

# ANNUNCIATION & CHURCH ASCENSION MISSION



## “BEING A GIANT” TO OUR YOUNG CATHOLICS ON THE COLLEGE JOURNEY

Sometimes, the numbers can be discouraging. Recent statistics show that as high as 80 percent of those raised in Catholic families are no longer practicing the faith by the time they are 23. The college years can be a struggle, away from family and the parish community, with many young people falling away from God and their Catholic beliefs.

Here at Annunciation, we hope to make a difference, positively counteracting this concerning trend. “Being a Giant” is a new ministry at the parish, aimed at pairing faithful parishioners with our graduating high school seniors and current college students, to provide prayer, encouragement and support during these formative years of their lives.

The idea of a “giant” comes from the image of one who serves as a role model – someone who is farther along in the journey of faith. A “giant” is also one who serves as a great force – in this case, a powerful force of prayer, interceding for our young people in their college and young adult years.

Those who volunteer to serve as giants will be assigned a young person to pray for, and to whom they can send an occasional encouraging note or care package, perhaps for their birthday or during finals week.

For a young person, away from home for the first time – especially if they attend a university on the mainland – it can be a lonely time. However,



*Our young people face various challenges when they go away to college. The Being a Giant ministry is a chance to support them in prayer.*

simply knowing that people from home care and are praying for them can make a world of difference for a homesick college student.

Our young people face all sorts of temptations and distractions every day. Staying close to God, in the midst of a world that seeks to pull them away, can be challenging. As prayer partners, the role of the “giants” is to intercede for our youth, that they would find strength to remain faithful, even when it is difficult.

“When I first read about Being a Giant, I got so excited and signed up,” says Jane Aganus. “I thought of it as being a great way to keep in touch with our youth and support their efforts to continue

*continued on back cover*

# Good for the Giver

A simple riddle: If you don't give it away, you can't keep it. But if you give it away, it will increase.

The best answer to this riddle, if you haven't already guessed, is love. But the beauty of this paradox is that there can be a number of different answers. Another response might be artistic talent. Ask any artist, and they'll tell you that their skill for drawing or painting diminishes after a few weeks or months of inactivity. But the more they paint, the more their talent grows.

We also see this truth illustrated in nature. The Sea of Galilee, teeming with fish and other wildlife, is one example. All of the water in this beautiful reservoir is constantly being drained through the Jordan River, which stretches for about 60 miles, providing the only fresh water for all of Israel. It finally drains into the Dead Sea, which has no outlet. It is consequently stagnant and totally lifeless, continually evaporating into thin air.

The point, in a nutshell, is that the good steward takes care of his or her gifts by giving them away. As a result, you won't have less left over, but will instead have more!

There is a story about St. Teresa of Calcutta and her visit to one of the hundreds of convents she had founded. The Superior of the convent told her,

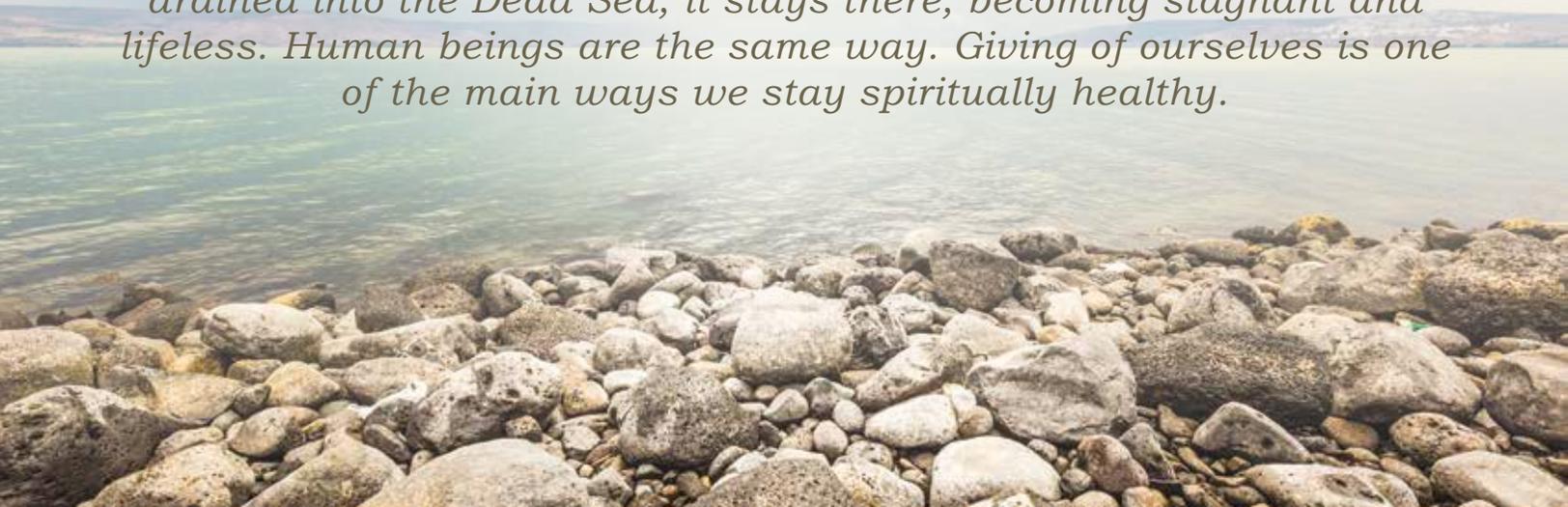
"Mother, we don't have enough time to do our work with the poor; there's just not enough hours in the day." St. Teresa responded, "Then you need to pray more." When the convent added another full hour of prayer each day, they somehow found that they had enough time to do even more for the poor in that city.

The difficulty with this idea – that by giving we receive – is that it is still a struggle to give. When we arrive at the moment of giving, it appears on the surface that we will have less left over. This is especially true regarding money. When writing a check to a charity or to the parish, you mathematically end up with less money to spend on other things. And yet, the immaterial value of our sacrifice is immeasurable. This is why Jesus speaks so frequently in the Gospels about the spiritual benefits of giving to others. We do have more after we give, but it is simply more of something else – and something better.

When we emphasize stewardship, it is not primarily to increase "volunteerism" or to swell our budget. Indeed, our first aim is always the "good of the giver." It is not because the parish has needs, *but because we have a need to give.* We recognize that the model Steward is Jesus, who gave all, even His very life, so that we may have everything.

## Stewardship in Nature

*The Sea of Galilee stays fresh and healthy because it "gives away" all its water through the Jordan River. When all that water is finally drained into the Dead Sea, it stays there, becoming stagnant and lifeless. Human beings are the same way. Giving of ourselves is one of the main ways we stay spiritually healthy.*



*A Letter from Our Pastor*

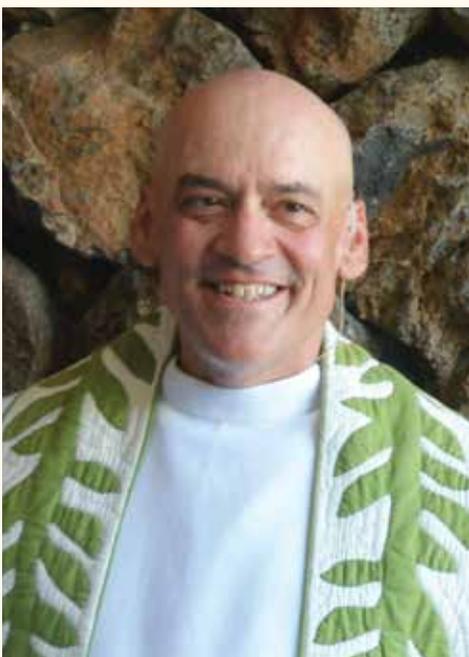
## *Stewardship and Discipleship Begin With Love*

Dear Parishioners,

In John 13:35, Jesus says, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” So many times, the Lord calls us to love one another. And as Pope Francis gathered with a large group of teenagers one Sunday in April 2016, the whole theme of his homily was built around that message. It is a message that is equally appropriate for all of us, young and old.

Pope Francis is well aware of modern technology and modern communication, especially with how it is so prevalent among today’s youth. He also said in that homily, “Happiness cannot be bought; it is not an app that you can download on your phones, nor will the latest update bring you freedom and grandeur in love.”

The pope explained that “Love is the Christian’s identity card, the only truly valid ‘document’ that identifies us as followers and disciples of Christ.” Nevertheless, we must work to constantly renew this card, because if it ever expires, we cease being witnesses of the faith. If we are really followers of Christ, then genuine love needs to



shine forth in our lives. As Pope Francis said, “Before all else, love is beautiful, and it is the path to happiness.”

Who among us does not want to be happy? We all strive for that, and the Lord gives us a formula for achieving it. It may seem simple on the surface, but we all know how difficult it can be. Love – the kind of love to which we are called by Jesus – is work. Lots of work. It takes effort, renewal, conversion, and persistence.

During his homily, Pope Francis completely captured the essence of stewardship,

and of love. He declared, “Look to the Lord, who is never outdone in generosity. We receive so many gifts from Him, and every day we should thank Him... Let me ask you something. Do you thank the Lord every day? Even if we forget to do so, He never forgets, each day, to give us some special gift. It is not something material and tangible that we can use, but something even greater, a lifelong gift. He offers us His faithful friendship, which He will never take back.”

Gratitude is, of course, at the very heart of stewardship. It is this thankfulness that should inspire us whenever we run up against one of life’s many roadblocks – those things that make it hard for us to love as we should. If we rely on the Lord, we can accomplish this love. As the pope said in closing on that day in April, “Loving in this way, you will be recognized as disciples of Jesus. And your joy will be complete.”

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Fr. Stephen*

Reverend Stephen Macedo  
Pastor

## A NEW BEGINNING: *Annunciati*

Though Confirmation is the final Sacrament of Christian Initiation, rather than being viewed as an end, it is meant to be the beginning of a mature life in Christ. It perfects the graces of Baptism in the young members of our Church, allowing them to more fully receive the power of the Holy Spirit and commit their lives to Christ.

“Confirmation unites the candidates more firmly to Jesus,” explains Religious Education Coordinator Jane Aganus. “Through it, we receive the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, and these gifts strengthen us to be a witness to Jesus – to live the faith more fully and to follow Jesus.”

Because of its life-changing effects, each candidate for Confirmation here at Annunciation spends two years learning about the sacrament and preparing for its graces. This preparation entails many aspects, working to ensure that each young person understands and emulates Catholic discipleship.

“They attend traditional weekly classes in which

the catechists work to ensure that they are all well-grounded in the teachings of the Church,” Jane says. “Other aspects of the program include the youth becoming more active participants by becoming lectors or ushers for Mass, in their interactions with the parish priest, parishioners and their family members, and finally through community service projects, retreats, and special fun activities, such as movie nights, bowling, and parties.”

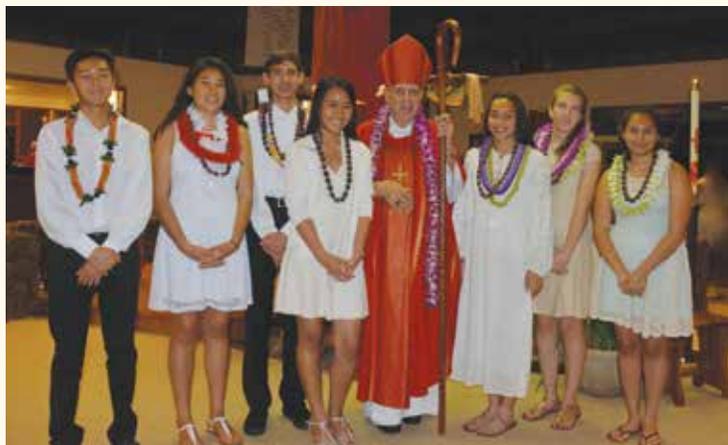
All of this is done to make sure that Confirmation is more than a mere “rite of passage” or an “end” to the sacramental journey. Confirmation catechists Liz Chock and Lisa Winborne work hard to help make the Catholic faith part of their students’ lives, involving them in the parish family and transitioning them into parish ministries, so that they can become new leaders in the Church.

“Catechists transition students into the youth group to be actively involved in ministries, community service projects and are encouraged to continue being engaged in their faith once



*The bishop and other concelebrants during this May's Confirmation liturgy.*

# on's Confirmation Program



*Youth from Annunciation parish who were confirmed on May 11, 2017*

confirmed,” Jane says. “We have had good responses to these efforts and continue to work hard to increase the numbers of youth participation.”

The result of all this hard work is that our college-aged youth leave the parish equipped to face the world because of their solid faith foundation.

Though in past years, Confirmation at Annunciation has been reserved exclusively for youth between 10th and 12th grade who have completed their two years of preparation, next year the program will be expanding to include any child between second through 12th grade. This change is occurring in conjunction with a diocesan-wide Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation, allowing students to potentially receive the Sacraments of Confirmation, the Eucharist, and Reconciliation within the same year. Though this will obviously require additional volunteers and effort on the part of catechists, the hope is that this will better engage our youth in the Church from an early age, helping them become truly active members of our faith community.

“We have been preparing our children for this change for some time now,” Jane says. “I believe through the grace of God, it will all fall into place. We will need to work and put a little more effort into our comprehensive youth ministry, which

***“We ask parents and adults to be volunteers because we need catechists for one thing. We need them to help us teach our children what they need to know as Catholics. We need them to be an example – to live Christ-like lives so that they will look to us and learn from us, and then they can teach others as well. By us adults becoming involved like this, we are truly forming the future of our Church.”***

– Jane Aganus,  
Religious Education Coordinator

includes grades six through eight. This is part of the Restored Order change. These students will be able to minister in various ministries at an earlier age to help keep them engaged in their faith.”

The change will become effective next year with the 2018 Confirmation candidates, who have already completed their first year of preparation. As our Confirmation program prepares for this season of growth and change, parishioners are invited to consider becoming involved as volunteers for the program.

“We ask parents and adults to be volunteers because we need catechists,” Jane says. “We need them to help us teach our children what they need to know as Catholics. We need them to be an example – to live Christ-like lives so that they will look to us and learn from us, and then they can teach others as well. By us adults becoming involved like this, we are truly forming the future of our Church.”

*We invite all parishioners to pray for this new beginning with our Confirmation program and to consider becoming involved. For more information, please contact Jane Aganus at either 808-887-1203 or 808-885-7274.*

## Prayer Blanket Ministry Wraps

Seven women stitching, sewing and praying.

And from their efforts, prayer blankets are given to patients in the hospital. These blankets not only provide physical warmth, but they embrace the recipients in the love and prayers of our community.

Lisa Wells leads the Prayer Blanket Ministry, which has been revived after its former chair left.

“I know the person in charge of Holistic Patient Care at North Hawaii Community Hospital, and had heard quite a few stories about how these blankets have been used,” Lisa says. “I crochet, and others in the parish sew, so I thought it would be wonderful to get this started again.”

Lisa contacted the Holistic Patient Care director and asked for her help. Lisa received the directions for making the blankets and learned that the hospital would supply the materials, if needed.

Within the directions was the statement that expresses the purpose of the ministry:

*“If everyone partakes in prayer when they do their sewing, imagine the number of times the blanket will be prayed over before it is finally placed into the hands of the one who needs the prayer.”*

“We advertised in the weekly bulletin to find out if there was enough interest, and there are now seven of us in the group,” Lisa says. “Many of the women not only donate their time and talent, but also the material left over from other projects. I hope that we can find a time when all of us can



*Prayer blankets made by our Prayer Blanket Ministry will be prayed over by parishioners before they are distributed to hospital patients. Those making the blankets, from stitching to laundering and ironing, offer prayers for the recipients as they work.*

gather together sometime and work on blankets all together.”

The blankets are made of linen, cotton or any fabric that would provide warmth. Some of the women sew the blankets, while others knit or crochet.

“We pray and meditate for the person who will receive the blanket while we are making them in our own way, for healing and comfort,” Lisa says. “Some play spiritual music while making them, also. Having been around the medical profession as a youngster – my father is a retired physician and my mother was a nurse – I also pray for those caring for the patients.”

When a number of blankets are finished, Lisa will wash and

iron them, praying over them as she works. She takes the blankets to church and at the end of Mass, we all pray over them. Lisa then delivers the blankets to the hospital.

The hospital distributes flyers about the blankets to patients who can request one. New employees at the hospital are told about the blankets during their orientation, and word about the blankets has spread among the various churches that participate.

As for the benefits that the blankets provide the patients, Lisa shares two stories from her experience.

“There was a man who was going to have surgery, and he had requested a prayer blanket

## Recipients in Faith and Love



*Prayer blankets crafted by our Prayer Blanket Ministry are prepared for distribution to hospital patients. The makers pray as they work, and our parish also prays over the completed items.*

before the operation,” Lisa says. “The Holistic Coordinator at the hospital searched her office, but was afraid there were none left. Finally, she opened a drawer and found one. The blanket was a very unusual one that she would have given perhaps to a child, but not to a grown man. But it was the only one left, so she took it to him. She sheepishly entered the man’s hospital room and handed him the prayer blanket. The man began to cry when he saw the black blanket covered with pink flying pigs. The coordinator started to say, ‘I’m so sorry that was the only blanket I

had left,’ thinking the man didn’t like it. The man grabbed her hand and said, ‘Oh, thank you, no, you don’t understand. My grandmother collected flying pigs. I had said a prayer earlier to ask for a sign that all would be fine. Now I know that she will be here watching over me.’”

In another case, the prayer blanket prompted a recipient to reach out to a fellow patient, only to receive its blessings again.

“A man told me he had come in to the hospital and put in a request for a prayer blanket,” Lisa recalls. “The coordinator had told him that she had some nice ones. She brought

him a blanket with cowboys and horses, not knowing that he loved the old Wild West and cowboys. He was delighted with the blanket. As his condition improved, he started walking around the hospital, and one day while wearing the blanket over his shoulders, came across a young boy. The boy admired that blanket. The man, seeing the look on the boy’s face, spoke with him for a while. The boy said he was going to have surgery. The man told him, ‘You know, I’m feeling so much better and I’ll be leaving the hospital as soon as tomorrow. This is a special blanket, it is a prayer blanket and others prayed over it to give healing to those who use it. Would you like it?’ The boy said, ‘Oh boy, would I!’ So, the man gave the boy his prayer blanket.”

“Many months later, the man had to go back into the hospital,” she continues. “He again requested a prayer blanket. He told the coordinator he loved his first blanket, but had given it away. The coordinator told him she doubted any were left, but she would check. She went back to her office and did not find any blankets in the usual place she kept them. She looked in a few of her file cabinets and in one of them where she rarely keeps the blankets, she found one exactly like the first one the man had given away. The man was so pleased with it he told her, ‘You know, I’m not going to give this one away, thank you so much.’”

*Anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the Prayer Blanket Ministry may call the parish office at 808-887-1220.*

Annunciation / Ascension Parish  
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## “Being a Giant” *continued from front cover*

being engaged in their faith. I also thought of it as being a good way to let them know that their parish family supports them in prayer for their safety and good health.”

This is the perfect ministry for a parishioner who cares about our youth, but is unable to make the time commitment of being directly involved in youth or young adult ministry. There are no formal commitments, and all aspects of this ministry can be fulfilled on one’s own time. We are currently in need of people who are willing to stand alongside our 14 students who recently graduated from high school and our 33 current college students, committing to support them in prayer.



*By praying for our young people, we hope to help them remain close to God, even when away from their parish family.*

*If you are a parishioner who would like to support and pray for a college student, you can learn more by emailing [annunciationstewardship@gmail.com](mailto:annunciationstewardship@gmail.com). Youth who are currently in college, or will be leaving to attend school this fall, are encouraged to sign up to be assigned a “giant” in this ministry. To register, please fill out the form at [bit.ly/gradsandcollegestudents](http://bit.ly/gradsandcollegestudents)*

## MASS SCHEDULE

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