



St. Michael the Archangel Parish

Aloha nō Fr. Noé Acosta! E Komo Mai!

As a child, Fr. Noé Acosta sensed that Our Lord had a special mission for his life, and he opened his heart to it freely.

“Ever since I was little, I always felt very drawn to the things of God, and I believed He was calling me to become a priest,” he says. “I was raised in a Catholic family and was deeply impacted by the Christian testimony of one of my grandmothers. In my home, my parents had an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and every night before I went to bed I would speak to her and pray, ‘Help me to become a priest.’”

However, following this divine call wasn’t always so clear-cut and easy.

“When I was an adolescent, I began to fall away from God,” he says. “However, after a few years, I returned to the Church. I joined a group of Catholic young people and began serving as a full-time missionary. Two years later, I attended a seminary for 11 years named *Seminario Conciliar de Ciudad Juarez*, in Chihuahua, Mexico, since I had to start from high school to finish with theology.”

Fr. Noé was ordained to the eternal priesthood of Jesus Christ on July 7, 2007, in the Diocese of *Nuevo Casas Grandes*, in Chihuahua, Mexico. Since his ordination, he served as Pastor of the Church of *San Isidro Labrador* (St. Isidore of Labrador) for seven years, where



Fr. Noé Acosta is truly enthusiastic about being part of our parish family, and has many joys and hopes to share with us.

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Is Christ the Lord of Our Checkbook?

There is a humorous proverb that says at the end of our lives, there will be two books that determine who we have been — the Book of Life and our checkbook. It sounds a bit ridiculous, but the fact is, how we spend our money says a whole lot about where our hearts lie. Jesus Himself told us, “Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be” (Matt. 6:21). Our actions are supposed to glorify God. How many of us are eager to show God the glory we have given Him in our checkbooks? Are we ordering our finances responsibly, and is our stewardship of treasure truly Christian?

For the majority of Americans, Christian stewardship of finances is virtually non-existent. Consider the following statistics:

- 49 percent of Americans don’t pay their bills on time.
- 65 percent of Americans don’t do a good job of staying out of debt.
- 82 percent of Americans don’t save adequately for the future.
- On average, Americans give less than 2 percent of their income to charity, and Catholics give about 1 percent of their income toward charitable causes.
- A majority of those getting divorces point to finances as one of the primary causes of their breakup.

What we do reflects who we are as persons — therefore, there can really be no separation of our personal finances and our spiritual lives and our relationship with God. As much as we would like to hide our less-than-ideal financial situation, hiding that from God would be like running away from the well when we are dying of thirst. The mark of a Christian steward

is that he recognizes God as the source of everything he has and that Jesus is the answer to all our problems, including our financial woes.

In short, financial freedom consists in putting God first, and allowing Him to be Lord over all our actions. It means praying for the grace of the Holy Spirit in our financial dealings, and responding to that grace by spending responsibly.

One of the most effective ways to manage money well is to budget — to figure out what you are spending your money on and how much you are spending, to look for areas that need improvement — where you should spend more, less or not at all — and then to draw up a practical plan for spending more wisely and more Christ-like in the future. If you aren’t doing this already, now is a great time to start. The following can serve as a guide:

- Be realistic about income and expenses.
- Distinguish between wants and needs.
- Avoid unnecessary debt, especially credit card debt. If you have too much debt, make a plan of monthly payments and stick to the payments.
- Make charitable donations and savings a priority even though your first instinct may be to let them go (remember, tithing is a tangible way to show God that He comes first in your life).
- Designate a time and day each week to address financial matters, including paying bills.
- Most important: Pray for God’s guidance and grace to manage your finances according to His will.

“Every man also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and the power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and find enjoyment in his toil — this is the gift of God” (Ecclesiastes 5:19).



A Letter From Our Pastor

Being Good Stewards of Our Personal Harvest

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

October is that special time of year when the summer-time heat has long since broken and Fall is in the air.

For most of the country, October also brings the completion of harvest. Although most Americans live in urban areas and many of us seldom ever see a farm, the foods we all eat – fruits and vegetables, meats, milk, and the grain for our bread – come from farms and ranches across American and around the world.

Some of us may feel completely detached from farm life and think that the harvest has little to do with us, but we are all connected with agriculture more closely than we realize. The success of the harvest affects the prices we pay; and if the harvest were to fail completely, there would soon be nothing available to put on our grocery shelves.

In the Old Testament world, most people were farmers, and the Israelites were to bring offerings to God from the harvest of their fields and flocks. The success of the harvest directly affected their wellbeing during the next year. At their agricultural festivals, “the measure of your own freewill offering shall be in proportion to the blessing the



Lord, your God, has bestowed on you” (Dt 16:10) they were told.

The same holds true for us. We may not have a harvest of fruits or grains, but we do receive a return for our own labor, whether it is in a factory, an office, a classroom, or wherever. And, we also are invited by God to return a portion to Him for His glory and our own spiritual welfare, in proportion to the blessings we have received.

It’s ultimately a choice we make. Are we going to hoard everything we get, or are we going to share our Time, Talent and Treasure, which all are ultimately

gifts that God gives us?

The Israelites brought the “first fruits of the various products” (Dt 26:2) they raised. Are we, as stewards, going to return the first fruits, rather than the leftovers, to God? What choice will you make?

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Lio Faletoi

The Israelites brought the “first fruits of the various products” (Dt 26:2) they raised. Are we, as stewards, going to return the first fruits, rather than the leftovers, to God? Is that the choice I will make? Is that the choice you will make?



Island Treasure Award Recipient *Sue Biro*

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Sit down for a chat with Sue Biro, one of our 2018 Bishop's Island Treasure Award recipients, and you will find that there is one word that keeps popping up when she speaks about stewardship — privilege. Indeed, Sue considers the ability to serve God and His people to be a great privilege, and it is this belief that shapes the way she lives out her faith every day.

When Sue and her husband, Alexander, first moved from their native Connecticut to Hawai'i 25 years ago, Sue said to him, "I give it two years." After all, the couple had only ever visited Hawai'i once, on a cruise they had taken a few years earlier. Sue could not have guessed how very much at home they would come to feel here in Kona!

The warm welcome they received when they first arrived here and began attending St. Michael was the first indication that their "two-year stay" might turn into more. Now, the couple attends our mission church, Holy Rosary, which is just a mile from their home.

"Holy Rosary is such a wonderful little church," Sue says. "It's a very warm, warm family — it's like we're all 'ohana there. We all care about each other in the parish, and anybody will help you in whatever you might need without batting an eyelash."

While Sue began serving as a lector as soon as she and Alexander arrived in our parish, her demanding work schedule in those early years made it difficult to truly immerse herself in our many ministries. However, she always knew she wanted to do more.

"Five years ago I retired, so I thought, 'OK, now it's time to give back to God for what He has given me,'" Sue says. "So I asked myself what I could do to serve Him. He blesses us in so many ways, and sometimes we don't even realize it until we really stop to think — simple things like being able to do the grocery shopping, or seeing a beautiful butterfly go by. I began to appreciate God in everything I see and do, and to give Him thanks in big and small ways."



Sue Biro, one of the 2018 Bishop's Island Treasure Award recipients

Currently, Sue serves at Holy Rosary as a lector, Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion and altar server. She also cleans the church once a month and lends a helping hand on the Church Environment team.

In all she does, Sue remains thankful for the opportunity to serve.

"When I go to clean, I think of it as a privilege, not a chore," she says. "It's a privilege God has given me to clean His house. I've always enjoyed being a lector — it's also a privilege to proclaim the Word. And it's the same thing with serving as a Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion — it's just an honor to be able to give the Body and Blood of Christ to someone who is receiving."



Sue is Grateful for the Privilege of Service

Each day, Sue strives to stay in tune to the many blessings in her life, whether they be something as simple as a colorful sunset or as considerable as her 53-year-long marriage, five children, and grandchildren. By keeping a strong sense of gratitude at the forefront, she finds that giving back to God becomes a natural part of everyday life.

"I'm blessed to have five healthy children and to live here on the island," she says. "And just the little things God has done to bless us over the years — the more I see what He has done, the closer in I'm drawn. I owe Him more and more. And God

just wants us to do His will, to be faithful to Him and do the very best we can.

Every day that God gives us is a blessing, and the older you get, the more you realize that," Sue adds. "It's been a privilege to live a long life. God sees us through everything and blesses us so much. We can never thank Him enough."

All of us here at St. Michael and Holy Rosary consider it *our* privilege to have dedicated parishioners like Sue giving of their time and talent in stewardship to our parish 'ohana, and we are truly grateful for such a spirit of service!

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Sue Biro (center right) with fellow recipients of the 2018 Bishop's Island Treasure Award

Darlene Gawlik Grows in Faith



Through her work as a catechist, Darlene Gawlik is grateful for the constant reminder to grow in faith and share it with everyone she meets.

Throughout her husband's Army career, Darlene Gawlik and her family had the opportunity to live all around the country and even around the world. During each of these times of transition, getting involved at their local parish was a great way to create a sense of stability and to give back to the community that welcomed them.

"Since we were a military family, always moving, and always needing to start over, we quickly learned that the best way to make a new place feel like home is to get involved right away," Darlene says. "We always sought out our church as soon as we arrived — now, of course, that's been replaced by looking up the church on the internet before we even arrive. We moved to Kailua-Kona in December 2016, and immediately registered and started attending Mass at St. Michael. I clearly remember being awestruck by the beauty of the church, and feeling so welcome at our very first Mass, when we were greeted so warmly and given our shell leis!

The St. Michael's congregation is truly like a large 'ohana full of so many people who are so generous with their time, talents, and treasure."

As one of the recipients of the 2018 Bishop's Island Treasure awards, Darlene credits her family, and especially her grandmother — who prayed the Rosary with her and took her to confession — for her strong faith.

Originally from New Jersey, Darlene and her husband, John, are high school sweethearts.

"We met in high school band, and we still play together, currently in the West Hawai'i County Band!" she says. "We married right after we both graduated from college, and have been married for 39 years. We have two grown sons — Matthew, 34, a software engineer who lives in Madison, Wisc.; and Evan, 31, a math professor at University of Hawai'i, who lives in Honolulu. Both got married this summer to lovely women!"

Darlene started volunteering in the parish office just a few weeks after they registered as parishioners.



and Community Through Stewardship

She works in the office every Monday, helping with the money counters in the early morning and providing assistance throughout the day for whatever is needed.

“Being in the office has helped me realize what an essential role the church plays in the lives of so many,” she says. “I have been privileged to meet so many kind, caring, and giving people who are true disciples of Jesus. They certainly help me keep the faith, and are an inspiration for me to share it with others.”

Darlene also serves as a catechist for the parish Faith Formation program.

“One of the first people I met here was Cynthia Taylor. I told her that I’d taught Faith Formation at many different parishes over the years, and that I’d love to help,” she says. “She immediately put me to work as a sub, and shortly after, I finished out the rest of the year for a teacher who unexpectedly could not complete the year. I continue to teach third grade, and I love every minute of it!”

Through her work as a catechist, Darlene has been able to strengthen her own faith as she teaches the children and answers questions from parents.

She is grateful for the constant reminder to grow in faith and share it with everyone she meets.

“I have been blessed to be able to learn so much more from the children than I could ever teach them,” she says. “I try to ask the children each week, ‘How did you share the Good News this week?’ Obviously, I must also ask myself that question, and challenge myself to do the same.”

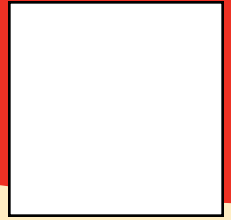
Throughout her many military moves, Darlene has also made the effort to volunteer at local schools, libraries, scouting programs, the Red Cross, Army Community Service, and more. She currently volunteers for the local library and the emergency room at the hospital. For Darlene, serving as a community volunteer is a natural extension of stewardship.

“It’s so important to get involved,” she says. “Being involved — by teaching, making a meal for a family in need, singing in the choir, whatever it is we do — benefits not only the people we serve, but ourselves as well. Serving as an active member of the community helps ignite our faith, and being grounded in that faith helps us grow in grace.”

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— Darlene Gawlik



Darlene Gawlik and family celebrate her son’s wedding.



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Fr. Noé Acosta *continued from front cover*

he was in charge of the Youth Ministry program. Later, he served as the Pastor of the Church of *San Antonio de Padua* (St. Anthony of Padua) for three years, where he was also in charge of the Youth Ministry and Vocation Ministry. Bishop Larry Silva then invited him to come work in the Diocese of Honolulu, where he served the Hispanic community in Maui.

Fr. Noé is enthusiastic about joining our parish `ohana, and has much to share with us.

"I am very happy with this new mission that Bishop Larry has entrusted to me to work in St. Michael's Parish with Fr. Lio," Fr. Noé says. "As Parochial Vicar of his parish, I believe that my mission is to collaborate with Fr. Lio in whatever he asks of me, always looking for ways

to give my best to help the community, while remaining aware of my limitations. During my time at St. Michael's, I hope to integrate more people into the parish community through evangelization, and help form marriages that will foster families with Christian values."

Overall, Fr. Noé deeply enjoys being a priest, and leading others toward a deeper relationship with God.

"What I enjoy most about being a priest is celebrating Mass and accompanying people on the journey of life, sharing with them in their sorrows and their joys," Fr. Noé says. "To me, the most important aspect of the priesthood is to save souls."

We thank God for the gift that Fr. Noé is to our parish, and include him in our daily prayers.

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Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil: 5 p.m. • Sunday: 7 a.m. (Hawaiian/English), 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. (English), 12:00 noon and 6 p.m. (Spanish)
Daily: Mon-Sat 7 a.m. • Mon-Tues-Thurs-Fri 12 p.m. • Confessions: Saturday 9-9:30 a.m.
Immaculate Conception Mission: Sunday 8 a.m. • Holy Rosary Mission: Sunday 10 a.m.