

# ANNUNCIATION CATHOLIC CHURCH & ASCENSION MISSION



## THE EUCHARIST: *The Source and Summit, the Real Gift of Jesus*

We understand it as the “source and summit of our faith.” It is the gift that nourishes our belief and is also the high point of our Catholic faith — the Eucharist.

As Catholics, we hold the unique belief that, in the Eucharist, we are invited to receive our Lord, truly present — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Our eternal God humbles Himself to be united with us in this sacrament. Unfortunately, for many of us, it’s a gift that may all too easily be taken for granted.

However, if you’re looking for inspiration in deepening your appreciation of the Eucharist, look no further than the devotion of our second-grade students.

Each year, these students prepare to receive the gift of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament for the first time, and their excitement is contagious. The formation program teaches the children about



topics such as the Mass, prayer, the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, and more.

Parishioner and parish secretary, Mary Erickson, has spent the past 10 years serving as a catechist, preparing our second-grade students to receive Jesus in the Eucharist. In turn, she has found her own faith and devotion to the Eucharist has been strengthened through her experience.

“Receiving the Eucharist strengthens my faith with the realization that Christ is in me,” Mary says. “It gives me the courage to live life and accept life’s challenges, knowing He is with me through it all.”

Mary reminds her fellow parishioners of the fact that, by welcoming Jesus — truly present in the Blessed Sacrament — into ourselves, we have a chance to be uniquely and intimately united with Him.

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## TEACHING CHILDREN TO LIVE A LIFE OF *Stewardship*

**H**ow old do you have to be to practice stewardship? Can a 5-year-old embrace stewardship? How about a 10-year-old?

Although there is no guideline to what the right age is to begin to live a life of stewardship, God's call certainly extends to each of His children — even the young ones.

It is especially important to show children that they are not too young to share their time, talent and treasure to help build God's kingdom.

### *Sharing Your Time*

A young child can share of his time in a variety of ways appropriate to his ability. For example, during the day, a child can pray for a loved one that is hurt, or say prayers with his parents or siblings. He or she can participate in Mass each Sunday, and even take time each day to thank God for a veteran who has served our country.

Spending time being virtuous — such as being patient, generous and kind — is also a great example of sharing our time for love of God.

### *Sharing Your Talent*

Using God-given talents to glorify God can also be performed by both young and old. An elementary school-age child can easily clean her room or perform chores such as raking leaves, doing laundry or taking care of pets. Making cards for people who are sick or who have had a death in

the family are other concrete examples of being a faithful steward.

Even using our talents — such as playing a musical instrument or football — to the best of our abilities to give God glory is an example of being a good steward.

### *Sharing Your Treasure*

Although children do not have the same type of treasure to share as adults, instilling the importance of sharing finances is an important lesson.

If a child receives an allowance, he can return a portion of it to the Church in the collection basket. If he gets money for his birthday, he can give a small portion of it back to God in thanksgiving. Little ones can even share things like their Halloween candy with their siblings or friends as a way of demonstrating generosity.

### *The Most Important Lesson*

Above all, the most important lesson to teach our children is why we share. We don't share because we "have to." We don't share because our parents tell us to. We share our time, talent and treasure with God because we are thankful for the blessings He has given us and we want to thank Him for His generosity.

Teaching these lessons at a young age will allow a lifetime of good stewardship to follow for even the youngest of God's children.



# 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.

## MEET PARISHIO

*Former RCIA Candidate and Football Fan Scoring To*

*Devo Voss received a 2019 Island Treasure Award from Bishop Larry Silva for his service to the Ascension Mission parish.*

Knowing what a servant of Christ we have in recent Island Treasure Award recipient Devo Voss, it's hard to believe there was a time when the only "Hail Marys" Devo was interested in were taking place on the football field! Now, 15 years after joining the Catholic Church, Devo can't imagine his life without the guidance of both our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Mother. His involvement in parish life at Ascension Mission is a testament to the powerful ways in which God calls us all to active discipleship in His own time.

Raised both a Lutheran and Jehovah's Witness, Devo first became interested in learning more about the Catholic faith when he was reminded by a religious sister that he should not be receiving Holy Communion with his wife, Carrie, and their children. Then-pastor Fr. Bob Wynne noticed that Devo was upset by this Church teaching, so he personally called Devo to explain the Catholic view of the Eucharist and invite him to come learn more through the parish RCIA process.

"The funny thing was, when I asked Father what day the classes were held, he said Monday, and I told him I couldn't go on Mondays," Devo says. "He asked if I worked those evenings, and I said 'No, I actually watch Monday Night Football.' So he said he would call me back in 30 minutes. He called everyone in the class and then called me back and said, 'Guess what? Everyone likes Monday Night Football. We decided to move the class to Tuesdays.'

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*"If you want to get closer to God, just try stewardship and you will meet people whose hearts are open to sharing their love for God. The more you're around people like that, it's infectious. Everyone has a million things going on, but the focal point for them is God — they are grounded in Him. I met a lot of people like that, and it enhanced my faith even more." — Devo Voss*

# NER DEVO VOSS

## *Touchdowns with Christ Through His Active Faith Life*

“After he did all that, I had to give it a shot,” he adds. “That was probably the greatest thing I ever did. I learned all about the Roman Catholic faith, and it changed my life.”

In RCIA, Devo was amazed by Fr. Wynne’s ability to explain the tenets of the faith in such a clear and genuine manner. Even Father’s explanation of the relationship between Catholics and the saints — especially Mary — rang true for Devo. He became a full member of the Catholic Church about 15 years ago, but parish involvement was difficult for him at the time since he had to work on Sundays.

In the meantime, Devo’s wife, Carrie, had become more engaged in church life. First, she began helping with Religious Education. Then, she became a Eucharistic Minister. When Devo’s work schedule changed right around the time of last year’s Stewardship Renewal process, Carrie encouraged him to sign up to serve as a lector and Eucharistic Minister.

Once he began participating more fully in the Mass, Devo’s experience of the Catholic faith was greatly enhanced.

“Prior to becoming engaged in parish life, you’re like an observer in a stadium,” he says. “You show up for Mass and watch and go through the rituals, and then you leave. You don’t realize that someone has to open the place, clean the place, and there are a lot of people serving so we can have the Mass. It really opened up my mind to learn all that went on behind the scenes.”

In addition to actively participating in the Mass, Devo has found another way to grow closer in his walk with Christ — by building a relationship with His Blessed Mother through the Rosary. About a year ago, he found a book on the Rosary online and began reading it out of simple curiosity. The book so inspired him that he sat up all night reading it, and soon



*Devo Voss gathers with his family and Bishop Larry Silva after receiving the Island Treasure Award.*

developed a great devotion to praying the Rosary. With Fr. Stephen's support he started a group which comes together to offer a Rosary at 6 p.m. on Tuesday evenings at Ascension Mission. Devo firmly believes that if more people begin gathering to pray the Rosary, wonderful things will start happening in the world.

Thankful for the abundant blessings that come with an ever-deepening faith life, Devo would encourage anyone who is currently “sitting in the stands” of the Church to come down onto the playing field and get more involved in parish life!

“If you want to get closer to God, just try stewardship and you will meet people whose hearts are open to sharing their love for God,” he says. “The more you’re around people like that, it’s infectious. Everyone has a million things going on, but the focal point for them is God — they are grounded in Him. I met a lot of people like that, and it enhanced my faith even more.

“We have the ability to give all year of our talents, and it’s so rewarding doing something for others and knowing that in the end it is glorifying God,” he adds. “It’s just a great blessing, and it brings so much joy.”

# ALTAR SERVERS

*“I like being involved in the Mass. I continue to be involved because serving is fun, and it is great to spend time with new people. I pay more attention to the Mass when I am an altar server, so I gain more knowledge from the Mass.” — Amanda Jordan*

Are you looking for a way to involve your children in parish life, or to further open their eyes to the joy of the Mass? Or are you looking for a way to draw closer to Christ yourself? Look no further than the Altar Servers Ministry, which is a great way to serve God, serve others and grow in faith.

“We are blessed,” says ministry coordinator Geri Giffin. “We have wonderful altar servers at our parish and at our mission church in Puako.”

Children may begin altar serving once they have received their First Communion, and our Religious Education program encourages children of all ages to get involved, including our middle school and high school students.

Altar servers at Annunciation and Ascension Mission receive “on-the-job” training, in which they are put on the schedule and immediately

begin serving, while simultaneously receiving training from the presiding priest throughout the Mass.

“Once a child shows interest, we want to capture that interest and move forward right away,” Geri says. “Father guides them through each step, and coaches them the whole time until they don’t need to be coached anymore.”

Servers are scheduled via Ministry Scheduler Pro, and can indicate their preferences as to which days and Mass times they’d like to serve. This also allows family members who are part of different liturgical ministries to serve at the same Masses.

“It’s a great way for families to serve together, and it becomes even more meaningful,” Geri says. “This often makes the child be more excited about serving as an altar server.”

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*Amanda serving at Mass*

## GROWING IN FAITH WHILE SERVING GOD AND THE PARISH COMMUNITY

Since they experience the Mass in an “up close and personal” way, altar servers have an opportunity to grow in their understanding of the Mass and the miracle of the Eucharist.

Serving at the altar as children also helps to instill in them at an early age the value of service. What better place to serve than at the Lord's table during Mass!

“I like being involved in the Mass,” says Amanda Jordan, who began serving four years ago, when she was in fourth grade. “I continue to be involved because serving is fun, and it is great to spend time with new people. I pay more attention to the Mass when I am an altar server, so I gain more knowledge from the Mass.”

“Serving helps them grow in their faith because they are following Jesus,” says Religious Education Coordinator Jane Aganus.

“We also feel that serving helps the servers to understand the Order of the Mass,” Geri adds. “They cover that in Religious Education, but to be serving at the Mass really cements that whole concept.”

For Amanda and her mother, Mary Pueringer, altar serving has also brought their family together in faith.

“It enriches our church experience as a family,” Mary says. “We have great conversations after Mass and have learned more about the rituals of Mass and services like Holy Thursday and Good Friday. She even served on Ash Wednesday on my birthday one year, which was a special way to celebrate. We also arrive at church earlier when she serves, which is a bonus.”

Annunciation and Ascension Mission take great pride in their altar servers, and encourage anyone who is interested and eligible to get involved!

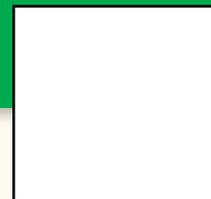
“I love to see their pride in serving the Lord and helping Father during the Mass — they're up there at the altar just beaming,” Geri says. “I can't say enough how I look at those altar servers with pride. They're great, and we're grateful for their service to the parish!”



*Amanda Jordan on her first day of altar serving*



*Amanda serving at Mass this past November*



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## THE EUCHARIST: *The Source and Summit, the Real Gift of Jesus* *continued from front cover*

“One cannot get any closer to Jesus than when He is inside us and we are communicating with Him,” Mary says. “The more we receive the Eucharist and take this special time to acknowledge His presence in us, the closer our relationship gets with Jesus.”

In receiving the Eucharist, Mary hopes that both her students and others will take the opportunity to reflect on the gift they’ve been given and the way it should impact their daily lives.

“Every time we receive the Eucharist, we talk to Jesus, thanking Him for this great gift, thanking Him for our lives, for prayers answered, and asking His help for our needs,” Mary says.

“We go to Mass to receive the greatest gift, the Eucharist, and to hear the Word of God to know how we should be living,” she adds. “Then we offer ourselves, our lives back to God in thanksgiving.”

Mary encourages all Catholics, young and old, to foster a deeper sense of appreciation for the gift that we receive in the Eucharist.

“Catholics can foster a sense of appreciation for the Eucharist by spending time talking to Jesus, thinking of the fact that He is inside you and guiding you, and talking about this exciting fact with our families,” Mary says. “The Eucharist gives us comfort knowing Christ is with us through all life’s challenges.”

*If you would like more information, or to sign your child up for First Communion preparation, please contact Religious Education Coordinator, Jane Aganus at 808-887-1203 or [annunciationwaimeare@gmail.com](mailto:annunciationwaimeare@gmail.com).*

## MASS SCHEDULE

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