

# St. Rita Catholic Church

**89-318 Farrington Hwy.  
Nanakuli, Hawaii 96792**

**Parish Office: (808) 668-7833  
Website: <http://www.stritananakuli.org>**

Pastor:	Rev. Paulo Kosaka, OFM Cap	
Deacon:	Deacon Harold S. Levy, Jr.	
Office Manager:	Mele Ahuna	
Bookkeeper:	Lalla Andres	
Religious Education:	Karen Victor	808-672-5437
O. C. I. A.	Don Gerry	860-908-5954
Youth Minister:	Ivan Okuda	808-3086261
Knights of Columbus:	Bill Kozak	609-381-1193
Outreach Coordinator:	Carlin Ujimori-Kaeo	808-668-7833
Outreach/Facsimile/Prayer-line		808-668-7716

## SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday at **5:00 PM**

Sunday at **7:00 AM, 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM**

**Confessions:** Saturday from 3:15 to 4:00 PM *at the church* or by appointment

**Infant Baptism:** Contact Parish Office

**Sacrament of Matrimony:** Contact the Pastor 6 months before the wedding date for an appointment.

**Funerals:** Contact the Pastor before going to the Mortuary

*We, the people of God of St. Rita Parish in Nanakuli, are united in our belief and in our commitment to Jesus Christ. In the spirit of aloha we respond to Christ's mission of love and freedom with our care, concern and communal action. This is expressed in the stewardship of our treasure through tithing and in the gift of our time and talents through shared ministries.*

*As a fast growing rural parish with a large Hawaiian population we feel a special calling to stand together in truth and justice for indigenous people of this land. As part of the universal Church, our outreach extends beyond our boundaries to the global community and we affirm the human dignity of all peoples. As a parish family we enthusiastically participate in bringing about God's reign of peace. We continue to evangelize, welcome and invite all of God's people to St. Rita Parish.*

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## PARISH CALENDAR

First Sunday  
of Lent

February 22, 2026

One does not live  
by bread alone!



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Saturday, February 21	..... 5:00 p.m.	Mass
Sunday, February 22	..... 7:00 a.m.	Mass
	..... 9:00 a. m.	Mass (Live Stream)
	..... 5:00 p.m.	Mass
Monday, February 23	..... 7:30 a.m	Liturgy of Hours/Rosary
	..... 8:00 a.m.	Mass
Tuesday, February 24	..... 7:30 a.m	Liturgy of Hours/Rosary
	..... 8:00 a.m.	Mass
Wednesday, February 25	..... 7:30 a.m	Liturgy of Hours/Rosary
	..... 8:00 a. m	Mass
	.. 9:30am -11:30 am	<b>Food Pantry Open</b>
Thursday, February 26	..... 8:00 a.m	Communion Service
Friday, February 27	..... 7:30 a.m	Liturgy of Hours/Rosary
	..... 8:00 a. m	Mass
	..... 7:00 p. m.	<b>Station of the Cross - Lectors</b>
Saturday, February 28	..... 8:00 a. m	Mass
	..... 3:15-4:00 p.m.	<b>Confession - Church</b>
	..... 5:00 p.m.	Mass

### NEXT SUNDAY READINGS:

**Gen:12:1-4a:** Abram was commanded by the Lord to leave his home and go to a new land. There the Lord God would make of him a great nation, and all would be blessed because of him.

**2 Tm:1:8b-10:** God saves all people and calls them to a holy life, not because of their own merit but because of the grace held out in Christ. Christ “destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

**Mt:17:1-9:** Jesus went up to a high mountain. With Moses and Elijah at his side, he was transfigured before the eyes of his disciples Peter, James, and John. A voice from the cloud said, “this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”



HAWAÏI  
**Catholic Ministries**  
*Annual Appeal*

*If we think of the devil as a make-believe “boogie man,” a comical cartoon villain who whispers into our left ear while angels whisper into our right, then the Gospel dispels this notion. The devil exists. He is crafty (he quotes Scripture to Jesus). He is persistent (he tries three times to get Jesus to bow to him). He can subtly lead us down seemingly harmless paths with small sins the white lie here, the flash of anger there. He can also launch aggressive assaults when we are weak and vulnerable.*

*He tries this with Jesus, who was susceptible after 40 days of isolation, prayer, and fasting. Fully human, Jesus understands our weakness. He was born and baptized as we were born and baptized. He grew up, like all of us do. He learned a trade from Joseph, just as our parents have taught us important lessons. And like us, he is tested by Satan. But he is not tempted. That is the difference. Our Lord never strays from the Father’s plan for him, not with the devil in the desert and not with his crucifixion at Calvary.*

*This Lent, let us remain ever vigilant to the devil’s attempts to draw us away from God. Let us explore different ways to pray, perhaps saying the rosary on our evening walk. In addition to observing Friday’s abstinence from meat, we can fast from criticizing others. And supporting the **Catholic Ministers Annual Appeal** – almsgiving - is a powerful way to share our blessings with those in need.*



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CRS RICE BOWL: A TIME OF PREPARATION: CRS

Rice Bowl brings Catholics across the United States together each Lent to respond to global hunger and poverty through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. During this holy season, let us recommit to sharing bread for life our global family so that all people can reach their God-given potential. Visit [www.crsricebowl.org/week-1](http://www.crsricebowl.org/week-1) to read this week's. Story of Hope.

**WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER:** In the desert, Jesus was tempted to prioritize material comfort and power over His relationship with God. In our marriages, we are often tempted to prioritize careers, possessions, or status over our relationship with our spouse. This Lent, choose to prioritize your sacrament.

**The next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Experience is a non-residential weekend, April 24-26, on Oahu.** Rediscover your romance without the stress of overnight travel. Two other weekend experiences are scheduled in Hawaii this year. To apply or for more information, visit [www.hawaiiwme.org](http://www.hawaiiwme.org) or contact Brian and Claudine Perry at (808) 276-5721. Space is limited.

**WORD OF LIFE:** *"The essence of our identity is that we are created in God's image and likeness and loved by Him. Nothing can diminish the priceless worth of any human life. Every person is cherished."* **USCCB, Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities Respect Life Reflection: Cherished, Chosen, Sent** [www.usccb.org/cherished-chosen-sent-reflection](http://www.usccb.org/cherished-chosen-sent-reflection)

## WEEKLY READINGS

**Feb 22 Sun: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent**

Gn:2:7-9, 3:1-7; Ps:51; Rom:5:12-19; Mt:4:1-11

**Feb 23 Mon: Lenten Weekday**

Lv:19:1-2, 11-18; Ps:19:8, 9, 10, 15; Mt:25:31-46

**Feb 24 Tue: Lenten Weekday**

Is:55:10-11; Ps:34: 4-5, 6-7, 16-17, 18-19; Mt:6:7-15

**Feb 25 Wed: Lenten Weekday**

Jn:3:1-10; Ps:51: 3-4, 12-13, 18-19; Lk:11:29-32

**Feb 26 Thur: Lenten Weekday**

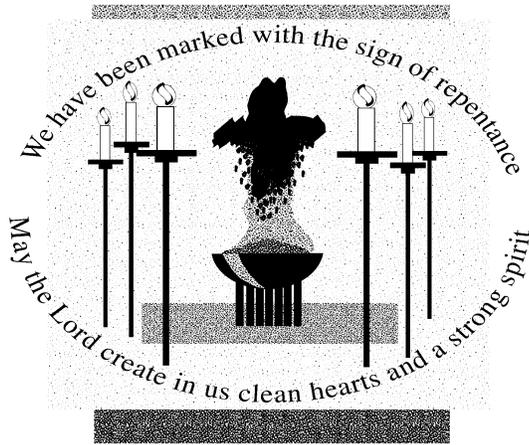
Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Ps:138:1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8; Mt:7:7-12

**Feb 27 Fri: Lenten Weekday**

Ez:18:21-28; Ps:130: 1-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8; Mt:5:20-26

**Feb 28 Sat: Lenten Weekday**

Dt:26:16-19; Ps:119: 1-2, 4-5, 7-8; Mt:5:43-48



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## NOTES ON STEWARDSHIP

*In today's Gospel reading we listen to the confrontation between Jesus and the devil, who thought he might tempt Jesus to forget who he was and commit a grievous sin when he was most vulnerable. Jesus had just spent 40 days and nights out in the desert, alone, away from civilization. He was hungry, thirsty, and tired. If there ever was a time to tempt Jesus, that was it. Temptations to sin come at us every day, from many directions and in many different forms. When the temptation to sin tries to overcome us, how do we react? Do we consciously remind ourselves that we are followers of Christ? Is there a time this week when you have needed to confront a temptation to sin? What lessons did you take away from the experience.* **International Catholic Stewardship Council**

## STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

<b>Sunday Collection</b>	<b>\$ 2, 532.00</b>
<b>Candles</b>	<b>50.01</b>
<b>Mass Intentions</b>	<b>50.00</b>
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>95.00</b>
 <b>Total</b>	 <b>\$ 2, 727.01</b>

## RESTRICTED COLLECTIONS

<b>Building Fund</b>	<b>\$ 400.00</b>
<b>Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b>	<b>10.00</b>
 <b>Total</b>	 <b>\$ 410.00</b>

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## First Sunday of Lent A February 22, 2026

**Ka Leo O Ke Kahuhipa – Aloha ‘Ohana Aloha Nu’ia**

**Ho’omaika’i – Congratulations to St. Rita parish Elect!** Ohelia Lynn, Shanda Lee Rabacal, Jay Soto, Peyton Dean, Royal Dean, Zerek Dean – Verdadero, Angelica Szabicliki and Alexia Kahalekai.

These **8 catechumens** will gather with many other Elect (catechumens) from other O’ahu Catholic parishes at St. Teresa Co-Cathedral, **Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1:00pm** for the **Rite of Election Ceremony**. Bishop Larry Silva D.D. will officiate and invite each one as he witnesses the sign-in ceremony of the Elect in the **Book of Elect**. Mahalo to the teachers, Don Gerry (OCIA), Dcn Hal and Brenda Levy (Instructors – children), Karen Victor (CCD Coordinator), Ivan Okuda and Thomas Izzy (Instructors).

Let us continue to keep each one of our St. Rita parish catechumens in our prayers as they journey to full initiation of **Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist** coming, Saturday, **April 4<sup>th</sup> at 8:00pm Easter Vigil Mass**.

### HAWAI’I CATHOLIC MINISTRIES ANNUAL APPEAL

The **Hawai’i Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal 2026-2027 envelopes** are found in the pews with the prayer card. Please take the envelopes home and prayerfully reflect and participate in the Annual Appeal. St. Rita Parish is allocated to raise **\$13, 840.00** for the Appeal. We ask for your kokua-participation. Mahalo nui loa and God bless you all.

### LENT 2026

We entered the **Season of Lent with Ash Wednesday**, (February 18<sup>th</sup>) and began our 40 days of our spiritual journey leading to the Solemn Feast of Easter Triduum. Lent is a grace-full time for each one of us as we are given the opportunity to deepen our Faith by our conversion of our hearts!

When the blessed **Lenten Ashes** were marked on our forehead in the form of the cross, we were told, **“Repent, and believe in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”**

**Traditionally** we make Lenten sacrifices, usually something we give up for Lent. Why not also add on to do list? **Choose a virtue to practice**, each day or perhaps for the whole week. **Virtues** such as forgiveness, patience, kindness, perseverance, purity, silence where it is required, attentiveness and participation in Prayer, Holy Mass, Rosary or Stations of the Cross? There are much more but keep it simple that we can all do.

## Scripture Reflections of Ash Wednesday

**Old Testament: Joel 2: 12-18** Prophet Joel boldly proclaimed, “Even now says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart...rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord.” (Joel 2: 12).

Indeed it is about the **heart, that is conversion begins in our hearts!** Let us seek conversion of **our hearts**.

**New Testament: 2 Corinthians 5: 20 - 6:2.** St. Paul reminded us of who we are, “We are the ambassadors for Christ, as if God is appealing through us.” (2 Corinthians 5: 20). Most importantly Paul reminded us, “Behold now is the very acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation.” (2 Corinthians 6:2). Lent is the time we seek to recall who we are as baptized Christians, we represent Jesus Christ to the world...home, school, workplace, recreation, where we are. We represent Jesus Christ! St. Paul also reminded us that now is the acceptable time indeed to return to the Lord!

**Gospel: Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18** Jesus told His disciples, “Take care not to perform righteous deeds on order that people may see them; other wise you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father.” (Matthew 6:1). We are to do good deeds this Lent, to give alms, pray and fast not to be seen by others but that they are done hidden yet God our Father sees us and blesses us! Truly Lent is of the **HEART, conversion of our hearts from sin, which is death to life, live in the life of grace!**

### Scripture Reflections - First Sunday of Lent A

**Old Testament: Genesis 2: 7-9; 3: 1-7** **Background Context:** The **Genesis** creation stories were written for the people of Israel to explain who God is, who human beings are and why the world is both beautiful and broken. These stories were shaped in a time when Israel lived among cultures that believed humans were slaves to the gods in heaven.

**Book of Genesis** tells a very different story - vision; one that upholds a God who lovingly created, breathed life, and desired relationship with humanity. **Book of Genesis** illustrated a very tender picture of creation. That God created man out of love and created man and woman to be happy in His presence.

The opening verse in our first reading from **Book of Genesis** clearly makes this point: “**The Lord God *formed* man out of the *clay of the ground* and blew into his nostrils the *breath of life*, and so man became a living being,**” **Genesis 2:7.** Truly revealed a God who deeply loves us! For it profoundly represents a holistic anthropology (humanity), the word “**formed**” evokes a potter shaping a clay, emphasizing care and intentionality! (**see also**

**Isaiah 64:8**). The words “**clay of the ground**” highlights our human fragility and mortality. Finally, “**Breath of life**” signified divine gift, not a human possession. We human beings became a living soul, not by possessing a soul as separate entity but by God’s life-giving breath animating the whole person!

Here **two important truths about us are made. One**, we come from the earth, we are fragile, limited and dependent. Yet we also carry God’s breath within us. We are precious, loved and filled with divine life! **Two**, our human dignity comes not from our achievements but from God’s loving hand. God gave to humanity freedom but also set limits, not to punish but to protect life and trust - relationship.

In the later part of the narrative, the serpent entered the story. The serpent did not deny God, but asked “**Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?**”

The cunning serpent instead of challenging what God had stated to Adam and Eve, now twisted God’s word and created doubt by posing the question, “**did God really say?**” As the serpent undermined Adam and Eve’s trust in God. The real temptation is not about eating fruit but about control, wanting to decide for oneself **what is good and evil, without God.**

**Application to Life:** When we begin to distrust God’s goodness, we begin to fall into the temptation of the cunning serpent – the devil to believe that God is hiding something from us. The devil with his crafty temptations whispers in our ears to undermine our trust in God enduring goodness and love for us. **Sin** often enters first not in denying God outright by our actions, but more often by developing doubt on God’s love and goodness that leads to our choices that bring pain and separation from God by sin.

**By our choice to sin**, our trust is broken with God, with each other and within ourselves. This was the tragedy in the garden of Eden, disobedience – sin brought about the loss of trust and relationship with God.

This too is our story as we still struggle between trusting God and choosing our own way. By sin we separate ourselves from God and the longer we remain in sin, we are rendered helpless, as sin renders us blind and incapable of seeing God. We become incapable of walking with God much less walking back into the love of God.

Lent invites us to “**return to the garden of Eden**”, not literally but symbolically to know that our past should not hold us back from God. But this Lent to go forward to renew relationship with God, by accepting that we are sinners and that we have fallen and need of repentance. It takes humility indeed, yet it is in act of our conversion where we

remember that we are “**clay of the ground**”, yet deeply loved, and that life comes from “**breath of life**” within us by repentance and conversion.

Take the opportunity to prepare and go to **St. Rita Lent Confessions Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm where many priest confessors will be available.**

**New Testament: Romans 5: 12-19 Background Context:** In the second reading taken from Paul to the Romans, Paul speaks about two important persons, **Adam and Jesus Christ**. Through them Paul helps us to understand sin, grace, and the gift of salvation. Paul explains that sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and with sin came death. Adam’s disobedience broke the relationship between humanity and God.

As a result, suffering, weakness, and death became part of human life. This does not mean that people are punished for Adam’s personal sin, but that all human beings now live in a world affected by sin. (**Original Sin** Catechism of the Catholic Church par 7 #385).

**Application to Life:** We experience this brokenness every day, in selfishness, injustice, and fear. But Paul does not stop with Adam, but he quickly moves to **Jesus Christ** whom He presents as the **new Adam**. Paul reminds us that if one man’s sin (Adam) brought sin and death, then one man’s (Jesus, the new Adam) obedience brought grace and life.

What was lost through Adam’s distrust and brokenness caused by his sin, is now restored through Jesus Christ’s obedience. Where sin increased God’s grace became even greater.

This is the heart of Good News, “**just as through the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so, through the obedience of the one (Jesus Christ) many will be made righteous.**” We who are united to Jesus Christ, who canceled and overcame sin through obedience and the cross.

Paul reminds us that we are part of that very life won by **Jesus Christ the new Adam**. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ offered forgiveness, healing and a new way of life.

**More importantly** we are reminded that grace is not earned, it is gift. We cannot and do not earn it ourselves. God freely offered to us this new life through Jesus Christ. This passage invites us to reflect on our own lives, we all know the power of sin, how one wrong choice can hurt many people. **But we are also reminded** that our acts of love and obedience in Jesus Christ can bring healing and hope. That we can make a difference by our faithfulness even in very small matters, by uniting with Jesus Christ. When we choose Jesus Christ we choose life, sin does not have the final word. This Lent, let us strive to choose Jesus Christ and reject sin one small step at a time.

**Gospel: Matthew 4: 1-11**Background Context: Matthew's gospel begins with the passage; **"At that time Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil."** Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights in prayer, Jesus was extremely hungry, alone and physically weak.

Matthew by placing the temptation story right after Jesus' baptism, emphasized that Jesus' Messianic mission is tested at the very beginning. At Jesus' baptism the **"Voice"** from the heaven had declared Him, **"this is my beloved Son, listen to Him"**, and now the temptations challenged Jesus **what kind of Son He will be.**

**There are precious lessons** we can learn from this passage. The temptations are not accidental, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, indicating that testing was part of Jesus' obedience to the Father's will.

The *devil, diabolos*, **"the accuser or divider"** sought to undermine Jesus' identity and mission. The temptations Jesus endured were not just in appearance, Jesus was really tempted **"We have one (Christ) who has been tempted in every way that we are, though He is without sin."** Hebrews 4: 15.

**Application to Life:** After 40 days and 40 nights of fast and prayer Jesus was extremely hungry. Jesus is physically vulnerable and this is when the devil appeared to tempt Jesus. Something important about temptations, they rarely come when we are strong and prepared. **More often temptations come** when we are tired, weak or least expect them, that is exactly where the gospel placed Jesus. The devil knows our weakness and knows where we are likely to fall. **This reminds us of an important truth**, it true that God knows and loves us but at the same time we must be guarded of the devil for even the devil knows us to a certain degree often better than we think.

The devil's temptations are to choose the easy way, making use of our own human powers rather than to trust in God who will provide for our needs.

In **the 1<sup>st</sup> temptation**, Jesus endured not just merely about hunger that tempter told Him to turn stone into bread but about temptation to use His divine power for self-interest. To take care of His immediate need rather than to trust that God the Father will provide.

**We too try to turn stones into bread** when we seek quick solutions instead of patient faith, or to test God by expecting help without share of our own responsibility. We too must resist the temptation to immediately satisfy our material needs through compromising our deeper good and our spiritual needs. In **the 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation**, Jesus taken up to the top of the temple parapet and told, **"if you are the Son of God...throw yourself down"**, then

further quoting the Scripture the devil entices, **“He will command his angels concerning you ...support lest you dash your foot against a stone.”**

Jesus rejected the devil’s temptation to perform spectacular works to gain fame and glory nor to tempt God to act on quick gain or whim. How often we have fallen into this temptation when we sought to force God’s protection or gain public recognition through spectacle. We are called to trust God without demanding signs or wonders.

In the **3<sup>rd</sup> temptation**, Jesus is taken up the high mountain, **“Jesus is shown all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence and told all these I shall give to you if you will prostrate and worship me.”** At this Jesus said, **“get away Satan...it is written the Lord your God alone shall you worship.”**

How we have fallen into this enticing temptation of the devil! How many men and women young and old had been deceived that power and money can open every door in the world and attain happiness? The devil entices us that without care whether that means we are right or sinful, committing sin or not, if happiness can now be gained go for it.

Like Jesus, we are tempted by worldly things, power, control and approval. In each temptation the devil tried to pull Jesus away from trusting God fully. We too face the same.

**What is striking is how Jesus responded**, He did not argue, did not flaunt power rather **Jesus relied completely on God the Father**. When Jesus answered with Scripture, **God’s Word became His strength, His shield, and His guide**. Jesus showed us that faithfulness to God is more important than comfort, popularity or power. **All three temptations** Jesus endured are what we too encounter and must continuously reject in our lives in order to be faithful disciples and children of God - our identity.

The **danger is the temptations** are often subtle and seem reasonable using good things like comfort, safety or success to slowly pull us away from trusting God.

**We are reminded too** that temptations do not disappear just because we are good or religious. They often come when we are stressed, tired or feeling empty. And like Jesus we must remember that we cannot overcome our weaknesses by ourselves, we need God.

**Will power alone is not enough**, we are to rely on God through prayers, through Scripture and trust. When we allow **God’s Word** to shape our choices, we grow stronger. Lent invites us to face our temptations honestly and to turn back to God. While temptation is real God is stronger. When we cling to God, we are never alone in our struggles. This Lent let us stop trying to be strong on our own and learn again to trust **“the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew...breath of life...”** **Have a blessed week in the Lord!**