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Senior Ministry Reaching Out to Help at Home and in the Community

Sometimes, when you want to help someone, it isn't necessary to look very far.

"Throughout the Bible, Jesus talks about widows and orphans, and he encourages us to go out and help them because they have so much wisdom to pass on to us," says Deb Zedalis, Social Ministry Commission Chair.

Such a need exists right here within our parish among those who have been believing in Jesus' promises the longest. Since its inception this past summer, the Senior Ministry has worked to serve the aging in our community. Whether by spending an hour chatting, helping shop for groceries, or answering the call in an emergency situation, the ministry looks to grow by helping both parishioners and clients through Catholic Charities.

"Our major role so far has been to act as a resource and referral center," says Connie Murphy, ministry team leader. "We notify parishioners of services available to the elderly or refer them to the proper agency. The team currently consists of myself, my husband Jim Murphy, Stephanie Mauriello, and Francine Tezak. We participated in the recent Parish Health and Wellness Fair and shared a table of brochures from many local senior resources and non-profit agencies."

From there, the group has gone on to partner with Catholic Charities in identifying a need within the area. Connie and Jim have since been able to spend time with an 89-year-old local woman who is a client of Catholic Charities.

"Jim and I are both in our 70s and have seen fellow seniors in denial about their own or their spouse's illnesses and are not getting the proper care," she says. "Some are too proud and want to remain independent and don't want to ask for help from their children or anyone else. Without



(From left) Senior Ministry Team Leader Connie Murphy, Social Ministry Commission Chair Deb Zedalis, and Parish Health Nurse Elaine Gibson at the recent Parish Health Fair

New Year's Resolutions and Stewardship

The beginning of the year is a popular time for personal reassessment. The earth has finished one more revolution around the sun. The days are shorter, and an evening of introspection seems more inviting. Somehow, when we take down the old calendar and tack up the new, we sense an opportunity to make a fresh start.

To make the best of this opportunity — which, truthfully, exists in June just as it does in January — it is useful to make firm commitments. It's even more useful to write them down. These resolutions, kept in a desk drawer or on the refrigerator door, are a “hard copy” of our best intentions for self-improvement. They're signposts that redirect our lives towards good, and towards God.

New Year's resolutions are often focused on personal health — losing weight, relaxing more or smoking less. It is certainly important, of

course, to take good care of our bodies. But Christianity offers us a fuller concept of self-improvement. St. Paul reminds us that both the body and the soul need an exercise program. In fact, every aspect of our persons — physical, mental, spiritual, emotional — can benefit from an annual self-audit.

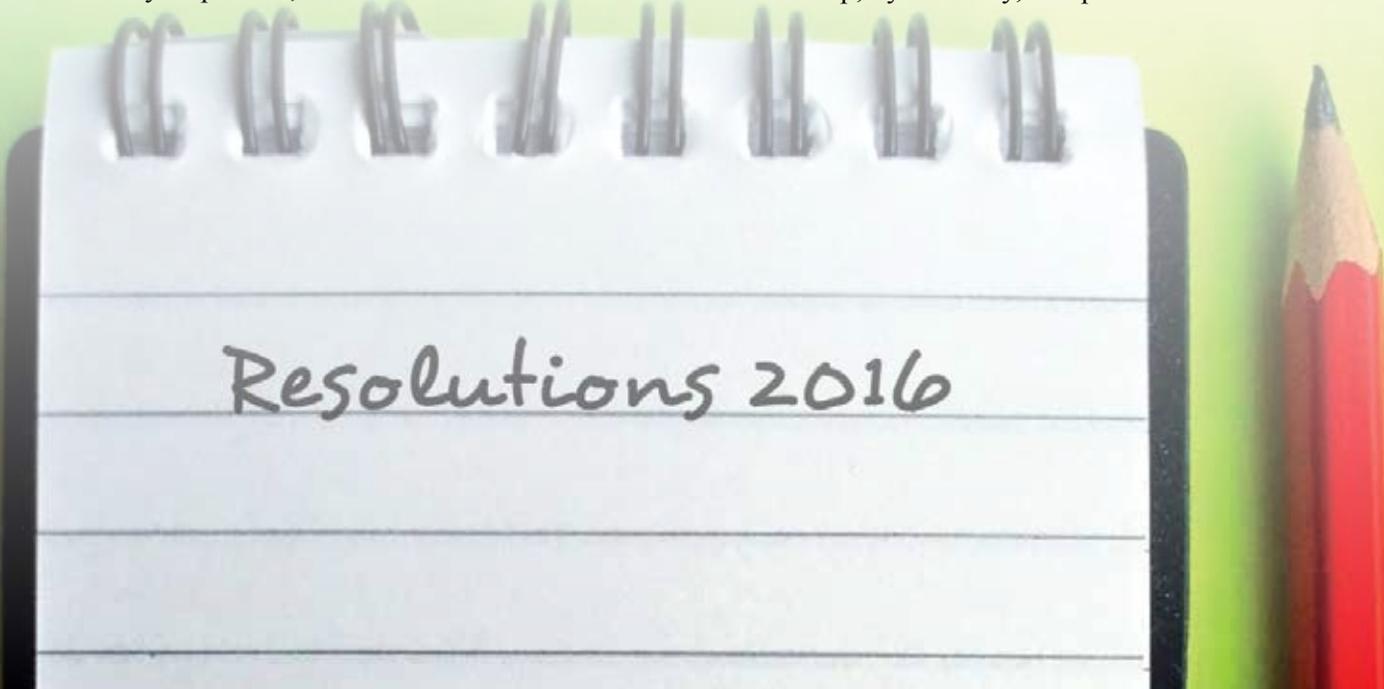
Some people have taken to heart this multifaceted concept of the self, and each year make one resolution for each area. For instance, one could resolve to join a Rosary prayer group to work on spirituality, or take a continuing education course to build mental skills. Still, others use the three theological virtues — faith, hope and love — to guide their resolution-making process.

By now, you may have discerned a similarity between New Year's resolutions and stewardship commitments. First, we use a similar method to think about stewardship, by

breaking it down into more specific concepts — time, talent and treasure. Second, to become better stewards, we write down our commitments. We record our good intentions to clarify exactly what they are — and to remind us of our commitment on the evenings when the Rosary group interferes with a bowl game.

Any serious commitment shares the same components — it is specific and it is written. From marriages to mortgages, treaties to trades, serious resolutions are spelled out both literally and figuratively.

But even more important than the methodology of a commitment is the heart of the person who makes it. Even the most eloquent job descriptions are useless unless there is someone to do the job well! Let us pray that this New Year is a time of grace and wisdom for those of us who seek to recommit our lives to our family, our parish and our God.



Resolutions 2016

A Letter From Our Pastor

Resolve to be *Merciful*

Dear Parishioners,

Most of you are aware that we launched a Holy Year of Mercy on Dec. 8, 2015, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. You are most likely also cognizant of Pope Francis' motivation for proclaiming this year. In his announcement the Holy Father stated, "It is indeed my wish that the Jubilee be a living experience of the closeness of the Father, whose tenderness is almost tangible, so that the faith of every believer may be strengthened and thus testimony to it be ever more effective."

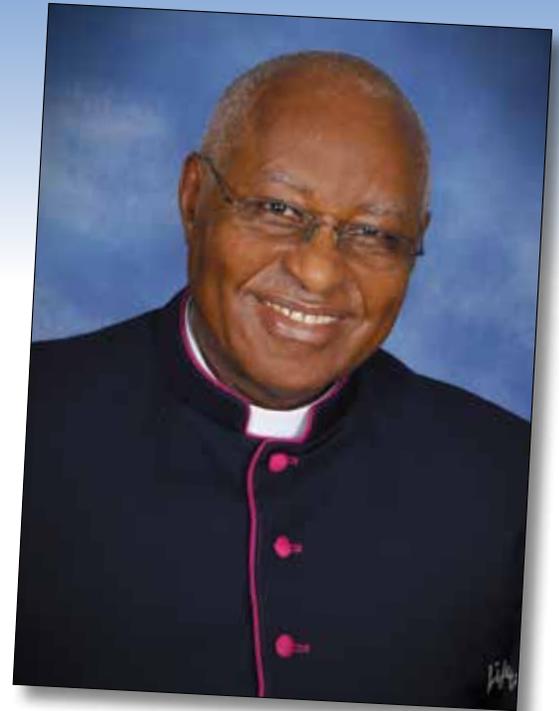
If we do nothing else during this Holy Year, each of us must seek forgiveness from the Lord; and we also need to make an effort to forgive others. Mercy is, after all, a two-way street. We receive it, but we must as well show it. In fact, during this month when many make resolutions, let us each resolve to be merciful.

That, of course, is not always easy, and sometimes may not even be convenient. Being able to be merciful requires us to look beyond the emotional, past the self-centeredness

that may lead us to be angry and unforgiving. The story is related that soon after becoming pope, an interviewer asked Francis to describe himself – the pope immediately answered, "A sinner." However, he quickly added, "Who has been looked upon by the face of mercy."

Each of us can recall when we have been "looked upon by the face of mercy." This needs to be our motivation for showing to others what we have received. Also, in his letter announcing this Holy Year, the pope called us to have a "deep desire for true conversion." This is what stewardship is all about – not being self-centered, but God-centered. It asks us to recognize, acknowledge, and share our many gifts. Nevertheless, to do that effectively requires a conversion on our part. That needs to be part of our purpose for this year, too.

Stewardship always seems to come back to the concept of "love for one another." One of the misnomers



– and a conclusion many have drawn from the Year of Mercy – is that God's essential characteristic is mercy. The Lord's fundamental attribute is love. Mercy is what love looks like when we show it.

Therefore, let us resolve to be merciful like the Father and to love all we meet, all we know, and all with whom we may work.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. John S. Mbinda
Pastor

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Music as a Means *The Faith*



The Paul J. Kim praise and worship event, Aug. 23, 2015

Music is a powerful and moving gift, often bringing about deep emotion in people – this is certainly true of music used for worship or prayer. And since music has a universal appeal, especially for our young people, it can play an important role in evangelization.

Here at St. John Apostle & Evangelist, music has become a natural way for our parish to reach young people and bring them to the Church. This is the goal for the newly formed FaithLife Band – to use our God-given talents for music to reach our Youth and Young Adults, and bring them closer to God and their faith.

“In our Church, we feel like music is something that really encourages the youth and young adults to come,” says Allen Orense, the Music Director for the Youth and Young Adult program. “It’s an attention-grabber. It really catches people’s attention when they see that youth and young adults are playing in a band, especially if they are from our parish. It’s that first step to trying to get them involved. If you can reach them with music, you can get them in the door. And once they are here, it exposes them to what our Church is all about, and what the Holy Spirit is about.”

The FaithLife Band, named for the Youth and Young Adult FaithLife nights, was formed in 2014, but was a long time in the making. Precursors of the band had been formed to serve at Agape Retreats, Youth Day Rallies, Youth Lock-Ins, Homeless Shelter visits, Confirmation classes, and other events.

“St. Joseph, our sister church in Waipahu, put on a praise and worship event and invited us to come down,” Allen says. “Their Youth and Young Adult Ministry is very strong, and they had a band play at the praise and worship. I was speaking with one of our mentors, Nolet Quiason, who we call ‘Uncle Nolet’, and he was saying, ‘When are we going to have something like this?’ Their band plays very well, and so it got us brainstorming together about when we can start to form our own band. It wasn’t until we invited Paul J. Kim to visit our parish from Los Angeles that we finally saw an opportunity. We were asked to perform praise and worship to open before he speaks, so we saw that as a perfect opportunity to form our own band.”

Nolet along with his wife, Amie, are the musical mentors for the band. The band’s goal is deeply rooted in the parish’s vision for the Youth and Young Adults – namely, “to foster the personal and spiritual growth of each young person,” says Nolet. “In our view, the Youth and Young Adults are not the ‘future’ of the Church any more than we senior adults are the ‘past’ of the Church. The whole

for Evangelization Life Band

faith community, young and old alike, are the Church of today, each one fully and actively participating in its life by discerning and using their gifts to build up the body of Christ, the people of God. The gift of music has clearly emerged from this awareness.”

Nolet shares that he and Amie enjoy being in the band because the energy and spirituality of the Youth and Young Adults are very inspiring and infectious.

Band members include singers Anna Davide, Joy Sanchez, Brooke Albete, Aubre Calvoflores, Alvin Orense, Michael Hartsock, and Amie Quiason; and musicians Allen Orense (acoustic guitar), Fred Mariano (drums), and Nolet Quiason (bass). The band occasionally collaborates with Melissa Fernandez (singer), Oscar “Ohjay” Calma (keyboard), Nikko Magtoto (keyboard), Andrew Simbahon (electric guitar), and Italo Foglesong (electric guitar).

Since its formation, the band has participated in many Praise and Worship events in and outside of the parish, as well as every Thursday evening at the FaithLife Nights.

“FaithLife is an event that we have for our youth ministry, every Thursday evening, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in classrooms 4 and 5 at the parish,” Allen says. “We open up with Scripture, people will share testimonies about certain topics, and it’s a place for us to socialize, have refreshments and fellowship. The band plays some praise and worship. By naming our band ‘the FaithLife Band,’ it helps to evangelize those youth and young adults who aren’t a part of our parish. At FaithLife, you don’t have to be Catholic to attend our youth nights. We always tell people to bring a friend, even, if they aren’t Catholic. So the band helps us to evangelize our Catholic faith.”

For more information on the FaithLife Band and upcoming events, please contact Allen Orense, the band’s Coordinator and Music Director for our Youth and Young Adult program, at all_orense10@yahoo.com.

Senior Ministry *continued from front cover*

interaction with other people, it is very easy for seniors to drop into depression and/or abuse alcohol. It is mentally stimulating to share experiences about family, church, travel with other people.”

Deb notes that recent meetings among those involved in local outreach helped identify parish seniors as a group most in need of support.

“One of the gaps they saw was that our parish has a large percentage of seniors, and that we didn’t really have anything specifically focused on seniors,” she says. “Beyond having Bingo, we really didn’t have any other outreach. Our bishop has asked that we not just stay focused in our church, but also beyond. Catholic Charities has a program, they do the training, and they cover the insurance. So, under the umbrella of their program, we can then do our program.”

Recently, Deb and Connie were able to help an elderly parishioner deal with an emergency when he suddenly became ill and couldn’t care for his homebound wife.

“There’s a couple in our church and they don’t have any family here,” Deb says. “The husband wasn’t feeling well, he went to the hospital, and they kept him.”

When a caring neighbor called our parish, the Senior Ministry was able to respond and help the couple secure in-home nursing care until the man recovered.

“Just that event alone made me think that it is really good to have someone at church who can help with these services,” Deb says. “If you build it, they will come.”

Both Deb and Connie enthusiastically say parishioners with a need should never hesitate to contact them for help with issues both large and small. Volunteers are also more than welcome to help the ministry continue to grow and become a vibrant part of what St. John Apostle & Evangelist represents.

Would you like to learn more about helping the senior members of our community? Or are you a senior in need of support? If so, please contact Deb Zedalis at dzedalis@hawaii.rr.com, or text or call 808-348-2973, or contact Connie Murphy at connie96789@msn.com or 808-625-7773.

The Patron of Catholic Schools in America

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

As the first American-born canonized saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton's entrance into history was guided by Divine Providence. Born on Aug. 28, 1774, just months after the Boston Tea Party, Elizabeth's childhood witnessed pivotal events in the formation of our country — the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution. At the time of the foundation of the new Republic, in a society predominately hostile toward Catholicism, a flower blossomed that would forever change the shape of education in the United States.

Elizabeth Seton was born into a wealthy Protestant family in New York City. Her life, although materially blessed, was not without suffering. Elizabeth's biological mother died when she was only 3, and her younger sister, Catherine Josephine, died at the age of 2. A spark of faith, however, was visible even in her early childhood. When questioned about her sadness concerning her sister's death, Elizabeth simply responded, "Kitty is gone up to heaven. I wish I could go there too."

Elizabeth grew into a beautiful woman, courted lavishly by handsome young men from prominent New York families. At the age of 19, she met a charming New York financier, William Seton, and the couple was wed in 1794. They remained in high society until her father-in-law's passing, which left them to care for William's seven younger siblings, along with three children of



their own. Consequently, the Seton finances crashed.

The couple traveled to Italy — it was here that William's health failed him, and he died in December 1803. Providentially, Elizabeth was left in the company of a strong Catholic family where she witnessed the practice of the faith. In a letter to her sister, Elizabeth wrote, "My sister dear, how happy would we be, if we believed what these dear souls believe, that they possess God in the Sacrament, and that He remains in their churches..."

After an eight-month stay, Elizabeth returned to America, and she began to

investigate Catholicism more deeply. She was besought by Protestant friends who hoped to dissuade her. At this time, Elizabeth prayed repeatedly, "If I am right, Thy grace impart, still in the right to stay. If I am wrong, oh teach my heart to find the better way."

In 1805, after much interior struggle, Elizabeth became Catholic. Abandoned entirely by her family and friends, she resolved her financial difficulties through teaching.

In 1807, Elizabeth was invited to establish a Catholic school for girls in Baltimore. The task was daunting, and Elizabeth labored intensely, explaining how "from half past five in the morning until nine at night, every moment is full — no space even to be troubled." After winters spent in continual hardship and sacrifice, the school flourished and, within years, Mother Seton planted the seed from which sprang the parochial school system — along with hospitals and orphanages.

Before her death in January 1821, she was the active mother of five — although two of her daughters died young — and the spiritual mother of a full-fledged religious congregation known as the Sisters of Charity. She was canonized in 1975, and her feast day is celebrated on Jan. 4.

Thanks to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Catholic parochial school system remains vibrant and active. And as we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, we are thankful for the sacrifice of this loving wife, devoted mother, foundress, and All-American saint.

“Stand Up For Our Belief That All Human Life is Sacred and a Gift from God” Marching for Life

Every year, around Jan. 22, which coincides with the anniversary of two Supreme Court decisions that legalized abortion throughout the nation, hundreds gather at the State Capitol Building in Honolulu to remind legislators that the most vulnerable in our community, the pre-born, the disabled, and elderly have an equal right to have their lives protected. Our legislators and judges must understand that laws that legalized the subordination of innocent lives to the decisions of others are unjust and must be repealed. Several events are planned around the March for Life and the Luminary Prayer Vigil, scheduled for Jan. 22, 2016, such as uplifting singing, inspirational speeches, motivational prayers and a poster contest.

Even for those who are fighting for the right to life, facing the unfathomable reality of the overt attacks on innocent life is still incredibly difficult.

“I was naive about abortion,” says Mary Smart, one of the Coordinators of St. John Apostle & Evangelist’s Respect Life Ministry. “I thought abortions rarely occurred. I had no idea what happened during the various abortion procedures and that many women are physically, emotionally and psychologically hurt in the process. I was completely unaware that abortions could be performed on babies that were fully developed and over one million babies are aborted each year in the United States alone. These facts are concealed, because if the public were better informed, they would most likely oppose this brutal and inhumane procedure being legally perpetrated in their state and country.”

For Mary, who has been involved in pro-life work since 1989, standing up for those who are weak and vulnerable is an important part of living her faith.

“I have always been a faithful Catholic and loved God, but before I volunteered in the pro-life movement I was oblivious to what was going on in the culture,” she says. “Biblical passages tell us to welcome children, and they warn us about what happens to anyone that harms a



Lancen Crisostomo (Melissa Crisostomo’s son), at left, holds a banner as the 2015 march begins.

little one. God knows us before our birth, while we are still developing in the womb. We are called to protect the weak. It isn’t optional.”

Working at crisis pregnancy centers and counseling young men and women who are concerned about a possible unplanned pregnancy, Mary is passionate about helping them get the information and care they need to make a decision they will not regret later in life. She has found, “many people turn to abortion out of fear or when they are unaware of other options and also when they succumb to the pressures of others, including parents, friends, and husbands. It is not unusual that many of those who have positive pregnancy tests are surprised because they thought contraceptives would protect them. In fact, as the Catholic Church predicted, the widespread use of contraceptives has increased the number of unplanned pregnancies and the increase in the number of abortions.”

Mary laments that “most Americans are unaware of the attacks on their constitutionally guaranteed right to life and religious liberty. There is little news coverage

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Marching for Life *continued from previous page*

about the fact that parental rights to protect their minor children is undermined by the abortion laws of our state. It was only recently that the public learned about abortion providers harvesting human organs from aborted babies to sell for profit. It is expected that euthanasia laws will be considered and may pass in the 2016 legislative session. Our state has turned from a culture of life to a culture of death. This has happened because people are uncomfortable discussing the life issues. It has been deemed “too controversial,” which shuts down rational debate. Catholics have an obligation to protect the vulnerable, especially those who cannot speak for themselves.”

Not everyone is called to serve in the same way, but the March for Life and the Luminary Prayer Vigil offer an opportunity to join with like-minded people in taking a stand for the most important civil rights cause of our time. Participants will meet others who share their concerns. The prayer vigil is a solemn but healing remembrance of the many children who did not survive the pregnancy. The luminary lights by the capitol



The March for Life is an opportunity for people of all ages to come together to pray and raise awareness in the defense of human life.

reflecting pools provide a poignant backdrop for the event. This year, attendees from our church will wear the new Respect Life t-shirt designed by one of our young parishioners.

“It is important to participate in the March for Life, to stand up for our belief that all human life is sacred and a gift from God,” adds Melissa Crisostomo, who serves with Mary as Coordinator of the Respect Life Ministry. “It is also an opportunity to educate ourselves and our families about the very important issues and public policies that affect human life. My involvement has strengthened my Catholic faith.”

All are welcome to attend the March for Life on Jan. 22, 2016. People can make the trip individually, or as a convenience for our parishioners, St. John will provide bus transportation to and from the march and luminary prayer service. The prayer vigil is not only an opportunity to pray for victims of abortion and miscarriage, but is also an opportunity to support two local Catholic crisis pregnancy centers.

“It is still unpopular to stand for life, but the tide may be turning,” Mary says. “The return of the culture of life will only be completed if courageous individuals take a public stand.”

Mark your calendars! This year’s March for Life will be held on Jan. 22 at the State Capitol Building in Honolulu. Please join the community of St. John Apostle & Evangelist as we come together in support of all people’s right to life. For more information or to reserve your spot on the bus – first come, first served – please contact Mary Smart at 808-741-2358 or mghsmart@yahoo.com, or Melissa Crisostomo at 808-626-2469 or alohame@yahoo.com.

Stay tuned for the winner of the Respect Life T-shirt contest! The winning design will be featured on our parish Respect Life T-shirts.