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"Offer, Strengthen, Sustain" *Restoring the Order of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Honolulu*

This is a transformational time for youth ministry in the Diocese of Honolulu. Restoring the original order of the sacraments reflects an intention to empower our young people to live as disciples in today's challenging society.

"Now, children will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit at an early age, which is needed for their spiritual and personal formation and growth," Deacon Modesto Cordero says. "They will have the strength and support they need to make decisions as they deal with peer pressure and growing up in a very demanding and competitive society."

Many of us remember receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation after our First Communion. In the early Church, however, all three Sacraments of Initiation were received at the same time. The Eastern Church has continued this unified tradition with the priest administering these three sacraments.

Gradually, the Latin Church, which emphasized that the bishop should administer the Sacrament of Confirmation, separated Baptism and Confirmation – with the growth of the Church, it had become difficult for a bishop to be present at each baptism. By the 13th century, the practice of giving infants the Body and Blood of Christ had also ceased.

Actually, the "tradition" of receiving Confirmation after Holy Communion only dates until the mid-18th century. As announced this year, the traditional order of the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and then Eucharist – is the order that the Diocese of Honolulu will be restoring in each of its parishes.



Offer | Strengthen | Sustain

**The Original Order
Sacraments of Initiation:
Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist**

Teaching By Example

The Importance of Prayer in a Child's Life

“I want to be just like Mom and Dad!”

Perhaps nothing lifts a parent's heart like hearing these words. While certainly affirming, such words also remind us of the great responsibility that comes with parenthood.

Children often examine the lives of their parents when making decisions that will affect their own lives. For example, a young boy may dream of becoming a physician one day, just like his father. Or a young girl may hope to become a veterinarian, just like her mother. Could the same be said about their parents' faith lives?

Just as children learn traits and values from their parents, they should also learn the importance and great joy of developing a personal relationship with Christ. And the foundation of such a relationship is prayer — conversation with God.

How should we go about teaching our children to pray? There are several methods, but none works as well as teaching by example. Begin teaching the importance of prayer by praying openly with your spouse. This teaches children that prayer is meaningful and important, and not just a ritual. Also, pray with your children — in the morning and in the evening. Show your sons and daughters the importance of beginning and ending each day in prayer.

While a fortunate dilemma, it's a dilemma nonetheless — Catholics face the challenge of discerning which prayers to use, considering the thousands available. A good rule of thumb is to start simple — maybe an *Our Father* or *Hail Mary*, and then move into something more complex — *Hail, Holy Queen* or *Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel*, among others. Begin with prayers your children can pick up fairly quickly. Not only will this show them that praying can be fun and easy, but shorter prayers are also usually easier to understand.

Teach your children the importance of spontaneous prayer, rather than just prescribed prayers. Spontaneous prayer is any prayer that is created at the same time it is offered. Another way to think of spontaneous prayer is “praying in your own words.” Structure spontaneous prayers according to the ACTS acronym — Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. In layman's terms, this means beginning each prayer with words of adoration, such as “You are the Lord God Almighty. I love you.” Move into a period of contrition, asking God's forgiveness for the sins you have committed. Then give words of thanksgiving, thanking God for the gifts He has given. Finally, spend time sharing with God your heart's desires. These intentions can be personal or on another's behalf. Following this format ensures that spontaneous prayer “covers all the bases,” and doesn't become just a mental wish list. While God wants to hear and grant our wishes, He also expects words of adoration, contrition and thankfulness.

The best time to begin praying with your children is right now. The sooner they learn about prayer, the sooner they can begin cultivating their own relationship with Jesus. Many parents even pray with their children before birth, hoping their unborn son or daughter can hear their words in utero. Remember, there is no better way to teach one's children about the value of prayer than by example.

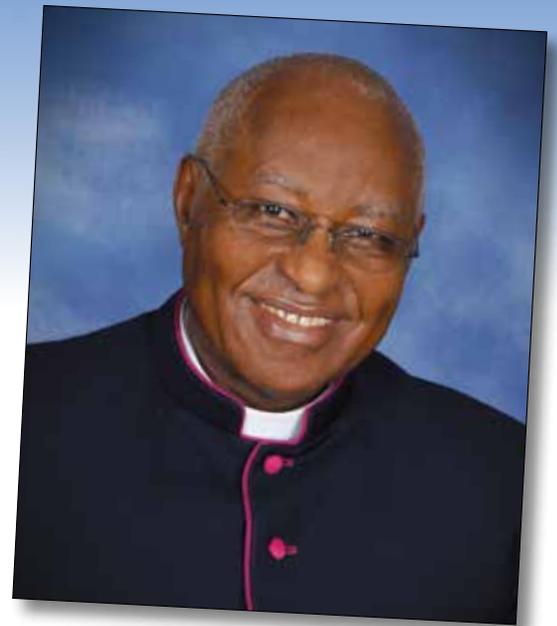


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A Letter From Our Pastor

ALL THINGS AND ALL PEOPLE ARE MADE

New



Dear Parishioners,

We associate the Easter season with springtime — a time of new life and new beginnings — and Holy Scripture addresses this idea of newness many times. In one of our readings during April, God declares, “Behold, I make all things new.”

This idea of being “new” is important to us as Catholics, and it is important to our parish. We need to strive to do this on a regular basis — even on a *daily* basis. Think of the fact that all was once new. Regardless of how you view the development of this earth and those of us who occupy it, all was once new.

During this ongoing Easter season, we need to retain that idea of being “new.” And being “new” means conversion, and we have often pointed out that conversion is at the heart of a life of stewardship.

It is always risky to try to summarize God, but we hear in Holy Scripture four ways that the Lord makes things new:

1. God makes us spiritually and morally new. This is part of that conversion process, but it does not occur unless we want it to happen and we work at it.

2. God makes us physically and bodily new. This is the hope of eternal life, when God makes it clear that all of our sorrows and pains and challenges of this life will be eliminated.

3. God makes creation new. This is difficult to imagine or to perceive, but the world that we will eventually experience is new and glorious.

4. God perfects our relationship with Him and with each other. In heaven there will be no sin to get in the way of His love for us, our love for Him, or our love for one another.

For all of the seeming depth and complexity of these concepts, they really boil down to one basic idea — if we live out our lives in ways that serve and love others, this “newness” is not only a natural progression, but also a natural result. It all comes down to the calling each of us has received. Are we responding to that call? Are we even thinking about that call? We need to, and we need to do it now — not at some vague point in the future. We have an annual renewal here at our parish, but we might better term it a “perennial renewal.” That is what our faith and our lives need to be all about.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. John S. Mbinda
Pastor

Behold, I make all things new

Spreading the

The words of Matthew 5:14 – “You are the light of the world” – took on new meaning here at St. John Apostle & Evangelist Catholic Church this past August. After listening to the heartfelt words of Fr. Eugen Nkardzedze depicting the living conditions of his people, our faith community was able to raise \$17,132.30 toward providing light, both physically and spiritually, for the Mfumte people within the diocese of Kumbo, Cameroon.

“Just imagine living in total darkness – you are sitting in the dark, and then suddenly the light shines. In America, filled with people who have grown up in a culture surrounded by electricity, it is easy for them to take light for granted,” Fr. Eugen says. “As Christians, sharing the light is not just spiritual, it is also physical.”

Fr. Eugen explains that within the Mfumte mission area, more than 30,000 people, with an estimate of 2,800

homes, are currently living in physical darkness. Already the sole provider of healthcare and clean water, his diocese felt compelled to live out the Gospel message further by providing basic solar electricity kits for each of these families. Each kit contains a solar panel, a battery with a USB inlet, cell phone charger, and three LED lamp bulbs with a portable one attached to the battery, which can be carried outdoors. Today, thanks to parishioners’ donations, 300 of those families are using solar energy.

“Children are now able to read at home and do their schoolwork at night,” Fr. Eugen says. “School activities are also able to take place in the evening, making such a difference in our children’s education.”

Fr. Eugen describes the receptivity of his people to their gift as truly phenomenal, having “received something that they never expected to have.” He goes on to say that



“Just imagine living in total darkness – you are sitting in the dark, and then suddenly the light shines. In America, filled with people who have grown up in a culture surrounded by electricity, it is easy for them to take light for granted. As Christians, sharing the light is not just spiritual, it is also physical.”

– Fr. Eugen Nkardzedze

Light of Christ

THROUGH GLOBAL OUTREACH

by giving of their treasure toward this cause, St. John parishioners were able to do much more than provide physical light to the people of Africa – they were able to share the light of Christ by demonstrating his unfailing love and generosity.

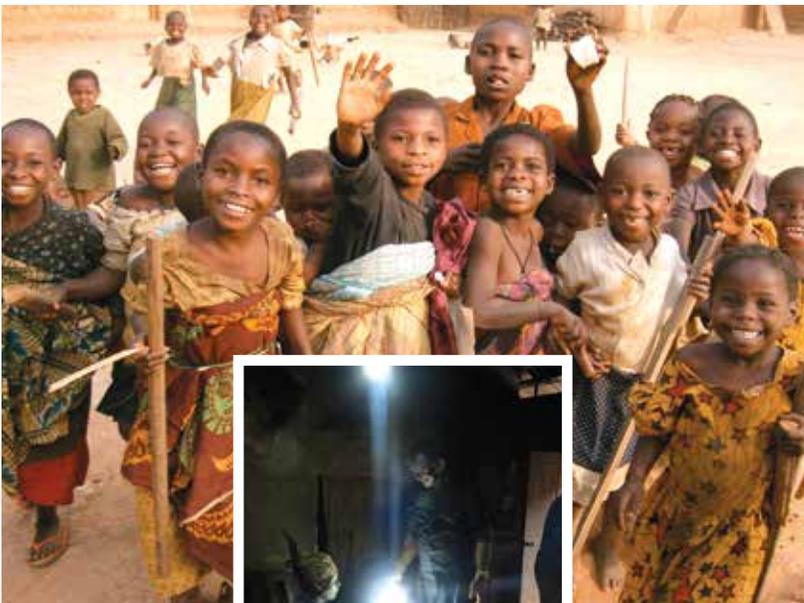
“Through that gift, they came to realize that there were people all around the world who cared about them, showing them that the Catholic Church is there for all of them – Christians, Muslims and pagans,” Fr. Eugen says. “In this way, the parishioners of St. John were also evangelizing. These gifts became the face of the Church for my people, and ultimately the face of Christ.”

Similar to the people of Africa, Fr. Eugen shares that he, too, experienced God’s love through the generosity of St. John Apostle & Evangelist parishioners. From providing for his personal needs, taking him sightseeing, openly listening to his

mission appeal, and even inducting him into the Knights of Columbus, Fr. Eugen was overwhelmed by the sense that he was “living among people of Christian warmth.”

“Among the many things that I experienced there, was the goodness of the Hawaiian people,” Fr. Eugen says. “Many people wanted to support me personally and they wanted to know who I was as an individual. I experienced a personal relationship with the church family. They didn’t treat me as someone from Africa who was just there to beg.”

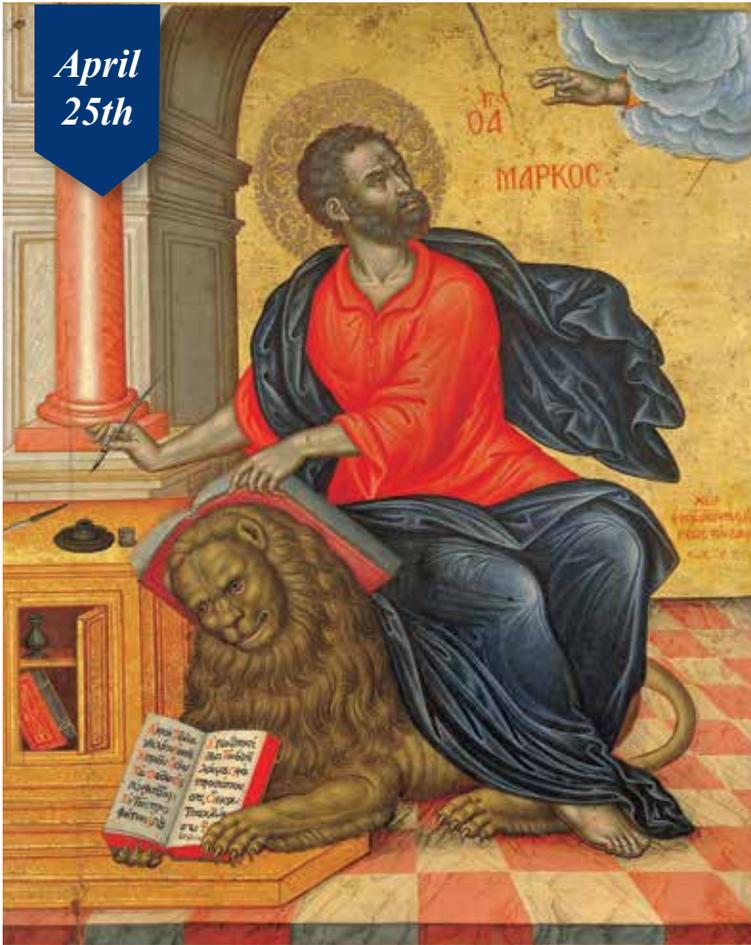
On behalf of both himself and his people, Fr. Eugen would like to offer his heartfelt thanks to the parishioners of St. John Apostle & Evangelist Church. Thank you for becoming the face of Christ to others, and for becoming a light – physically and spiritually – to the world.



ST. MARK:

Spreading Christ's Message

April
25th



Mark's story reminds all Christians of their responsibility to spread the Gospel message. Each believer is summoned to live a life of radical mission — one that, like Christ's in Mark's Gospel, defies the status quo in search of greater good and justice.

The shortest and oldest of the four Gospels, Mark draws from oral tradition and a document named *Q*, which contains many of Christ's sayings. Likely written 25 to 30 years after the Ascension, Mark's Gospel serves as a source for those of Matthew and Luke. Setting this Gospel apart from the others, women play an integral role in Mark's Gospel, often understanding with clarity aspects of Christ's message that the apostles had difficulty comprehending.

Furthermore, Mark portrays Christ's persecution as a result of His radical challenge to established orders of religion, economy and politics.

While the history of Mark's Gospel is fairly accessible, many legends have arisen around him that cause difficulty when attempting to explore this saint's historical persona. Some associate Mark with Simon Peter after the Ascension, and others identify Mark as the young man who ran naked from the Garden of Gethsemane when Christ was arrested. Despite attempts to place Mark in Christ's physical proximity, the most significant depictions recall his activity as a disciple in the early Church. Some scholars say that Mark was a companion of Peter's and was the first bishop of Alexandria — thus, the first pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria. Mark is also said to be "John Mark" of the Acts of the Apostles, a cousin of Barnabas who accompanied Paul on his journeys. However, most do agree on Mark's martyrdom. Tradition has it that he was dragged through the city streets due to his attempts to turn Alexandrians away from Egyptian gods.

Although Mark's extraordinary achievements may not seem to align with the lives of the ordinary faithful, his story reminds all Christians of their responsibility to spread the Gospel message. Each believer is summoned to live a life of radical mission — one that, like Christ's in Mark's Gospel, defies the status quo in search of greater good and justice. By following Mark's example, Catholics are empowered to continue their presence as a powerful political and social force, always attempting to mirror the kingdom of God on earth. We celebrate Mark's feast day on April 25.

Implementing a Comprehensive Youth Ministry

In a document called *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry (RTV)*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops gives us this definition of youth ministry: “Youth ministry is the response of the Christian community to the needs of young people, and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community.” Youth ministry, as defined by the U.S. Bishops, includes both middle school and high school-aged youth (grades 6-8 and 9-12 respectively). These groups should have separate dedicated programming that is tailored to meet and respond to their different ages and social, emotional and developmental needs. With this in mind, Religious Education Director Julie Quiroz-Zamora is moving forward with plans to expand our parish Youth Ministry program. Julie and the Comprehensive Youth Ministry Team will be working to offer our young people even more opportunities to make their faith personal, both in deepening



their relationship with God and through serving their brothers and sisters in Christ. Comprehensive Youth Ministry focuses on all aspects of a teen’s life, and aims to bring Christ to teens and then calls them to share what they have found with the world. It is dedicated to helping teens fall in love with Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the

heart of the Church. It aims to nurture their faith growth and Catholic identity through catechesis, serving in various parish ministries, evangelization and social justice activities.

To this end, Julie and the Comprehensive Youth Ministry team will be introducing the Life Teen program to SJAE. Life Teen, along with its middle school component, Edge, is a nationally recognized Youth Ministry program that provides us with the best resources to create a dynamic youth ministry with dynamic young Catholics.

In Life Teen and Edge, we go deeper into our faith, and discuss how the teachings of Jesus apply to our life. The focus of Life Nights and Edge Nights is to integrate our faith with our experiences. For the most part, teens know the basics of the faith, but when faced with the many new adult



Youth Ministry *continued from page 7*

experiences in the life of a teen, it is important to re-examine these experiences in the light of the faith.

Life and Edge Nights are primarily catechetical in nature. Sessions for middle schoolers and high schoolers follow the same basic structure, but content is tailored to the age groups. Sessions are based on a four-year curriculum originally developed by the USCCB and include Sacred Scripture, the Person of Christ, the Paschal Mystery, The Church, Sacraments, Morality, Social Justice, and Vocation. Topics addressed will also include pressing issues in the life of teenagers, like dating, drugs and alcohol, social



media, same-sex marriages, etc. The social dynamic is not neglected either, and so each night is also full of fun opportunities to grow closer together as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Life Teen is open to any high school student in the parish, whether they are currently attending Religious Education classes or not. Similarly, the Edge program is open to all students in grades 6-8.

“Every young person in the parish belongs to youth ministry!” Julie says.

Look forward to forthcoming information about the specifics for next year from the Religious Education Office.



Sacraments *continued from front cover*

“By placing Confirmation at this age, the Diocese of Honolulu will be following the natural sequence of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation – Baptism, then Confirmation, and then reception of First Holy Communion,” Deacon Modesto says.

By restoring this order, the Eucharist is underlined as the “summit” of Christian initiation (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1233), and Baptism and Confirmation are seen as preparation and fortification for ultimately receiving the Body and Blood of Christ.

“In the original order, Confirmation preparation is integrated into the preparation for Eucharist,” Deacon Modesto says. “This means that the close connection between Baptism and Confirmation is emphasized, while recognizing

the importance of the Eucharist as the culmination of Christian initiation.”

Going forward, Confirmation will be understood not as a “culmination” or a “graduation,” but as a means of strengthening our young adults as disciples through the grace of the sacrament. They will be fortified in their journey as disciples and further nourished through the Eucharist.

“Naturally, as your child continues to participate in religious education, he or she will continue to learn more and more about the Holy Spirit’s action in our lives,” Deacon Modesto says. “Just as your child was first empowered by the Spirit in Baptism, your child will continue to grow in the Spirit through the grace of Confirmation.”

For more information about restoring the order of the sacraments, please contact the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Honolulu at 808-585-3342 or Deacon Modesto Cordero at mcordero@rcchawaii.org.