



Holy Rosary Church

A Century of Faithfulness through Mary's Fullness of Grace

Centennial Celebration

OPENING THE PAST, ENTRUSTING THE FUTURE: HOLY ROSARY'S TIME CAPSULE CEREMONY

By Almie Lonzaga | February 3, 2026



With prayerful reflection and deep gratitude, the Holy Rosary community gathered to mark a historic milestone—the opening of the time capsule sealed one hundred years ago during the laying of the church's cornerstone. Held on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, the ceremony served as both a remembrance of the past and a renewed commitment to the future, honoring the faith, sacrifice, and hope of those who built this sacred place a century ago.

As the capsule was opened, it revealed more than objects preserved by time. It uncovered the hearts of a faithful community who built not only with stone and mortar but also with trust in God and enduring devotion inspired by Mary, full of grace. Their faith raised a church, strengthened a community, and began a legacy that has endured for a full century—one that now rests in the hands of a new generation.

A Call to Be Light

In his reflection, Msgr. Terence Watanabe reminded those gathered of the spiritual significance of the day. He noted that the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord was once known as *Candlemas*, a celebration proclaiming Christ as the Light of the World. That light, he emphasized, is not only something we receive but something we are called to embody.

As the community approached the century-old artifacts, Msgr. Watanabe reflected that the people who came before us clearly understood this call—*“to truly be light to the world.”* Their faith, he said, was lived out in daily care, steadfast support, and faithful stewardship of Holy Rosary. Standing together one hundred years later is both a powerful testimony to what has gone before and a challenge for the future: that we recognize we stand on their shoulders and take good care of this sacred place so others may continue to encounter the presence of the Lord in their lives.

The Voices of the Past Preserved

The contents of the 1926 time capsule offered a tangible glimpse into the lives, sacrifices, and hopes of Holy Rosary’s founders. Among the most moving discoveries was a list of parishioners who contributed financially to the construction of the church. The amounts varied—some as modest as \$1, others as generous as \$100—yet together they testified to a shared commitment rooted not in wealth, but in faith and love for the church.

Also found was a stack of written pledges, in which parishioners committed to giving over a specified period of time to help complete the church; some of the last names the parishioners recognized. These pledges reflect long-term trust, perseverance, and sacrificial generosity—marks of a community determined to build something that would endure.

Additional items preserved within the capsule included a Maui News magazine, capturing island life at the time of the cornerstone ceremony; coins from many nations, reflecting the diverse cultural backgrounds of the early parish community; a Korean booklet, pointing to global connections present even in those early years; and church documents that recorded the organization and faith life of the parish. Together, these artifacts tell a powerful story of faith, unity, and shared purpose.

A Cornerstone of Community Life

In his message marking the occasion, Mayor Richard Bissen, Jr. reflected on the enduring role Holy Rosary has played in Paia and beyond. He shared that *“this place has long provided a place for worship, for reflection, and special gathering during life’s most meaningful moments.”* Through its presence and service, the church has fostered shared values that strengthen families and neighborhoods, *“especially in a small neighborhood like Paia.”*

The mayor also emphasized the stabilizing influence of faith-rooted institutions, particularly in times of change, stating that such institutions *“offer us stability, continuity and the care that we achieve and install the change that we’re going through.”* Expressing gratitude, he added, *“I extend a deep appreciation to the leadership, the clergy, the congregation for carrying forward the responsibility with clear dedication.”* The opening of the time

capsule, he noted, challenges the community *“to be thoughtful stewards of our community and mindful of our future generations, who one day look back on what we have left behind.”*

A Centennial Proclamation

Adding to the significance of the day was a County Council proclamation, presented by Councilmember Nohe U'u-Hodgins and signed by all members of the Maui County Council. The proclamation formally recognized the centennial of Holy Rosary Church and honored its enduring impact on the community. It mentioned that it “has been a place where faith has been nurtured, and generations have found comfort, hope, and belonging. And that “this milestone honors a legacy rooted in love, faith, and steadfast commitment that continues to inspire and uplift the community.”

The proclamation affirmed Holy Rosary's place not only as a house of worship but also as an enduring spiritual and cultural anchor within Maui's history.

A Living Church, Looking Ahead

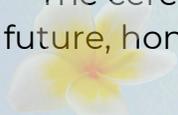
Msgr. Watanabe further invited the community to recommit itself to being *“the light and salt of the earth”* on Maui—to radiate Christ's presence, to ensure that in this place everyone is welcome, and to carry God's love into families, neighborhoods, and daily life. The light entrusted to earlier generations, he reminded the faithful, is now in our hands.

The opening of the time capsule marked not an ending, but the beginning of a yearlong centennial celebration honoring Holy Rosary's history, celebrating its present vitality, and preparing faithfully for the future. Planned events will culminate with the anniversary of the dedication of the church altar on February 20, 2027, recalling the first Mass celebrated within its walls.

Looking ahead, the community was reminded that those gathered today are now the foundation for the next hundred years, just as their ancestors were the foundation for them. United in gratitude for the past and faith in what lies ahead, Holy Rosary moves forward, called to live God's word, proclaim His love, and bring mercy and compassion to all, ensuring that the light entrusted continues to burn brightly for generations to come.



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Almie manages the church website and the church bulletin. For questions and contributions, please contact:

Phone
(808) 385-1504


Almie Lonzaga

Email
s_almie@yahoo.com