

Vol 01 | April 2021

# St. Michael School

## NEWSLETTER



*Seventh grader Adriana with Fr. Ernie, her mom, and brother after being baptized and fully initiated into the Catholic Church on Easter Sunday.*

## CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

The Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is the central focus of our Christian life. Without the Resurrection, the person of Jesus would have been a great story at best, but not a story of our salvation. The Resurrection offers a promise that those who are faithful to Jesus Christ have an eternal hope to join him in heaven at the conclusion of this earthly life.

At St. Michael School, we celebrate this in several different ways. This month, on Easter Sunday, several of our students and young siblings were baptized into the Church. Baptism is a sacrament by which we “die” to our former selves and “rise” to new life in Jesus as members of His Body, the Church. This act of dying and rising models Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection to new life. Next month, there will be several other students who will receive their sacraments of initiation, particularly Confirmation (in which they will be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, completing their baptism) and First Holy Communion (in which they receive the Body and Blood of Christ).

The forty days of Lent are concluded in which we suppressed the singing of the “Alleluia” at Mass. But during Easter time, which is fifty days of celebration, we sing the songs of “Alleluia”, a joyous word of praise to the Lord! At noon, instead of praying the Angelus (a prayer acknowledging that God became man), we now pray or sing the Regina Caeli, a prayer rejoicing as at the Resurrection through the lens of our Blessed Mother Mary.

Finally, in our school garden, you can often observe the transformational process of the caterpillars metamorphosing into butterflies. Once it becomes a butterfly, it cannot go back to being a caterpillar. It sheds its bodies that were stuck to the branches and develops beautiful wings that allow it to fly “to the heavens”. In a similar manner is the hope of our own Resurrection. We hope to one day be permanently transformed into beautiful creatures who ascend to the highest heavens and live in perpetual bliss around the throne of God. May this Easter season change our hearts toward heaven and lead us to life everlasting. Amen.

### MR. KAINOA FUKUMOTO

Principal



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*Established in 1944, Saint Michael School is a private parochial Catholic school in the North Shore area on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. St. Michael views itself as an integrated part of a larger living faith community, committed to the goal of a Christian education.*





## A GARDEN CONTINUES TO GROW (AQUAPONIC GARDEN UPDATE)

Not quite a year old, the school's aquaponic garden is doing well with a healthy growth of lettuce, eggplants, basil and lots more.

High School Director Dallas Carter mentions the recent torrential downpours that have affected residents in the North Shore area. He says the garden required several days of clean up, but it survived.

"Last week, it was even more lush than this," says Carter. "We cut down a lot and harvested almost everything from here. It's just because we finally had a day when it was dry, like, we gotta do it today. It looks very lush and full, but it was even more so last week."

The real challenge will be during the hot days of summer. The black netting covering the aquaponic garden provides some protection, but the rest of the garden will face some fallout.

"Every year the grass goes completely brown," says Carter. "Taking care of this space, especially when we're not in session, will be a challenge. I'm sure we'll survive, but that's gonna be a big test. We might also have to add more shade for the fish too. We've got more projects. I don't foresee myself being on break too much only because we're not gonna work this hard just to let it go."

The garden also has a few new features.

One of them is the addition of a "double-duty" aquaponic system courtesy of a Saint Michael student. Two horizontal containers stand parallel to each other growing a number of healthy vegetables. From them, water pours into a rectangular pool holding the fish. It's a larger set-up than the original aquaponic garden.

Another addition is a fenced in area marked by an arch. A few sturdy, hand-built stands support the heavy Dragonfruit plant. Once its unique white flowers come into bloom, they will provide a feast for bees and other pollinators. Recycled coffee cans painted in the school colors of blue and yellow hang on posts. As Carter walks into the area with rocks crunching underfoot, he says the intent is to create a riverbed.

Right next to this area is a white tent with a single plant peeking through a netted window.

"We're raising endangered plants in the greenhouse. This is an 'ālula," states Carter, pointing to the single plant on its royal perch. "There are only about 200 of these plants left in the wild, and they're all found on the island of Kaua'i. Someone was able to harvest it for me. I leave it in there because it can't handle the rain very well."

The little blue sports car that was empty during a prior visit is now the perfect home for potted succulents.

Due to recent rains, students haven't been able to care for their raised garden boxes as much. Kamuela Dabaluz, along with the garden, has also grown—by an inch, he says—though the rains have nothing to do with his growth spurt. He points out the mini gardens cared for by the students.

Dabaluz has been hands on with the aquaponic garden since day one and he takes great pride in it. Pointing to one of the boxes that holds edible flowers among other plants, he says, "This is taken care of by the kindergarten to 1st grade classes."





"This is my baby right here," claims Dabaluz, as he stands behind the middle planter. At the third box, "And this is the 8th grade to middle school." All three boxes are doing really well.

The "boy who lives in the garden" still takes great pride in this sustainability project, and his enthusiasm and good nature are shared by all who take part in its growth and maintenance. It truly is a garden that demonstrates the importance of growing one's own food just as it continues to give to this small community.



## APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Dominick Kankwenda	April 3
April Gudoy	April 8
Wes Grimes	April 19
Isla Deuchar	April 25
Mahealani Goldsman	April 30

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Over the past two years, St. Michael School partnered with the Pacific Alliance for Catholic Education (PACE), a graduate program of the University of Portland. This program allowed us to receive two amazing teachers, Miss Tisa and Miss Hoban, who have taught in our second and third grade, respectively, over the past two years. Next year, they will be moving on to other schools, so we want to take this moment to highlight and thank them for their contributions to our school. We will miss their presence on campus next year, but we are truly grateful and blessed that they have been part of our St. Michael School 'ohana.

## TEACHER PROFILE: MADELYN HOBAN

### Tell us a little bit about yourself.

My name is Madelyn Hoban, and I am the third grade teacher here at Saint Michael School! I was born and raised in Everett, WA, and have two older brothers who I look up to in so many ways. My parents and I are also very close, as I spent much time with the two of them growing up, being the last kid in the house when both of my brothers went to college. I have attended Catholic schools my whole life, and it was my time at Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA. (Go Zags!) that helped me realize my desire to become a teacher, and specifically to teach in Catholic Schools.

### What has been one of your highlights so far this year?

The highlight that comes to mind so far this year has been the ability to be in-person at Saint Michael School. It is such a blessing to be able to come to school every day knowing that I will get to see my students in-person, and be able to share in the joys of being in the classroom together!

### What has been your greatest challenge?

As someone who is very close to family and friends, being far from home has been challenging this year. I feel blessed that FaceTime and phone calls exist, but I have felt especially grateful for any opportunity I'm given to spend quality time with my people back home.

### What are your future plans for teaching?

I am moving back to Seattle area to be closer to family and friends and teach in a Catholic grade school! I will miss the Saint Michael School community deeply, and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of the community here at SMS.

### What do you like to do for fun (outside of school)?

I love to have a solid dance party, play games with family and friends, and in the summer time back home, you can find me on an innertube or on skis, taking part in water sports. I am definitely an "adrenaline junkie" and easily persuaded to join in fun, so I have skydived, bungee jumped, and parasailed. I love spending time in the sun, so the weather here is ideal for the kind of activities that I like to do!

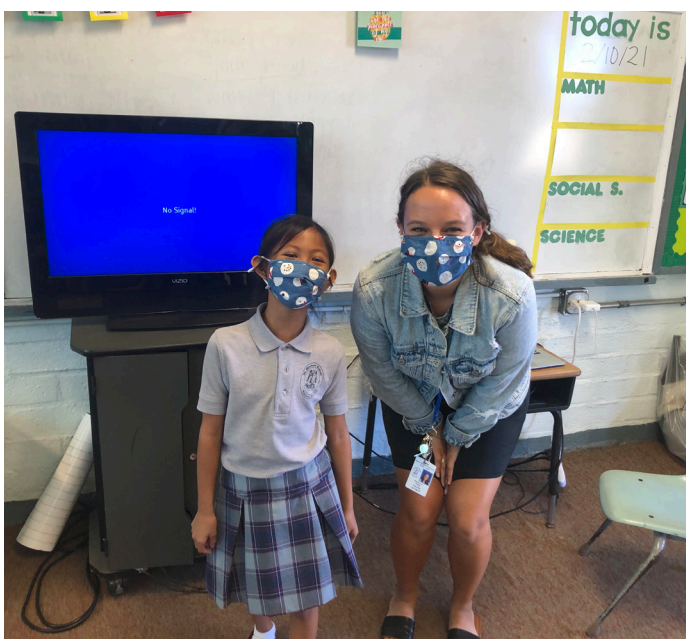
### Favorite Scripture?

"Perhaps you were born for such a time as this." (Esther 4:14) I live by the perspective that every moment has something great to offer. The moments we are living in are great memories that we will look back on one day, so I try my best to put all the good I can into each day.

### Favorite Saint?

Mother Teresa - She is known for the statement, "We cannot all do great things, but we can do small things with great love." I think this summarizes what we are called to do as followers of Christ: to live with love and share it however we feel called.





## TEACHER PROFILE: MADELINE TISA

I grew up in Chicago Illinois, and went to college in St. Louis, MO at Saint Louis University. I have three sisters, and my family now lives in Florida!

The highlights of my year so far have been to be able to be in-person with the students, and to celebrate the little things, even though it might look different. It was so much fun helping the students film for the Christmas video and the lip sync battle!

My greatest challenge has been navigating all of the changes that have come about this year. I am so proud of all of the students for adjusting so well and having grace and patience as we figure this out together.

My future plans for teaching are to stay on Oahu and hopefully in Catholic schools!

Outside of school, I love going to the beach and relaxing with a good book :)

My favorite scripture is "Love is patient, love is kind,..." (Corinthians 13:4-8).

My favorite saint is St. Catherine of Sienna, my confirmation saint!





## INNOVATION IN EDUCATION BRINGS RECOGNITION TO SAINT MICHAEL SCHOOL

In light of declining enrollment at Catholic schools and closures, Principal Kainoa Fukumoto and High School Director Dallas Carter started brainstorming. The idea they came up with kicked off prior to the pandemic and it's resulted in a few schools being able to remain open. Their idea for an online education program is so innovative, it's award winning!

"All the (Catholic) schools are very autonomous and make their own decisions," states Fukumoto. "But because enrollment for all our schools have been shrinking over the past decade, and schools have actually closed, I have been advocating to pull resources together so we can make it more sustainable for all Catholic schools."

The two men honed in on virtual learning before the public had even heard about COVID-19. The technology has been with us for years, but the pandemic created a boom in online meetings, webinars and educational opportunities.

The traditional school model of a teacher teaching in class in front of his/her students was thrown on its ear. The computer quickly became the gateway to learning with teachers on one end and students on the other. With many Catholic schools suffering due to lack of students, what if Saint Michael School "shared" its teachers via the internet?

Instead of one campus assuming all the costs for one teacher, the costs could be split across multiple campuses that participated in this virtual learning model.

"This will save them on the cost without compromising on the quality of education," says Fukumoto, "while being able to allow them to now be more sustainable and hopefully stop the closure of a lot of our Catholic schools."

"We implemented this, not just at our school," he continues, "but

we have different partner schools; one of them is on the Big Island, St. Joseph School. They were going to close last year. We entered into discussions, saying, 'Hey, we have this idea, what do you guys think?' St. Joseph was able to substantially cut costs through this plan, and along with fundraising efforts, they were able to stay open.

Fukumoto and Carter approached Catholic Virtual, an online platform offering courses designed for Catholic students taught by Catholic-trained teachers. They work with Catholic schools to take their courses online.

"We said, 'What if we incorporated our own teachers as a way for us to sustain Catholic education,'" shares Fukumoto. "They jumped onboard...and experienced a great amount of growth because of this model we presented to them."

Carter now teaches theology incorporating this model to students at Saint Michael, in town, on the Big Island and on Maui. He also has students on the U.S. Mainland and as far away as Japan, Okinawa, Saipan and Singapore. There are no geographical boundaries with virtual learning, but time zones can be a little tricky.

"In a summer and a half we created this huge model, and it's been a grind in its first year," says Carter. "But as far as the effect on the people and their experiences, it's been positive, it's been great."

"It's really spread in many places, not just here in Hawai'i, but many people whom we don't even know, and students and states involved...I think we kinda broke the ice, purposefully getting in meetings to say, 'You should try it too!'"

The two have spent a lot of time and effort to get the word out about the program and have discussed its merit with various school principals, talking with superintendents, administrators, and held





Zoom meetings for interested parents and school administrators.

Prior to the pandemic, Chaminade University had heard about the innovative model being shared by the two administrators. In partnership with the Hawaii Catholic Schools office, they awarded them and Saint Michael School with the first ever Ka Ho'oulu Award for innovation in Catholic education.

Another facet to the program is reaching the younger students.

"This is what colleges do, so why can't we bring it to the lower levels," shares Fukumoto, "because what we find at colleges is students, specifically freshmen, who go into these online classes, drop out soon after because they're not used to this style of education.

"So we're thinking if we started younger, maybe they'll be more successful. You can go to any college of your choice just by taking online courses. And you'll be more successful because you have the experience of doing it before you even get into your freshman year."

The hard work and time spent in developing this educational program has resulted in Catholic schools remaining open, the spread of Catholic-based classes, as well as sharing the talent of gifted teachers to a global audience. It's a win-win situation all the way around and a job very well done. Congratulations Mr. Fukumoto and Mr. Carter!

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## FAITH FIRST, THE REST WILL FOLLOW

*"It is not the actual physical exertion that counts towards a man's progress, nor the nature of the task, but the spirit of faith with which it is undertaken." — St. Francis Xavier*

Rather than focusing on just the curricular offerings like any other school, Saint Michael School integrates Catholic culture into the life of the campus. Students pray together daily, attend Mass weekly, and often, Catholic-focused content is shared across the different subject areas.

It's also more than going through the practices or viewing pictures of saints on the walls. Catholic identity has to do with one's heart and behavior and how we treat and interact with one another—our family, students, friends and staff. Saint Michael School encourages an inclusive environment of compassion, respect, human dignity, justice, and love of God and neighbor.

Because of this focus, there has been a unique success on campus.

"In the last four years within our small student body, we've had over 50 people baptized and become Catholic," says Carter. "That doesn't happen anywhere. It especially doesn't happen in a place that doesn't proselytize, that doesn't say, 'You should.' We just teach what we teach."

"We teach kids as if they are Catholic. There's no proselytization, no forcing of anything. But you're going to do certain things because you're at a Catholic school."

"That's the purpose of Catholic schools. We've forgotten that. With that said, we've had the highest test scores that we've ever had! If you order your life properly, you order the school properly, things happen. When you order things properly in your life, God takes care of the rest."

Carter says that since focusing on faith first, the student body has increased, more funds have become available and new programs have been established.

At the school, faith is the solid foundation upon which each student is encouraged to develop to his/her full potential, and if done the Saint Michael School way, things will fall into place.



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At the heart of Saint Michael School are three staff members who stand ready to assist when needed (left to right): Anvie Alcayde, vice principal, 9 months; Thelma Lancaster, business manager, 13 years; and Elaine Cubi, secretary, 22 years. Administrative Professionals' Day is celebrated on April 21st this year, so we honor and thank our office staff for all they do for our school.



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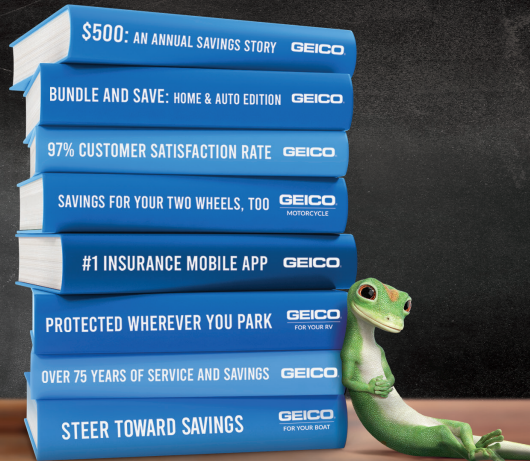
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