



The Rev. Antonio José Gallardo Lucena, D.Min. Rector at St. Luke's/San Lucas, Long Beach, since 2022

Past Positions: Vicar at St. Luke's of the Mountains in La Crescenta, 2019-2022; Pastor for Latino Ministries at All Saints Church in Pasadena, 2015-2019

Education: Diploma in Theology, Bloy House, 2019; Master of Divinity, Claremont School of Theology, 2018; Ph.D. in Business and Economics, Lehigh University, 2004; Master of Science in Manufacturing Systems Engineering, Lehigh University, 1995; Certificate, Information Systems Management, Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan, 1993; Master of Science studies in Industrial Engineering, Universidad Experimental Politécnica (UNEXPO), Venezuela, 1993; Bachelor in Informatic Engineering, Universidad Centro Occidental Lisandro Alvarado (UCLA), Venezuela, 1990

Age & Family:

Age: 58. Born June 1967 and raised in Barquisimeto Venezuela, the youngest of seven children. Currently blessed with an extended family that continues to grow over time, and which includes parents, siblings, nieces and nephews.

Hobbies & Interests:

International travel, seeing the beauty of God's creation in people, architecture, nature, food, music, culture, and art; reading, movies, a meal with friends, walks with the puppies, listening to music, concerts, art exhibits, and quiet time at home.

Greetings, dear followers of Christ in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles.

I have humbly accepted the nomination to the slate of candidates for the eighth bishop of our beloved diocese.

My deep desire is to serve God and God's people, and my spiritual journey has led me to this place of discerning, with you, to this call as bishop, having been persuaded by the Spirit.

I am a person of faith, a pastor, a steward of resources, a teacher, a deliverer of results, and someone who inspires people to work together, building upon their own strengths and abilities. Above all, I am a follower of Jesus Christ who strives to live every day – by the grace of the Holy Spirit – with a genuine desire to respond faithfully to God's radical call.

In reflecting on the expressed needs of the Diocese of Los Angeles, considering the bishop search committee's survey, the listening sessions, and my own experience as an active member in the diocese, I share the collective desire to develop a diocesan vision that unites us in our diversity, invites all in our diocese to become active participants in making that vision a reality, and supports our congregations in becoming more vital and effective.

My experience in both ministry and executive leadership has uniquely prepared me with the skills needed for this moment in the life of our diocese. I am an effective strategist with a demonstrated capacity to bring diverse people to the table to develop a shared sense of purpose, building upon our strengths while maintaining engagement and motivation.

I share the desire stated by those in our diocese for clear, consistent communication and transparency. I, like you, want to feel proud that our diocese is in tune with the realities of the world and is actively promoting mutual healing and transformation, being a loud voice for peace and justice.

I am confident in my administrative skills, having successfully managed operations larger than our diocese, and delivering results efficiently with

the highest level of transparency and integrity, while balancing the needs of different constituents and maintaining their engagement and keeping them informed. Having worked in various sectors of the economy across multiple countries and in organizations of different sizes, I have learned to successfully transfer the skills I have developed and adapt them to the specific needs of each call.

As a faithful pastor, I have guided people from all walks of life to lean more fully into discipleship, sharing with them God's love and compassion, meeting them where they are, and nourishing them in using their gifts to make God's vision for us a reality. I look forward to being a pastor who listens, guides, and strengthens the diocesan staff and clergy, so that, in turn, they may thrive in their ministry and serve their communities well.

As an active member of our diocese for the past 16 years, I am familiar with local ministry needs and have a solid foundation, allowing for a relatively smooth transition. I have served in three congregations that reflect the diversity of our ministries, as a pastor at All Saints in Pasadena, a vicar at St. Luke's of the Mountains in La Crescenta, and currently as the rector of St. Luke's in Long Beach. I also have experience serving on each of the diocesan governing bodies and have been appointed to many working groups and commissions in the diocese and in the wider Episcopal Church.

I love and respect our Episcopal tradition, and I bring a broad perspective to my faithful leadership, drawing on my lived experiences as an immigrant, as a working professional in the corporate and philanthropic sectors, and in my upbringing in a different Christian tradition.

I am aware of the challenges that we face as a diocese, and I am even more excited about the possibilities that the Spirit of God has in store for us. I am excited to get to know more of the amazing lay people of this diocese, learn what inspires them, and hear about their God-given talents. I am also looking forward to listen- *(continued on the next page)*

ing to all the clergy of the diocese, especially those leading congregations, to learn about the desires that God has placed in their hearts and to work together to decide what the diocese can do to support them in their ministries.

Given the state of our nation and world, I am eager to explore with others, including Presiding Bishop Rowe, the role of the Episcopal Church in the life of our country, as some of the most vulnerable in our communities face cruelty and fear.

I see beauty and possibility arising from the reimagining of the role of bishop that is currently happening in our Church: an increased focus on humility, vulnerability, and pastoral care; the exploration of new possibilities to evangelize; the insistence on supporting local communities, where the actual work with the people happens; and the nimbleness to respond to the growing needs of the world.

I am ready to meet you all, to expand my understanding of the local realities through the meet-and-greets, and to be a source of support for all congregants, clergy, and diocesan staff, guiding and uniting a diocese as diverse as ours.

I look forward to continuing in this process of mutual discernment, in which we will continue to learn from one another, and jointly pray that we remain open to what the Spirit of God has in store for our beloved Diocese of Los Angeles.

What is your vision for the Diocese of Los Angeles?

My vision is to cultivate a diocese where Christ is at the center, where we strive to love and live like Jesus, where lay and clergy leaders are equipped and empowered to serve in their unique contexts, where everyone embraces the compassionate and unlimited love of God, and where the diocese is a valuable resource for all people and congregations.

I consider that our joint vision needs to be anchored in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ through authentic discipleship; forming disciples of all ages and walks of life; supporting clergy wellness and developments; continuing to be enriched through diverse, inclusive, and multilingual/multicultural communities; standing with the vulnerable and marginalized to transform systems of in-

justice; strengthening financial sustainability; working with other Episcopalians, ecumenical and interfaith partners, and advocacy groups; becoming instruments of mutual healing and transformation in the world, and building upon the good work that has been done by Bishop Taylor and his team.

In accomplishing our vision, we should agree upon some guardrails to frame our work, and the scriptures are a great foundation to start drafting values like the following:

- ◆ *Joyful living* – We are joyful disciples, we embrace every day as a gift from God, and we rejoice in it (Psalm 118:24).
- ◆ *Fair acting* – We act with integrity, equity, and transparency, ensuring that every decision honors people and promotes trust (Matthew 7:1).
- ◆ *Creative healing* – Like the friends who brought the paralyzed man through the roof to be healed, we are creative in doing our holy work (Luke 5:18-19).
- ◆ *Compassionate connections* – We lead with empathy and respect, fostering relationships built on care, kindness, and mutual dignity (Zechariah 7:9).
- ◆ *Trustful resourcing* – Like the crowd who brought all they had, five loaves and two fish, we also bring our best for God to provide all we need, and much more (John 6:1-15).
- ◆ *Humble collaborations* – We embrace collaboration over ego, listen before we speak, and serve with a posture that values the good of the whole (Matthew 23:12).

This is a vision I offer in broad strokes, because I know that any lasting vision for our diocese must be discerned in prayer and in partnership with the people. I will prioritize to listen, to wonder, to question, and to be creative in the development of our joint vision.

What are your primary spiritual resources, and in what ways do they support your ministry?

I feel at my best to embrace every day when I start praying the Rosary, when I meditate, when I intentionally count my blessings, and when I read the scriptures.

These practices help me to stay centered on my mission, grow in my knowledge of God, and reflect upon how I am living, so that I can model a life of faith for the people with whom I share my ministry. In community, worship, Bible study, and opportunities for fellowship are my favorite times with the people at the congregation. These times strengthen my hope for the future and help me to grow in my embracing of God's presence in everyone. I also feel blessed with the guidance, accountability, and encouragement that my spiritual director provides.

What do you understand to be the primary thrust of the Gospel?

To me the primary thrust of the Gospel is Good News: God, out of love and faithfulness decided to live among us in the person of Jesus Christ, to show us unconditional love, to remind us of God's grace, to give us an example of how to live our best life, and to invite us to be participants in God's reign. The message of the Gospel is about forgiveness, transformation and hope for the renewal of all things. The true Gospel invites us to co-create a better world and make faith relevant by embodying Jesus' way of selfless love, care for others, and a deep connection to our Creator and humanity.

What primary principles are central to your leadership style?

My leadership style is consultative and delegative. I seek input and involvement from the people I am working with, inspiring them to set a shared vision and to develop a framework to make decisions based on agreed upon values. To foster ownership and creativity I set a clear direction, giving people the space to use their God-given gifts. I also believe in the value of equipping people with the skills needed to excel at what they do. As a leader, I prioritize serving others, emphasizing empathy, listening and community building. This leadership style has allowed us at St. Luke's Long Beach to empower lay leaders, to align more than 45 ministries, groups and activities with a common vision, and to make challenging decisions guided by our community values.

As chief pastor of the diocese, how would you call (continued on the next page)

upon and strengthen laypersons to engage their gifts for ministry?

My ministry has been possible only with the support and commitment of lay leaders. Together we have created more spaces at the table for other laypersons to become involved, while implementing best practices to avoid volunteer burnout. I intend to continue the efforts of the diocese that have resulted in increased levels of representation at the various governing bodies. I foresee more opportunities arising from a new diocesan plan, and I look forward to inviting the talented laypersons in our diocese to join and contribute, while offering them opportunities to explore and develop new skills and abilities. I believe that all people have gifts and talents to serve as Jesus' hands and feet in our diocese, and I hope that more people will support our efforts to fulfill the vision that we develop together.

Similarly, how would you describe the relationship you would hope to have with the clergy of the diocese?

I will strive to be the clergy's pastor. I would love to get to know each clergy member deeply, always listening to how their lives are growing in serving Christ in all people. I believe that by providing clergy with excellent pastoral care, development opportunities, and easy access to resources would allow them to lead their congregations more effectively. Although I would love to have an individual impact on all members of the diocese, it is unrealistic that I could do it effectively given the fact that I won't interact with them on a regular basis as the clergy do. I will strive for the diocese to be a resource that the clergy can reliably count on, so they can be compassionate pastors and nimble administrators.

How would you seek to involve young people in the life of the church?

To involve young people in the life of the church we must be willing to challenge ourselves to be a church that is relevant to them and be willing to intentionally include them in making the decisions that affect their lives. The first step would be to invite youth, youth leaders, lay, clergy, and parents to develop a joint vision and a plan for diocesan young people. This plan could include youth and youth leaders' formation and networking, youth leadership de-

velopment, a diocesan youth retreat, partnerships with youth organizations, and a library of resources for the entire diocese, among other things. I am looking forward to meeting the youth of the diocese, listening to them, and working together in making of our diocese a place where they can grow spiritually and personally, and where they feel valued and appreciated.

In what key ways would you serve and engage the multicultural and socioeconomic diversity of Southern California in raising up lay and ordained leaders across this spectrum?

All my work as clergy person has been in diverse congregations. In working with them, I have engaged and served the people with humility and practices that reflect both the love of Christ and a genuine commitment to community. I have endeavored to offer opportunities for discernment, participation and formation that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, and of equal quality for all the people. My approach has been to create safe and accessible spaces for people to learn from one another and together build upon their God-given gifts to create beloved community, all while remaining open to challenge the current ways of doing things. This approach would be the foundation upon which I would build the work diocesan-wide. I am looking forward to working with the richly diverse people of the diocese, exploring ways in which their diversity can enrich the fabric of our Episcopal tradition.

What opportunities do you see for evangelism and bringing seekers into the life of The Episcopal Church?

I believe that there are opportunities for the Episcopal Church to offer a path to deeper faith through sacramental life, through our commitment to justice and peace, and by offering a global community of faith united in Christ. We can intentionally reach out to the religiously unaffiliated, immigrant communities, younger generations, urban centers, digital and online spaces, and marginalized and overlooked populations such as incarcerated people, unhoused populations, refugees, LGBTQ+ communities, and those in recovery. I believe we can engage these individuals by forming disciples called to create com-

munity with them, by being an active presence in their communities, and by inviting them to participate in the life of our diocese. Even more importantly, we can show through our actions that we aspire to be the loving presence of God in the lives of everyone, especially those most in need.

In what ways would you advise congregations and the diocese to strengthen resources for financial vitality and sustainability, both at present and long-term?

For me, financial vitality is a process of discernment on how to align our resources with God's mission. At both the congregational and diocesan level, we are called to cultivate practices that are sustainable, transparent, rooted in discipleship, and consider the context of each congregation. In the present, this means strengthening stewardship formation, offering financial literacy for leaders, and the sharing of resources and collaboration among congregations. Looking toward the future, I hope we continue exploring creative use of our facilities, encourage legacy and planned giving, support entrepreneurial ministries, and honestly evaluate if ministries have run their course. Long-term sustainability will require building a culture where stewardship is a joyful response to God's abundance. I hope that through generosity, accountability, and creativity, we show that God's Church is alive, resilient, and oriented toward the flourishing of all God's people.

Around what central global and local issues would you seek to provide a prophetic voice as bishop in the public square?

We are currently experiencing in our country economic inequality and a threat to the dignity of women, seniors, immigrants of color and LGBTQI+ persons. On these, and any upcoming issues threatening the dignity of any human, the bishop should be a voice for those without voice, making of the church both of a source of hope, and an engine of resistance. Globally, climate change continues to be a threat for us, and for future generations. Joining on the work of the wider church, I envision our diocese to continue to be witness to the church's values and to advocate for bold climate action, acting as a counter-current to isolationism. *(continued on the next page)*

Moreover, as part of a global communion, and whenever possible, we should work alongside others for justice and peace, finding courage in our shared identity.

How would you interpret and apply the following observation from the late Brazilian Archbishop Dom Helder Camara: “The bishop belongs to all.”

To me the words of Archbishop Camara

mean that a bishop must be a servant to everyone. I am grateful to a clergy colleague who told me: “Remember that, although you are Latino, you are being ordained to serve every person.” I have been blessed to serve in multicultural, bilingual congregations where I have experienced that my heart loves them all equally, following the way of Christ, who said, “Whoever wishes to be great among you must

be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave.” (Matt. 20:26b-27). By the grace of the Holy Spirit, I aspire to overcome the power and privilege attributed to my position as clergy to look carefully into the eyes of the poor, the oppressed and the lowly, because in their grace-filled eyes I will be able to see the truth that Jesus spoke about. ■