

ANNUNCIATION CATHOLIC CHURCH & ASCENSION MISSION



MEET ETHEL SALADINO

Parishioner Finds Peace by Fully Embracing Her Faith

Here on the Big Island, many of us know what it is like to spend our weekends working in the service industry. For Annunciation parishioner Ethel Saladino, things were no different — for years, her career in the hotel business required her to work on Saturdays and Sundays, making church attendance nearly impossible. Then, about six years ago, Ethel’s seniority in the workplace meant that she could finally put in a request for Sundays off. Now that she is back to attending Mass regularly and getting involved in parish life, she has found a renewed sense of peace and harmony.

Facing stressful situations both at home and at work led Ethel to make a change for the better. By making her faith a priority once more and bringing her sons, Aizen, 11, and Airen Jakob, 5, to Mass each Sunday, she found what



Ethel Saladino with her husband, Ariel, and sons Airen Jakob (left) and Aizen (far right).

she had been missing all along.

“You always need God,” Ethel says. “I just like going to church to pray that things will get better. God is always on my side, which is good. It seemed like Fr. Stephen’s homilies were about all the things I was going through, so I was able to start taking things in stride and it really helped me.”

Thankful for the newfound peace that the Lord had brought into her life, Ethel decided to get more involved in parish life. She and her boys helped with the Giving Tree and the parish picnic last year. Ethel also helps with the food pantry, and her oldest son, Aizen, is an altar server.

In addition, Ethel has been helping with the preschool religious education classes for several years now.

“I enjoy teaching the preschoolers how to memorize their prayers and about God,” she

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MEET ETHEL SALADINO *continued from front cover*

says. “We have lots of coloring and activities, and the kids love the class. They really enjoy it. I remember when I was young, I didn’t really want to go. But for the kids in this generation, it’s fun. We have activities and crafts — I wish I’d had all this as a kid!”

Ethel’s childhood was not an easy one. Her father passed away when she was 12 years old, and her mother had to work two jobs. Ethel was often busy taking care of her younger brother. Now, as a mother herself, Ethel’s greatest desire is to provide her children with a life full of love, laughter and faith. Actively living out her faith has helped Ethel fulfill this wish. Although her husband, Ariel, is still unable to attend Sunday Mass due to a hectic work schedule, the Saladino family prays regularly at home and greatly treasures their time together.

By placing her faith at the center of life once more, Ethel has gained a new perspective on both her personal and professional experiences.

“I learned from going to church to stop being angry, let the past go, and enjoy each other — to live for today,” she says. “What is important is that our kids are making good memories. I’m thankful for going to church every Sunday, and pray harder and harder. It’s where I can forgive and be forgiven. That’s why I give all my heart to the church, because it really saved me. I’m stronger now, and it helps me have a sense of peace.”

Knowing well the abundant blessings that await for everyone who returns to the Church, Ethel would strongly encourage all who hunger for that peace to come to Annunciation and experience this welcoming, warm parish for themselves.

“The people are so friendly, it feels like a family, an *ohana*,” Ethel says. “I just love it here. Everybody goes through things, and we all need God in different ways. Everyone should go to church, but it’s a choice. And it’s never too late.”

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— Ethel Saladino

A Letter from Our Interim Administrator

WHERE ARE OUR PRIORITIES?

Dear Parishioners,

I am hopeful that you are aware that we are completing and will continue to celebrate the holiest time of the year in our Church. Easter Sunday, April 12, is the high point of the year for us as Catholics. We will, of course, continue to celebrate this holy time until Pentecost Sunday, which is May 31 this year. That is correct — our Easter season continues until then.

St. Paul provided some sage advice. He said, “think of what is above, not of what is on earth” (Colossians 3:2). Regardless of your opinions on what happens after resurrection, we can agree that it will be something “above” this life. Paul might be asking us if we put God first in all things. Life can become very encumbered with possessions, money, power, and even our egos.

Our goal should be to put God at the top of our lists. If that is not what we do, we may need to adjust our priorities. If we have not moved in that direction during Lent or in the past, now is the time to do it. We must constantly



strive to not allow earthly things to become our gods.

It was St. Gregory the Great who said, “God made us to be the gardeners of paradise.” Some stewardship people have maintained that God has given each of us a garden — and when we are judged, we only hear one question, “What have you done with the garden I gave you?”

What have we done? What are we doing? First, we must

recognize and acknowledge that we are all gifted, admittedly in different and varied ways. Despite what we see as our gifts or how we measure them, we need to ensure that we are using them in ways that serve God and others — ways that show good discipleship and stewardship on our parts.

Were you aware that the month of April is dedicated to the Holy Spirit in the Church? The term “spirit” translates from the Hebrew word *ruah*, which means “breath.” Truly, as Catholics, the Holy Spirit has been breathed into each of us, and is part of the garden we have received. Do we turn to Him? Do we rely on Him for strength? Do we even grant that He is part of our very being? We should. We need to, as St. Paul advised, “think of what is above, not of what is on earth.”

May God bless you in all you do, and strive to do!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Rico Bernadez
Interim Administrator



CHOIR LEADS CONGREGATION IN *Music Bringing*

It is often said that singing is like praying twice — and for the Annunciation Parish choir, this has proven to be true! The choir gathers every weekend to participate at all Masses, both at Annunciation and Ascension Mission, to lead the community in worship.

“Music and singing are vital parts of any liturgy,” says ministry coordinator Pete Hoffmann.

“It allows the congregation to be fully engaged in the Mass,” says fellow coordinator Toni McPeek. “Hymns are prayers, and song and music touches everyone differently. Hearing it and listening to the words can open minds and hearts, allowing the Lord to fill them with all His love and guidance, and the comfort and confidence that He is always with us.”

The choir has been active since the 1960s, and has continued to grow in the decades since. Currently, the choir includes approximately 35 members at both Annunciation and Ascension, and is led by five coordinators — Pete serves at Ascension Mission, and Toni,



Lisa Wells, Geri Bell and Rhonda Peck all serve at Annunciation, rotating coordinating duties each quarter.

In addition to weekend Mass, the choir also sings and plays for occasions such as Holy Days of Obligation, the Triduum, Christmas, and events or functions such as funerals and weddings, or special services such as Confirmation. The combined choir practices each

Wednesday in Waimea at 5 p.m. Along with Fr. Rico Bernadez, the choir selects songs for each Mass.

“We sing sacred and spiritual hymns, as well as songs based on the readings of the Mass,” Rhonda says. “We use a liturgical planner that aids us to select songs throughout the year based on the liturgical seasons.”

“We want the congregation

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WORSHIP

Parishioners Together in Fellowship

to sing with us, so choosing songs that are in our *Journey* missal is very important,” Lisa says. “Occasionally, we will also sing a verse or two of the more well-known songs in Hawaiian.”

Through the ministry, choir members have been able to grow closely in fellowship with their fellow musicians.

“I have been a member of this ministry for about 16 years now,” Lisa says. “When I first moved here, my only friends were co-workers. I realized that I needed some good friends outside of work and when I joined the choir, I suddenly found I was part of a family. We have potluck dinners on occasion and farewell dinners when people leave the ministry — for example, when one of our pianists went off to college. This ministry has made many of us close friends, and we love to enjoy each other’s company.”

Choir members also find that serving helps them to grow closer to the Lord.

“Being involved with the choir has allowed me to spend quality time with the Lord in prayer by song,” Toni says. “Music has allowed me to realize that we have a truly loving and caring God. I am able to talk to Him and walk with Him. I have grown to understand that God is always present and here at my side to love me, to nurture me, to steer me and pick me up when I falter. He will always guide me on the right and perfect path. He is my rock and my salvation! I have also become diligent in being aware of the liturgy and what takes place, as well as understanding Scripture and how it relates to song. My faith has grown so vastly with our Lord’s guidance and love, and I am honored to be able to serve Him and am very proud of my faith.”

“Singing and cantoring at Mass is one of the many ways I can praise, worship and thank my God,” Lisa says. “It makes me feel closer to Him, and brings me joy as well. When I’m directing the choir, it fills my heart when I bring in the congregation and they respond with their voices. The music has always helped me to better focus my attention on the celebration of the Mass.”

“My faith is measured by commitment, love and the joy I receive by being able to sing to, and for, our Lord,” Rhonda says.

As Pete points out, there are so many faith-related advantages to belonging to a choir.

“For me, these include praising the Lord in a manner different than simple prayer, and hopefully encouraging others to participate in a positive manner in the Mass,” he says. “As I prepare for each Mass, I try to study a little more about the hymns that will be sung at Mass, to understand better how our faith can expand in each of us. For me, the power of singing is found in bringing me closer to Jesus.”



The choir welcomes anyone who finds joy in making music, and wants to share their time, talent and treasure with the parish community. Ministry members can serve as coordinators, musicians, singers, cantors and directors. If you would like more information, please speak to any choir member after Mass, or contact the parish office at 808-887-1220.

STEWARDSHIP:

Living Life To The Fullest

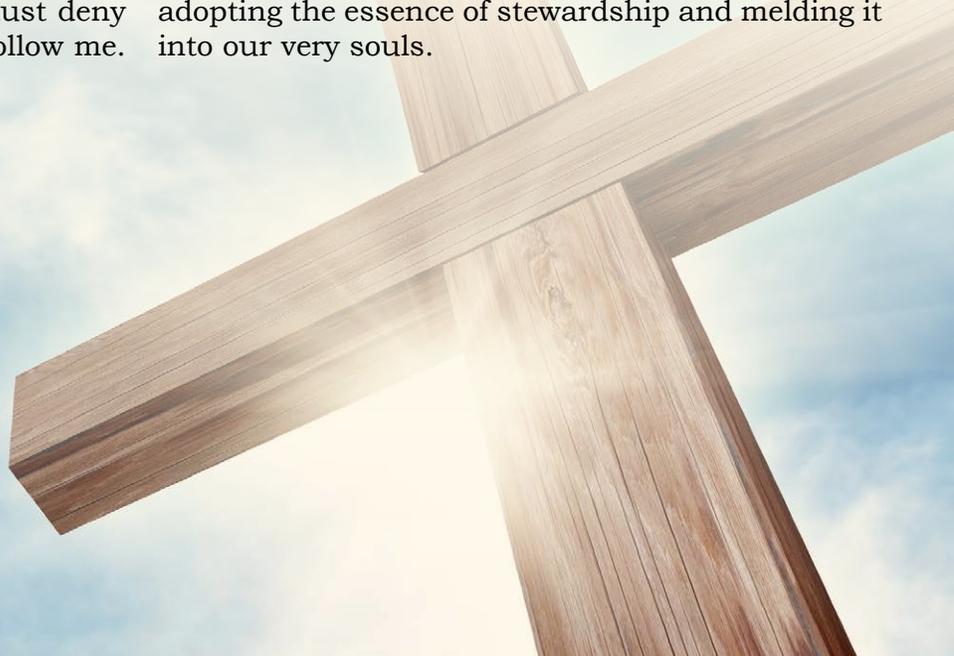
As professed disciples of Christ, we are also stewards of our personal and communal vocations. When we declare Christ as our King and Savior, we also promise to exist as His earthly body. The universal Church depends upon its individual earthly members for evangelization and support. As stewards of Catholicism, we must respond to this call with living faith and heartfelt stewardship. We must employ our lives in Christ's service, allowing Him to vocationally use us to our fullest potential. God designed us with specific talents in mind — by closely communicating with Jesus, His Son, we can put our talents to proper use. As stated in John's Gospel, when we give our lives to Christ, He promises to ignite them accordingly: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

True life demands sacrifices, which are crucial in urging us onward and upward toward Christ. When we embark upon a lifelong path of stewardship, giving our time, talent and treasure in the service of God and His Church, we are effectively allowing Jesus to guide us along life's slippery slopes with the steady hand of a practiced master. Christ explains this concept in the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Lk 9:23-24). Only after completely giving our lives over to Christ, will we experience the true majesty of life — the life each of us is destined to live.

As Catholics, we are urged to outwardly promote all stages of life, and to stand up in its defense. Considering the attention death has garnered within our society — whether we focus upon abortion, embryonic stem cell research, capital punishment or euthanasia — an understanding and respect for life must be reinstated into our culture and lives. But we must first harbor a true, personal love for life within our very souls, and live our own lives to the fullest, through Christ, in the service and promotion of His Church. We must become stewards of faith, in order to truly live as Christ planned. And we must give our time, talents and treasure — all gifts God has given us through life — before we can really claim to be alive.

Let us promote the sanctity of life through personal conversion. Our deaths in Christ destine us to live in His glory, the ultimate expression of life. Let us become the disciples we claim to be, by adopting the essence of stewardship and melding it into our very souls.



DISCERNING A VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD AND ANSWERING THE CALL TO SERVE

For some people, it's a sudden lightbulb moment. For others, it's a call met with resistance and reluctance. And still, in some cases, it's a slow and gradual work of discovering oneself and the plans God has in store.

This is "vocation." In each of our lives, God calls and invites us to grow closer to Him on our journey towards heaven. For some, this vocation — or calling — takes the form of serving God and His people, the Church, as a priest.

"At first when I entered the seminary, I had no intention to become a priest," says Fr. Rico Bernadez. "It was only when I was in formation, that I recognized and pondered the call of God to me. Slowly, in seminary formation, I realized and was clearly convinced that it was the hand of God working in everything that transpired."

As a Church, we always pray for vocations. That prayer can do a lot for an individual. As we talk to Him, we should allow Him to talk to us in the silence of our hearts. We should open our



minds, and hearts, and ears to hear Him speak to us.

For those who are called to the priesthood, there are a variety of ways in which they come to recognize their call. For some, it's examples within their families. For others, it's youth ministry or a retreat. For Fr. Rico, it was the example of priests and religious sisters in his life.

"It was my parish priest and the sisters of the Catholic

school that I attended who had a great influence in helping me recognize my vocation," Fr. Rico says. "I regarded them as God's instruments of His goodness."

For those who answer God's call to serve as a priest, not only is it an opportunity to serve, but it's also an opportunity to grow in their relationship with God in a unique way. Many priests also find themselves inspired and encouraged by the faith of the

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lay people in the communities they serve.

“Priesthood, for me, is a gift — it is not a career,” Fr. Rico says. “It is having a growing relationship with God in love.”

“My favorite part of being a priest is when someone who I’ve served shares their experience of how they’ve grown in their relationship with God — and when, as an expression of gratitude to God, they give and share their time, talent and treasure to the faith community,” he adds.

For those who may feel drawn to a life of service to Christ and the Church as a priest, consistent prayer and spiritual growth are often the first steps. As the desire becomes clearer, parish priests and our Diocesan Vocations Director can help to provide more guidance and insight. Fr. Rico encourages young men to consider a call to serve God as a priest.

“If someone feels that God is calling them to the priesthood — just be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in his life,” Fr. Rico says.

Please pray for all those who may be discerning a call to the priesthood, diaconate, or religious life. Also, please remember to pray for all the seminarians, especially our very own Larry Denis as he moves forward in his studies at St. Patrick’s Seminary.

If you are discerning a call to the priesthood, you may contact Diocesan Vocations Director Fr. Joseph Diaz at 808-585-3355. You may also visit the website at www.catholicahawaii.org/catholic-living/vocations/diocesan-priesthood/.

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil: 5 p.m. (Waimea) | **Sunday:** 8 a.m. (Waimea) & 10 a.m. (Puako) | **Confession:** Saturday 4 p.m. (Waimea)