



# St. Michael the Archangel Parish

## HOLO I MUA!

### Parish Center Project Moving Forward!

*Bright Future Ahead for Our Parish `Ohana*

**A**s any of us who have ever been involved with a building project surely know, the timelines around construction are dependent on many unpredictable variables. Throw in the many challenges of a global pandemic, and it should come as no surprise that we have faced a few delays in the schedule for the new Parish Center at St. Michael the Archangel. However, God always provides, and our building plans are steadily moving along once again!

Project Manager Bill Prince and the Building Committee have been busy this year. Following the acceptance of a bid from Tinguely Development, Inc., the next step in the process of building our new Parish Center was finalizing the diocesan contract. Next, architectural plans were drawn up by Domusstudio in San Diego, with InForm Design in Honolulu providing a local architect for the project as well.



This fall, the parish was waiting for the issuance of a building permit and the renewal of the Special Management Area permit. Once those permits come through, it is full steam ahead!

“In October, I submitted a request for payment for some items like the steel, the lumber for windows and some of the electrical items,” says Building Committee Chair Stan Ha`anio. “So once we have the

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# Christmastime Stewardship

## HOW WE CAN BRING HIS SON TO THE WORLD

It is not uncommon to give gifts during Advent and Christmas, but it is never enough just to leave it at that. True, Jesus gave *Himself* to us at the first Christmas. And, as always, we should strive to imitate Him by giving of *ourselves* in some way as we celebrate the anniversary of His birth. But there is a way to give even more than just ourselves — by giving the gift of Christ to others. The seasons of Advent and Christmas are perfect opportunities to share the love and message of Jesus with others in a beautiful way.

Of course, giving of ourselves in imitation of Jesus is a beautiful thing. But it is just as important to remember that, as human beings, we bear the likeness of God. As Christians, Jesus Himself inhabits our very souls. As Catholics, our Lord literally dwells within us when we receive Him in the Eucharist. Based upon this logic, we do so much more than imitate Jesus when we selflessly give of ourselves to others. Indeed, just as Mary carried Christ in her womb when she visited her cousin, Elizabeth, and just as she brought Him in her arms to Simeon as a newborn child, we can also literally bring Jesus Christ to the world.

What a profound task Our Lord has laid out for us this season! As He grew in Mary's womb, Jesus could only go where Mary chose to take Him. Of course, He couldn't do anything — He couldn't even speak. Mary became His hands and feet, and even His voice. Mary could have stayed at home during her pregnancy, resting and preparing for life with a newborn, as most mothers do. But instead, the Blessed Mother helped her Son begin His mission by bringing Him to her cousin, Elizabeth. Today, in much the same way, Christ invites us to share Him with the rest of the world. He chooses to make His presence known through us. And so, as the spiritual writer Caryll Houselander beautifully stated, "We must carry Jesus in our hearts wherever He wants

us to go, and there are many places to which He may *never* go unless we take Him to them."

How do we bring Jesus to those in our parish and community? There are many ways. We might visit with a sick parishioner over the holidays, providing fellowship and support in their time of need. We may consider serving a local soup kitchen or food bank, and doing our part to make sure that the hungry are fed. We can sing Christmas carols for our neighbors, bringing true joy and love to their homes. Perhaps we could help a tired friend clean her house, making her life a little bit easier during this busy season. Or we can share the Good News of Jesus Christ with others. We might even try going to work with a cheery disposition, or donating money so that a starving child in a poor country can have something to eat. These are just a few examples of how we can practice stewardship.

We may sometimes feel as if our efforts are in vain — especially when it is hard to see the effects of our evangelization. This temptation is particularly strong when we offer our treasure as a gift to God. The positive effects of monetary gifts aren't always as visible as gifts of time or talent. But when we give of our treasure, the love of Jesus can travel to places we could never go. While our gift may not directly affect someone in a positive way, it very well may enable someone else to do it for us. Sometimes, God doesn't just ask *us* to be His hands and feet, but to enable *someone else* to be them, as well.

Advent and Christmas give us the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' call to live as stewards and disciples of His Word. God has put us in a particular place, given us a certain amount of time, and asked us to perform particular tasks and selflessly share a portion of our gifts. This is all for a singular purpose — to bring His Son into the world, and make Christ's presence just as real as when He first became man more than 2,000 years ago.



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

## **OUR NEW PARISH CENTER:** *An Enduring Christmas Gift for Our Faith Community*

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**T**he most wonderful time of the year is upon us — Advent and Christmas. Considering all the adversity we have faced this past year with the pandemic and unrest for our nation, this is indeed a time to celebrate with our families and parish community and to be grateful for all we do have, despite the tumult of 2020.

Here at St. Michael's, we are truly blessed to have a vibrant parish that continues to grow not only in relationship with Christ but also in our commitment to the stewardship way of life. With that, our faith community is expanding both in size and in need. St. Michael's is growing in the number of parishioners we serve as well as growing our impact in the surrounding community.

Our faith community has wanted and needed a new Parish Center long before I became your pastor. Our hope for the proposed new building is that it will enhance the faith life of our parish family today and for generations to come. It will be a space for our current ministries to meet, a place where new ministries will form, a space to share and spread our Catholic faith, and a home for our community to connect and grow.

Despite the adversity we have all faced in 2020, our "Building on Our Foundation for the Future — E Ho'okumu Kākou I Ke Kāhua No Kēia Mua Aku" Campaign is long overdue. I have been inspired by the number of people that have continued to step forward and give generously towards this endeavor in spite of the uncertainty this year has brought.

During this past year as we have faced the pandemic together, the commitment of this parish family to fulfill Christ's mission on earth has been remarkable. Our community has continued to serve God's people both internally and externally despite the challenges of COVID-19, and our parish family has continued to



prove we are rooted in stewardship, in good times and in bad. We have always been able to put our trust in the Lord, and He has never failed us.

With this ambitious Capital Campaign for our new Parish Center, we finally believe we can bring completion to our amazing parish that was rebuilt so many years ago. Yes, we already have an amazing place to worship. But a new Parish Center will offer us an amazing place for fellowship, to gather, and to

continue our ministry in reaching out to the Kailua-Kona community.

Our goal is to complete this building project by the end of 2021, and during this Christmas season, I am hopeful that this parish community will continue to work together to help make the gift of a new Parish Center possible. Without a doubt, this will truly be a gift that keeps on giving for generations to come here at St. Michael's.

Thank you for all you have done to make St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church such an incredible parish community, as well as for your generosity in this endeavor. This Parish Center will build on our past, strengthen our community, and pass on our faith for future generations.

With God as our help, I am confident that we will continue the good work that the Lord has done here in Kailua-Kona, and the success of the campaign for a new Parish Center will truly be an amazing gift for our faith community.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Lio Faletoi

# CELEBRATING SIMBANG



As Catholics, we can always find joy in our faith, even as the turmoil of the world surrounds us. Each year during Advent, St. Michael celebrates the Filipino tradition of Simbang Gabi, a series of nine Masses leading up to Christmas Eve. This year, we hold on tightly to the hope and joy of the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

"This tradition is celebrated by Filipino Catholics in both the Philippines and in Filipino communities around the world," says Donna Urban-Higuchi. "Simbang Gabi originates back to when the Spaniards came to the Philippines about 500 years ago. They celebrated the 'Rooster Mass' at dawn, also known as 'Misa de Gallo,' in preparation for Christmas and the birth of Jesus. The Masses were held at dawn to accommodate the farmers who attended each Mass.

"This is an important tradition for Filipino Catholic communities because it gives hope to believers," she adds. "Some say that if all nine days are completed by parishioners, their wishes and prayers will be granted."

This year, Simbang Gabi will begin on Tuesday, Dec. 15. Each Mass will be celebrated at 5 p.m., except for Wednesday, Dec. 16 at 7 a.m., Sunday Mass at 9 a.m., and the last day of the novena, on which the Mass will be celebrated at 7 a.m. Most Reverend Larry Silva, Bishop of the Diocese of Honolulu, will be the celebrant of the 9 a.m. Mass on December 20.

Due to COVID-19, the novena Masses will follow CDC guidelines to ensure the health and safety of all those in attendance.

"Masks will be worn during each Mass, and every other pew will be marked off with tape to be used for seating," Donna says. "The Precious Blood will not be distributed, and Communion will be brought directly to the parishioners at the pews. Usually, a different family will sponsor the novena Mass each day. They will give a gift to the church, a decorative lantern called a *parol*, and bring up the hosts and wine. This year, during the offertory, the family hosting the Mass will instead bring up the *parol* and the church's offering basket.

"The effects of COVID-19 have made us change our usual traditions for Simbang Gabi," she adds. "Usually,



# GABI *A Light in the Darkness*

on our last day or night of Simbang Gabi, we have a feast with lechon, Filipino-style whole-roasted pig, chicken adobo, empanadas, pancit, and assorted desserts such as bibingka, puto and sinuman. This year, we will not have refreshments or a feast after the Masses."

St. Michael's Filipino Catholic community encourages all parishioners to celebrate this novena of Masses for the birth of Jesus.

"This is a great opportunity to celebrate our diversity as a parish because it reflects the spirituality that we all share as Catholics," Donna says. "Simbang Gabi is all about requesting blessings, worshiping God and praising the Birth of Jesus Christ. Our faith is all around the world — it's not just within parishes, it's within all of us Catholics."



*If you would like more information about Simbang Gabi, or to help out by hosting a novena Mass, please contact Donna Urban-Higuchi at 808-938-5137.*

## *Advent & Christmas Schedule*

**This year there will be NO**

- Mary's Tea (Dec. 8)
- Las Mañanitas (Dec. 12)
- Advent Penance Services

**Feast of the Immaculate Conception**

*Dec. 7 — Vigil Mass - 5 p.m.*

*Dec. 8 — Masses - 7 a.m.; 12 noon; 5 p.m. (will be live-streamed)*

**Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe**

*Dec. 12 — 7 a.m. Mass; 5 p.m. Mass; 7 p.m. Spanish Mass (no food after)*

**Simbang Gabi: (Dec. 15-23; NO food)**

*Dec. 15, 17, 18, 19 (Vigil) — 5 p.m. Mass*

*Dec. 16 & Dec. 23 — 7 a.m.*

*Dec. 20 — Bishop Silva presides, 9 a.m. Mass; Offertory procession w/parols, collection, & lei*

*Dec. 21-22 — 5 p.m. Mass*

**Las Posadas (Dec. 15-23; NO food)**

*Holy Rosary to be recited at 6 p.m., except on Dec. 20, when it will begin at 5:15 p.m.*

**Christmas Eve**

*7 a.m. (regular daily Mass), 6 p.m., 8 p.m., 10 p.m. (all in English)*

**Christmas Day**

*7 a.m., 9 a.m. (live-streamed, both in English) 11 a.m. (live-streamed in Spanish)*





## FOCUSING OUR HEARTS HEAVENWARD:

### *The Origin and Beauty of the Nativity Crèche*

With all the commercialism surrounding Christmastime, it's far too easy for us to lose sight of the true reason behind the season. Overwhelmed by our endless to-do lists and the hustle and bustle of last-minute shopping, our focus can quickly shift away from the Christ Child's birth. And yet, hidden amongst the `a`ali`i wreaths and garlands, the Christmas Nativity remains a tangible reminder of the Incarnation, pulling us back into time for a moment as we reflect upon the incredible gift of Christ's birth.

Interestingly, it was circumstances much like our own today which first led St. Francis of Assisi to recreate the Nativity scene nearly 800 years ago. Frustrated with the growing materialism and greed that seemed to pervade 13th century Italy, St. Francis wanted a way to visually remind people of Christ's humble beginnings — to show them that Christmas isn't about pomp and circumstance or material goods, but rather about unselfish love. Describing the idea to his friend Giovanni, St. Francis wrote, "I want to do something that will recall the memory of that child who was born in Bethlehem, to see with bodily eyes the inconveniences of his infancy, how he lay in the manger..."

And so, St. Francis' idea took form on Christmas Eve in 1223. This original crèche was a living one,

even including live animals. Villagers were deeply moved by the silent display of humble beauty, and the Nativity tradition soon spread throughout Italy and surrounding Europe. It is a tradition that remains today in nearly every Christian church and in many homes. In fact, it's hard to imagine Christmas without a crèche somewhere.

Coming in various sizes and styles, each Nativity replica continues to focus our hearts on the true meaning of Christmas — to help us remember that Christmas isn't about the amount of gifts under the tree or the festive decorations, but rather about celebrating Christ's birth. Many families have a tradition of hiding the Infant Jesus, only placing Him in the crib on Christmas morning. This helps build anticipation during the Advent season as we anxiously await the Lord's birth. Others go a step further, actually wrapping up the Christ Child to be opened as the very first gift of Christmas.

Yet, whatever your `ohana's particular traditions, we hope that the Christmas Nativity continues to draw your heart heavenward this Christmas season — to center us all on the greatest gift ever given, our Incarnate Lord.

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## The “Be Not Afraid” Beach and Kailua Block Evangelizing Ministry: A Place to Learn and Share Our Faith

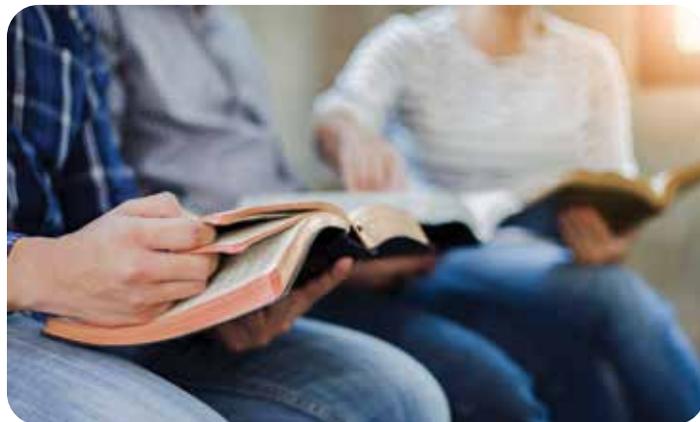
**W**e are not only called to live out our faith in our own lives — but we are also called to share the joy and truth of our faith with everyone. Recently, parishioner Dr. R. Scott French was inspired to start a ministry that would re-evangelize Catholics to help them learn about their own faith, so that together we can evangelize others in our community.

“As an ER physician, I saw firsthand a growing need for genuine fellowship, and hope for our youth,” Dr. French says. “My original idea was to find a way to reach out to both Catholics and non-Catholics, Hawai`i residents and visitors alike. We are all made for love of one another and of our Creator — and yet, sadly, so many have not been exposed to this truth. We are meant for family, communion and fellowship, which is how Christianity changed the world.

“The Catholic faith has always had the answers to the most important questions,” he adds. “Why am I here? Do I have a meaningful purpose in life? Why is there suffering? Are people really the problem for planet Earth? What is true happiness? Why do I feel empty if I just focus on myself? Are faith and science compatible?”

To answer these questions and more, Dr. French hopes that this ministry will start by engaging those who are already a part of our faith community.

“We need to be able to proclaim the Truth and defend the faith, and we can only do that if we understand our faith and know how to have effective conversations with both believers and non-believers,” he says. “I want to train people in evangelization and apologetics so that everyone will know the Bible and our faith well enough to be able to answer these questions. It’s also about learning to dialogue with people — how to be kind while discussing these topics, and how to disagree without losing your temper.”



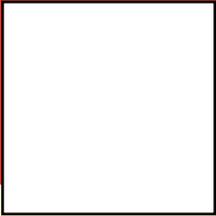
Dr. French hopes to launch this in 2021 with monthly events and meetings.

“I’d love to get people from all over the island to come, and eventually spread throughout the whole state of Hawai`i,” he adds. “As we grow, I am hoping to be able to have small-group fellowship, engaging discussions in larger venues, public presentations, and presence in community events.”

In light of the events of this past year, evangelization is more important than ever. In difficult times, we can always cling to the Light and Truth of our Catholic faith, and we are called to share that gift with others.

“The recent pandemic has highlighted how focusing solely on the material world does not lead to true happiness, but fear, despair, and hopelessness,” Dr. French says. “Authentic Catholics live a joyful life despite the inevitable, sometimes severe, difficulties. This is because Catholics understand that we are in the world, but we are made for our true home in heaven. Catholics also know that death has been defeated, and now we have modern scientific evidence of this reality. The Catholic faith has all the answers, and it is intricately linked to the Real Presence of the Eucharist and the Resurrection. In the Catholic faith, Truth is the Person of Jesus Christ.”

*For more information about the “Be Not Afraid” Beach and Kailua Block Evangelizing Ministry, please contact Dr. R. Scott French at [sfrench@healthylifejourney.com](mailto:sfrench@healthylifejourney.com).*



## St. Michael the Archangel Parish

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## Parish Center Project Moving Forward! *continued from front cover*

permit, we will have some of the big items in hand and we will be ready to go!"

With great anticipation for the wonderful Parish Center our community will soon enjoy, St. Michael the Archangel is launching a Capital Campaign with the theme "Building on Our Foundation for the Future — E ho'okumu kākou i ke kāhua no kēia mua aku." We have complete faith that our parishioners, knowing the abundant blessings that are sure to spring from this new gathering space, will generously support the funding of the \$5.1 million facility.

"We've seen here in our parish how incredible it was that we paid off that first building note — about \$12 million in five years!" Stan says. "In our parish, we come together and we get magic done."

In this time of social distancing, our appreciation for coming together as a faith community has deepened. We recognize that gathering and celebrating as a people of

God is a truly precious gift. Now, we look forward to the day when we can once again experience fellowship in both large and small groups. The main gathering space of the new Parish Center will hold about 300 people. Other areas will be utilized for faith formation classes, parish ministry meetings, and parish staff and clergy offices. A warming kitchen and modern audio-visual equipment will round out the amenities.

Looking forward to the day when we may gather in our beautiful new Parish Center, Stan is certain that this building will provide a lasting legacy for our community.

"It's something for our parish children and the future of the parish, where we can congregate and celebrate occasions for decades to come," he says.

"I just want to thank the parishioners for their understanding during this process," Stan adds. "I get a lot of questions about how the center is coming, and I thank them for their patience. It is coming along!"

### Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 5 p.m. • Sunday: 7 a.m., 9 a.m., 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (English), 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. (Spanish)

Daily: Mon-Sat 7 a.m. • Mon-Tues-Thurs-Fri 5 p.m. • Confessions: Saturday 9 a.m. • Adoration: Wednesdays 7:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.