

NOV  
2017

# ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

## STILL GIVING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

### *Meet Miyoko Onaga*

On any given day, parishioner Miyoko Onaga can be found sitting in her wheelchair at Rose-lani Place, busily knitting hats and scarves for the St. Anthony Craft Group to sell at its upcoming Christmas Bazaar. At 96 years old, this is Miyoko's way of continuing to live out stewardship after a lifetime of service to Christ and His Church.

"She is just constantly seeking ways to stay involved in the community," says parishioner Myrna Fung. "Before she was in assisted living, Miyoko was always finding new ways to volunteer – always busy making or doing something for others."

Interestingly, Miyoko wasn't raised Catholic. She decided to convert to Catholicism after meeting and falling in love with her husband, a devout Catholic, so that they could raise a religiously unified family. Yet, as with most things in her life, Miyoko dove whole-

heartedly into her chosen faith, serving and becoming involved wherever possible. She worked as a school cafeteria manager and librarian, helped make Portuguese Sweetbread at St. Joseph's Church, took classes in watercolor painting, and would spend hours creating delicate cards from seaweed found upon the shore. Even when she was well into her 80s, Miyoko would still travel to Maine each summer to work a camp and could be found volunteering regularly at a local museum.

Then, following the death of her husband, Miyoko moved here to Wailuku, becoming involved in our St. Anthony Catholic Community.

"She didn't become part of our parish until her husband passed away and she had to move here to be with her son," Myrna says. "I ended up meeting her through my mother, who would pick



*Parishioner Miyoko Onaga crafts one of her hand-knitted items, made lovingly for St. Anthony Catholic Community.*

her up and bring her to church. And when my mother got sick and eventually passed away, she told me to continue doing that,

*continued on back cover*

## THE “THANKSGIVING SPIRIT” DOESN'T HAVE TO END AT THANKSGIVING

The origin of the first Thanksgiving feast is a matter of some debate among historians. But since 1863, Americans have annually set aside the fourth or fifth Thursday of November to give thanks to God for a bountiful harvest. The holiday became a matter of federal law in 1941, as President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a joint congressional resolution to observe Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday of November. Even as our society has become less agrarian, families continue to gather each November to give thanks to God for each other, and for the many blessings they have received throughout the year.

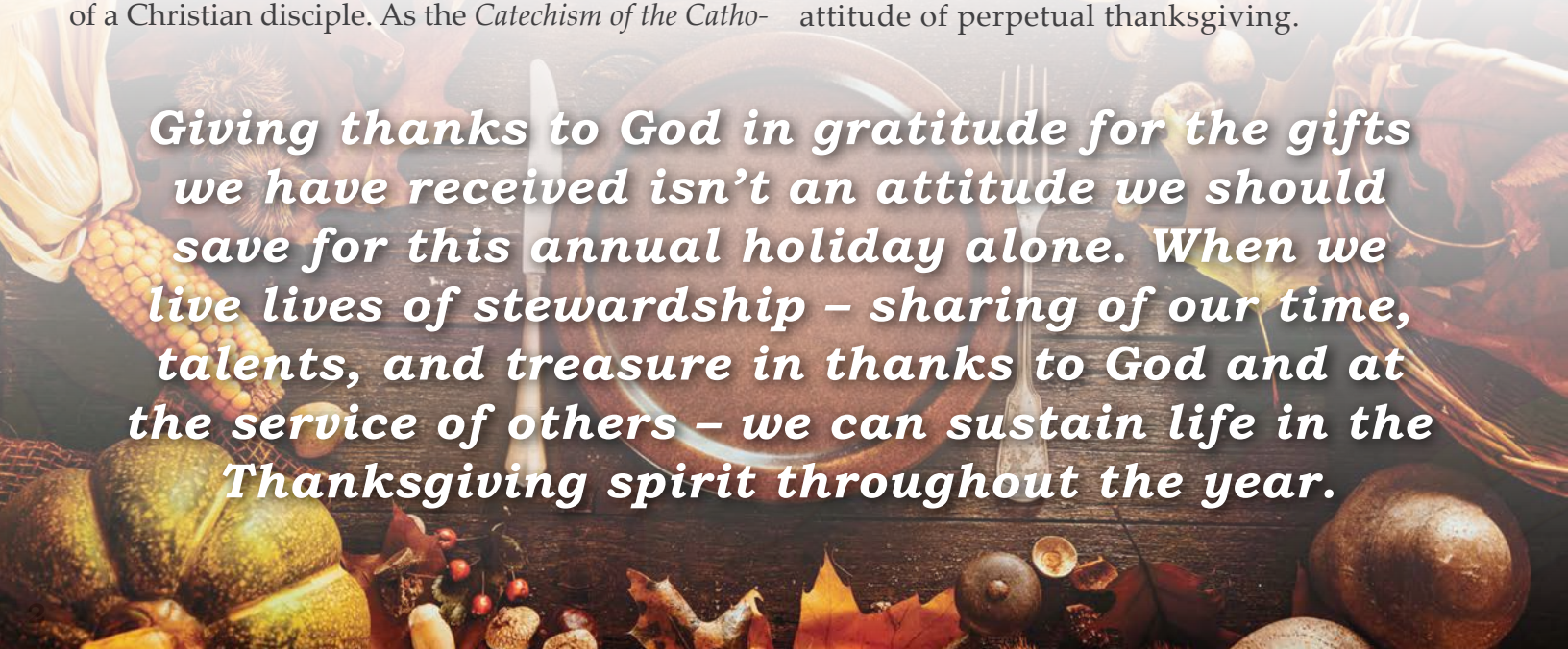
Most people associate this “spirit of Thanksgiving” with the fall holiday and its many recognizable symbols – brisk weather, cornucopias, family gatherings, and plenty of delicious food. But giving thanks to God in gratitude for the gifts we have received isn’t an attitude we should save for this annual holiday alone. When we live lives of stewardship – sharing of our time, talents, and treasure in thanks to God and at the service of others – we can sustain life in the Thanksgiving spirit throughout the year.

The Church teaches that this daily response of gratitude is an important element of living the life of a Christian disciple. As the *Catechism of the Catho-*

*lic Church* states, “Indeed, in the work of salvation, Christ sets creation free from sin and death to consecrate it anew and make it return to the Father, for his glory. The thanksgiving of the members of the Body participates in that of their Head” (CCC, 2637).

And how can we express this spirit of thanks? We can serve others, living the virtue of charity by reaching out to our brothers and sisters in need through acts of kindness. We can give back to God from our “first fruits,” sharing of our treasure in thanksgiving and recognition of the need to return a portion of our gifts to God. We can utilize our unique talents to make our parish and local communities better places. And, as the *Catechism* also points out, we can even express thanks through prayerfully offering up our daily activities to God – “Every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving” (CCC, 2638).

This Thanksgiving, take a moment to think of ways that you can live in the “spirit of Thanksgiving” on the fourth Thursday of November, and every other day throughout the year. Living the stewardship way of life may not always involve a precisely carved turkey, decorations or a family viewing of *It’s a Wonderful Life* – but it will provide lifelong fulfillment and joy rooted in an attitude of perpetual thanksgiving.



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## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

# November is a Time for Thanksgiving

Dear Parishioners,

November seems to automatically bring us to thoughts of thanksgiving and Thanksgiving – it is both a time of year when we tend to think in terms of gratitude to God, and a time when we also formally celebrate our American holiday. My memories of Thanksgiving are filled with food, of course, but they are also filled with thoughts of family and a sense of togetherness and a sense of my faith.

But this is also a significant month in the Church from a number of perspectives. Nov. 1 is a Holy Day, the Solemnity of All Saints. The next day is All Souls Day, a day devoted to all the saints in our lives – living, not living, known, and unknown.

Most of us have people in our lives who have had a profound impact on us – people we can consider our own personal saints. This month is a wonderful reminder to think of them, thank them, and thank God for making them a part of our lives.

Our Thanksgiving holiday falls on Nov. 23, and is a time for families and gratitude. Thanksgiving became official in the United States in 1863, and in his proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln made very clear Whom we needed to thank. “To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we

are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God,” Lincoln said. In other words, we all need to thank Almighty God for our many blessings.

Finally, November also brings us to the end of one Church year and the beginning of a new one. The Feast of Christ the King on Nov. 26 officially begins the final week of our liturgical year, and the First Sunday of Advent is on Dec. 3. From the beginning of the month when we thank God for the example of the saints and the saintly people in our lives, to the end of the month when we thank God for everything we have and everything we are, November is a time to approach the Lord with a grateful heart. That is what stewardship truly is all about – about approaching God, about approaching each day, and about approaching all those with whom we come in contact, with hearts filled with gratitude and love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Fr. Roland Bunda*

Fr. Roland Bunda, S.M.



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## LOOKING BACK ON THE

*"We're All in It"*

When we reflect upon how Jesus entered the world, He didn't arrive as an adult, or a warrior. Instead, He came to us as a baby, to parents, in a family.

"That's the way we all start out," Martha Haleakala says. "We want our parish to make our families feel welcome and to know that we're there for them. It's important to keep the families together and to keep the faith growing within the family."

With this in mind, earlier this fall, Martha and other lay Marianists from our parish brought the first Family Life Retreat to St. Anthony.

The retreat, held on Sept. 9, included skits, large-group activities, presentations to specific age groups, family projects, and a whole lot of laughter and fun. From the youngest to the oldest, all family members were encouraged to grow in important areas, such as affirming each other, communicating well, learning to reconcile differences, and committing to investing in their relationships with God and each other. Thirty-five families attended the day-long event, which culminated in the families going to the Saturday vigil Mass and enjoying dinner together.

Martha hopes that families who experienced the retreat will be reminded of how God wants to be part of their everyday family life. She also hopes that families will be empowered to grow in their relationships

with each other, using the tools and skills they were given.

"We were trying to show the families that there are means of overcoming their differences and working together, with their faith," Martha says. "We wanted to impress upon our families that the Church is trying to support you in the problems and things you encounter on a daily basis. We want people to know their Church and faith is there for them."

Throughout the retreat, families were reminded of the importance of faith, and were given the opportunity to grow closer to God together.

"Within the family unit, that's where the faith is first born, and it has to be nurtured and strengthened," Martha says. "We plant the seed and nurture it, and then hope and pray that once children get out in the world, it's taken root."

"For a long time, people thought that being holy, praying daily, etcetera, was for the priests and the nuns," she adds. "We're trying really hard to let families in our parish know that practicing your faith is a daily thing and we really want to be there to help with that."

Torie Hoopii and her husband, Rick, attended the retreat with all six of their children, and their grandson.

"I think the most profound part of the



*This past September, 35 families gathered for our first annual Family Life Retreat at St. Anthony.*



*Pre-teens also had activities geared toward their interests.*



# E FAMILY LIFE RETREAT

## *This Together*

activities was when we wrote out the forgiveness letter – that was really special,” she says. “We’re really busy and we don’t always have the time to sit down and decompress and hear what’s on the other person’s heart. With that forgiveness letter, we could really reflect and speak from the heart and hear what was bothering each person or what we could do better. I’m hoping that we can grow more in our communication skills – everybody committed to having more time together.”

Torie and Rick also hope that their example of prioritizing their relationships with God and each other will have an impact on their children.

“I think the example of a person’s life is a stronger witness than anything you could say to anybody,” Torie says. “That’s important to my family. We don’t have it all together – it’s not perfect, but we know that we serve a perfect God. And no matter what, if we focus on Him and His love for us, that’s enough to get us through.”

Martha particularly enjoyed seeing the camaraderie among family members.

“I walked around, and everyone was having such a good time and working together, applying what they had learned from the sessions, and it was really so nice to see,” she says. “It’s not often that everyone in a family is free to really enjoy the day and be together. I heard over and over again, ‘We’re going to spend more time together, we’re going to do things together as a family, and most importantly, we’re going to pray together as a family.’ They saw how important it was.”

Martha hopes that not only will the retreat become an annual event, but also that the parish will begin offering more opportunities for families to grow in faith together, as well as fellowship with other families.

“The world is full of so much pain and disaster and worry,” she says. “People are looking for a place and other like-minded people to worship with, and to spend time with. It’s out there. We’re all in this together!”



*Parents met in small groups to share about issues relevant to them.*



*Kids aged 8 years old and under participated in “superstar” activities.*

*If you would like more information on upcoming family events, or if you are interested in helping to plan events and serve families within our parish, please contact Martha Haleakala 808-269-5208 or kobemaui1@hawaiiantel.net.*



## UNDERSTANDING ALL SOULS DAY AND ALL SAINTS DAY

All Souls Day and All Saints Day are two important days on our Catholic calendar, and both illustrate foundational elements of our faith.

On Nov. 1, as we honor the saints, we also honor God with our whole heart and soul. We need the example of the saints, who have carried Christ's cross before us, just as a newborn child needs the help and wisdom of its mother.

The saints have carried us inestimably far along the path of salvation. Many Catholics may never gain eternal life without the graces won by their red and white martyrdoms. Let us pay our saints due honor by decorating our houses and dressing up to celebrate their presence among us. Life is too short to ignore our most loyal friends!

On Nov. 2, All Souls Day, Catholics traditionally visit cemeteries to attend a solemn memorial Mass, arrange beautiful flowers on a loved one's grave, or pray the Holy Rosary for poor souls in purgatory.

Some of us may wonder, "What is purgatory? Why do we honor the dead and pray for them, anyway?"

"The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different than the punishment of the damned," (*Catechism of the*

*Catholic Church* 1031). The Church formulated her doctrine on purgatory at the Councils of Florence and Trent, and in reference to Scriptural texts which speak of a "cleansing fire," such as 1 Cor 3:15 and 1 Peter 1:7.

Understanding that purgatory truly exists, we easily conclude that there are souls who are there right now. We then need to help these souls through this purification process – especially if they are our loved ones!

This is how the Old Testament character Judas Maccabeus felt: "Therefore (Judas) made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin," (2 Macc. 12:46).

The *Catechism* supports this clearly: "From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may obtain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead" (CCC 1032).

Let us hold the dead close to our hearts and not forget about them. They are helplessly waiting for us to have compassion on them and pray for them this All Souls Day, and every day.





## AN INVITATION TO LISTEN WITH YOUR HEART

### *The 5 p.m. Sunday Mass Choir*

The men and women who lead our parish in song as choir members have the awesome privilege of bringing a special form of prayer to the Mass each week. When we join them in singing, we're embracing a form of worship that touches the heart of God and deepens our sense of community.

The 5 p.m. Mass Choir has been leading St. Anthony in song for more than two decades. Though their numbers sometimes vary, Coordinator Denis Cabacungan says he enjoys the way music can bring Scripture to life within the Mass.

"It makes the liturgy so much more moving," Denis says. "It's like you're praying twice."

Denis' involvement at St. Anthony has had a special influence on his life as a musician. As a young person, he helped develop the 5 p.m. Mass choir with the help of other young parishioners, including his wife, Lori.

"We called ourselves the Young Youth Choir, so I've been playing at the same spot since then," he says. "We're not the Young Youth Choir anymore – maybe we're the 'Middle Aged' or 'Getting Up There' choir now!"

For Denis, spending time in the choir led to learning guitar with the help of other young choir members, and it also led to getting to know Lori, who managed the music store where he bought his first guitar.

"I still have that guitar," he says. "I won't get rid of it because that's like our start."

Married for more than 20 years and parents to Darin, 13, Denis credits Lori with having a special talent for choosing the music the choir will perform each week.

"She's our everything," he says. "My wife can



*Members of the 5 p.m. Mass Choir gather at the altar. Choir Coordinator Denis Cabacungan says all are welcome to join as God invites everyone to sing and listen with their hearts.*

figure out two months in advance every song we need. She has a gift for it. I call it a gift because the songs she picks always match the readings and she does it so fast. It takes me weeks to figure out something."

For parishioners who want to lend their time to the 5 p.m. Choir, Denis says no special talent for music is required.

"The only policy we have to join the choir is that you love to sing or you love the Lord," Denis says. "We've had people who are tone-deaf, people who can't keep a beat. We've had a whole bunch of people with wonderful gifts."

"I believe it's all in how we listen," he continues. "If we listen with our hearts, the music will inspire anyone. I believe if we listen with the Heart of the Lord, the Lord can make everything beautiful."

*Those who are interested can call the parish office at 808-244-4148 or just talk to Lori and Denis Cabacungan after Mass.*

# ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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## *Meet Miyoko Onaga* continued from front cover

causing me to first bring Miyoko to church and then later, take her Communion when she got ill and became more homebound.”

Yet, what Myrna thought would be merely a task turned into a tremendous blessing as she found her life touched again and again by Miyoko’s selfless and loving spirit. Describing her as someone who “really lives out the faith,” Myrna always walks away feeling like she’s received something from Miyoko. Sometimes, it’s simply the pleasure of listening to her stories or of being told that she’s in Miyoko’s prayers.

“It is so interesting to listen to and hear her stories,” Myrna says. “Sometimes, I end up staying there for over

an hour just talking to and learning from her. Taking Communion to her has truly been such a gift. I know that she prays the Rosary and reads her other prayers daily, and oftentimes, she will tell me that she is praying for me. To me, that’s the most humbling thing, because here I am thinking that I’m helping her out – and yet, she is always trying to give back to me in some way.”

In her simple and hidden way, Miyoko continues to be a living example of stewardship, using her time and talent daily to serve others. Never wasting a moment in idleness, she reminds us all of the true happiness that comes from serving others through our time, talent, and treasure.

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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.