDs to its Members

By Nubia Reyna Staff Writer Friday, January 17, 2020

Leaders at the Saint Eugene de Mazenod Catholic Church will launch an ID Fest so members of parishes have a way to identify themselves to local law enforcement regardless of their legal documentation.

The ID strategy is in partnership with Valley Interfaith, and it's a way for the church to provide any member of the parish with the dignity of photo identification.

"No one should feel afraid to report a crime for lack of an ID," Nancy Cruz, a parishioner from St. Eugene and leader with Valley Interfaith, said in a statement by the church.

The parish identification strategy is intended to provide all members of participating parishes with a way to identify themselves to local law enforcement, particularly those individuals who have immigrated to the United States and do not have a state-issued ID.

In September 2019, Valley Interfaith, the Diocese of Brownsville and interfaith leaders of the Valley announced the initiative during a community meeting in the Upper Valley.

"ID cards can only be used for identification purposes, it is not a government issued card and cannot be used to vote, does not take place of drivers license," said Jose Hinojosa of Valley Interfaith told The Monitor last year. "Right now leaders have negotiated with McAllen, Pharr, Edinburg and Brownsville. We want all cities in the Valley to recognize it and leaders will start working with individual cities."

Hinojosa said then that the ID cards were not exclusive to local Catholic churches. Leaders of St. Eugene said they have been working with the diocese and preparing their leadership for this event.

"We are excited to kick off this strategy at our parish," Rosie Hinojosa, a leader at the church and Valley Interfaith, said in the statement. "We have been waiting for this day and we are excited it has arrived."

In an interview, Hinojosa said Saint Eugene de Mazenod it's the first church to do this but others will follow. To receive an ID members have to show proof of residency.

ID Fest will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at St. Eugene at 5409 Austin Road.

For more information about the event, call St. Eugene's office at (956) 831-9923.

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