



Celebrating Msgr. John Mbinda's 50 Years in the Priesthood

More than 20 priests and the Most Rev. Larry Silva, Bishop of the Diocese of Honolulu, will take part in our celebration of Msgr. John S. Mbinda's 50th Anniversary of Ordination, set for 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 27. A reception will follow.

Msgr. John's life of service to God and the Church has been truly international in scope, with his journey beginning in his native Kenya, Africa, then on to the Vatican, and now here in Hawaii. He arrived in the Diocese of Honolulu on Jan. 1, 2007. He remained in residence at St. Michael the Archangel, Kailua Kona, Big Island, until June 30, 2007. He then served as Parochial Vicar at St. Joseph in Hilo and St. Jude in Kapolei. He was accepted into the Diocese of Honolulu in 2011 and appointed pastor of our parish on July 1, 2011.

And with the celebration of his 50th anniversary of ordination marking a significant milestone in his life, Msgr. John reflected upon his faith journey to the priesthood that began with the notes of a marching band.

Msgr. John was from a non-Catholic family. One day he was attending a sporting event including a number of schools — one of which was Catholic. And it had a marching band. The young John Mbinda was hooked — he convinced his family to enroll him in the Catholic school so he could take part in the band. Unfortunately, by the time he arrived at the school, a lack of funds eliminated the band.

"I tell people, I converted to become Catholic, and I joined the biggest marching band in the world!" he says.

As he studied to join the faith, Msgr. John found that he was caught up by the beauty of the church and its architecture. He wanted to serve Mass even before he was baptized.

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Msgr. John at the Annual Diocese of Honolulu Jubilee Celebration for Clergy and Religious held on April 21, 2018 at the Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa.

Celebrating Msgr. John Mbinda's 50 Years in the Priesthood *continued from front cover*

"I started studying the *Catechism*, and I asked if I could serve Mass," he says. "But I was told I had to wait. As soon as I was baptized and confirmed, I served."

He met an Irish priest who was recruiting boys for the Junior Seminary — similar to a middle school.

"I went to see the priest for an interview, and I was accepted," Msgr. John says. "My journey began from there."

Msgr. John entered high school in 1958 and of the eight who enrolled with him, only he went on to Senior Seminary, St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Nairobi.

"An interesting thing, relating to the time when I went to Junior Seminary — I didn't tell my mother and father what was going on, he says. "When the time came to join the College Seminary for my philosophy degree, I didn't know what to tell them. I told my dad, a non-Catholic, I was going to become a priest. He knew an Irish priest in town, and Dad was a chief who had given land to the priest's church. Dad asked the priest what it meant for me to be a priest. Dad then told me, 'It's a good profession — go ahead.'"

His mother, however, was another story. His father had died in 1966 in a car accident.

"When she came to my ordination in 1968, to help my mom understand I had to explain to her before the ceremony that I couldn't get married," Msgr. John recalls. "She was surprised. She was expecting me to finish college and begin helping her. He told her I made a commitment, there would be no marriage, and I kept talking to her about this journey. At the end she understood— another Irish priest had come home with me and he explained the situation to her."

During the ordination ceremony — in the Basilica of the Holy Family, Nairobi, Kenya, on Dec. 14, 1968 — Msgr. John's mother watched and began to cry.

"I asked her what happened, and she told me, 'When I saw you lying there, I started to cry and I don't know why,'" he says. "Maybe the Holy Spirit affected her with the joy of seeing her son become a priest."



Msgr. John would go on to pursue his bachelor's and master's degrees in the field of sociology in Rochester, N.Y. and Syracuse, N.Y., from 1970 to 1974. Upon returning home, he served as pastor of a parish in his diocese from 1974 to 1977.

Some 25 years later, Msgr. John was visiting his Mother when she told him that she had decided to become a Catholic, along with everyone else in the family.

"This was just by example," he says. "All my siblings converted. I came from that background. I appreciate my priestly life so much."

From 1982-86, he served as secretary general of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA). In 1986, he was called to serve in the Vatican Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity for 20 years. He was also the person responsible for the Africa desk for the ecumenical concerns of the Bishops in Africa. Pope John Paul II honored him with the title of Monsignor in 1989. And in 1993, he completed his doctoral degree in theology at the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum).

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A Letter From Our Pastor

November: A Time of Faithful Celebration and Sharing in Thanks

Dear Parishioners,

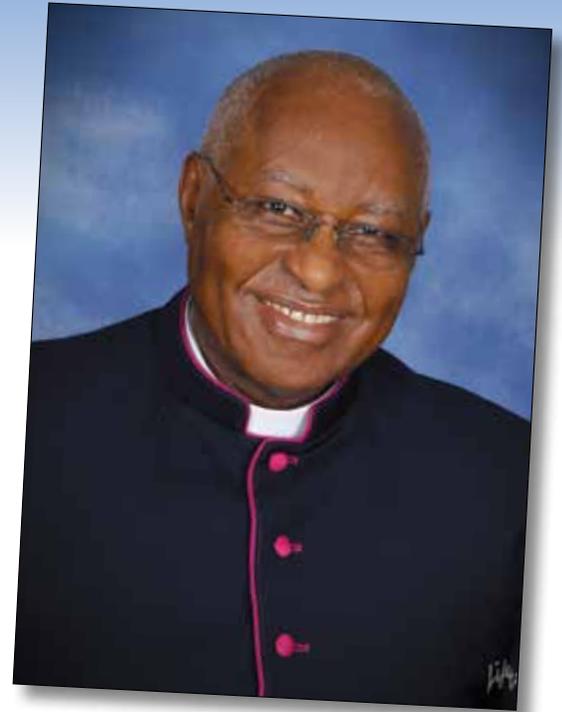
As I look over the calendar for November, my mind is filled with thoughts of thanksgiving. These aren't just thoughts about Thanksgiving Day, although I look towards it with happy anticipation — more than that, they are thoughts filled with a variety of reasons for why we should be thankful.

The month begins with a great celebration that should be a day of thanksgiving for all of us — All Saints' Day. This is a great feast celebrating the great company of Christians now in heaven — a company we shall eventually join, whether or not we're formally canonized, if we remain faithful to Christ.

And the communion of saints — the sharing of spiritual goods by those in heaven to us who are still in our pilgrimage — is a great cause for thanksgiving. We read the lives of the saints to be encouraged and inspired by their examples. Plus, we are strengthened by their fellowship in the Body of Christ, and we are aided by their prayers.

And then, the very next day, we celebrate All Souls' Day. Although this day commemorates all the faithful departed who are being purified in Purgatory, it is natural for us to concentrate on the members of our own family and our friends who have died. While we pray for them, that they may soon experience the joys of heaven, at the same time we also are thankful for the love they gave us and for the faith they passed on to us.

Then, later in the month comes Thanksgiving Day, the national holiday celebrating all the things for which we are thankful. The fact that it comes toward the end of autumn reminds us that it was originally a harvest festival. For Christians today, it's a wholesome reminder that we should thank God for everything we receive, especially the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Why not participate in the Church's Great Thanksgiving, the Holy Eucharist, on Thanksgiving Day? It's the ultimate way to give thanks.



A reminder — while much of our attention this month may be drawn to the often contentious goings-on in our country, we need to remember that God is in charge of the universe, even though He has given us free will. If we trust in His loving care, demonstrated by returning to Him a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has entrusted to us, we can withstand the troubles of life. It's a good principle to follow in this month of thanksgiving.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. John S. Mbinda

Msgr. John S. Mbinda
Pastor



Catholicism 101 and Introduction to Scripture

Teaching Parishioners the Basics



As Catholics, we share in a rich faith tradition that offers us so much at every stage of life — so why would we ever want to stop learning more? Here at St. John Apostle & Evangelist, we just began offering two foundational Adult Faith Formation classes last month — *Catholicism 101*, taught by Msgr. John Mbinda, and *Introduction to Scripture*, taught by Fr. Joseph Ayinpuusa.

“These foundational classes will help us become more familiar with Catholic history, tradition and theology, and help us to understand and appreciate Scripture as well as showing us how they have formed our Catholic faith and liturgy,” says Adult Faith Formation ministry leader Deb Zedalis. “Adult faith formation is very important. I once had a priest say that if we left school at the eighth grade — or the comparable grade for Confirmation — then how informed would we really be? Yet, in the past the challenge has been that many do not continue to study their faith. People today live incredibly busy lives and with all the

demands, it is difficult to keep up on their own. Through our Adult Faith Formation classes, we are trying to help them. Programs like these draw us closer to God — the more we know of His love, the more we can love.”

“I believe that the two courses we are offering will help parishioners to discover the beauty and genius of Catholicism, and deepen their encounter with Jesus Christ as a result,” Msgr. John says. “Parishioners will be nourished in the faith and led to appreciate what they already believe.”

The classes take place on the first and third Thursday of each month — they started on Oct. 4 and will run through Sept. 5, 2019. While attendees will need their own New American Bible for the Scripture class, no other required materials are needed for either class. Instead, the parish library will be stocked with plenty of books that will serve as resources for both classes, and will be reserved for class attendees.

“It seems to me that in the present secular culture, we need to know the faith in a far deeper sense, both to live in today’s culture and also in order to grow spiritually. It’s an ongoing journey, and we want to create a space in which parishioners can actually do that.” — Msgr. John Mbinda

Introduction to Scripture Classes

The Foundations of Faith

In Msgr. John's *Catholicism 101* class, he will use the structure of the liturgical year to explore important questions and topics related to the building blocks of our faith.

"The objective of the course is to help parishioners deepen their faith — to see not only the beauty of the Catholic faith, but also the value in it, and to be comfortable enough in the faith that they can share it with others," he says. "Sometimes, part of the reason we are uncomfortable sharing the faith or answering questions is because we don't know enough. We need to be able to not just have the answers, but to be very comfortable responding to questions and understanding the roots of what we believe. This way, we can frame our answers in a way that we can help an inquirer from another church, or someone who is seeking to understand."

Catholicism 101 will help to answer questions such as: "Why do Catholics have bishops and a pope?" "Do you worship Mary and the saints?" "Why do you worship on Sunday if the Sabbath is the day of worship in the Bible?" "Why do you do things that aren't in the Scripture?" These questions and more will be covered by delving into topics such as the origin of the Mass and the liturgical calendar; the origins of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter seasons; an introduction to Mary, the saints and the meaning of veneration; the origin of our creeds; and the history behind our Church's organization and leadership.

"When I speak about helping parishioners get to know their faith, I'm also speaking about getting to know where we come from," Msgr. John says. "The Catholic Church is a family, and everybody has a story to tell to other families. Our story comes from our Church history — we need to know our history in such a way that we know our rootedness."

Fr. Joseph's *Introduction to Scripture Class* complements *Catholicism 101* in that it will help parishioners to understand the significance of the Bible, and how the Scriptures specifically shape our Catholic faith.

"Scripture is the basis of our faith — St. Jerome said that ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ," he says. "Many times, Catholics can seem to not know the Bible, so the idea is to introduce them to what the Bible is all about, and lead them to appreciate its importance. It will also help them to deepen their knowledge in the Scripture in particular and their Catholic faith in general and give them the confidence to go out and share their faith with others."

The course will explain how the Bible came about, and how it is the inspired Word of God; how our Catholic canon is different from other Christian canons; and how to approach the Bible overall. The first part of the course will focus on the Old Testament — specifically the Pentateuch, the historical books, and the prophets — exploring the Biblical world before the coming of Christ. The second part of the course will then turn to the New Testament, examining the differences between it and the Old Testament, comparing the Gospels, and exploring the world of the early Church as documented in the Bible.

"I am using a number of materials for the course, and we will specifically be looking at Catholic sources in order to see the Bible from a Catholic point of view," Fr. Joseph says. "It's important for the Catholic family to understand that they need the Bible. It enables us to learn more about God, to know His will for us, and to go out and do the mission of Christ."

Both of these courses can equip us to be better Catholics, and to be a light in an often dark world.

"It seems to me that in the present secular culture, we need to know the faith in a far deeper sense, both to live in today's culture and also in order to grow spiritually," Msgr. John says. "It's an ongoing journey, and we want to create a space in which parishioners can actually do that."

"Today is an excellent day to begin a faith journey armed with information and supported by a learning community!" Deb says.

For more information about Catholicism 101 and Introduction to Scripture, please contact the parish office at 808-623-3332.

STEWARDSHIP *Living in Love*

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him” (1 Jn 4:16). As Christ’s disciples, we are called to live lives of love. When asked which commandment is the most important, Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.” He immediately followed this command with, “Love your neighbor as yourself. No commandment is greater than these” (Mk 12:29-31).

The life of a Christian is, essentially, all about love! This doesn’t mean that Christ preached an abstract Gospel, or that we need to love simply because “it feels good.” The reality is quite the opposite. Indeed, Christ’s Gospel of love is one of dramatic action, and living in that love calls each of us to action.

What is this love, then, of which Christ speaks? How are we to live it out today?

Christ, the God who, as John tells us, “is love” Himself, came to Earth out of pure love for us. So that we might have everlasting life, Christ took the punishment for our sins. He, the Lord of all creation, was mocked, scourged and ultimately murdered on the cross to atone for the sins that we, His creatures, have committed. Now, that’s love! And it is the love that we are called to imitate throughout our lives.

Notice the selfless nature of Jesus’ act. He gained nothing in return for what He did, and He calls us to love in the same manner. How do we do that here and now? Do we die on our own personal crosses? The answer, in a way, is “yes.” We don’t necessarily die on the wood of the literal cross as Christ

did, but we must die to self for the sake of others. That is the love of Christ, and that is the love He calls us to every day. If we want to truly love God, we must love others. God Himself showed us the reality of this need when he commanded that we love our neighbor just as we love Him. And then Christ explained, “Whatever you do to the least of those, you do to me.” If we are called to love God, then we are called to love our neighbor, for Christ resides in each one of us. It must be a love like Christ has shown us – one of selflessness. We should want for nothing more than the good of our neighbor.

There are many ways that we can show our love to others, particularly through prayer and service. Here at our parish, there are many ministries that offer us the opportunity to serve our neighbors. If we offer a little bit of time, we can help out in the parish office doing seemingly menial yet important tasks, such as stuffing inserts into the bulletins so that fellow parishioners are aware of news and events within the parish. Those of us with an aptitude for teaching may be called to serve others through RCIA or our Religious Education program. There is also always a need for more lectors and Eucharistic Ministers to aid the priest in bringing Christ to other parishioners at Mass.

These are but a few of the countless opportunities we have to serve our parish and local community. However we are called to do so, one thing is for certain: the love of Christ calls us to action. How will we show our love for God this year? Remember, “Whatever you do for the least of those, you do for me.”

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Cenacles of the Marian Movement of Priests: *Bringing Our Priests to the Blessed Mother*

In the early 1970s, an Italian priest named Fr. Stefano Gobbi received a call from the Blessed Mother to begin a movement of consecrating priests to her Immaculate Heart. This was the start of The Marian Movement of Priests — or MMP, priests gathering under Our Lady’s intercession. Not long after the formation of the MMP, groups of lay people began forming “Cenacle of Prayer” groups, with the particular intention of praying for and entrusting the Holy Father, the Church and priests to the Blessed Virgin. Thus began the many Cenacles of the Marian Movement of Priests that are spread throughout the world.

Over 20 years ago, a Cenacle group began meeting in parishioner Pat Perez’s home, with the intention of growing closer to the Blessed Mother through prayer and formation, and entrusting priests and families to her intercession. The group quickly grew, and it wasn’t long before meeting in a home proved unfeasible. Soon, the group moved its weekly gatherings to St. John Apostle & Evangelist.

“It was formed in my home, in 1996, and it’s been going over since then,” says Pat, who is still an active member.

Currently, the group meets on Tuesday afternoons, from 3 to 4 p.m., in the church. They begin their time together praying the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, as they currently happen to meet during the Hour of Mercy. The group then proceeds to follow the standard Cenacle format, opening with a hymn to the Holy Spirit, offering intentions, particularly for priests and member’s families, and praying the Rosary and other prayers, such as

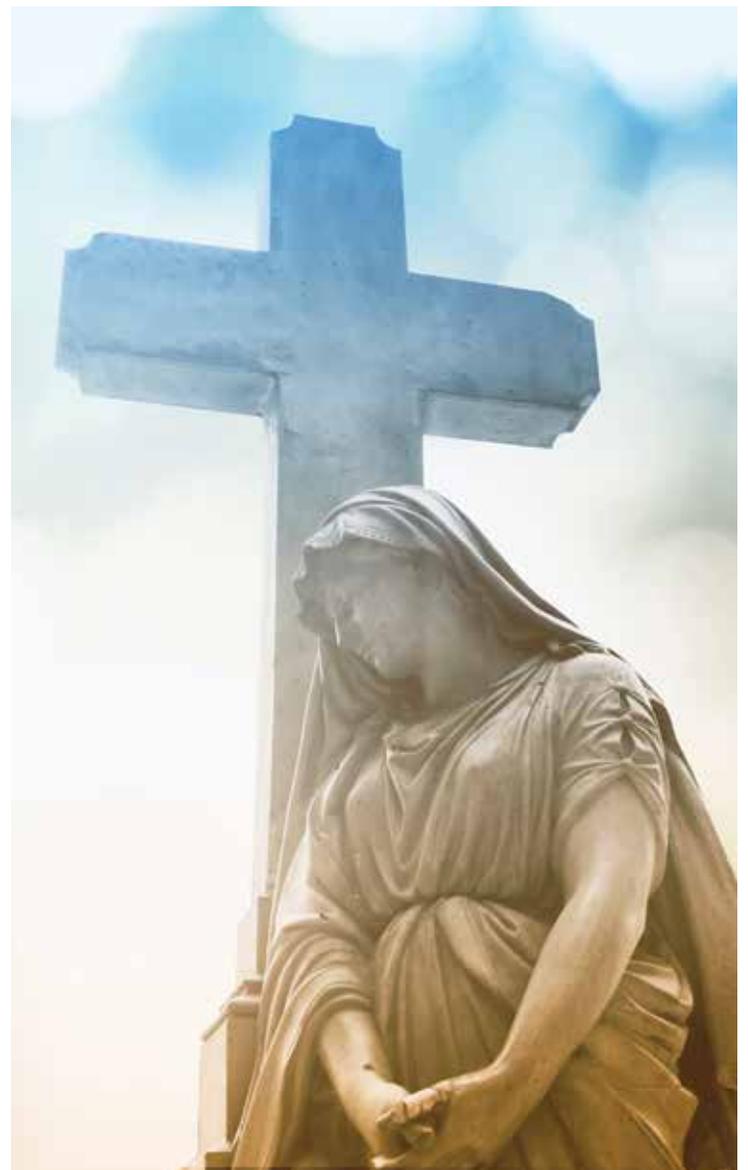
“The Blessed Mother is forming us. The messages are quite specific and it’s quite relevant to what is happening in the world and the Church. She’s forming us and asking us to be faithful in prayer, to pray for our priests and our families.” — Pat Perez

Consecration to the Blessed Mother. Then the group takes time to read from *To the Priests Our Lady’s Beloved Sons*.

“We read one chapter and after that, sometimes there will be a small discussion about what we’ve read,” says Pat, explaining that the group then closes with a Marian hymn.

Pat has found that, as she has been part of the group, her appreciation of and devotion to the Blessed Mother has grown and strengthened her faith.

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Cenacles of the Marian Movement of Priests

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“As we read the messages that were given to Fr. Gobbi, the Blessed Mother is forming us,” Pat says. “The messages are quite specific and it’s quite relevant to what is happening in the world and the Church. She’s forming us and asking us to be faithful in prayer, to pray for our priests and our families.”

According to Pat, setting aside time to pray with other people each week has also deepened her prayer life, and reminded her of the significance of interceding for others, especially priests and her family.

“Why is prayer important?” Pat says. “The Church and the family are both under attack. [Gathering in the

group] helps with setting priorities, even when you’re at home, setting priorities for prayer.”

Although the group is currently not as large as it once was, Pat is certain that the power of their prayer remains.

“I hope that the ones who have passed on are still praying — we pray for them also, as well as for the members who have moved away,” Pat says.

Pat and the other members of the group hope that new people will consider joining them to pray for our priests and families, and grow closer to Our Lady, who wants to draw all of us closer to her Son.

*For more information, or to become part of the group, please contact Pat Perez at 808-445-4658.
All are welcome and invited to join the group.*

Celebrating Msgr. John Mbinda’s 50 Years in the Priesthood

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When he looks back over his life, Msgr. John reflects on two memorable moments.

The first was when he was asked to teach in a pastoral institute of renewal of clergy religious and laity from 1977 to 1982.

“Seeing the participants, I saw them come to their faith, and saw them blossom in faith,” he says. “This was very enriching to me, a very meaningful part of my priestly life.”

The second is his position here at St. John Apostle & Evangelist.

“My last seven years here have been a wonderful opportunity, being pastor in a big parish, and this is the first time of being in a parish outside my own culture,” he says. “My experience here is very, very rewarding. It

started from when I came in to getting to know the people and their needs, joining together with the parishioners and forming leadership.”

Msgr. John also values the embrace of stewardship in the parish that he found when he attended a stewardship conference in Wichita, Kan.

“I have seen the parish transformed by stewardship as a way of life,” he says.

Importantly, Msgr. John has also witnessed young men in the parish receive the call to the priesthood.

“I tell them to continue in their discerning and find ways to respond to the call,” he says. “I also tell them to get in touch with the diocesan office for vocations. That’s part of the discernment journey.”

For more information about the upcoming celebration of Msgr. John Mbinda’s ordination anniversary, please contact the parish office at 808-623-3332.