

ANNUNCIATION & CHURCH ASCENSION MISSION



“ICING ON THE CAKE”

The Marriage Convalidation Story of George and Darlene Montgomery

Annunciation parishioners George and Darlene Montgomery’s romance began nearly 60 years ago, when George returned home after serving in the Korean Conflict. While George was still active in the U.S. Army Reserve, the couple fell in love and soon decided to be married civilly. Shortly after, their first child came along — leading them to embark on a new journey together revolving around the simple motto of “playing, praying and working together.”

“Early on, George and I decided that family was a very important way of life for us,” Darlene says. “We believed in a simple way of living — attending church, working and playing together. We did everything together with our children over all the years of our marriage, and worked hard to teach our children to love God and to always be good and kind.”

Though their marriage was indeed blessed, the couple’s inability to receive Holy Communion due to being married outside of the Church remained a continuous suffering. And yet while immersed in the daily business of work and raising their children, they felt daunted by what seemed to be a complex process of having their marriage blessed.

“We attended Mass over the years as a family whenever we could, but not being able to receive Holy Communion was extremely hard for us since we were both Catholic,” Darlene says.



For nearly 60 years, George and Darlene Montgomery have embarked on a journey that is centered on the simple motto of “playing, praying and working together.”

“We thought about having our marriage blessed many times over the years, trying on several occasions,” George adds. “But it would never work out — it still was not the right time. Also, the process seemed a little frightening.”

And so the couple continued for many years in what they describe as a “cloud of doubt and misconception,” never feeling like they truly belonged to the Church.

This finally changed when our pastor, Fr. Stephen Macedo, began working with and encouraging the Montgomerys through their marriage convalidation

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TANZANIAN SCHOOL CAN BENEFIT FROM OUR STEWARDSHIP

Our parish has the opportunity to truly live in stewardship by looking beyond ourselves to help children rise from a life of poverty and escape the horrors of human trafficking.

Through a friendship, and through those remarkable resulting connections that happen in a friendship, Fr. Stephen has made it possible for us to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Christ — children living in the African country of Tanzania.

“We as a parish have been practicing stewardship for about four years,” Fr. Stephen says. “I believe that one of the things we are called to do as a Church is tithe. I’ve been looking for good ministries to support, and I’ve been thinking about partnering with some group in a foreign country that has really great needs.”

In looking at the variety of income levels in our area, Fr. Stephen acknowledges the area is blessed with good schools, both public and Catholic, so our children have the advantage of receiving a quality education.

Here is where the connection comes in — one of Fr. Stephen’s former classmates is a parish priest in Seaside, Calif., where Sr. Benedicta Wasonga of the Order of Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa, is also located. Fr. Stephen



The kindergarten students at St. Consolata School gather around their classmate, Gody, 12. Gody is now able to attend school for the first time in her life, thanks to scholarship funds at the school.

met Sr. Benedicta through his classmate and learned of her work on behalf of St. Consolata School in the Baraki Village, Mara Region of Tanzania. The ministry of the school, founded and run by the Immaculate Heart Sisters, is to end the cultural, yet

illegal, tradition of child brides through education. Another goal is to enable the children to enter the Tanzanian high schools that require the English language. So, the students at St. Consolata are educated not only in Swahili, their native language, but also English.

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A Letter from Our Pastor

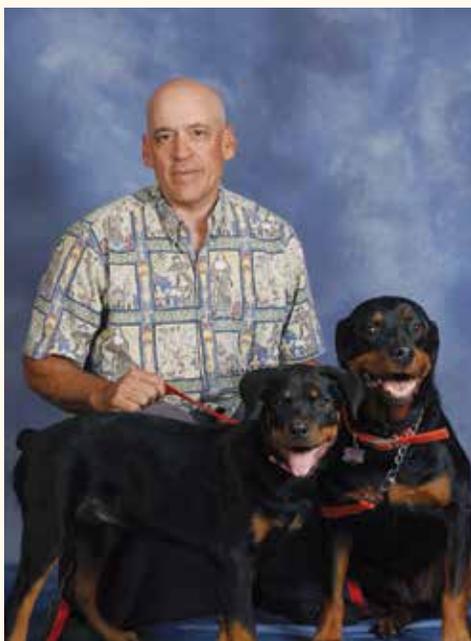
THANKING GOD *for Who and What We Are*

Dear Parishioners,

It is July, and with Independence Day upon us, I think of what a blessing it is to live in this country, and I also think of the many Catholics who contributed to what our country was, is, and in many ways continues to be. These men and women were people of stewardship — stewards of their country, but also stewards of their Church.

Perhaps the most prominent Catholic family in the early days of what was called the New World, and what became the United States, was the Carroll family. I recall learning early on that there was one Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll. Charles' first cousin, Daniel Carroll, was a member of the Second Continental Congress, and Daniel's brother, John Carroll, became the first Bishop in 1787 of what was the Diocese of Baltimore, which initially made up all 13 colonies.

What is most remarkable about the Carrolls is that they never compromised their Catholic faith. In spite of opposition and even laws that prevented them from voting or participating fully in some aspects of the colonies, they maintained their faith and stood as examples of what it meant to be Catholic. On the day Charles Carroll signed the Declaration, it was



against the law for a Catholic to vote or to hold public office in his native Maryland. Carroll, a shrewd businessman, was one of the major contributors to the financing of the revolution. These are examples of stewardship to all of us as we reflect on what a blessing it is to be an American.

It has been said many times that stewardship is “an attitude of gratitude.” If we fully appreciate what it means to be a U.S. citizen, we need to be grateful to God for the opportunities afforded us. Every day is a time to consider the many gifts God has given us, and in particular during this patriotic month, we need to thank the Lord for the gift of this country.

The slower pace of this time of year gives us a great opportunity to reflect on the Lord and our relationship with Him. We need to set aside time each day to talk with God, to thank Him, and to renew our efforts to be good stewards of all our gifts.

Summer is also a time for many to vacation, or to relax and enjoy the many sights and experiences all around us. For families, children are home more. What a great occasion to increase our prayer lives. All of us, especially families, should vow to put family prayer into our lives, especially as part of a summer outing or a summer vacation.

During his papacy, St. John Paul II wrote a letter to families. In it he said, “Prayer needs to become a regular habit in the daily life of each family. Prayer is thanksgiving, praise of God, asking for forgiveness.” Stewardship calls us to lives of prayer. Thank God for who and what we are. I bear in mind those words written by Irving Berlin, “God bless America.” Thank God for the U.S.A. And I thank God that I am your pastor. I am blessed in a multitude of ways.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen

Reverend Stephen Macedo
Pastor

CELEBRATING FIRST COMMUNION AND

We offer our congratulations to the members of our faith family who received their first communion and confirmation.



CHILD CONFIRMATION AT ANNUNCIATION

Received the Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation this May!



Tanzanian School Can Benefit

Sr. Benedicta has made a mission appeal to our parish and to St. Michael Parish in Kailua-Kona.

“Our parish has been very supportive,” Fr. Stephen says.

Sr. Benedicta points out the need for education in that remote part of Tanzania by explaining the practice of what she calls “child bride.” In practice, it can take place in one of two ways. In the first, a man with money or livestock will purchase a girl, perhaps as young as six months in age, to be his wife.

“When she grows up, she becomes the buyer’s wife,” Sr. Benedicta says. “They exchange money or livestock, and once it is done, it is binding. There is nothing written, it’s by word of mouth. This child grows and if the buyer decides to take

her home at age 6 or 10, she’s his property. So the child is sent with him not knowing anything, only to find herself in this horrible situation. By the time she knows this isn’t right, she’s having a child. Once she reaches puberty, it’s over. She has no education, no ability to write. What do you expect of her? She’s a lifelong slave to this man.”

The second way this custom is practiced is that the buyer is an old woman. The girl is purchased from her parents, taken to the buyer’s home, and then trafficked for the purpose of producing children.

In one case, a young girl is one of the first graduates of the St. Consolata School who now is in her second year of high school. She was to be sold as a child bride at age 6, with the intention of trafficking her to other men. Her mother —



When the parents of these three siblings both died on the same day, the Sisters of the Immaculate Sisters of Africa took them in and enrolled them in their school.



The joy of being able to attend school that will enable them to move beyond lives of poverty is quite evident on these young faces. They attend St. Consolata School.

From Our Stewardship *continued from page 2*

who herself had been a child bride — took the child secretly to Kenya, where she stayed with her grandmother while going to school there. When her grandmother died, the mother had to bring her daughter back home. Then, her father began planning to sell her as a child bride. This time, the mother brought the child secretly to the Sisters at the convent and asked the Sisters to keep her in the convent so that she could stay in school. The girl stayed at the convent until she graduated in 2016.

In another case, three siblings — two girls and one boy — ranging in age from 6 to 10, were tragically orphaned in one day. No one offered to take the children in. The three walked to the convent, where the Sisters took them in, and are educating them in the school.

“These are our children,” Sr. Benedicta says. “We provide for them, just like they were our own. This is important, because the girls can be taken advantage of.”

Our support for the St. Consolata School means that we recognize the plenty that we have and are willing to help someone living far from us.

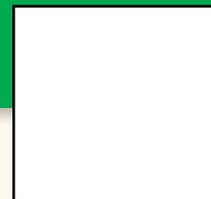
“We are all brothers and sisters in Christ,” Fr. Stephen says. “Kids can get an education and break free of the poverty they find themselves in, and are raised in. The way I see us helping is to give Sister an opportunity to come here and do a mission appeal each year.”

To meet the physical needs of the school, funds are needed for two dormitories — one for 200 boys and one for 200 girls; housing for teachers; transportation; dining hall; library, and administration building. A child can be sponsored for a scholarship at \$500 per year or \$250 per semester.



Florence was to be sold by her father as a child bride, but her mother took her to the Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa for protection. The youngster is enrolled in the Sister's St. Consolata School to not only give her an education but also to break the cultural tradition of child brides.

If you would like more information on how to help this mission appeal, please call Fr. Stephen at 808-887-1220.



Annunciation / Ascension Parish
PO Box 301 Kamuela, HI 96743

George and Darlene Montgomery continued from front cover

journey. His listening ear and simple instructions made the process seem doable for the first time.

“Fr. Stephen was really the driving force behind us, and we felt so blessed to have him lead us through the process,” George says. “He is truly an awesome communicator and we were always at ease in his presence.”

Thanks to Fr. Stephen’s guidance, George and Darlene were able to finally have their marriage convalidated by Most Reverend Larry Silva this past March 6, at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. Their grandchildren were there as witnesses, partaking in this “new beginning.” Since then, the couple continues to feel a tremendous amount of joy and peace as they partake fully in the Eucharistic celebration.

“God is the one who made the way for us to be together for these 58 years,” George says. “This convalidation was just the icing on top. Now we have His Holy Word, and we truly feel that the journey has brought us so much closer to each other and with God. We feel so much happier, living the way our Lord



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God has asked us to.”

“God answered my prayers through the convalidation of our marriage,” Darlene adds. “Now my prayer is for His blessings on our Pope Francis, who made the way for us to have this blessing, and for Him to keep Fr. Stephen Macedo in His arms as he continues to do God’s work here in Hawaii.”

MASS SCHEDULE

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