

ANNUNCIATION CATHOLIC CHURCH & ASCENSION MISSION



MEET THE PRAYER WARRIORS

Helping Others Through Prayer Requests

Parishes are like families, and what better way to look out for your fellow family members than by praying for them? Through Annunciation's Prayer Warriors Ministry, group members take specific prayer requests from their fellow parishioners. Conducted through email or text message, each request is accepted and prayed for with genuine care — no intention is too big or too small!

"Prayer is so powerful, not only when we pray for ourselves and our intentions, but when we pray for others and their needs," says ministry leader Larry Denis. "When we pray for others, we need to call them by name as we ask God for His intercession, or the Blessed Mother, or any of our saints — call them by name so they know exactly who we are praying for and what their needs are."

The Prayer Warrior Ministry has been active for the past four years, and currently numbers nearly 50 prayer warriors who

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Some prayer warriors from Puako — (from left) Pat Sanford, Larry Denis III and Maile Lincoln

Prayer Warriors *continued from front cover*

receive prayer requests. Parishioners may submit prayer requests through a simple online form, found on our parish homepage. The request is then immediately sent out to the prayer warriors, who will remember the intention in their prayers.

“When I get a prayer request, I add the intention to my list of prayers,” Larry says. “I remember them in my daily prayers and at adoration, which I love to go to. I know prayers work, and I love praying for others while in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in adoration. It is very powerful and I encourage others to do the same.”

Anyone is welcome to become a prayer warrior — since the requests are submitted

online and received via email or text message, parishioners of a variety of ages and schedules may participate.

“This ministry is so easy for everyone to be a part of, especially those who are unable to leave their homes,” Larry says. “As long as they have email access or the ability to receive text messages on their phone, they can be a prayer warrior.”

Larry has often received feedback from those for whom the ministry has prayed.

“They are so appreciative of the prayers,” he says. “Since I put in a lot of prayer requests myself, I know firsthand that the Prayer Warriors are strong in their faith and their prayers work!”

To become a **Prayer Warrior**, or for more information, please contact **Larry Denis at Lbd3emails@gmail.com or 808-883-1999**. Be sure to indicate whether you would like to receive requests via email or text message, and provide a phone number if you choose the latter. Larry is also looking for a tech-savvy individual to help lead the ministry — for more information, please reach out to Larry via the email address or phone number provided above.

To submit a prayer request, please follow these steps:

1. Access our online prayer request form at www.tinyurl.com/annunciationprayerrequest.
2. The form may also be accessed via our homepage, www.bigislandcatholicchurch.org — simply scroll down and click on the “May We Pray for You?” icon.
3. Complete the form and click “Submit” — the prayer request will immediately be sent out via email and text.

DON'T FORGET TO RETURN YOUR COMMITMENT CARD!

Please remember to turn in your commitment card to the parish as soon as possible, and a part of our Stewardship Renewal. We appreciate your willingness to participate in this year's Renewal. The more we grow to embrace and understand the stewardship way of life, the more our parish will flourish and grow!

The image shows three overlapping commitment cards. The top card is titled "TALENT" and has sections for "FORMATION" and "SERVICE". The middle card is titled "STEWARDSHIP A PATH TO HOLINESS 2018 COMMITMENT CARD" and includes a prayer: "Take, Lord and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will, all I have and call my own, You have given all to me." and another prayer: "To You, Lord, I return it. Everything is Yours; do with it what You will, Give me only Your love and Your grace; that is enough for me, Amen." The bottom card is the "ANNUNCIATION PARISH AND ASCENSION MISSION 2018 COMMITMENT CARD" and includes a form with fields for "First & Last Name", "Phone", "Email", "Spouse: First & Last Name", "Spouse: Phone", "Spouse: Email", "Mailing Address", "City", "State", and "ZIP".

A Letter from Our Pastor

REFLECTIONS AT THE END OF THE YEAR

Dear Parishioners,

It seems as if we just finished Lent and Easter, and here we are at Advent and Christmas. To say this is a busy month for many is an understatement. Although December is a month of love, it can also be a difficult month for some. For those with families, it may be a month of travel as people rush to be united with loved ones, sometimes after a long period of separation.

There is no shortage of reminders as to what time of year this is. However, for us as Catholics, we may need to refocus to see where we are in our faith lives. Were you aware that for us, December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception? We celebrate this Holy Day of obligation on Dec. 8. Advent begins on Dec. 2, and you may notice that we begin to wear purple as a sign of Advent. That color changes to white or gold beginning at Christmas.

Of course, this is also the last month of the regular calendar year, which may add additional tasks to our own schedules as we finalize things for the end of the year. However, there are many opportunities for us during this month to share, to pray and to celebrate in a Christian way, and I would encourage you to make an effort to be part of these. Right here in our parish, much is happening along those lines, and a careful reading of the bulletin will alert you to the “when, where and what” of these upcoming opportunities.

As I indicated earlier, this can also be a difficult time for some. In the midst of our own celebrations and joy, we need to be aware of that reality and of those living with it. This is a time



to reach out, and it is a time to show love.

This December, let our minds be focused on Christ, Who will be born for us at Christmas, and for Whose coming we must always be prepared throughout the year. This is a time to thank God and to pray. It is a time to reach out to love and live peacefully with one another. We need to remember that life continues after December, in spite of everything we feel we need to get done.

My prayers and blessings go out to each of you and your families. May God continue to watch over you. May the year

2018 end well for all of us!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Stephen

Reverend Stephen Macedo
Pastor



FRED AND ANDREA *Finding Joy and Strength*

Married for 38 years, Fred and Andrea Costanzo have found unity in their faith and have enjoyed sharing it with both their family and the parish community.

The couple first met while working as engineers on the same submarine model.

“I was working in Connecticut, and I was sent on travel down to Virginia,” Andrea says. “Fred was also working on that model. I had to stay for a month, so we got to know each other!”

After getting married, they settled in Virginia, worked for the Department of Defense, and had three children. Although Fred was a cradle Catholic and Andrea was raised Protestant, faith was always an important part of their lives, and often a topic of conversation and discussion. Fred started getting involved at their local Catholic parish early on in their marriage.

“Right after our oldest child was baptized, I just felt like I needed to give back, because our priest helped us out a lot when we were preparing for the Baptism,” he says. “I did a lot of public speaking at work, so I thought that being a lector could be a good match, like something I was called to do. I have been a lector at every parish that we have been members of since.”

“I find the preparation and prayer before reading to be really important,” he adds. “It made me realize that it wasn’t just me up there speaking — it was the Lord speaking through me.”

As their children continued to be raised in the Catholic faith, Andrea continued to ask questions and explore her own faith.

“We were at Mass one day when my two boys went up to receive the Eucharist with Fred,”



Fred and Andrea Costanzo on their wedding day

she recalls. “I felt a pang in my heart, that I needed to do something, that I needed to be a part of this community. When Fred sat down, he held my hand and said, ‘You know, I really think a lot about you converting.’ So we really both felt the same thing, at the same time, without even talking about it! That’s what really made us feel that this was right, and that we knew God was there with us.”

In 1994 and 1995, Andrea participated in the RCIA process, and became a Catholic at the same Mass where their daughter, Gina, received her First Communion.

This celebratory occasion gave Andrea and Gina a special bond, and they are both still close and strong in their faith to this day. In fact, all the Costanzo children have remained close to their parents, and continue to practice their faith and have passed it on to their own children.

“All our wonderful sons and daughter have visited us here,” Andrea says. “Nick, our oldest, brought Fred’s 87-year-old father here this last Christmas. Sam and his wife, Frances, have brought our three grandchildren — Vinny, Vivian and Vito — here twice. Gina has been here nine times already! Her husband, Gino, has come four of those times, and this latest trip our youngest grandson, Calvin, braved the trip. They have made a habit of coming at Easter where they attend all the Puako Holy Week Masses. They have been honored to bring up the gifts and actually request to be considered for this ministry whenever they are on island.”

This heart for service is a direct result of the example the Costanzos gave their children while growing up. In addition to volunteering in the

ANDREA COSTANZO

Living Faith Through Service

local community, Fred and Andrea have also consistently served in local parish ministries. After retiring to the Big Island in 2013, they quickly looked for a parish home and ways to get involved.

“We were already familiar with Ascension from our prior visit to the island,” Andrea says. “When we moved here, we decided to experience the church community dynamics before volunteering for ministries. We quickly found that we looked forward to Sunday Mass, and were drawn to the local parishioners and the wide variety of visitors. Our path to stewardship opened up more and more.”

At Ascension, Fred continued his love of lecturing, was elected to the Pastoral Council, and also helps to prepare the weekly Mass Welcome Statements read before Sunday Mass. Both Fred and Andrea became Eucharistic Ministers, and have helped out in several ways “behind the scenes,” such as cemetery cleanups and church cleaning. Andrea is also a part of the parish Rosary Group.

“As a former Protestant, I didn’t really understand the Rosary,” she says. “But our group has helped me to understand it better. We spend a lot of time talking about prayer intentions, and I learned that while saying the Rosary, you’re thinking about the intentions all the time and praying to Mary that she will pass these intentions on to God. I had never thought about it that way!”

Finally, Fred and Andrea deeply enjoy their role as co-catechists for the parish’s Religious Education program — something in which they’ve had many years of experience.

“This is the third diocese where I’ve taught



Andrea and Fred with newest grandson, Calvin

religious education,” Andrea says. “Early on, we thought it was important for our children to see us taking an active interest in faith development. Obviously, parents are the primary instructors of their children’s faith. We are there to provide so many resources and to help the parents wherever needed. If we can offer any advice for our fellow parishioners with young family members — get them enrolled, and make sure they attend class and Mass regularly!”

This year, they are teaching third through fifth grade. Fred and Andrea have noticed that in addition to teaching the students, they themselves have been able to strengthen their own faith.

“I like that I can relate back to something that I learned in my own religious education, and put it into a concept that they can understand,” Fred says. “Last year, I was helping the person teaching first and second grade, and I remembered a visual lesson that a priest had taught us about Reconciliation. I shared that with the kids, and they really understood it. That was a really cool feeling and connection.”

“We learn so much from these kids,” Andrea says. “We’re able to see that what we are teaching them is not just Jesus 2,000 years ago — it’s Jesus now.”

Fred and Andrea encourage all parishioners to jump in and get involved — you won’t regret it.

“If you haven’t come forward to actively embrace a ministry yet, do it now!” Andrea says. “You will see that not only do ‘many hands make light work,’ but also that it is so true that you receive much more than you give!”

LET US FIND THE MANY OPPORTUNITIES *to Share and Encounter Christ this Season*

We all know classic stories of Christmas spirit instilling new life and bringing about a deeper sense of joy and gratitude — Dr. Seuss’ Grinch, whose heart grows three times its size; or Buddy the elf, who brings Christmas cheer by singing loud for all to hear; or even the cold and greedy Ebenezer Scrooge, who awoke on Christmas morning a changed man, sharing in joy and treating all with kindness. We certainly enjoy hearing these stories every year. But sometimes, even as Christians, it is so easy to forget the source of these lessons — the birth of Christ, the first Christmas itself. There are so many characters from this ancient story that remind us how to embrace this season as Catholic stewards.

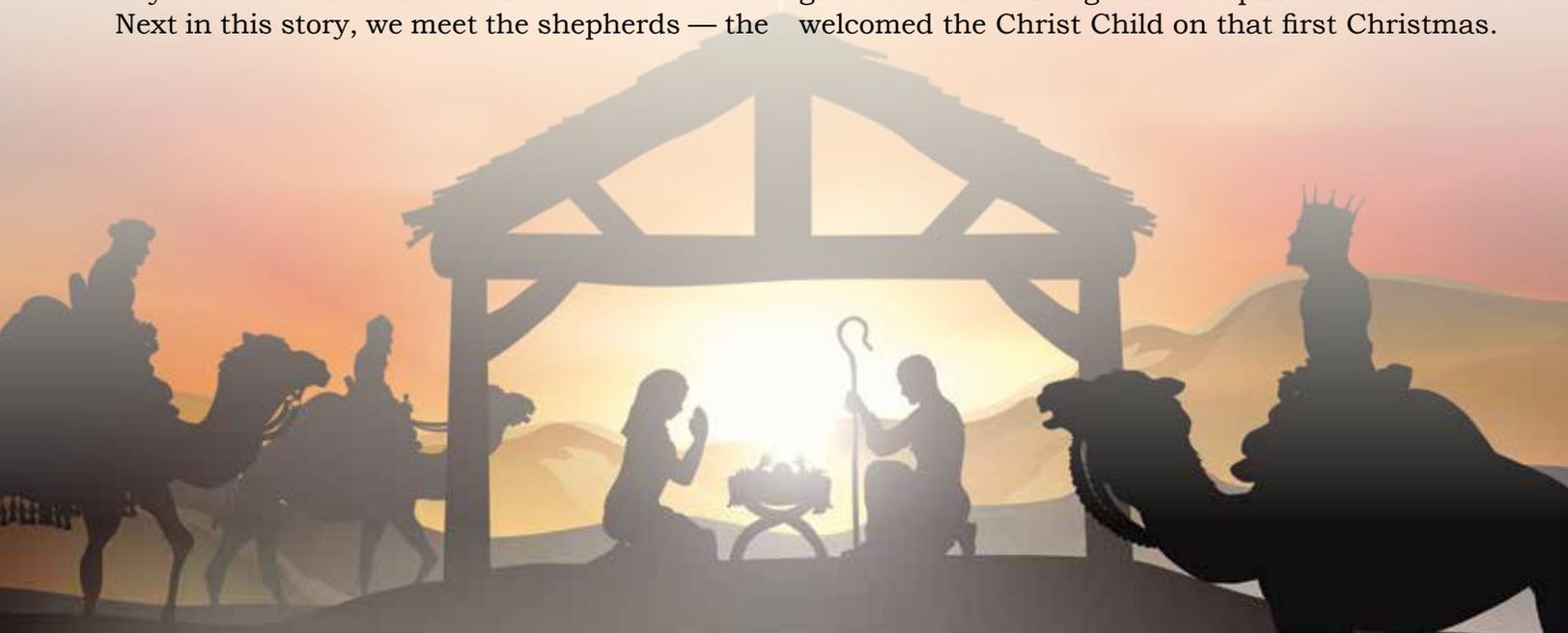
Let’s start with the innkeeper, the first character Mary and Joseph encounter before Jesus even enters the world. He does what he can — there is no room, just a stable. He has little, but what little he has he gives away freely. Unknowingly, the Christ Child enters into this world in the midst of one man’s humble offering. What a beautiful example of stewardship! Is there some small thing into which you could invite Jesus? Perhaps there is a new parishioner you could invite over for dinner, or a new mom for whom you could prepare a meal. In whatever way you might reach out, be sure to make a place at the table for your new guest and allow yourself to encounter Christ in them.

Next in this story, we meet the shepherds — the

first people to meet Jesus, to see their Savior face to face. Even in their poverty, they simply bring Jesus their very selves, this gift of their presence and eagerness to encounter Him. Consider visiting a nursing home to be with those who might not have company during this Christmas season. Or have a neighbor over who you haven’t seen in a while. Sometimes, we forget that just taking time to be present to another person can be a gift of self.

And then there are the Wise Men. Though they are better off perhaps than the shepherds or the innkeeper with their offerings, they still chose to give their very best gifts, not out of excess or what was left over. Though such finery would not usually be seen in Bethlehem, the Wise Men went out from the comfort of their homes to encounter the newborn King. Consider starting a coat or sock drive to give to those in need in the community. Spend time serving in the local soup kitchen or homeless shelter. Go where the giving is not glamorous.

No one of these characters is better than the other — in fact, without even one, the story of the birth of Christ would not be the same at all. In turn, we all have something to offer, a way that we can allow the Lord to enter into our lives during this season, or to bring Him to others that we encounter. However we may choose to give this season, let us give with the same generous spirit as those who welcomed the Christ Child on that first Christmas.



FRIDAY ADORATION

A Powerful Opportunity to be in His Presence

Some people love to pray outside. Some enjoy the peacefulness of a comfortable chair at home. Others find time to talk with God when they're driving. Then, there are those who connect with the Lord each week, between 7:30 a.m. and noon on Fridays, at Annunciation, in Eucharistic Adoration. And while the Lord loves to hear from His children regardless of their location, there is certainly something special about being in His Presence.

Parishioner Celeste Tanodra has been attending Friday adoration at Annunciation for the past three years.

"It's true, we can pray anywhere and everywhere, and that's what we're called to do — live our life as a prayer," Celeste says. "But at Mass and adoration, you can go and actually be in the King's Presence. Spending time in front of the King of Kings, it's indescribable, really."

Friday adoration begins immediately after Friday morning Mass, with a brief time of prayer and song, followed by silent prayer, until the closing Benediction.

"Silence is huge," Celeste says. "We're busy, we're always in a rush to get from one place to the next, there's so much to do in a day. I really look forward to going to adoration and spending that time in quiet, just sitting there and absorbing the peace of the Lord."



"It gives me strength," she adds. "It's where I can go and unload everything with no judgment — all of the joys, the hurts, the sorrows, the regrets, it's a release."

Over the years, adoration has become one of Celeste's favorite ways to pray and has helped her develop her communication with God.

"Adoration is where I'm most comfortable — it's home," Celeste says. "We can pray anywhere and everywhere, but His presence is truly there in adoration."

"We all have different feelings, wants, needs, and Adoration is a time where you can go and spend time with Him," she adds. "You can say everything or you can say nothing at all."

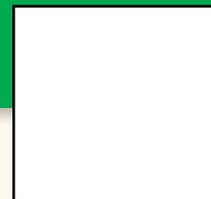
For those who attend adoration, it's an opportunity to deepen one's relationship with God, in the midst of everyday life.

"Going to adoration is a way of preparing our hearts for a deeper relationship with God," Celeste says. "It's like developing a friendship. You have to put something into it, to get something out of it."

Celeste encourages other parishioners to consider coming to adoration on Fridays.

"It is my prayer that adoration will grow, and more people will come and pray," she says. "Even if you just come for five or 10 minutes, that's all the Lord needs. When you open your heart to Him, He's always there. We have to invite Him in."

If you would like more information about Eucharistic Adoration at Annunciation, please contact the parish office at 808-887-1220. Eucharistic Adoration is held every Friday, immediately following the 7 a.m. Mass, until noon. On the first Friday of every month, adoration is also available from 6 to 9 p.m.



Annunciation / Ascension Parish
PO Box 301 Kamuela, HI 96743



December Schedule

Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation)

*Friday, Dec. 7 (Vigil)
7 p.m., Puako*

*Saturday, Dec. 8
7 a.m., Waimea*

*10 a.m., St. Michael Kailua-
Kona (Island Treasures)*

Advent Penance Service

*Thursday, Dec. 13
6 p.m., Waimea*

Christmas Eve

*Monday, Dec. 24
7 p.m., Waimea
10 p.m., Puako*

Christmas Day

*Tuesday, Dec. 25
8 a.m., Waimea
10 a.m., Puako*

MASS SCHEDULE

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