

# ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

## THURSDAY PRAYER GROUP OFFERS WAY FOR SHARING, GROWING FAITH

Our Thursday Prayer Group is certainly important to many in our parish. But did you know that tourists to our island have sought out the group and attended meetings because spending time in prayerful worship is important to them – even during their vacations?

“We have people from different parts of the United States attend,” says Cindy Lee, a member since 1998. “What makes them attend? They belong to a prayer group at home and St. Anthony is the only parish with such a group on Maui.”

What makes the Thursday Prayer Group important is the fact that God is in control.

“He knows what we need before we ask,” Cindy says. “He wants to share.”

Cindy notes that when members of the prayer group gather and ask for God’s help, their faith is made stronger.

“We make sure we have prayer time before or after praise

and worship at the meetings,” Cindy says. “I’ve found, in talking to some, they enjoy sharing their faith with others. At other times, they don’t want to share it verbally. Sharing is voluntary. Prayer Group allows you to share verbally what’s on your mind and what you need help with.”

Currently, there are 25 to 30 members who meet each Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in the Church Center. Denis Cabacungan leads the group, and the session starts with a half hour of praise and worship. At 7 p.m., there is another activity, sometimes with a guest speaker either from St. Anthony or another Christian, non-Catholic church.

“We try to be attentive to what is going on in the Church calendar,” Cindy says. “Sometimes it’s Bible study, with sharing, or we’ll do Bible trivia. On the last Thursday of the month, we have a Communion service with a deacon, or a priest says Mass.”

The Thursday Prayer Group was founded about 30 years ago as a way for people to have another outlet to praise and honor God outside of Mass

“It’s important to the parish because there are some people who haven’t come to Mass for a long time, or just one time a year,” Cindy says. “But something happens and they feel the need to get in touch with God again. This is one way to do it.”

Cindy cites the time an individual stopped in because he heard music and wanted to see what was going on.



*The Thursday Prayer Group offer prayers and song during a recent gathering. All are welcome to attend. Visitors to the island have also attended whenever their travels bring them here.*

## THE BIBLE

### *The Textbook of Stewardship*

**H**ave you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there is such a manual – the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the "textbook of stewardship," the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, expressed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions of their harvest to God: "When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the

various products of the soil which you harvest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and putting them in a basket, you shall go to the place which the Lord, your God, will choose for the dwelling place of his name... 'Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.' And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence" (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he said, "In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about living a life of Christian stewardship: "Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in

various passages? It shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefited from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church – St. Paul – preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return – all most certainly important topics of discussion for any steward-in-the-making.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.





## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

### *We Are All Part of the Ministry of Hospitality*

Dear Parishioners,

This is a time of many celebrations in the Church. The list is almost endless at this time of year - First Communions, Confirmations, graduations, and weddings. There are so many events that bring people who are not from the parish, or even members of the Church, into our parish.

You may recall that we speak of the Four Pillars of Stewardship - Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. I want to particularly speak of that pillar of Hospitality this month. It is important every day of every year and at everything we do as a parish community. However, at this time of year, when there may be strangers and newcomers in our midst, it becomes even more important.

Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith. In Matthew 25:35, the Lord speaks to us in terms of expectations when He says, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." He makes it clear to us that whenever we welcome any of His brothers and sisters, we welcome Christ Himself. Sometimes, we may think that this concept of hospitality is the responsibility of a committee, ministry or group of people assigned that task - but the truth is that we are all part of the parish hospitality effort.

If we are going to be a stewardship parish, and if each of us is going to be a good steward, we need to be aware that we need to seek and find Christ in everyone around us, everyone we meet, and certainly everyone who enters our church or other parish facilities.

Hospitality is a parish priority that each of us must take to heart. It is not so challenging to greet someone, smile at them and welcome them - yet, it may require a little extra effort on our part. That means we must have an awareness of those near us, of those who may appear to be alone or new. We may not always think of Christ in this way, but if we carefully listen to Holy Scripture, we must realize that He was a caring, welcoming and



friendly person. If we are to be His disciples, we need to be the same.

As stated, Jesus assures us that when we welcome others, we are welcoming Him, as well. St. Paul once said that people who are hospitable sometimes entertain angels. For us, parish hospitality is not an option. It is our way to model the Kingdom of God right here and right now.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Fr. Roland Bunda*

Fr. Roland Bunda, S.M.



## “It Is a Way We Live Out Our Call to Stewardship” *Knights of Columbus*

We are blessed in our St. Anthony Catholic Community to have Knights of Columbus Council #8578. Our K of C Council is one of more than 15,000 councils with almost two million members around the world. Fraternity and charity are the two key marks of the Knights, who in the past decade alone have donated \$1.475 billion to charity and given as good stewards almost 700 million hours of volunteer service.

All the good works done by the Knights of Columbus are based upon their four core principles – Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. Our local Council is an excellent example of what it means to give and to be good stewards.

“For me, being a member of the Knights of Columbus is a commitment to service,” says past Grand Knight Norm Franco, who

now serves as Trustee and Membership Director of Council 8578. “It is also a dedication to the Gospel, the Good News. It is a way we live out our call to stewardship; Christ’s command that we be disciples.”

Norm became a member of the Council in 1984, so he has personally witnessed and experienced the good work done by the Knights in the parish and in the community for more than 30 years.

“There is so much we do, and so much in which we are involved that it is difficult to outline it all,” he says. “I doubt if people even know everything we do. For example, every summer, we do a program and a dinner to recognize and honor all the ordained priests and deacons and religious here on the island. We provide scholarships for Catholic grade school and support our seminarians in a large way. We have given free wheelchairs to those in need and provided ultrasound machines to pregnancy centers to assist them.”

Our Council was the first Council on Maui, having been established in 1982. In the years since, additional Councils have been formed that now

provide similar services to their parishes and communities.

“We have been an active part of the Special Olympics program for several years,” Norm says. “We have a great commitment to the pro-life effort. In fact, we organized the March for Life here on Maui. Our major annual fundraiser is running the parking concession at the annual Maui Fair each fall. We are now looking to expand to Molokai and are working on establishing a Council there. We were privileged in April to host the State Council meeting here on Maui, a gathering of Councils from throughout Hawaii.”

The Council is also re-establishing its Squires program, which Norm says is like a “junior Knights” program for boys between the ages of 10 to 18.

“The Squires have their own programs based on church, community, service and leadership,” Norm says. “Also, boys who are Squires have available to them five different college scholarship programs, and we encourage all Catholic parents to enroll their sons into the Maui Squires Program.”





# hip, Christ's Command That We Be Disciples"

## Maui Council # 8578

Nationally, the Knights of Columbus is re-branding itself as a Catholic family organization whose primary mission is to strengthen Catholic family lives. Given that commitment to family, the K of C also has a Ladies Auxiliary for the wives of current Knights.

"The mission of the auxiliary is for the wives to help their spouses in their mission to be the head of their households, while also being good stewards in their service to Our Lord Jesus Christ and His church," Norm says.

Norm also points out another outstanding benefit of being a Knight – the K of C Life Insurance Program. "It is one of the best in the nation, and all members of the Knights have the option to secure their families financial future through its insurance programs," Norm says. "We are always looking for men who are interested in becoming part of our council. Currently, we have almost 100 members, but because of all we do, we can always use more, especially younger members from the parish. Membership is open to any man 18 years or older."



*For more information about joining the Knights of Columbus, the Squires, or the Ladies Auxiliary, contact Norm Franco at 808-357-6676 or normanfranco@hotmail.com.*

## THURSDAY PRAYER GROUP *continued from front cover*



*Members of the Thursday Prayer Group offer praise as one of their members receives a blessing.*

"Ron asked me if I knew about the Prayer Group," Cindy says. "I came, and thought, 'This isn't for me.' Back then, there were about 150 people there and when I went in, people were raising their hands with charismatic prayer and I felt uncomfortable. Ron told me to come back – and I did, and I've never left."

For others, attendance at Prayer Group is more occasional.

"We had people who came when they really needed help with a problem, and once it was solved, they step away – that's OK," Cindy says. "Then there are some who've been a member as long as I have, or longer. What we're trying to do is reach as many as we can. We have people who come who aren't Catholic, from all different walks. We wish the numbers of attendees would go up. But it will, in God's time."

"He stayed to praise and worship the Lord with us," she says.

On occasion, the group will hold a prayer healing.

"The people will come up to the front and are anointed with blessed oil and hands are laid on," Cindy says. "Maybe others have had surgery or found they have a sickness, or an injury. We'll ask for prayers at the end of the session."

Cindy's journey to the group occurred when Ron Gonsalves, who was a deacon at the time, arrived at the hospital to see her husband.

*For more info about the Thursday Prayer Group, please call the church office at 808-244-4148.*

## CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION:

*May 31*

At first glance, the Visitation seems a simple enough event – Mary went to Judah, where she visited her pregnant cousin, Elizabeth.

And, yet, the reality behind the events that took place on this fateful day is so profound that we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation every year on May 31.

Imagine being 12 years old again. For most of us, that brings back memories of playing in the park, riding our bikes, watching TV, playing baseball, and so forth. Now, imagine that at the young age of 12, you find out that you are expecting a child – and, even more daunting, that this child is the Lord.

As unimaginable as that situation is for all of us, it is the reality that 12-year-old Mary knew. What a weight to bear!

Yet, it is clear that God knows what He is doing, because Mary's reaction to this reality was much different than most of ours would be. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord," she responded to the angel. "Be it done unto me according to your word" (Lk. 1:38).

Then, she set out to the town of Judah to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, whom she just learned was also expecting a child.

Instead of keeping to herself and processing the fact that she was pregnant with her Lord and Savior, Mary immediately set out to bring Christ to others. She was indeed the first steward of the Church – offering her whole life to the Lord as His "handmaid," and revealing Christ to others through her service.

As soon as Mary entered the house and greeted Elizabeth, John the Baptist leaped in Elizabeth's womb, rejoicing at the presence of the Lord within Mary. "And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And

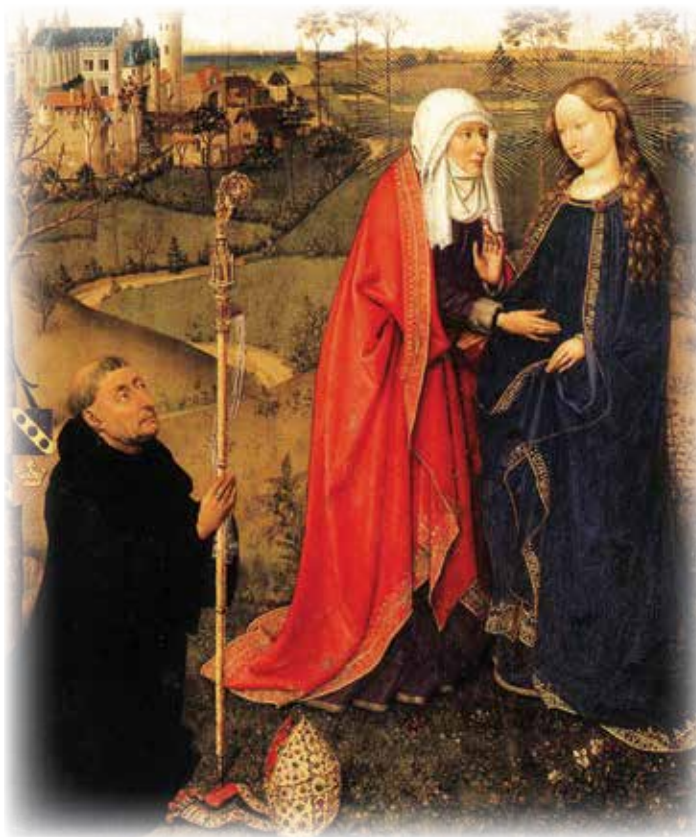
how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?'" (Lk. 1:41-43). Mary radiated with the presence of Christ. Elizabeth had not been told that Mary was pregnant with the Savior, and yet, no sooner did Mary enter her home, Elizabeth knew.

No doubt, Mary is the steward of all stewards. So selflessly had she given herself to the Lord that she became His mother, and, in that way, her very being radiates Christ. It is for that reason that we venerate the Blessed Mother. Everything about who she is as a person, so closely united is she to the Lord and His will, brings us to her Son. And in her words that followed

Elizabeth's joyful greeting, we see exactly that. Christ is glorified through her.

In response to Elizabeth's veneration of Mary, Mary exclaims, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has looked upon His handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name" (Lk. 1:46-49).

This month, as we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation, may we all venerate the Blessed Mother for her selflessness, and ask her to bring us closer to her Son.





## THE DIVINE MERCY GROUP

### *Living the ABCs of God's Mercy*

As Catholics, we recognize the important role saints have in our lives. They are a gift from God who, in His infinite wisdom, sees our potential and uses the saints to show us the way and to remind us that we are not alone on our journey. Obedience, forgiveness, trust, faith, perseverance, holiness – there are so many lessons to be learned from the saints, who we turn to time and again for inspiration and intercession. And here in our parish, there is a small ministry known as the Divine Mercy Group, which takes spiritual inspiration from Sr. Faustina, a Polish nun who St. John Paul II called, “the greatest apostle of Divine Mercy in our time.”

The fact that an entire ministry is inspired by this saint – a ministry that meets every Sunday at 3 p.m. to pray – begs the question of who, exactly, was Sr. Faustina?

Growing up in Poland in the 1930s, Sr. Faustina lived with the Congregation of the Sisters of our Lady of Mercy. She came from a very poor family, and because she only had three years of education, she was given the simplest, most menial tasks such as working in the



*The painted image of Christ as He appeared to Sr. Faustina in a vision: “Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and throughout the world” (Diary 47).*

kitchen or the convent garden. And yet, it was to this sweet, humble soul that God chose to share revelations – messages that she would compile into notebooks that are known today as the *Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska* and in which she writes about Divine Mercy.

“Devotion to the Divine Mercy is about total commitment and trust in God’s mercy, which comes from the font of Jesus – that is, the moment on the cross when a sword pierced Christ’s side and blood and water poured forth,” says Joybelle Gumtang, ministry member. “Sr. Faustina wrote that the more we trust in God, the more open we are to His mercy which, in turn, can flow to others.”

While the message of mercy revealed to Sr. Faustina was not a new one, her writings sparked renewal in the devotion to the Divine Mercy, especially with the introduction of the Divine Mercy Chaplet – a recitation of prayers using ordinary rosary beads – and a painted image of Christ as He appeared to Sr. Faustina in a vision. In the image, Christ is clothed in white with His right hand raised in a blessing; His left hand touches His heart from which come two rays, one white and one red denoting blood and water (and thus the hour of Jesus’ death), as well as highlighting the graces that are poured out through baptism and the Eucharist.

Sr. Faustina died in 1938, and 62

*continued on back cover*

*“Being part of the Divine Mercy Group means everything to me. When I moved here from California, I didn’t know where God was leading me, but He opened my heart to say ‘yes’ to this. God calls us in different ways – some of us serve through financial means, some work with their hands, and some do God’s work through prayer. But in the end, when we all work together in God’s name, then God’s work is being done.” – Joybelle Gumtang*

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## THE DIVINE MERCY GROUP *continued from page 7*

years later, on April 30, 2000, she was canonized a saint by Pope John Paul II and would now be known as the Missionary of Divine Mercy. The pope, who would later himself become a saint, also established the Second Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday.

And today, the inspiration from that humble, Polish nun continues in our parish with The Divine Mercy Group. Each week, members meet to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, offer novenas, and pray for intentions such as the end of abortion, those who have died, those who are dying, and for the conversion of sinners. But at the heart of the group is the idea that God's mercy is there for the asking.

Joybelle explains how God's mercy can be explained with "ABC" - *Ask for His mercy* (God wants us to come to Him); *Be merciful* (receive God's mercy and let it flow to others); and *Completely trust in God* (the grace of His mercy is dependent upon our trust).

"So, as a group, we think of ourselves as spiritual

warriors because we are trying to be apostles of Divine Mercy and trying to help God with His salvation work," Joybelle says.

It may seem like such an easy thing to do, but praying is a concrete, impactful way to serve God and one another. Ultimately, since we are all called to serve, we can look to the saints - those who have walked this earth before us - for inspiration. And, for members of the Divine Mercy Group, St. Faustina is one saint who has given them direction, purpose, and spiritual guidance.

"Being part of the Divine Mercy Group means everything to me," Joybelle says. "When I moved here from California, I didn't know where God was leading me, but He opened my heart to say 'yes' to this. God calls us in different ways - some of us serve through financial means, some work with their hands, and some do God's work through prayer. But in the end, when we all work together in God's name, then God's work is being done."

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## 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.