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## “It Really Shares Our Faith at a Different Level” *The Children’s Choir*

**F**or Kristine Calzada, the Director of our Children’s Choir, working with the youth through the liturgy provides a unique opportunity to gain wonderful perspectives on our faith.

“God has given children something so special,” says Kristine, who is also the wife of our new Director of Liturgy, Nick Calzada. “Whenever they’re around us, in this case, singing, they’re really moving us in a different way. The children have this special way of bringing us back to our faith.”

Originally from Mililani, Kristine studied piano in college and spent eight years teaching music at a Catholic school in California. Upon returning home, she felt called to share her passion for music with the children of St. John Apostle and Evangelist. The Children’s Choir began last September, leading the music for special occasions such as All Saints Day and Christmas Eve. Offering an



*Children’s Choir - Christmas Eve Family Mass, 12/24/15*

*“You’re asking them to sing as one, which is what our Lord calls us to do, to pray as one. All the songs really tie together liturgically, so I feel that’s the best way to teach the Mass to the children. It’s so important to help the children realize what they’re singing and why they’re singing it. It really shares our faith at a different level than you would, just speaking.”*

*– Kristine Calzada, Children’s Choir Director*

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# How Can We Model the Faith for Our Children?

The Church has made it clear that parents are primarily responsible for the spiritual and cognitive development of their children in matters of the faith. As the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, states, “Husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children” (Chapter 4, Section 35). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* further emphasizes this vocation, by pointing out that the moral education and spiritual formation of children is not only the right, but the responsibility, of their parents: “The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable... Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children” (CCC 2221, 2223).

But how can we as parents create an environment in the home conducive to spiritual and moral development? As busy adults, how are we to disseminate the knowledge and understanding of the tenets of the faith to our children in the way that a trained and experienced catechist can? Furthermore, how do we strike a balance between teaching our children in the home and not interfering with the faith formation and sacramental preparation they are currently receiving through their parish school or religious education program?

The answer to all of these questions is stewardship.

Indeed, it is important that we reinforce the lessons that our children



learn in school and at religious education classes by talking to them about the faith, reading Sacred Scripture with them, and spending time in family prayer. And there are several authoritative resources online that can help parents in this task, including Catholic Parents OnLine – [www.catholicparents.org](http://www.catholicparents.org) – which links parents to numerous websites and documents that can help them in talking to their children about the faith.

But the best way that we can teach our children is by serving as a living example to them of how to live as disciples of Christ. If we want our children to grow up as strong Catholics and to display a lifelong commitment to their faith, then it is important that we ourselves live a committed faith life. This includes an ongoing commitment to our own faith formation as adults and active participation in the sacraments.

It also includes the giving back of our time, talent and treasure in service of our community in thanksgiving for the gifts that God has given us.

Parenting can be a tough vocation, and children deal with many influences in their lives that exist in stark contrast to the values that their parents often hope to instill within them. Fortunately for parents, the stewardship way of life provides a simple and effective model for teaching our children in matters of the faith. By living as stewards of God’s gifts and reaping the spiritual rewards that accompany this lifestyle, we are tangibly showing our children that sharing of our gifts and talents leads to a life of happiness and spiritual fulfillment. In doing this, we give them a good opportunity to follow in our footsteps and make their faith a top priority for the rest of their lives.

*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# Lent – A Time of Preparation, Introspection and Change

Dear Parishioners,

This is the holiest time of year for Catholics. Lent, of course, officially begins on Ash Wednesday. Most of us are familiar with the traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Those are important in relation to repentance and renewal. Everything we do should remind us that Lent is a penitential season.

In the midst of this serious time, however, we must keep in mind that the word “Lent” comes from a Middle English word, which means “springtime,” and the time of lengthening of days. When we think springtime, our thoughts tend to be lighter and brighter. That is how we need to view Lent, just as we recognize the joy, colors and brightness of Easter.

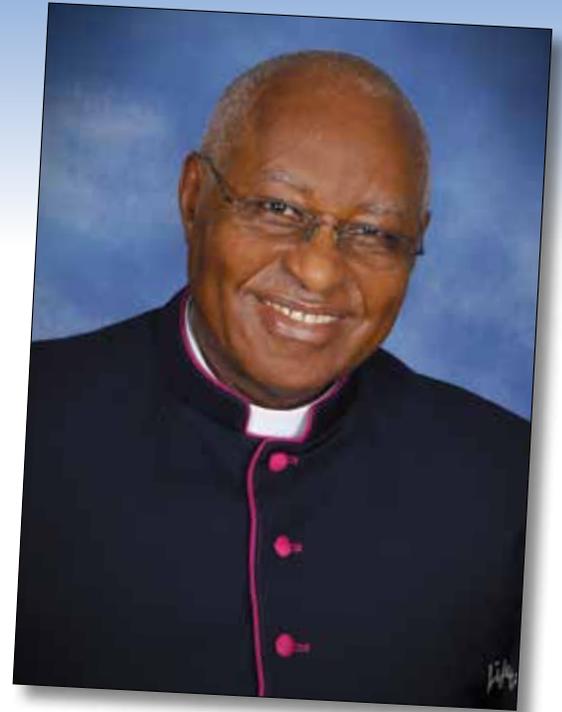
In the Church over the past few decades, we as Catholics have come to the insight that Lent is more than a time to give something up. It is also a time to add something, to take action about our faith in ways that make it more meaningful and real. This does not mean we should not make sacrifices – we need to consider

that while sacrifices may mean denying ourselves something, they can also mean we are filling that denial with a positive action.

We are talking about conversion again. We are speaking of stewardship again. This is a time when we should be looking within ourselves. It is a time for introspection. How can we improve? Maybe we need to be a bit more patient with people in our lives – perhaps we need to adjust some of our attitudes. One thing we all need to do is to see and find the good in many small things in our lives.

Do we spend quality time with God, and with our families? Do we help someone in need? Do we set aside a time each day to pray? The possibilities for change and positive action seem quite endless. The point is to do it. Stewardship is a life of action – Lent should be a time of action.

Rather than being concerned about how others see us, this is a time for us to look at ourselves. We may need to rethink and re-



evaluate our faith and especially our relationship with God. The Lord has called each of us to love and serve. Every day and every season is a time for us to carry out that call – but now, during Lent in preparation for Easter, this is very important indeed.

The 40 days of Lent are a time for us to live life as a disciple and as a steward of our God-given gifts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. John S. Mbinda  
Pastor



# “I Am a Lost Sheep that the Shepherd Found Our St. John Apostle and Evangelist

The Catholic Church is the largest Christian church in the world. Yet, it is said that one of every three traditional Catholics is not practicing his or her faith. They are, so to speak, “inactive Catholics.” It is estimated that in the U.S. alone, there are more than 20 million inactive Catholics. In response to this situation, our parish instituted the Catholics Returning Home Ministry and program. This ministry enables people to reintroduce themselves to the Church in an embracing and compassionate way.

One of those involved in this ministry from its beginnings was Mike Browning. He recalls the motivation and the impetus for becoming involved.

“I am a convert, so I am Catholic by choice,” Mike says. “As I learned more about the faith, I realized that there were many ‘cradle Catholics’ who no longer practiced their faith. Some others and I felt that as a parish community, we needed to provide those people with a way back, and the result was this program. We evaluated and studied programs which were already in existence and opted to follow the Catholics Returning Home program as designed and outlined by Sally L. Mews. We follow that as a guide.”

Catholics Returning Home, or CRH, is a parish-based program designed to reach out and invite non-practicing or inactive Catholics to return “home to the Catholic Church” and resume active practice of their faith. This year, the program is scheduled to begin on Wednesday, Feb. 24, at 7 p.m. The program sessions take place over six weeks, each on a Wednesday evening at 7, culminating on March



*“When I started the Catholics Returning Home program, I wondered if God would have mercy on me and forgive me for 46 years of sin and neglect. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of St. John parishioners, and the help of priests and religious, I can now say I am a lost sheep that the Shepherd found and brought back to join the others.” – John Michels*

30. The sessions, which are an hour and a half in length, are held at the St. John Preschool. The team is actively marketing the program at this time in various ways.

For John Michels, a notice in the *Honolulu Star Advertiser* about the Catholics Returning Home program at St. John inspired him to contemplate his

own faith journey, and he responded to the invitation to become part of this process.

“I had just witnessed my brother-in-law die after a battle with cancer,” John says. “His one goal before he died was to become a Catholic and receive the Eucharist. I thought to myself, here was a man that wanted to receive the Holy Eucharist before he died, and here was I,

# Found and Brought Back to Join the Others" Catholics Returning Home Program

a baptized and confirmed Catholic who had neglected his faith for almost 50 years – how stupid I was! I vowed to give it a try.

“When I started the Catholics Returning Home program, I wondered if God would have mercy on me and forgive me for 46 years of sin and neglect,” he continues. “Through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the prayers of St. John parishioners, and the help of priests and religious, I can now say I am a lost sheep that the Shepherd found and brought back to join the others.”

For Mike, faith sharing is an essential part of the program, for both those returning to the Church and those who are helping to provide the way back.

“Not only have I been able to share my own journey as a member of the team, but my faith is strengthened by hearing and learning of other’s journeys,” Mike says.

“Through the mercy of God, the forgiveness of my sins was like getting a large weight removed from my back – I felt good



spiritually and physically,” John adds. “We need to all support the CRH program, find those lost sheep, and assist them in returning to their Catholic faith.”

*If you are interested in the Catholics Returning Home Program, or if you might like to be involved, please call Mike Browning at 808-623-3332.*

## The Children’s Choir *continued from front cover*

opportunity for children in second through eighth grade to serve at Mass, the Children’s Choir quickly reached over 20 children and continues to grow.

According to Kristine, who grew in her relationship with God through music, song can be a powerful tool in teaching the faith to children.

“When you grow up in the Catholic Church, you can go through the motions,” she says. “Music takes it to another level.

“You can read the readings to [kids] and preach to them about our faith, but you *engage* it through song,” Kristine continues. “You’re asking them to sing as *one*, which is what our Lord calls us to do; to pray as one. All the songs really tie together liturgically, so I feel that’s the best way to teach the Mass to the children. It’s so important to help the children realize *what* they’re singing and *why* they’re singing it. It really shares our faith at a different level than you would just by speaking.”

Singing at Mass can also help children learn that music can be a powerful prayer.

“When you’re praying and you don’t know what to say, music fills in that gap,” Kristine says.

In a culture where many young people are encouraged to use their talents selfishly and for their own recognition, singing at Mass is an opportunity for children to learn about using their gifts to serve others. In the Children’s Choir, it’s not about drawing attention to yourself, but rather, about giving glory to God and serving your community.

“We are a family,” Kristine says. “It takes humility to be in a group like this because it’s not about ourselves. We’re up there and we’re ministering through the songs. It takes practice. We intentionally, deliberately practice this prayer so that we are united. We’re not individuals, we’re one.

“It’s really not about us, it’s about serving,” she continues. “We go to serve and worship and pray for one another and focus on the gift that He has given us. Ultimately, it’s about giving back.”

According to Kristine, the earlier children learn how to be involved in liturgy, the better.

“The sooner they start, the more that they can understand and be a part, which is what we’re called to do, to be a part of one body,” she says. “Music is the perfect way to do that.”

*If you have children in the second through eighth grades who would like to become involved in the Children’s Choir, please contact [sjaeinfo@rcchawaii.org](mailto:sjaeinfo@rcchawaii.org) or 808-623-3332 ext. 100.*

# A History of Lent and Lenten Practices

When we approach the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday, we look toward a season of preparation, sacrifice and penance, culminating in Holy Week and the joyous celebrations of Easter. And while the liturgical season of Lent offers us a time for solemn reflection, it is also widely welcomed each year as an opportunity to be drawn ever closer to our faith.

But just how did this penitential season come to be? And how did the reverent hallmarks of Lent – such as fasting and prayer – become so deeply ingrained in our observance of this season?

To understand the Lenten season, it is important to understand the word “Lent” itself, which is derived from two Anglo-Saxon terms: *lencten*, meaning “spring,” and *lenctentid*, which is the term for both “springtide” and “March” – of course, Lent often falls throughout most of the month of March, and during the transition into (and renewal of) the spring season. In Latin, the corresponding term for “Lent,” *quadragesima*, refers to its dating from the 40<sup>th</sup> day before Easter.

This brings us to another hallmark of the Lenten season – its length of 40 days. However, Lent was not originally observed for this length of time. During the first three centuries of the Christian era, Easter preparations consisted of three days of fasting and prayer. In some places, this preparation was extended into the entire week prior to Easter – which we now observe as Holy Week. There is also some evidence that, in Rome, Easter preparation was as long as three weeks.

In its early form, Lent was an intense period of spiritual and liturgical preparation for catechumens who were to be baptized at Easter. At the time, many

members of the community observed this period of preparation alongside the catechumens. But, as time passed and more people were baptized as infants, the connection between catechumens and Lenten preparation gave way to a focus on the themes of repentance and fasting during Lent for *all* Christians.

It was not until the fourth century – upon the legalization of Christianity – that Lent developed into its current length of 40 days, which mirrored the length of Jesus’ fast and temptation in the desert, as chronicled in Luke 4:1-13.

Yet, interestingly, the Lenten observations of fasting and prayer did not always take place for 40 *consecutive* days. For instance, in Jerusalem, fasting was observed for 40 days, Monday through Friday, but not on Saturday or Sunday – thus, Lent lasted for a total of *eight* weeks. In Rome and the West, fasting took place for six weeks, Monday through Saturday, with Lent being observed over *six* weeks. The practice of fasting for six days over the course of six weeks eventually prevailed, with Ash Wednesday being instituted to account for 40 fasting days prior to Easter.

And as the length of Lenten observance developed over time, so did the observance of fasting itself. At first, some areas of the Church abstained from all meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for certain foods, like fish. And while a person was to only have one meal a day, a smaller repast would be allowed so that manual laborers could maintain their strength throughout the day. Eventually, eating meat was allowed throughout the week, save for Ash Wednesday and on Fridays.

In fact, two of our most common and beloved Lenten and Easter traditions – the Shrove Tuesday meal and Easter eggs – developed from these early Lenten observations. Initially, abstinence from dairy products was observed during Lent, with dispensations given if pious works had taken place. Eventually, this particular rule of abstinence was relaxed entirely. Today, pre-Lenten pancake breakfasts, Easter egg decoration and egg hunts remain as enjoyable seasonal opportunities for fellowship and fun within our parish families!



# Family Faith Formation Helping Families Share a Rewarding Friday Night

What do your Friday nights look like? Do you stay in for pizza and a movie with the family while shrugging off the cares of the week? Well, what if you had the opportunity to do just that while surrounded by a community of faithful who want to help make your Friday nights so much more rewarding?

Meeting every other month on a Friday night from 6 to 8 p.m., the religious education program is offering a series of faith formation events that seek to help families grow in their faith together. Families meet on the Hospitality Lanai for pizza and games before moving into the church for a group session based on that evening's theme.

The St. John's Family Catechesis team is co-coordinated by Rob and Catherine Garnsey. The Garnseys previously led religious education programs for the Archdiocese of New York for 12 years. They have now brought their talents to St. John to help parish families grow deeper in their faith together.

"We had a very successful family program there, with some 50 families who participated," Catherine says. "I believe that the parents really enjoyed



*Pictured are Front row, left to right: Marley (goddaughter), Portia (granddaughter)  
Back row: Rob and Catherine Garnsey*

the opportunity to learn more about their Catholic faith along with their children."

Catherine says the goal of these events is to create a small Christian community that, among other objectives, will teach families how to pray and discuss their faith with one another, help parents better understand their role as primary catechists, and strengthen the relationship between

the family and the Church. It is offered as an enriching addition to other Faith Formation classes that usually only focus on kids.

"Parental participation gives witness and validity to our Catholic faith," Rob says. "Without this involvement, faith formation can be perceived as just another class or activity to be checked off on a family's busy calendar."

*continued on back cover*

*"Parental participation gives witness and validity to our Catholic faith. Without this involvement, faith formation can be perceived as just another class or activity to be checked off on a family's busy calendar." – Rob Garnsey*

## Family Faith Formation Helping Families Share a Rewarding Friday Night *continued from page 7*

Describing a recent Friday night event, Catherine notes how families spent the evening learning about the Communion of Saints.

“We began with an opening song, ‘The Litany of the Saints’ as the families followed along on our video monitors,” she says. “Our whole group, down to the youngest child, really enjoyed singing the refrain, ‘Pray for us,’ calling all the saints to join us in spirit. We then talked about how God desires every one of us to be saints and that a family is responsible for helping each other to live a life of holiness.”

That particular session ended with an impromptu play about the lives of St. Damien of Molokai and St. Marianne

Cope, Hawaii’s newest saints. Children gathered in the front of the church to act out scenes from the Kalaupapa leper colony as Rob narrated.

Going forward, the Garnseys say they’d like to see outings such as a family picnic on the beach, outdoor Mass and Vacation Bible School added to the roster of events offered by the program. Volunteers are welcomed and encouraged to help make such events a success.

“We have had about 12 families participate so far,” Catherine says. “We are beginning small, but like the mustard seed, we will grow and grow until the faith is well rooted in the hearts of our families.”

*If you would like more information or wish to volunteer for a future event, please contact the Garnseys at 808-623-3332 or [mrs.catherine.garnsey@gmail.com](mailto:mrs.catherine.garnsey@gmail.com).*

## Lenten Schedule

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 10  
Masses at 8 a.m., 5 p.m., and 7 p.m.

Stations of the Cross (Fridays during Lent), 7 p.m.  
February 12, 19, 26  
March 4, 11 (Teen Stations), and 18

Parish Lenten Retreat, March 7-8  
7 p.m.

Speaker: Fr. Felix Just, S.J., Ph.D. (Executive Director,  
Loyola Institute for Spirituality, Orange, Calif.)  
Fr. Felix will preach at all Masses the weekend of  
March 5-6

Lenten Penance Service, March 9  
7 p.m.  
Homilist: Fr. Felix Just

Palm Sunday, March 20

## HOLY TRIDUUM

Holy Thursday, March 24  
*No daily Mass*

Morning Prayers, 8 a.m.  
Mass of the Lord’s Supper, 7 p.m.

Good Friday, March 25  
Church Offices Closed, *No daily Mass*

Morning Prayers, 8 a.m.  
Stations of the Cross, 3 p.m.  
The Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ, 3:30 p.m.

Holy Saturday, March 26  
*No daily Mass*

Morning Prayers, 8 a.m.  
*No 3:30 p.m. Confession*  
Easter Vigil, 7 p.m.

Easter Sunday, March 27  
Masses at 7 a.m., 9 a.m., and 11 a.m.  
*No 6 p.m. Evening Mass*

Easter Monday, March 28  
Church Offices Closed