

**Inside This Issue...**

- 2** Stewardship of the Cross
- 3** Lent Is More Than Preparation for Easter
- 4** Welcoming Our New Parochial Vicar, Fr. Norlito Concepcion
- 6** Feast of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary  
*March 19*
- 7** Becoming a People of Mercy *Our Upcoming Lenten Mission*



## Workshop on Aging to Help Seniors Navigate Dementia and Alzheimer's

It has been said that having dementia or Alzheimer's feels like being called on by a teacher in class when you don't know the answer. As your mind races to find a solution, your palms sweat and your throat tightens. The people around you stare, embarrassed for you and waiting for the painful moment to pass. For the caregiver of a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia, the emotions are just as complicated. They can swing from the joy of connecting with a loved one to confusion and anger when memory fails during the simplest of tasks.

Understanding these complicated diseases will be the subject of "Understanding Dementia: Normal vs. Not Normal Aging," a free workshop co-sponsored by St. John Apostle & Evangelist and Project Dana. The event will be held at the parish Saturday, March 18, from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and will feature a presentation by Dorothy Arriola Colby, a dementia care specialist and a Hawaii Alzheimer's Disease Initiative Memory Care Navigator.

"She comes highly recommended and has wonderful credentials," says Event Coordinator Connie Murphy, SJAE Senior Adult Ministry.

Connie, who has seen friends and loved ones suffer from both dementia and Alzheimer's, says she felt it was important for our parish to host an event such as this one because both diseases are on the rise in our community, even if they're not always talked about.

"Here in Hawaii, we have people in our parish that have Alzheimer's, and it seems like it's happening younger and younger," she says. "Our community has a lot of seniors, but people don't want to say there's something wrong. They're very private about it."



*Dorothy Arriola Colby is the featured speaker at "Understanding Dementia: Normal vs. Not Normal Aging," a free workshop on aging sponsored by St. John Apostle & Evangelist and Project Dana. Colby, a dementia care specialist, will teach participants about the effects of dementia and Alzheimer's, and will offer coping strategies for caregivers.*

*continued on back cover*

## Stewardship of the Cross

The liturgical year is such a gift to us. As we turn the pages of the calendar, reflecting on the life of Christ, we have the opportunity to consider the most sublime events in the history of mankind. Of these events, perhaps none is more beautiful and worthy of contemplation than the one we are about to commemorate — Jesus’ sacrifice of Himself for us on the Cross.

It is fitting and, at the same time, paradoxical. It is fitting that God should do it, because only an infinite God could rid us of the infinite debt we owed by our sin. It is paradoxical that He not only did it, but wanted to do it out of pure love for us, His lowly creatures. What is Jesus trying to show us? Even more staggering, what is He really asking when He exhorts us, in turn, to take up our cross and follow Him?

Jesus freely gave His life for the Church, and He calls us to do the same. Some of us may, in fact, give our entire lives for the Church. But for most of us, this giving takes place by a series of daily actions, both large and small, of Christ-like, sacrificial love – specifically, by giving our time, talent, and treasure for the good of the Church. And yet, by joining these actions with His, we have the chance to participate in that very same sacrifice. This month, let us take the time to examine our hearts and actions in light of Jesus’ as we journey with Him toward the Cross.

### **Jesus gave Himself unselfishly and excessively.**

Consider the manner of His sacrifice – one drop of Christ’s blood would have been more than sufficient to save

the entire human race, and yet Our Lord Jesus chose to shed every last bit. From start to finish, Jesus showed us by His passion that He wanted to do more than what was merely sufficient. If there was more He could give, He gave it. He never stopped to count the cost or to look for what He could get in return.

### **Jesus made His sacrifice a supreme act of love for the Church.**

Counter-cultural even to this day, Jesus actually upheld sacrifice as desirable – the most perfect way to show our love: “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13). In His infinite wisdom, Jesus now offers this path to us as the way to holiness: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk. 9:23).

### **Jesus gave Himself willingly and even joyfully.**

“No one takes [My life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it again” (Jn. 10:18). At the first Eucharist, Jesus even went so far as to say, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you” (Lk. 22:15). Needless to say, the Passover sacrifice to which Jesus referred was not a symbolic one, but was in fact His very Body and Blood He would give for us through the sacrifice of the Cross.

Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts more like Yours.

### **A Lenten Stewardship Prayer**

*“O my God, teach me to be generous: to serve You as You deserve to be served; to give without counting the cost; to fight without fear of being wounded; to work without seeking rest; and to spend myself without expecting any reward, but the knowledge that I am doing Your Holy will.”*

*— St. Ignatius of Loyola*

A Letter From Our Pastor

# Lent Is More Than Preparation for Easter

Dear Parishioners,

In 2013, Pope Francis issued his first significant work. It was what is called an “apostolic exhortation” titled *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* in Latin). While Rome may use fancy words for some of these things, an “exhortation” of this sort does not change any official Church rules or traditions. However, it does offer advice and encouragement about how we should live our lives.

Pope Francis offers this kind of guidance on a regular basis, but this one in particular seems to present us with suggestions that are worthy of our consideration, especially during Lent. The pope called us to become missionary disciples: “The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 24).

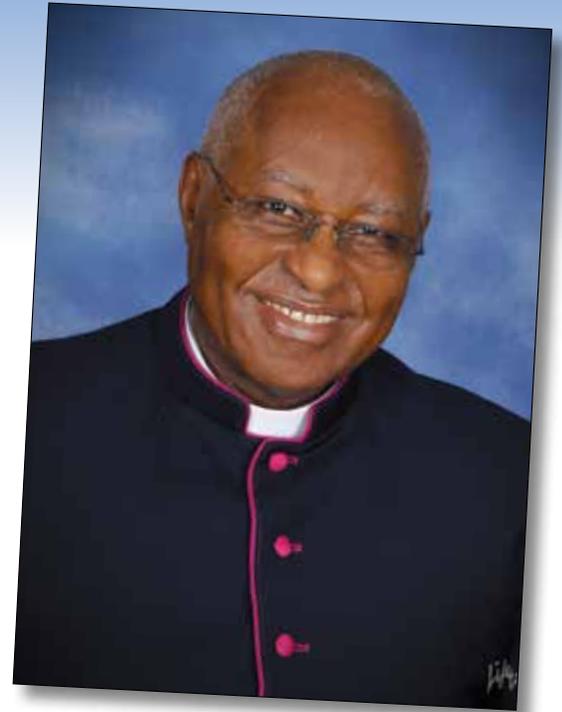
Speaking about his exhortation, Pope Francis said, “One of the riches of the Second Vatican Council was to remind the Church of the two ‘lenses’ of the season of Lent: baptismal and penitential.” In fact, Vatican II noted specifically, “The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent – the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance – should

be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepared the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God’s word more frequently and devote more time to prayer” (*Companion to the Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1348).

It might be well for us to keep these in mind during Lent. There were vows made during our baptism, and this is the time of year to try to fulfill those vows, in addition to reaffirming them. We are given various opportunities to renew these vows, and we may tend to do it automatically without a thought. Now, however, is the time to think. Perhaps during Lent, we can renew these vows as families – and we must not necessarily do it in church or at a Mass. Then, we need to do something during Lent to help each of us understand what that renewal means.

The other important part of Lent pointed out by Pope Francis has to do with penance. Most of us have heard the traditional practices of Lent – fasting, prayer, reception of the

Sacraments, and almsgiving. These are things that may bring us closer to Christ. By fasting, we may gain a



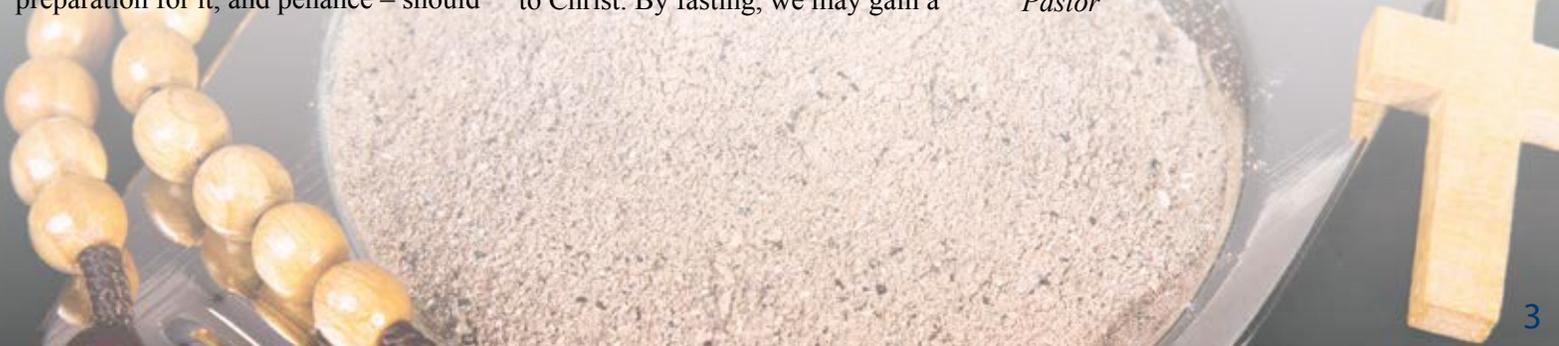
greater understanding of the hunger the Lord feels for our souls; by increased prayer, we join in union with God; through the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, we become a greater part of that union with God; through giving alms, we empty ourselves in part, just as Jesus emptied Himself for us on the cross.

This is a time to do more than prepare for Easter. This is a time to change how we may approach living and our faith.

God bless you now and throughout this holiest of seasons.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. John S. Mbinda  
Pastor



# Welcoming Our New Fr. Norlito C

Our parish is thrilled to welcome Fr. Norlito Concepcion as our new parochial vicar! Fr. Norlito – or “Fr. Lito” – arrived in Hawaii last September, and is already settling into life here very well, enjoying the beauty of our island and, of course, the delicious poke and fresh sushi! Coming to St. John Apostle & Evangelist with a wealth of experience in religious life across various cultures and countries,

Fr. Norlito is happy that his newest assignment has brought him here to Mililani.

As a child in the Philippines, Fr. Norlito was introduced to the Catholic Church by his stepmother. His father was a member of the Aglipayan Church – also known as the Philippine Independent Church – a religious sect that separated from the Catholic Church at the turn of the 20th century. And while Father

was raised in both churches, he was baptized in the Catholic Church.

Seeking the monastic life as a young man, Fr. Norlito joined the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus of the Philippines – a province of the Order of St. Augustine.

“The truth is, I first entered the monastery just to become a friar and a monk,” Fr. Norlito says. “I found that life in the monastery is more detached from the worries of the world, and I admired very much the prayers that we have [in the Order]. I was also very inspired by our contemplative sisters who are very content and happy. Despite not leaving the premises of their monastery, they have a true joy and contentment.”

Later, Fr. Norlito was asked by his superior to consider the priesthood and readily accepted. Then, in 2011, the direction of his faith journey changed yet again. During the quadricentennial celebration of the Universidad di Santo Tomas in Manila that year, Father had the opportunity to experience serving at a Mass celebrated in the Eastern Rite.

“They opened up the worship of the Byzantines to the university, so that the university could experience a different Mass,” he explains. “With that experience, I was able to widen my perspective of the faith and not just see the Roman Catholic side,



*Fr. Norlito Concepcion*

# New Parochial Vicar, Concepcion

but also our brothers and sisters of different backgrounds in the Eastern Church. And that also prompted me to go to the missions – I wanted not just to stay in the monastery, but also to experience the Catholic faith in various parts of the world. It really did change the direction of my faith. Now, I consider myself to have the faith of two wings.”

Since his ordination as a priest in July of 2013, Father has been able to fulfill his commitment to missions by serving in both Costa Rica and El Salvador before arriving here in Hawaii. During those first years of priesthood, he discovered that the things he enjoys the most in his vocation are dispensing the holy sacraments, visiting the sick, and

feeding the hungry, which he was able to do daily during his time in El Salvador.

In all things, whatever may come his way or wherever he may be sent to serve, Fr. Norlito finds happiness in the Lord. And when he is in need of guidance, he will often turn also to Our Lady of Consolation, patroness of the Order of St. Augustine, and to St. Augustine himself.

“I have a very strong devotion to our Lady of Consolation and, of course, to St. Augustine,” Father affirms. “St. Augustine’s motto says, ‘Love and do what you will.’ First we love God, and then we do things that are right and let Him do the work... and let Him make marvelous things out of us.”

After just a couple of months here at St. John Apostle & Evangelist, Fr. Norlito has already witnessed what a special faith community we have here and looks forward to this opportunity to walk with us as we continue on our faith journey.

“The parishioners are very welcoming, and I see in this place that they have a very strong faith,” Father says. “I’m very eager to share the experiences that I have and also the rich traditions and rich learnings that I have gotten from the Order. Let’s journey together with one mind and one heart intent upon God.”

St. John Apostle & Evangelist welcomes Fr. Norlito Concepcion with open arms and with great faith and joy in the journey still to come!

*“The parishioners are very welcoming, and I see in this place that they have a very strong faith. I’m very eager to share the experiences that I have and also the rich traditions and rich learnings that I have gotten from the Order. Let’s journey together with one mind and one heart intent upon God.”*

– Fr. Norlito Concepcion

# Feast of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary

## March 19

Devotion to St. Joseph began relatively late in Church history, primarily because his role of husband to Mary and head of the Holy Family was underplayed in early Christianity by many unauthenticated legends of Christ's childhood. These legends almost always portrayed Joseph as an old man, a simple guardian of Mary and Jesus.

Modern theology places Joseph in a much more important position. Because of his valid marriage to Mary, Joseph shared in Mary's parenthood – Joseph was a father to Jesus in every way except biological. Joseph appeared publicly as the natural father of Jesus, thus shielding the virginity of Mary and the reputation of Jesus. Joseph's fatherly love, authority and watchful service were all necessary circumstances in God's plan for the Incarnation.

Joseph was born in Judea or Galilee in the first century B.C. Little is stated in the Bible about the influence Joseph had on Jesus. History tells us that he brought Mary and Jesus to the temple each Passover and taught Jesus the carpentry trade. He seems to be the silent family man who shows his love for his family by providing them with security. The very safety of Mary and Jesus was guarded by Joseph when he took his family into Egypt to avoid the massacre of male babies ordered by King Herod.

In the history of the Church, Western veneration of Joseph began with the introduction of the Feast of St. Joseph in the late 15th century.

In 1870, at the end of the First Vatican Council, Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph to be the patron of the Universal Church. He is also the patron of carpenters, workers, fathers, and a happy death given that he died in the presence of Mary and Jesus. The title of Joseph's March 19 feast day



is "Husband of Mary." Pope Pius XII later declared May 1 to be the feast of St. Joseph the Worker, to counteract the Communist May Day holiday.

### A traditional prayer to St. Joseph

*O Blessed St. Joseph, faithful guardian and protector of virgins, to whom God entrusted Jesus and Mary, I implore you by the love which you did bear them, to preserve me from every defilement of soul and body, that I may always serve them in holiness and purity of love. Amen.*

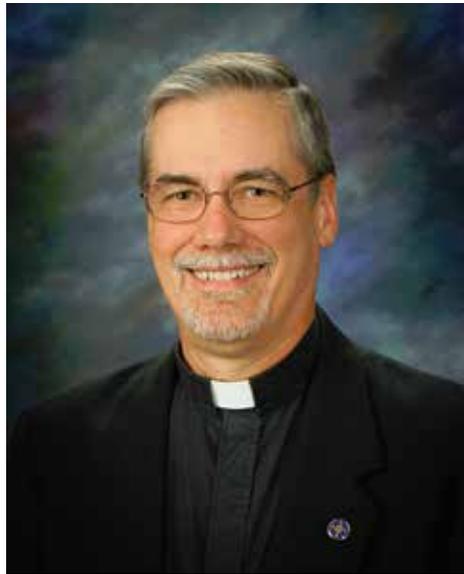
# Becoming a People of Mercy

## *Our Upcoming Lenten Mission*

As he closed the Jubilee Year of Mercy in 2016, Pope Francis said, “even if the Holy Door closes, the true door of mercy which is the heart of Christ always remains open wide for us.” Through these words, the Holy Father reminds us that mercy is a central part of what it means to be redeemed – what it means to be a Catholic. As such, becoming a people of mercy should be a natural part of our faith journey and life as a community. Here at St. John Apostle & Evangelist, we have a unique opportunity to continue reflecting on this theme of mercy through the Lenten Mission.

“We’ve had the Year of Mercy,” says mission presenter Fr. David C. Robinson, S.J. “But now, we need to find out what that means for our daily lives.”

Coming to us from the Loyola Institute for Spirituality in Orange, Calif., Fr. Robinson plans to base this year’s mission on the Holy Father’s own writings. Beginning with the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Fr. Robinson will lead us through an examination of mercy through the lens of Christ’s own life. In the process, we will discover important



*Fr. David C. Robinson, S.J., comes to us from the Loyola Institute for Spirituality in Orange, Calif. to present this year’s Lenten Mission.*

lessons on how we are called to treat one another, particularly during “times of division.”

“The Gospel is all about caring for the poor and the stranger – all about hospitality,” Fr. Robinson says. “During the first night, I’ll extract things from the narrative of Scripture, helping us redirect our time and energy in a constructive way toward the things which divide us and create anxiety. I think it’s important to know

that Christ met each person in their uniqueness, rather than concentrating on the things which separated them.”

Then, during the second night of the mission, Fr. Robinson plans to focus on Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato si’*, concentrating on how we as a people of mercy should treat God’s creation.

“We’ll talk once more about how we are in a covenant of love, not only with each other, but also with the entirety of creation,” Fr. Robinson says. “As such, we need to look at that more than ever so that we can continue to protect our environment and to provide for those in need.”

Finally, the mission will conclude with a discussion on cultivating love and mercy within the family, drawing from the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. In this letter, says Fr. Robinson, the Holy Father reminds us that familial love extends far beyond our own family units. It crosses over to our parish, the Church at large, and finally the whole of humanity.

“It’s focusing on the fact that we belong to a much larger family through the Church and our relationship to one another as human beings,”

*continued on back cover*

*“This is meant to be a chance for us to enter into a conversation together. I’m there to give some maps, readings, and ideas that will bring everyone into a much broader relationship with the covenant of mercy. I really want them to build their own dialogue and to make it as interactive as possible.” – Fr. David C. Robinson, S.J.*

## Becoming a People of Mercy *Our Upcoming Lenten Mission* continued from page 7

Fr. Robinson says. “Throughout the mission, we’ll examine the question, ‘How do we use Jesus’ example to reach out to others in our hearts, intention, conversations, treatment of the earth, and finally through the charities we get involved in?’”

To help promote the Lenten Mission and introduce himself to the parish, Fr. Robinson will begin by preaching at the weekend Masses on March 25-26. The actual mission will take place during the evenings of March 27-29 with the possibility of some additional

morning sessions. Not wanting the mission to be strictly lecture, Fr. Robinson hopes to create an atmosphere of reflection and discussion, drawing all attendees into the conversation of mercy.

“This is meant to be a chance for us to enter into a conversation together,” Fr. Robinson says. “I’m there to give some maps, readings, and ideas that will bring everyone into a much broader relationship with the covenant of mercy. I really want them to build their own dialogue and to make it as interactive as possible.”

*All parishioners are invited to attend the Lenten Mission, learning on a much deeper level what it means to be a people of mercy. Please look to the parish bulletin for additional information or contact the parish office at 808-623-3332.*

## Workshop on Aging to Help Seniors Navigate Dementia and Alzheimer’s continued from front cover

That privacy can sometimes lead to feelings of isolation and has a dramatic emotional impact on caregivers. The workshop will cover normal signs of aging and paint a vivid picture of what sort of symptoms to look out for as we age. Dementia, Alzheimer’s and other aspects of aging will be explored in a way that helps workshop attendees take a positive approach to each issue.

“We hope to benefit whomever needs it in the community, not just St. John’s,” Connie says of the workshop. “There’s always that question with seniors. We all have memory loss, and those who have family history, we want answers.

We want to know that we’re normal. Dorothy will help us understand what’s happening to the brains of our loved ones. We hope to give families a better way of understanding their family members and how to have the patience to deal with it on a daily basis.”

Registration for the event will begin at 9 a.m. with part one of the presentation beginning at 9:30 a.m. A break with light refreshments will be offered at approximately 10:15 a.m. followed by part two of the presentation at 10:30 a.m. The event will end with a question and answer session at 11:15.

*“We hope to benefit whomever needs it in the community, not just St. John’s. There’s always that question with seniors. We all have memory loss, and those who have family history, we want answers. We want to know that we’re normal.” – Connie Murphy*

*To pre-register for this event, please call Connie Murphy at 808-625-7773.*