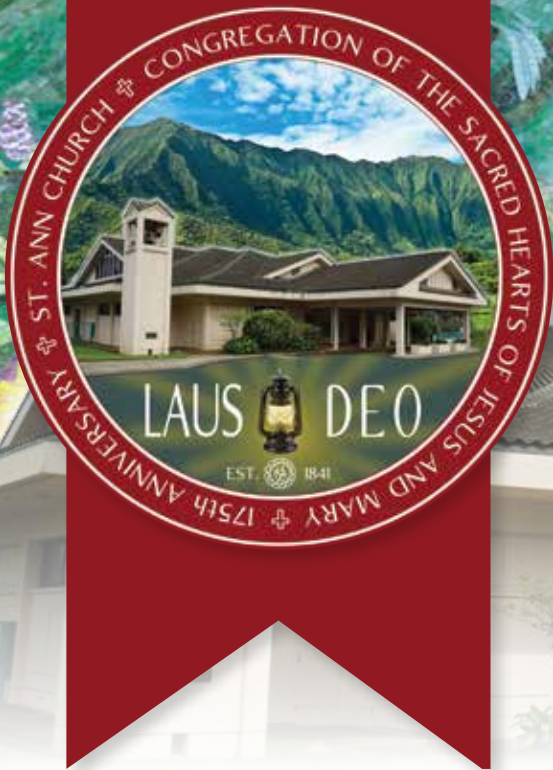


AUGUST 2017

Saint Ann Church



OUR YOUNGEST STEWARDS: *Caring for God's Creation*

We tend to think of stewardship predominantly in relation to adults or older children. But the 3-year-olds from Mrs. Michelle Yamada's class at the Early Learning Center prove there are no age limits to when one can begin making a difference in the life of the church.

It all started last October, when Mrs. Yamada began teaching her children about God's love for them, and the importance of being good stewards of the earth He created.

"I told the students about how God loves them unconditionally and that He wants us to behave like Jesus did – how Jesus was always going out and helping people through His life, and how that's what He wants us to do now," Mrs. Yamada says.

Mindful of this, Mrs. Yamada's class adopted a yearlong recycling project as a concrete way for the children to give back both to the community and to God's earth. Throughout the school year, the children would bring plastic bottles and cans that they had saved at home or collected elsewhere. Mrs. Yamada would then bring these items to the local recycling center, receiving money in



return that would eventually go to the children's designated beneficiary — the St. Ann Food Pantry.

"The children chose who they wanted the money to benefit," Mrs. Yamada says. "I told them that we could take the money and buy books and games for another preschool that was in need, or we could give back to our own `ohana. They chose to give back to their St. Ann `ohana."

For Mrs. Yamada, it was inspiring to see the students' enthusiasm for the service project throughout the year. The class spoke often about

continued on page 2





Our Youngest Stewards: Caring for God's Creation

continued from front cover

the importance of caring for one another and the earth. And when children went to places like the beach with their families over the weekend, they would eagerly return to school sharing about how they had collected rubbish left on the beach, working to ensure that God's earth was protected. No matter where they were, the young students took to heart the message of love and service, implementing it in unexpected ways in their daily lives.

"I was blown away when I went into the grocery store one day and ran into one of my students who was shopping with her older brother and sister and her mom," Mrs. Yamada says. "It was raining quite hard and there was a homeless man sleeping outside. I witnessed my little student ask her mom if they could purchase bread and water for him, saying, 'He is one of God's creatures too, so let's go and help him.' I can't tell you how touched I was to see that my lesson had sunk in to that degree."

The 3-year-olds' service project culminated this May when



the children were able to take their hard-earned money to the Food Pantry and receive a tour of its facilities. This allowed the children to better understand what their money was being used for, and to see the good that they had accomplished.

Though Mrs. Yamada is uncertain what service project next year's 3-year-olds will undertake, she is excited to see the school's "charism of service"

continue to be lived out in its youngest members. Her hope is that these early seeds of stewardship will continue to blossom as each student works to make our world a better place.

"It is truly so overwhelming to see that a child is able to truly internalize that concept of service – to see them actively trying to share and care for God's creatures and creation," Mrs. Yamada says.

"I was blown away when I went into the grocery store one day and ran into one of my students who was shopping with her older brother and sister and her mom. It was raining quite hard and there was a homeless man sleeping outside. I witnessed my little student ask her mom if they could purchase bread and water for him, saying, 'He is one of God's creatures too, so let's go and help him.' I can't tell you how touched I was to see that my lesson had sunk in to that degree." – Mrs. Michelle Yamada

If you would like more information about the Early Learning Center, please contact Director Mrs. Cindy Achong at cachong@saintannahawaii.org.

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... Now What?

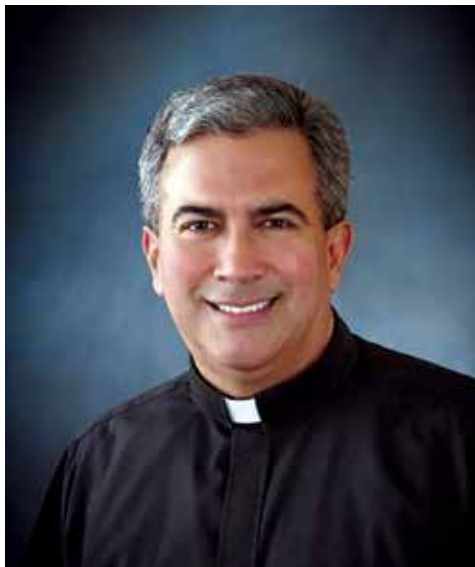
Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, “Now, it's time to work.”

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: “What is mine and what is God's?” The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In



terms of time, the secret is not learning how to use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rev. Herman Gomes, S.S., C.C.". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned over a background image of a beach scene with a blue umbrella and lounge chairs.

Fr. Herman Gomes,
Pastor



WHEN IT COMES TO FAITH, PERREIRA



Mark and Roxanne Perreira celebrated a marriage convalidation after Roxanne joined the Church and Mark was confirmed

Sometimes, out of the greatest losses and struggles, beautiful things are born. For the Perreira family, tremendous grief became the catalyst for a search for meaning that would eventually lead them right here to the steps of St. Ann, and to the Catholic faith.

When Roxanne Perreira lost her mother in 2012, she began to seriously question all that she thought she knew about life.

“Prior to the loss of my mother, I had always been philosophical and would question here and there, but never really pursued things,” Roxanne says. “But I had seen my mother’s struggles in life, and her goals – she was a single mother of five children and worked two jobs.

“She finally bought a home, and then she got an illness later in life that attacks your voluntary muscles,” Roxanne continues. “She had to take steroids for it and ended up having a heart attack as a result. She had always worked so hard and never got to enjoy her retirement time. That was devastating for me and really made me question why.”

Roxanne ended up turning to her Catholic mother-in-law, Gwen Perreira, for support, and was immediately drawn to the calm and inner peace that Gwen seemed to carry with her.

“When I would question Gwen about things, she would answer and say, ‘I’ll pray for you and leave it to God,’” Roxanne recalls. “She had no worries or anxieties, and I thought, ‘How does she do that? This must be something that works.’”

As it turned out, Roxanne’s husband, Mark, has a cousin who is part of the RCIA, or Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, team here at St. Ann. So, Gwen suggested that Roxanne and Mark meet with his cousin, Trudy Rawlins. When Trudy invited the couple to a class, Roxanne decided to check it out.

“The feeling was strong with me – I really wanted to know what this was about,” Roxanne says. “Part of me was still angry [about my loss], and part of me just really wanted to know what our purpose in life is.”

RA FAMILY GOES “ALL IN” TOGETHER

Roxanne began attending RCIA classes, and Mark, who had been raised in a Catholic home, accompanied her to offer his support. Through the course of the RCIA process, however, the couple learned that Mark had never received the Sacrament of Confirmation, having drifted from the Church during his teenage years. So, Mark began preparing for his Confirmation while Roxanne prepared to join the Church. With Roxanne and Mark’s then 15-year-old daughter, Kristen, also going through the RCIA process, the experience was truly a meaningful family affair for the Perreiras!

“There were a lot of questions Roxanne and Kristen had for me and I didn’t always have the answers, but we learned along the way together and we enjoyed it,” Mark says. “I just want to say that the RCIA team at St. Ann was excellent, and I would highly recommend them to anyone. At RCIA, I learned more about God and the path for me and having faith. I decided to go all in, and I’m loving it.”

At the Easter Vigil Mass in 2014, Mark received the Sacrament of Confirmation, while Roxanne and Kristen received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation.

“That Easter Vigil Mass was so emotional,” Roxanne says. “I had never felt closer to God in my life. I don’t know that I can explain it – it’s overwhelming. I think it’s happiness to know that I’ve come into fulfillment with God, to know my acceptance of Him and know His acceptance of me fully.”

Grateful to have found their way to the faith, Roxanne and Mark now devote much of their time and talent to giving back to the Lord for blessings received. The couple enjoys meeting other parishioners by serving on the Hospitality Committee. Mark is a lector and a Eucharistic Minister, and Roxanne helps out with baptisms and the Bereavement Ministry. Having grieved the loss of her mother five years ago, this ministry is particularly close to her heart. And, while it can be difficult, Roxanne is thankful for the opportunity to



The catechumens and candidates brought into the Church at St. Ann during the 2014 Easter Vigil Mass. Kristen Perreira is on the far left, Roxanne Perreira is the second from the left, and Mark Perreira is behind Roxanne.

express her compassion and caring for those who are suffering.

In the few years since the Perreira family has joined the Church, their faith life has continued to grow in leaps and bounds. For Roxanne, the meaning that she so fervently sought as she struggled with her mother’s passing has at long last been found.

“When things happen in life now – where before I might have found it tragic or unbearable – I try to instead read into it that God has a purpose for me,” she explains. “So, I don’t have the same anxiety anymore. I accept that God is making it what it’s going to be. I feel blessed by Him every day, and I think having that inner happiness and inner calm and peace is my biggest blessing.”

Like Roxanne, Mark has found his coming home to the Church to be a real turning point in his life and the life of his entire family.

“I just feel better about myself; I feel right with the Lord,” he affirms. “God was calling us. He works in mysterious ways – it was our time.”



HOSPITALITY: *The Cornerstone of Stewardship*

The dictionary defines “hospitality” as “the quality or disposition of receiving and treating guests and strangers in a warm, friendly, generous way.”

A Christian worldview can refer to hospitality as “Christian kindness.”

We see the effects of hospitality – or the lack thereof – time and time again throughout the Bible. Christ speaks of hospitality in Matthew’s Gospel when He says, “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). The Old Testament told of the Israelites, as they wandered the desert for 40 years in search of hospitable environs. Even the Holy Family spent ample time searching for shelter before the birth of Our Lord.

It is safe to say that hospitality is, and most likely has always been, of great importance to people everywhere. Modern hotels and hostels often use the image of a pineapple to advertise their special brand of hospitality. There is no doubt that in ancient times, the distant lights of an inn or tavern struck a chord of hope within weary travelers’ hearts.

Indeed, hospitality’s meaning has not diminished at all over the years, decades and millennia.

Christians view the presence of hospitality as meaning the difference between calling others “guests” and “strangers.” Guests are welcomed with open arms and warm smiles, but strangers aren’t. Guests feel the genuine love present in a hearty welcome, but strangers don’t. Guests often return for second or third visits, while strangers don’t.

As a parish, do we find ourselves surrounded by guests, or burdened by strangers?

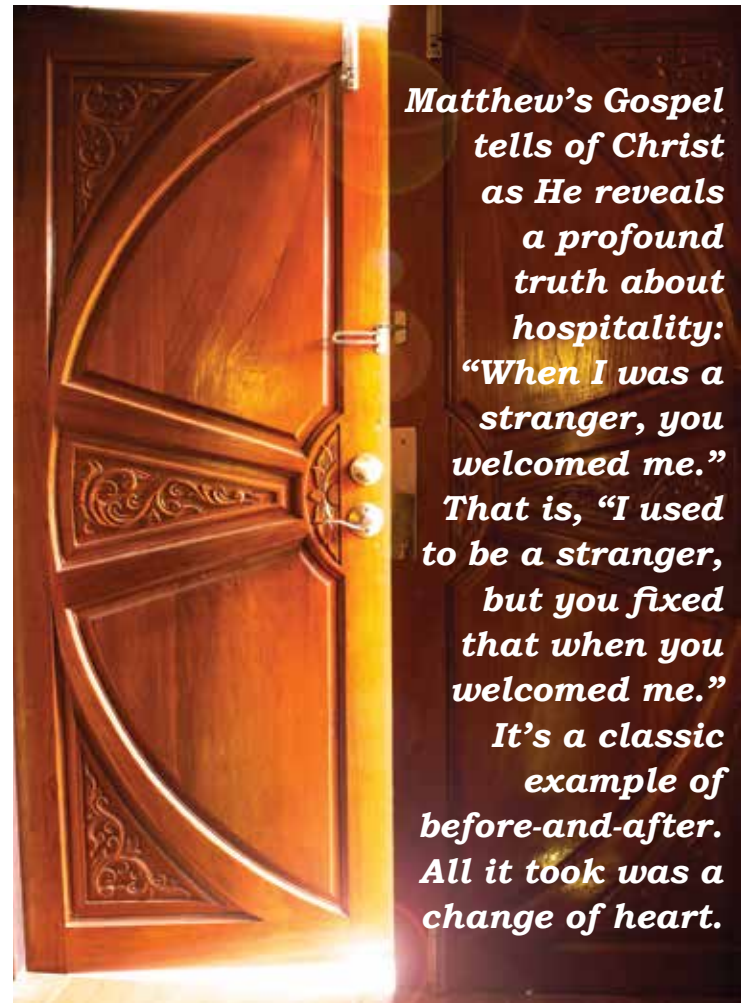
Hospitality is, in many respects, a mindset. The same person may be treated as guest at the church just down the road, but as a stranger here.

Matthew’s Gospel tells of Christ as He reveals a profound truth about hospitality: “When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.” That is, “I used to be a stranger, but you fixed that when you welcomed me.” It’s a classic example of before-and-after. All it took was a change of heart.

Stewardship holds hospitality as an immensely

important concept. Remember the “three Ts” of stewardship – Time, Talent, and Treasure? Well, there are also “four Ps,” the Four Pillars of Stewardship – Hospitality, Prayer, Formation, and Service. Hospitality is mentioned first. Why? If not for hospitality, none of the other pillars will ever take hold. Hospitality is the cornerstone of stewardship, because it opens the door to a person’s heart and allows them to receive joy, grace, and love.

Hospitality must become second nature, if stewardship is to truly take hold within a parish. So, when a stranger visits our parish, welcome them as a guest. Perhaps one day, they’ll pay us a second visit.



Matthew’s Gospel tells of Christ as He reveals a profound truth about hospitality:

“When I was a stranger, you welcomed me.” That is, “I used to be a stranger, but you fixed that when you welcomed me.”

It’s a classic example of before-and-after. All it took was a change of heart.

CHURCH CLEANERS WORK OUT OF *Love*

When the members of our Church Cleaners Ministry gather on Saturday mornings to dust, mop and vacuum, they are working, as Pastoral Assistant Barbara Honda says, “For love of God, the church, and their fellow parishioners.”

The Church Cleaners Ministry, led by Danette Hiura, meets after the 7 a.m. Saturday Mass, and makes sure the church, along with the restrooms, are cleaned and stocked. Twice a year, the members do the “big cleaning,” when everything is given a thorough cleaning and polishing. That project typically begins Friday evening and is completed on Saturday.

“It seems like people gravitate toward one area they like to do,” Barbara says. “Over time, they find something they really like doing, so off they go!”

There are about 25 active members, and most are retirees.

“They are so committed and dedicated,” Barbara says. “And they do have a good time. When we have a funeral on Saturday, I do my set-up while they are working. One gentleman will be mopping and he’s singing. And then you hear the others singing. Sometimes they bring potluck food to eat, and they really enjoy each other’s company. They enjoy fellowship with each other. Most come to Mass at 7 a.m. and then they clean. Afterwards, they worship and serve the Lord together.”

In many ways, the ministry has a family aspect to it, especially for Danette.

“I started with my mom and dad, when they were part of it,” she says. “It was partly to help them and I’m part of the parish, and the ministry is to help them out. I’m a member of the parish, and it’s like a family. You take care of your own; that is the way I feel. But I was really driven by my mother and father being involved, and it was an opportunity to spend time with them. But it has turned into more than that. My grandkids also take part with my husband and family.”

While the Church Cleaners are making sure our worship surroundings are ready for us, they are,



The members of the Church Cleaners Ministry faithfully take care of their duties to make sure our church is always ready to welcome parishioners and visitors.



Friendships grow as our Church Cleaners go about their work.

continued on back cover



NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
MAILED FROM
ZIP CODE 58040
PERMIT NO. 3

Saint Ann Church

46-129 Haiku Road | Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744
808-247-3092 | www.saintannahawaii.org

Church Cleaners Work Out of Love continued from page 7

through their efforts, worshiping as well.

“All of our teaching is to give back,” Danette says. “You know, just pass it on – I think to embrace what Jesus has taught us, be a giving community, giving back to the church. When I’m there, it’s so positive. People are all volunteers, and we give freely of our time. I know, as my husband works as a contractor. He visits other churches. And they have to pay for these services. We have about 20 come here on Saturday, to give of their time.”

New ministry members are always welcome. There are no formalities – anyone interested may arrive at the church at 7:30 a.m. on Saturdays.

“If anyone is thinking of joining, this is a

great opportunity to give back to God and our Church for what we are getting from the Church,” Danette says. “For me, I get back each time I’m in church, I feel at home. People talk to each other and find out about each other’s needs. We hang out, I bring pastries, and people bring fruit, and we share. It’s kind of like the breaking of the bread, and sharing of our time and our talent. For people who don’t have time, I hear that a lot. If a lot show up, we’re out in 30 minutes. This is 20 to 30 minutes out of the whole week. Come help, and feel good. This puts me in a good place for the rest of the day, and potentially for the rest of the week.”

Anyone who would like more information about the ministry, or would like to volunteer, may call Barbara Honda at the parish office at 808-247-3092, ext. 115.

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sunday: 7:00 a.m., 8:45 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 5 p.m.

Saturday: Vigil: 6 p.m. | **Daily Mass:** 7:00 a.m. | **Confession:** Saturday, 4 p.m.