

MARCH
2016

ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

HOSPITALITY MINISTRY: *The Power of a Smile*

We never really know the full effect of our words and actions. Something as simple as a smile or a friendly greeting can dramatically change a person's life for the better – a casual invitation can draw a person into the community, making them feel needed and important.

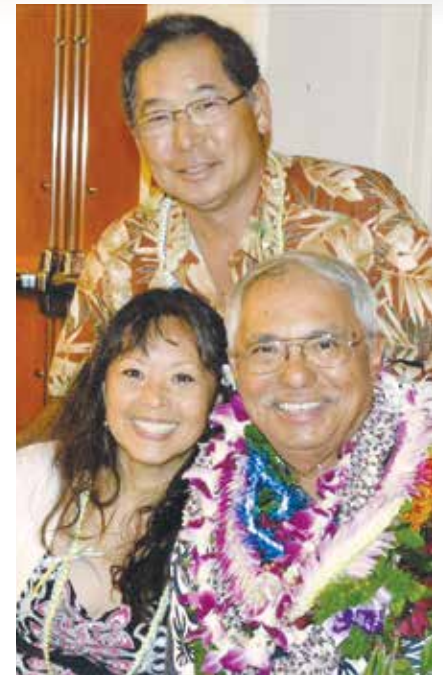
For St. Anthony parishioner Michele Hondo, the warmth experienced through the Hospitality Ministry made "all the difference" in her life as she returned to the Church after a long absence. Later, it was that same ministry that led her, and eventually her husband, Leslie, into a life of stewardship within our community.

"I was actually asked to join this ministry by another hospitality minister," Michele says. "At the time, I just thought, 'Why not?' I just decided that I would do it because they needed the help, or they wouldn't have asked me. If I remember correctly, my husband wasn't a Catholic at that time – he hadn't even been baptized yet. I began doing the ministry by myself. Later, my husband also became part of the Church and it became a ministry that we do together."

Since then, the Hondos have taken over the leadership of the Hospitality Ministry, coordinating and training volunteers. The couple serves faithfully each weekend at the 5 p.m. Saturday Vigil, working with other volunteers to welcome new and old members alike to the Lord's Table.

"I think the ministry is really important because we are like the front line of the Church," Michele says. "The hospitality ministers are the first people that you actually see as you come to church. To me, that is really important because if you make them feel like you are really happy to see them and that you really want them to come back, especially if they are someone you have never seen before, they are more likely to return."

Hospitality ministers serve many important roles within the liturgy, as Michele points out. Giving of their time, volunteers arrive each week 30 to 45 minutes before Mass in order to ensure that a welcoming face meets each person who enters the church. Additionally, volunteers are responsible for choosing a family or individuals to bring up the



*Hospitality Ministry Coordinators
Michele and Les Hondo
with Fr. Roland Bunda*

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STEWARDSHIP

The Wise Men's Gifts Symbolize Our Lenten Obligations

We experience great joy when we celebrate the coming of the Magi at Epiphany each year. For many of us, it is the completion of Christmas. Yet, the gifts offered by the Magi — gold, frankincense and myrrh — can serve to guide us as we observe Lent this month.

It may seem strange to connect the joyful celebration of Epiphany with the penitential season of Lent. Yet, our spiritual life should not be divided into separate bits having no connection with each other. In the same way, the Church's liturgical year should also flow from one season to another. The different feasts and seasons certainly have different emphases, but they are intended to build on each other. So let's see if we can connect what the Magi gave Jesus with what we're going to offer Him this Lent.

The basic ingredients for our Lenten rule normally come from what are termed the Three Notable Duties — prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These in turn come from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

How do we connect the wise men's gifts with the notable duties? Actually, what the gifts symbolize matches up surprisingly well.

Frankincense is the basic ingredient in the incense used in the worship of God, in the ancient world and in the Church today. Offering it to Jesus points out His divine nature, and so it symbolizes prayer. Our Lenten rule needs to include prayer and worship. Of course, we are bound to worship at Sunday Mass year-round. Maybe during Lent, we might add a weekday Mass. Perhaps we can increase the time we devote to private prayer at home or at adoration. Devotional reading from the Bible or another appropriate book can be added. In addition, don't forget the possibility of adding family devotions during Lent, so that the whole family prays together.

When we offer our gold to Christ to build His Church and to help His poor, we are engaged in almsgiving. While giving from the treasure God

has entrusted to us is a duty throughout the whole year, maybe this Lent we can practice being a little more generous than usual. If our giving is a thankful response to the gift of eternal life that God has given us, we will find that the giving is indeed a means of grace.

For centuries, myrrh has been associated with fasting. Although myrrh comes from the same family of plants as frankincense, it has a more pungent scent and bitter taste. In the ancient world, it was regularly used in embalming. Generations of theological writers have seen the gift of myrrh as a foreshadowing of Christ's sufferings. And fasting strengthens us in holiness and prepares us to come into God's presence after our own deaths. St. Thomas Aquinas himself linked myrrh with repentance and fasting when he wrote that myrrh represents the penance by which we preserve our souls from the corruption of sin.

Fasting may be the most difficult of the three notable duties for modern Americans. After all, most of the advertising and many of the magazine articles we see are devoted to making us more, not less, comfortable. We usually think of fasting only under the heading of dieting to lose weight. Instead, try to think of fasting as a way to become more spiritually fit. Body and spirit affect each other. The whole sacramental system is built on the truth that we can receive spiritual grace through material things and physical actions. Our specific requirements of fasting are limited — abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, and a reduction in the quantity of food we eat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. But discipline of our physical bodies for our spiritual well-being does not have to be limited to Lent!

Gold, frankincense and myrrh were indeed valuable gifts for the wise men to present to the Child Jesus. When we look at their symbolism, we can see their relationship to the three notable duties of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. What gifts are we going to offer to Jesus this Lent?

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Make Prayer and Hospitality Pillars of Your Lenten Journey

Dear Parishioners,

In the coming weeks, we will conclude our Lenten observance, experience Holy Week, and celebrate the joy of Easter. Of course, I hope that you have made some effort to make this Lenten season special and significant, but if you have not, it is never too late to accomplish that goal.

With thoughts of Lent, Easter and the Year of Mercy at the top of my mind, I offer a couple suggestions to help carry you to the end of your Lenten journey.

As you know, prayer is foundational to stewardship, as it is one of the Four Pillars of a stewardship parish – along with hospitality, formation and service. With this in mind, here are some suggestions on how you might make your prayers even more meaningful.

Pick someone to pray for, perhaps even someone you don't get along with. Just pray for them. You do not have to tell them you are praying for them, but the exercise is good for you, and for them, as well. If possible, find a time this month to pray before the Blessed Sacrament, especially if this is something you do not normally do. Pray every morning shortly after you get up, and again each evening before you turn in. It does not have to be a long prayer, but it does need to be done consistently.

In terms of the pillar of hospi-



tality, there is also much we can do in this area, both as a parish and as individuals and families. Here is a suggestion that involves hospitality – one that is also connected to gratitude and even the Year of Mercy. Many of us spend time at a computer. It is a way for us to stay connected to those who are close to us, and to the world around us. Why not begin and end each week emailing someone a note of thanksgiving? Again, it does not have to be lengthy, but when we think about it, each of our lives is filled with people to whom we should be grateful.

Just send that someone a note thanking them for something specifically, or in general. By starting and ending each week like that, our minds are in the right place for

prayer and for having the attitude that Christ asks us to have.

I thank you for all you do, for our parish, for the Church, for one another, and for me personally. I am blessed. Like most, I may not express it often enough. I pray for you, and I ask you to pray for me during this holy time.

Blessings to your loving and merciful hearts,

Fr. Roland Bunda

Fr. Roland Bunda, S.M.



Bereavement Ministry Extend

In this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis has asked all of us to reach out to those around us. We can answer the Pope's call to serve in many ways, and just one of these is through the St. Anthony Bereavement Ministry. During the time surrounding a funeral, families mourning a loved one are in need of all different kinds of assistance. Meeting these needs, the members of the Bereavement Ministry help grieving families with funeral arrangements and emotional support during this difficult time.

Fr. Charles Oyabu, S.M, first started the Bereavement Ministry in 1988.

"Fr. Oyabu felt that we needed to form a ministry within our parish with its purpose being to assist those who have lost someone, and to help them walk through their grief," says ministry coordinator Nona Iwata. "We work together with the families to assist with funeral arrangements and to support them through prayer, encouragement, sharing of ideas, and insights. Grief is a way of life, and to assist one another through this ministry is a way of showing the real presence of Jesus and His mercy."

The Bereavement Ministry is notified of deaths either from the families themselves, or from a funeral home. Ministry members then reach out to extend their con-

lences and go over the logistics surrounding the funeral arrangements. Once a funeral date is settled, ministry members will contact priests, deacons and preferred musicians in order to confirm their availability. If family members choose not to read at the Mass or to present the gifts, ministry members will step in. Ministry members also serve as acolytes and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, organize a reception with light refreshments during the visitation prior to the Mass, and clean up after the funeral is over and the family has left the church.

"Everyone [in the ministry] has a duty," says long-time ministry member Millie Presbitero. "We're there to make sure everything is taken care of, that the families are satisfied with the funeral arrangements, and that they have someone to talk to if they need help. We are always the last ones to leave the church."

Ministry members often speak to the grieving families at the church before the funeral, offering their condolences and continued prayers.

"It is important to reach out to these families to comfort them through prayer and encouragement — being the real presence of Jesus in their time of grieving and sorrow," Nona says.

In addition to their service at funerals, the



The All Souls Day Memorial

As a Hand to Grieving Families

Bereavement Ministry also reaches out to families who have lost a loved one for an All Souls Day memorial.

“During the year – starting on Nov. 1 until Oct. 31 – we keep a special record of the deceased,” Nona says. “On Nov. 2, All Souls Day, we remember our loved ones with a special All Souls Day Mass and luminary celebration. In mid-October, we send a letter to all surviving families, reminding them of the special celebration and inviting them to attend the Mass.”

For a \$5 donation, families may decorate a luminary with a photo of their loved one for the ceremony. The luminaries are brought to the church and placed in front of the sanctuary, with a canned good inside (to keep the bag from tilting) as well as a battery-operated tea light. Before the Mass begins, the luminaries are lit, and the names of all the year’s deceased are read. During the meditation after communion, a video is played displaying photos of the deceased.

“Throughout the year, we collect and scan photos of the deceased [to make the video],” Nona says. “During the meditation time, the lights are dimmed and the video is played. We play a song during the video that goes with the Mass theme – for example, last year’s theme song was ‘Footprints in the Sand.’ Our Sunday evening choir plays the song live, and during this time, there is not a dry eye in the prayer community.”

After the Mass, parishioners may take home their luminaries, and each canned good inside is then donated to the Maui Food Bank.

The Bereavement Ministry also coordinates a Christmas Memorial project, in which family members may make a donation for a poinsettia plant to be purchased in honor of their loved one. The potted plants each have a label with the loved one’s name, and the poinsettias are placed in the church as decorations for Christmas. After Christmas, families are able to take their plant home.

All parishioners are invited to participate in the Bereavement Ministry – no training is needed, just “willingness to serve,” says Nona.



The All Souls Day Memorial



The Christmas poinsettia project

If you would like more information on the Bereavement Ministry, or if you would like to get involved, please contact the parish office at 808-244-4148.

STEWARDSHIP OF OUR

The Church

The same loving, determined spirit that drove the rebuilding of our church after it succumbed to fire in 1977 continues to energize our Church Cleaners. This group consists of four teams of 75 parishioners who make sure our church is cleaned and ready for worship each week.

Sr. Eva Mesina coordinates the teams of 15 each and prepares a schedule of workdays and duties that covers the entire year. The teams are rotated through the year, so each team will work approximately every four weeks.

Some of the teams gather at the church at 5 a.m. Saturdays and work until 7 a.m., while another group has chosen to meet at 4:30 p.m. Fridays.

"I have people on each team who will call and remind the others of their time," Sister says. "I also make a list and give each cleaner a list of their duties, and the duties for the whole year. That way, they can plan ahead of time."

Sister also points out that when she notices that membership has dropped in the group, she will make an announcement after Mass that she needs workers.

"I usually get three or four," she says.

The cleaners sweep, dust, vacuum, wash windows, and take care of whatever tasks are needed to keep the church clean. The cleaners also remove the Mass books when they dust the pews, and make sure every wooden part of the pews are clean before returning the books to their places.

Some of the cleaners bring their children to help, Sister notes.

"Some are in grade school or high school," she says. "And some of our cleaners are all the way up to 80 years old, so we have the whole range of people. One team is made up mostly of graduates of St. Anthony School, and they brought in their friends."

When cleaners have finished their assigned tasks, they customarily will pitch in to help the others with their work.

"If someone is absent, the leader will know, and ask the others to cover for the absent member," Sister says. "They're a very cooperative group. It's a pleasure to work with them."

Val Pacheco is a member of Team 3, and has been working as a church cleaner for at least 15 years.

She says attending a seminar on living in the Spirit inspired her to join the Church Cleaners.



In the pre-dawn darkness, members of the Church Cleaners Ministry are hard at work making sure our church is at its best.



Vacuuming, dusting and straightening up the prayer books are all part of the work done by our Church Cleaners.

R HOUSE OF WORSHIP

h Cleaners

“One of the teachings inspired me,” she says. “It stated, ‘What can we do to offer ourselves? What is something you can do?’ I’m sitting there thinking about what I can do – cleaning! So I joined it.”

Val originally began working with the Church Cleaners on Friday, but that group was consolidated with another, and now Val takes the early Saturday morning shift.

Even though the Saturday shift means rising early, Val says there is a sense of enjoyment in the work.

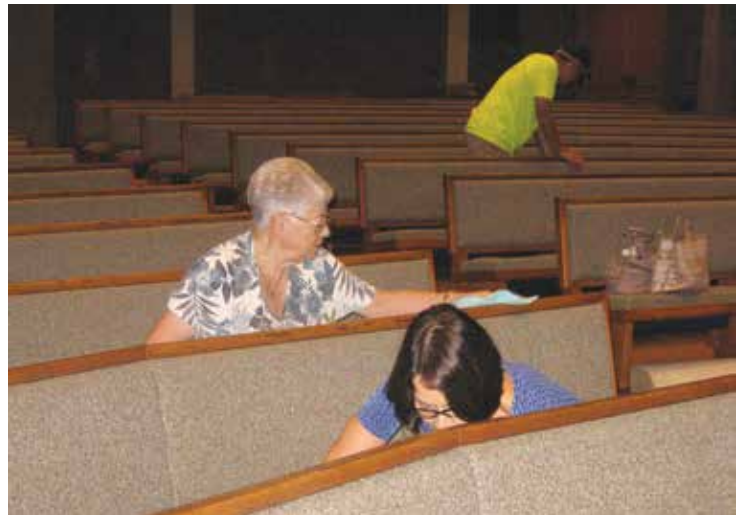
“The thought of waking up that early is a little hard, but once you get up and go, you feel joyful, uplifted, and happy you did it,” she says. “It’s always been that way. It’s always just a good feeling.”

One aspect that Val particularly enjoys is that everyone’s background and age are varied.

“We all want to help each other,” Val says. “There’s always someone to help. It’s really a good, nice group. There’s just a feeling – we’re there and want to do it. And we don’t leave until all are done.”

Val says that if anyone is considering joining the Church Cleaners, to give it a try.

“It would be something they’d really be happy they are doing,” she says.



Val Pacheco (foreground, in the pew) works with other members of Team 3 early on a Saturday morning. While some of the Church Cleaners prefer to work early Saturdays, other teams coming in after their workday ends on Fridays.

“We all want to help each other. There’s always someone to help. It’s really a good, nice group. There’s just a feeling — we’re there and want to do it. And we don’t leave until all are done.”

— Val Pacheco



No “dustable” surface is missed when the Church Cleaners are at work!

If you are interested in joining the Church Cleaners, please call Sr. Eva Mesina at 808-244-4148.

1627 B Mill Street
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii 96793

Church Office: (808) 244-4148
www.stanthonymaui.org

Hospitality Ministry continued from front cover

gifts, passing out the collection baskets, guiding Eucharistic Ministers to elderly or disabled parishioners, and finally distributing parish bulletins as members exit the church. In the process, ministry members are helping to foster that familial atmosphere within our faith community.

“I think that the more you get to know the church community, the more you feel that it is a family,” Michele says. “We see the children even before they are born, when their moms are pregnant with them. I enjoy meeting the people. I enjoy seeing people come every week. I enjoy watching the children grow up. I enjoy helping to make people feel a part of our church family.”

Over the past 16 years, Michele has also witnessed many fruits from this ministry. She says that it has changed her perspective, making her “more aware of our church and its needs.” Michele has also become more focused on inviting others to become involved within the parish, extending that same invitation she received years ago. Finally, the Hospitality Ministry

has blessed her marriage because it is something that she and Les continue to do together.

“I really enjoy what I do,” she says. “I would also hope that it makes a difference in some people’s lives. If we can make people feel like they want to come back to the Church, then that makes me really happy.”

The Hondos would like to invite all parishioners seeking a way to become more involved in our community to consider joining this important ministry. Come spread the joy of Christ through the gift of your smiles. For more information on the Hospitality Ministry, please contact Michele or Leslie Hondo at 808-205-2034.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

CHURCH CENTER :: **Saturday** 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday** 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

SAINT DAMIEN CHAPEL :: **Monday - Friday** 6:30 a.m. | **Saturday** 7:00 a.m.