

# ST. ANTHONY CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

## YOUTH MINISTRY HELPING YOUNG PARISHIONERS FIND THEIR PLACE

Middle school. High school. The teenage years can often be a confusing and overwhelming stage on the journey of life. As a parish family, it is our job to step up and walk alongside our youth. Here at St. Anthony, we hope to not only prepare our students by teaching them about the faith, but also by giving them an experience of growing closer to God as part of our community.

“We hope the youth know that our Church is behind them, we’re supporting them in whatever challenges come up, in whatever choices they have to make,” says our youth minister, Chiree Souza.

Our middle and high school Religious Education programs will look a bit different for the next couple years, as we work to transition the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation from high school, down to second grade. In 2018, a group of 9th through 12th-grade students will be confirmed, and a group of current sixth through 12th-grade students are preparing to receive the Sacrament in 2019. During these years, our primary focus will be in preparing our young people to be fully initiated into the Church.

Each Sunday morning, students meet to learn about their faith and what it means to be Catholic, focusing first on the Baptismal promises that their



*Young people decorated trunks of their vehicles and served the children, ages 1-10, of our parish.*

parents made for them, followed by learning about the Sacrament of Confirmation.

“This is an important sacrament,” Chiree says. “We hope they take it with them and continue their spiritual life and spiritual growth.”

While Confirmation preparation will remain at the center of our efforts, there will also be other opportunities for students — who are either preparing for the sacrament, or who have already been confirmed — to get involved.

An evening of youth fellowship will be held, once a quarter, giving all teens an opportunity to come

## *Youth Ministry* continued from front cover

together for praise and worship, a speaker, a time for discussion, and an activity. Teens will also have the opportunity to go on retreats, such as our Give Thanks daylong retreat, which was held just before Thanksgiving, or our overnight Confirmation retreat. This year, our middle school students will also be invited to join others in our vicariate for a retreat designed to help them grow in their faith, and fifteen of our high school-age youth and adults will attend the LA Congress in southern California, in March.

Chiree hopes that our program helps our youth know that they are not alone on their journey of faith.

“The Church is there for you to come pray with others, with our priests, to talk to somebody — let us know how you feel,” she says. “I hope to help them realize they’re loved by Jesus and they have a place.”

Chiree also wants to help our youth feel heard, knowing that their voices and opinions matter in our community.

“They have expressed that they go to church, but don’t feel like they have a voice in the Church,”

Chiree says. “In giving them instruction and also giving them the opportunity to voice their concerns, they feel they have a voice, and they belong. Then, they take ownership of making our parish better. It’s really important.”

Having been involved in serving our youth for many years, Chiree loves watching teens grow in their relationship with God.

“Seeing some students going from not really feeling that Jesus is real and there, and then going on retreat and something hits them, and they come back saying, ‘Thank you very much, this really opened my eyes!’ — that has kept me going,” Chiree says. “My prayer is that they take their relationship with Jesus and build on that. That’s my goal.”

Chiree encourages our young people to come and get involved in our parish.

“I will be more than happy to help you find your place in our Religious Education program,” Chiree says. “I hope they realize the whole family of God is supporting them.”

*If you would like more information on youth ministry events at St. Anthony, please call, text or email Chiree Souza at 808-269-8178 or leilani1958@aol.com.*

## **Christmas Mass Schedule**

*On Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017, we will not have the regularly scheduled 5 p.m. Mass because of the Vigil that starts at 6 p.m.*

### **Sunday, Dec. 24, 2017 (Christmas Eve)**

Christmas Vigil Mass – 6 p.m.

Christmas Caroling in church – 11:30 p.m.

Midnight Mass – 12 a.m.

### **Monday, Dec. 25, 2017 (Christmas Day)**

Mass at 7 a.m. and 9 a.m.

(No evening Mass)

### **Dec. 16 to 24, 2017 – Misa de Gallo Mass Schedule**

Dec. 16 – 5 a.m.

Dec. 17 – 7 a.m.

Dec. 18-23 – 5 a.m.

Dec. 24 – 7 a.m.

\*\*Dec. 17 and 24 the regularly scheduled 9 a.m. Mass will be rescheduled to 9:30 a.m.

## A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

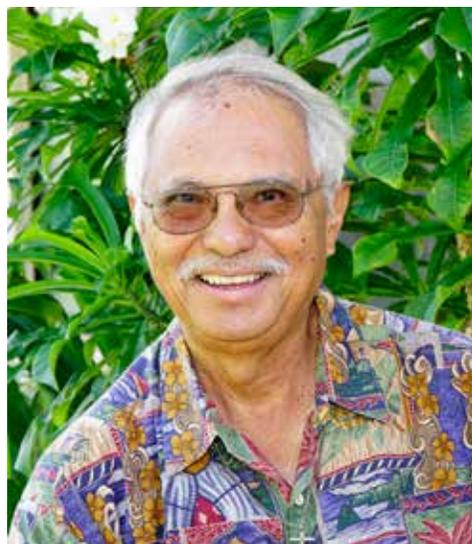
### *Reflections at the End of the Year*

Dear Parishioners,

It seems as if we just finished Lent and Easter, and here we are at Advent and Christmas. To say this is a busy month for many is an understatement. Although December is a month of love, it can also be a difficult month for some. For those with families, it may be a month of travel as people rush to be united with loved ones, sometimes after a long period of separation.

There is no shortage of reminders as to what time of year this is. However, for us as Catholics, we may need to refocus to see where we are in our faith lives. Were you aware that for us, December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception? In that regard, we celebrate a Holy Day of Obligation on Friday, Dec. 8. Advent begins on Dec. 3, and you may notice that we begin to wear purple as a sign of Advent. That color changes to white or gold beginning at Christmas.

Of course, this is also the last month of the regular calendar



year, which may add additional tasks to our own schedules as we finalize things for the end of the year. However, there are many opportunities for us during this month to share, to pray and to celebrate in a Christian way, and I would encourage you to make an effort to be part of these. Right here in our parish, much is happening along those lines, and a careful reading of the bulletin will alert you to the “when, where and what” of these upcoming opportunities.

As I indicated earlier, this can also be a difficult time for some. In the midst of our own celebrations and joy, we need to be aware of that reality and of those living with it. This is a time to reach out, and it is a time to show love.

This December, let our minds be focused on Christ, Who will be born for us at Christmas, and for Whose coming we must always be prepared throughout the year. This is a time to thank God and to pray. It is a time to reach out to love and live peacefully with one another. We need to remember that life continues after December, in spite of everything we feel we need to get done.

My prayers and blessings go out to each of you and your families. May God continue to watch over you. May the year 2017 end well for all of us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Fr. Roland Bunda*

Fr. Roland Bunda, S.M.

## FOR JEFF VIERRA, USING TALENTS FOR THE CHURCH



*Using handmade banners, natural flowers and plants from around the Island, Jeff brings a unique style to our liturgies each Sunday.*



*St. Anthony Catholic Community Church decorated for the Christmas season.*

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” It’s a common question asked by adults to small children. Typically, you’ll get the usual responses of doctor, fireman, or professional athlete. But not so for lifelong parishioner Jeff Vierra, who always had a rather unique response.

“I remember years back when I was in grade school and the teacher would ask each of the students, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’” he recalls. “Many of my classmates would say the usual things like fireman, or doctor, but I always said I wanted to be an interior decorator. Throughout my life, I’ve always had this love for design and interior decorating. Over the years, I’ve decorated my parents’ home and I even had a business at one time where I could use these talents. But I never thought in my wildest dreams that I’d one day be doing this for God.”

Born and raised here at St. Anthony Catholic Community, Jeff has always had a strong understanding of stewardship. This began with his own parents, who remain actively involved parishioners. Jeff’s mother served as one of our parish organists for many years, while his father enjoyed serving as a lector for weekend liturgies. And so, following in their footsteps, Jeff eagerly became an altar server during his grammar school years, seeking to give back as his parents had taught him.

“It truly was my parents’ example that led me where I am today,” Jeff says. “I remember years ago, when I was just out of high school, someone from the church asked me if I would be a student reader. Of course, when you read in front of people, nerves set in, but I did it. From that point on, I knew that just going to church for one hour a week wasn’t enough for me — that I wanted to do more.”

Defining stewardship as simply “giving of yourself” to God and others, Jeff has worked to embrace this way of living throughout his life. He continues to lector at Mass, serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and a member of the Liturgy Committee, has been involved in Parish Council in past years, and

## IS “GREATEST SOURCE OF CONTENTMENT AND JOY”

continues to chair our Arts and Environment Ministry.

Though each of these ministries have blessed Jeff’s life in some way, the Arts and Environment Ministry has been a particular gift. Focused on creating a beautiful and prayerful atmosphere within the Church, it has allowed Jeff to truly use his time and talent for God. Spending hours upon hours each week in both preparation and actual set-up, Jeff and his team of volunteers work hard to ensure that our worship experience remains ever new as they create a church environment worthy of our Eucharistic Lord.

“In life, we decorate our homes — we spend time getting dressed when going out to the movies or a special event,” Jeff says. “I just feel like decorating the church and preparing the environment for worship is equally important. A lot of people say to me that it’s very rare what they see when they come to our church, because every week I do something a little different. Everything is heavily decorated with natural plants, flowers and banners. I feel like this ministry is so important — a way of bringing people together much like food does. And it’s all worth it to see people’s reactions as they walk around the church and examine what we’ve done.”

Jeff describes his work at the church as his “greatest source of contentment and joy.” It’s so rewarding to see his childhood dreams come to fruition within God’s house — to have the satisfaction of knowing he truly is giving God his all. And in the process, it’s brought Jeff even closer to his childhood parish.

“I just feel like stewardship is a never-ending process,” Jeff says. “You go from one thing to another. It’s about making the church a part of your life. I always say what belongs to me belongs to the church because we are the church. So many people have thanked me over the years for what I do and said that they look forward to seeing what I’ve done each week. I think that is truly amazing, to think that God is using my talent to bring people back to the church, or to help them appreciate the beauty of the liturgy even further.”



*Parishioner Jeff Vierra loves being able to use his talents for God’s Church.*



*Seeking to make our worship experience ever new, Jeff does something a little different in the church each Sunday.*

## EMBRACE *Advent* TRADITIONS

Advent is that time of the Church year when we prepare for the “coming” of Christ. Advent, from the Latin word *adventus*, is the season of the Church year before Christmas.

According to *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, “When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Saviour’s first coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor’s birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: ‘He must increase, but I must decrease’” (524).

There is a compelling stewardship message found in this passage of the *Catechism*. Stewardship very much reflects putting Christ at the center of our lives (“He must increase”) and recognizing our need to serve God, the Church, and others (“I must decrease”). Advent is an important time for us as individuals and as families to emphasize the holy nature of this season. Three dominant Advent traditions have developed which allow us on a daily basis to bring our thoughts back to the significance of this Church season.

The first is, quite simply, the Advent wreath. Most of us are familiar with and aware of the Advent wreath, as it is a common practice in parishes to have a wreath and to trace the progress of Advent with it. By placing an Advent wreath in our homes, praying around it and lighting the appropriate candles are wonderful opportunities to travel with the Lord on a daily basis. The wreath is circular, representing God’s eternity, and it includes four candles — one for each Sunday and week of Advent. To light the candles and to pray every day is a wonderful way for families to share and focus.

The second tradition is the Jesse Tree, named for the father of David. This tree is decorated gradually throughout Advent with pictures and symbols of biblical persons associated with the coming of the Messiah, Christ. You may include Noah, the



ark, Abraham, Moses, a “burning bush,” Joseph, Mary, or any of a number of other familiar biblical figures and events. It is a teaching opportunity for children in particular, and also a good way for families to gather and to pray, and to reflect upon preparing for Christ’s coming.

Although it has become quite commercialized, the last key tradition is the Advent calendar. Advent calendars tend to follow the calendar month of December, not the four Sundays of Advent, which can begin as early as late November. In recent years, these calendars have increasingly utilized secular images, but if a person or family wishes the calendar to be most beneficial, it needs to be religious and Christian in nature. This, too, affords an opportunity to pause, to reflect, and to pray every day during the Advent season.

The themes and traditions of the Advent season have evolved throughout history. At one time, Advent was more like Lent — penitential in nature. We and our families need to do things that are prayerful and that prepare us spiritually for the Second and final Coming of Christ, as well. Stewardship involves planning, practicing our faith, and transmitting it to those close to us. These traditions can fulfill and help that effort.

## Inspired by the Ioanis Family, the Roby Family Comes “Home” to St. Anthony

One of the most beautiful things about the Catholic Church is that it is here for everyone — those who have spent their entire lives coming to Mass every Sunday, as well as those who come to the faith much later in life. The Church is also always ready to welcome back those who find themselves somewhere in between, having drifted away from the faith for a number of years after their Baptism or Confirmation. Thankfully, just as God’s mercy is available to everyone who turns to Him, the doors of His Church here on earth stand open for all who seek Him!

As disciples of Christ, it is one of our greatest callings to share the Good News and draw others to Him. Often, this may mean encouraging those who have left the Church to come back and share in the fullness of God’s love in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Recently, Molden and Charlene Ioanis were blessed by the opportunity to be such an encouragement to Molden’s nephew, Jeff Roby, and his wife, Yoleen.

In the 15 years that Molden and Charlene have been parishioners here at St. Anthony, they have remained active in parish life. The couple and their three sons — Hamilton, Holden and Golden — clean the church once a month and help with hospitality. Charlene also serves as a lector and Eucharistic Minister, and participates in the Divine Mercy.

By putting the Catholic faith at the center of their life, the Ioanis family became a living witness of God’s love to their extended family, eventually leading Jeff and Yoleen to return to the Church with their three daughters — Marla, Carla and Jaylamae.

“It all began with the children,” Charlene recalls. “They saw us coming to church, and all of a sudden,



*The Ioanis family – (from left) Holden, Charlene, Golden (front), Molden, and Hamilton*

they said that they wanted to come to St. Anthony. They had been living on Maui for a long time but hadn’t been to church, so I said, ‘Come! Come join us at church every Sunday.’ Their youngest daughter had not been baptized, so they asked us to be her godparents. It has really been all about the children.”

When the Ioanis and Roby families come together these days, they often gather with a prayer. Charlene especially enjoys praying the Rosary with Marla, Carla, and Jaylamae — and in a few years, the newest member of the Roby family, baby Jaymarkson, is sure to join them! Watching the girls go to Religious Education classes and receive Holy Communion is a source of great joy for both families.

For Charlene, seeing her extended family members here at church is a true blessing.

“When I see the kids coming to Mass, it just

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**“St. Anthony is such a loving and welcoming place. Whenever it’s the best time, just come back. God is always waiting, Jesus is always there. I see some families that haven’t come to church for a long time, and I pray for them that they will one day be a strong family in the faith, too. It’s never too late, and we are always here for them!” — Charlene Ioanis**

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## *The Roby Family Comes “Home” to St. Anthony* *continued from page 7*

heightens my spirit,” she says. “I go to the 7 o’clock Mass, so I see them coming in when I’m leaving. It’s so beautiful to see them smile and hear them say, ‘Hi, Auntie!’ It’s like bringing back the family and getting to know our family members better. I’m just so happy for them that they have come back.”

As it turns out, the Ioanis family provides a warm welcome to Catholics returning to the faith in more than one way. Each month as they clean the church, they are preparing a warm and welcoming space for all who come through the doors at St. Anthony Catholic Community. At the same time, they joyfully encourage, both in words and actions, those who have drifted from the faith to return home to the Church.

What a blessing it is to know that the door is always open for all who wish to enter into God’s presence and His peace!

“St. Anthony is such a loving and welcoming place,” Charlene says. “Whenever it’s the best time, just come back. God is always waiting, Jesus is always there. I see some families that haven’t come to church for a long time, and I pray for them that they will one day be a strong family in the faith, too. It’s never too late, and we are always here for them!”



*Yoleen and Jefferson Roby with their three daughters, Jaylmae (seated), Carla and Marla, and baby Jaymarkson*

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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.