

ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

PARISH CHOIR BRINGING COMMUNITY CLOSER TO CHRIST THROUGH BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

If you have had the opportunity to hear our Saturday Evening Choir, and think you'd like to join this talented group, you are most welcome!

"We welcome anyone who wants to join!" says Jo Fernandez, Director. "If you keep music in your heart, and sing praise to God, you're welcome to come be with us!"

The 11-member choir gathers each Wednesday evening at the Fernandez home to rehearse for the following Saturday Mass. After the singing is done, the group shares coffee, sweets, and fellowship.

"It's so much fun!" Jo says. "We're a very close-knit choir."

The choir was started when Jo and her husband, Manny, were attending Mass at Christ the King parish in Kahului. In 1989, the late Fr. Charles Oyabu, of our parish, asked Jo if she would come here to form a choir for the Saturday evening Mass. Jo and Manny agreed. The original choir members were Rey Pelayo, Patrick Fevella, Manny, and Jo.

"Today, we have a very faithful group that does the Saturday evening Mass," Jo says. "I plan out what to sing for any given week by praying, first of all, for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, then



Members of the Saturday Evening Choir provide prayer and praise in song. The members are (top, from left) Patrick Fevella, Rey Pelayo, Ramon Garcia, Randy Leval, Sr. Eva Mesina, Valerie Standing, Janet Fernandez, Bonnie Gaspar; (front) Norman Villarama, and Manny and Jo Fernandez.

read the readings for that weekend. And then, I select songs that tie into the readings. Our group is very blessed to have Rey as our music leader. He is gifted in playing the piano, guitar and bass. He teaches us the music and timing so we can better sing praises to God."

The choir sings in English and, on occasion, in Hawaiian. Of all the songs the choir sings, Jo's

Parish Choir continued from front cover

favorite is *Seek the Lord*. Yet, for Jo, the language of the song doesn't matter, for singing itself is an expression of her faith.

"I'd always been taught that singing is like praying twice," Jo says. "I've always had music in my heart, and always for the Church."

When Jo was in fifth grade, she began singing in the choir of Holy Rosary Church in Paia. By the time she entered high school, she was asked to be the choir director; a post she held until the family moved to Kahului in 1967. When Jo was working in the accounting department of the

Hukilau Hotel, she met Manny, who was playing drums there. They married in November 1969, and have two children – Alana and Scotty.

Jo agrees that singing with the others in the choir brings them all closer as part of the Body of Christ. She shares her own story of why this is so.

"All of us have been through many trials," Jo says. "God has seen us through, even when we don't understand. I consider the birth of my first grandchild. He 'coded,' and I cried out to God. The doctors said I had to leave the labor room, and we went to the waiting room. The first question from the family was, 'is it ours (who the code was sounded for)?' We gathered and cried to God, 'if it's Your will, breathe life into this little baby.'

"After we prayed, the labor room doors opened, and here's our little baby going to the ICU," she continues. "Father came to the hospital and baptized Ian. Then he was airlifted to Oahu, where he spent 10 days in the neonatal intensive care unit. And now, in May, he graduated from high school. God granted us a miracle!"

Thus, for Jo, singing is truly giving glory and praise to God.

"It's from our hearts," she says. "We thank God every day for the privilege of being able to sing and praise Him at St. Anthony's. We are very proud as a group to serve at St. Anthony Parish. I want to thank my faithful choir members for their dedication in enhancing Mass and for keeping the gift of music in our hearts."

"We thank God every day for the privilege of being able to sing and praise Him at St. Anthony's. We are very proud as a group to serve at St. Anthony Parish. I want to thank my faithful choir members for their dedication in enhancing Mass and for keeping the gift of music in our hearts."

– Jo Fernandez, Director

If you are interested in joining the Saturday Evening Choir, please call Jo Fernandez at 808-877-5862.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

We Are Blessed as a Church and a Nation

Dear Parishioners,

The month of July may seem like a bit of an “in-between” month. Of course, it sits in the middle of summer. During this last month of June, we shared in a number of solemnities and celebrations – these served to remind us of the incredible gifts we have received as Catholics, from the Holy Trinity to the Body and Blood of Christ.

Now, a look at the calendar shows us that all of the Sundays this month are in Ordinary Time. We know that Ordinary Time is anything but “ordinary,” even though it might seem that way – especially after a month of celebrations.

However, one thing happens this month that is certainly unique to us as Americans – Independence Day. We are Catholics, but we also are Americans, and we should be proud to be both – grateful for the gift of faith, and equally grateful for the gift of liberty we receive as American citizens.

Yet, to be Catholic and

American should not mean choosing one over the other. These allegiances should be complementary. Our Catholic faith states that we need to work together as fellow citizens for the common good of everyone in this great country. Through the Constitution, our Founding Fathers guaranteed us of religious rights to contribute to our common life together.

Freedom is a special inheritance we have received, fought for by many at a great price, and it is a heritage that must be guarded – we are truly stewards of the gifts of freedom.

In 1886, just over 140 years ago, Bishop James Gibbons of Baltimore was made the second American Cardinal. He attributed the progress of the Church in America to the “civil liberty we enjoy in our enlightened republic.” He continued to say that “in the genial atmosphere of liberty, the Church blossoms like a rose.”

July is not just a time for us to celebrate – it is also a time for



us to blossom. It is not a time to cease praying or working to build the Kingdom of Christ. Rather, it is a time to work even more diligently to express our appreciation for our many gifts, and to share them with others. We are blessed – by the gifts of our faith and the gifts of freedom – and we must always remember to thank God for that.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Roland Bunda

Fr. Roland Bunda, S.M.

July is not just a time for us to celebrate – it is also a time for us to blossom. It is not a time to cease praying or working to build the Kingdom of Christ. Rather, it is a time to work even more diligently to express our appreciation for our many gifts, and to share them with others.

SR. EVA MESINA: *Blessed for*



Sr. Eva J. Mesina, during her time as Vice Province Councilor for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet



The 50th anniversary celebration of both Br. Fred Silberius and Sr. Eva J. Mesina, with her mother

Fifty-six years ago, God the “Hound of Heaven” touched young Eva’s heart in an extraordinary way, and she just couldn’t resist His loving call – and to this day, she still can’t.

“I never wanted to be a religious sister,” says Sr. Eva J. Mesina, CSJ. “But during my senior year of high school, I went on a retreat, and as I was making a visit to the chapel, it happened. Just as I was genuflecting, I had a powerful experience – like a lightning bolt, and I said, ‘yes!’ Then, I had to sit down and realize what I had said ‘yes’ to – I had said ‘yes’ to entering the Sisters of St. Joseph. Try as I might I couldn’t shake it off. I just had this deep joy and conviction and I had to follow it.”

However, as one often finds, following the will of God isn’t always easy.

“My parents were not happy about my wanting to become a sister,” she says. “My mother made it clear that she was ashamed to share my decision with her friends, and my father practically disowned me. I had to prepare all that I needed for entrance on my own.”

And yet, God does provide plenty of unexpected blessings for those who courageously seek Him.

“But this story has a happy ending,” Sr. Eva says. “My parents started to go to church while I was in the novitiate, and soon they were proud to have a daughter who was a nun. On my Silver Jubilee, we had a double celebration – their 45th wedding anniversary and my 25th anniversary of religious life. We both renewed our vows at Mass, before several hundred friends and relatives.”

Now as a sister, she continues to respond to the divine call of the “Hound of Heaven” by serving as our Director of Religious Education, as well as in other capacities.

“I enjoy working with the children and preparing them to receive the sacraments,” she says. “What I enjoy most is my parents’ sessions

Responding to God's Call

that deal with the spirituality and theology of the sacraments. I teach them that they are not 'one-time fixes,' but instead, a way of life. It is so rewarding when the parents respond with amazement about what the sacraments really mean for their faith journey. Their response is a joyous acceptance of how great God is, and I hope that it spurs them towards a deeper relationship with God and a better understanding of stewardship."

Sr. Eva also coordinates our church cleaners (whom she refers to as "the faithful behind-the-scenes parishioners"), sings and cantors for the Saturday evening Mass choir, and serves as a lector.

Time and time again, she is thankful for the gift of our parish family, and impressed by the profundity of our faith.

"Our parish has such great people," she says. "They are extremely generous with their time and energy when they see that it is for a good cause. Many of them care deeply about our parish. On the other hand, there is a lot of work to be done in our community regarding faith formation. Many people are struggling just to make a living. They need our help and support. There are many ways the faithful have responded to them, such as by preparing Advent Boxes and Angel Tree gifts, and running the Thrift Shop. I love it here!"

Through the companionship of her fellow sisters, she finds the strength she needs to serve

Christ and her brothers and sisters in need with an undivided heart.

"I love being part of a community of well-educated, dynamic and forward-looking women of the Church," she says. "The spirit and spirituality of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet is

"I realized that God was calling me to go beyond just 'good feelings' and love Him as God without the wonderful, joyous feelings I had at the beginning of religious life. Now, I find myself constantly in the presence of God, and our relationship has shifted to a deeper level."

– Sr. Eva J. Mesina, CSJ

a great fit for me. I am constantly nourished by my sisters as we practice 'sharing our hearts' in our daily prayers. This practice reminds us to listen to God in all the events of the day and the people we come into contact. It keeps us grounded in our spiritual journey."

Although being a religious sister brings much peace and happiness to her soul, nevertheless, it is still

a way of walking in the footsteps of Christ, the Suffering Servant.

"The greatest challenge I have encountered as a sister was when I went through a period of spiritual desolation for several years," she says. "I couldn't pray and I lost the sense of God's tangible presence. It was as if I was in a deep dark pit, and I literally hung on a 'string of faith,' stubbornly believing that God would not desert me. I finally pulled through when I was studying for a master's degree in Christian Spirituality. I realized that God was calling me to go beyond just 'good feelings' and love Him as God without the wonderful, joyous feelings I had at the beginning of religious life. Now, I find myself constantly in the presence of God, and our relationship has shifted to a deeper level."

SERVICE

The Fourth Pillar of Parish Stewardship

Throughout Sacred Scripture, there are numerous references to service. There is the parable of the vigilant and faithful servants who await their master's return from a wedding, "ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks" (Lk 12:35-40). There is the story of the good Samaritan who was moved with compassion to help the victim of a violent robbery (Lk 10:25-37). And there are several examples of Christ serving those around Him – feeding the multitudes, healing the sick, and even turning water into wine at a wedding banquet.

Why is service a running theme throughout the Gospels? Because service is at the root of living in imitation of Christ. Christ served others throughout His life on Earth, and His death on the cross was the ultimate act of service to mankind. And when we serve others, we are not only following in Christ's footsteps, we are also serving Christ Himself: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

As a stewardship parish, service must be at the heart of everything we do. The parish community is the bastion of service within the Catholic Church, as we serve one another and are also served by our brothers and sisters in Christ. As the Diocese of Wichita's document, *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship*, states, "Like a blood family, the parish family stands ready and eager collectively to wrap their arms around their brothers and sisters when they suffer in trial and/or celebrate special events in their lives."

It is good to recognize the parish community as a place where service is appreciated and can be utilized for the good of the Church. However, it is not enough for us to simply serve other members of our parish family. As disciples of Christ, it is our obligation to serve people in need everywhere they exist – in our families, our greater community, our country, and throughout the world. This can be a challenging concept, as it is often much more comfortable and convenient to serve those who are close to us than it is to reach out to "outsiders." But, as *The Pillars of Parish Stewardship* eloquently points out, "Failure to have this understanding leads to a selfish parochialism, which is life draining to a parish stewardship way of life."

Think of ways that you can serve others around you, both within our parish family and in the greater community. Our many parish ministries offer a great place to begin offering your time and talents, but the opportunities for service don't end there. There are many civic and nonprofit organizations that do an immense amount to serve others across the globe and are always looking for volunteers.

Once you serve, you will find that you will reap numerous rewards in return, much like the faithful servants who doubled the talents their master had entrusted to them: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy" (Mt 25:21).

W
E
L
C
O
M
E
S

A TRUE DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

Parishioner Jo Reyes Fostering Friendships in Our Community

About eight years ago, Jo Reyes' friend began encouraging her to visit St. Anthony. At the time, Jo had recently moved to the area and was attending several different parishes.

"I started giving my friend a ride to Mass at St. Anthony and liked Fr. Roland right away," Jo says. "He built an ohana here. He is a local boy and a lot of his homilies and stories I can identify with."

Over the years, Jo has appreciated the many faith-building events that the parish has provided. Through the faith community, she has fostered old friendships and built new ones.

"Everyone is like a family," says Jo. "There is a close-knit bond with many people. That's why I think so many people attend and participate in our daily Masses."

Jo is a member of Diamonds in the Rough, a group of parishioners, including Fr. Roland, who are celebrating their 75th birthdays this year.

"My birthday is on Nov. 19," Jo says. "I'm actually the youngest of the group, the baby of the Diamonds in the Rough!"

In March, Fr. Roland hosted a party to celebrate this special group of parishioners who are so active in the faith community in many ways.

"Father went out of his way to make it a special celebration for all of us turning 75," Jo says. "It was a beautiful dinner, and we enjoyed good conversation and fellowship. We were laughing



(From left) Jo Reyes with Benita Ventura

about so many things."

One ministry for the larger Catholic community of our area that Jo has become invested in is the devotion to the Divine Mercy. At our own parish, Jo and a number of parishioners were drawn to the devotion and formed a Divine Mercy prayer group that meets every Sunday at 3 p.m.

continued on back cover

"Since I've been coming to this parish, my faith has become stronger and deeper. I am really thankful and appreciative, and I believe that if Jesus is the source of all that you have, then you have access to all that you need." – Jo Reyes

1627 B Mill Street
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii 96793

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

Jo Reyes continued from page 7

“Then, there were a few of us who had this vision that we really wanted to establish the devotion in all the parishes in Maui,” Jo says. “It was not so much our plan, as Jesus’ plan. He put it in our hearts.”

The group began reaching out to all the pastors of the Catholic churches in the area. They did presentations at all of the Masses, encouraging people to foster a devotion to the Divine Mercy.

“It was easy because everyone has a tremendous love for the work,” Jo says. “By this year, almost all of the parishes have enthroned the Divine Mercy image and have a Divine Mercy prayer group.”

If Jo could offer any advice to faith community members, she would encourage them to

find a spiritual director, someone who strives to become a saint, as we are all called to be, and someone who endeavors to emulate Christ.

“There are so many distractions in our life, and we get thrown into situations that are difficult to discern,” Jo says. “Sometimes, all you need is someone who is more spiritually wise than you are.”

Jo would like to thank all the members of the faith community who form the *ohana* that is St. Anthony.

“Since I’ve been coming to this parish, my faith has become stronger and deeper,” Jo says. “I am really thankful and appreciative, and I believe that if Jesus is the source of all that you have, then you have access to all that you need.”

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.