

THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOHN VIANNEY PARISH AUGUST 2022

COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET
(Created by Earl Walker)

1960's



EXTERIOR OF CHURCH



INTERIOR OF CHURCH

A NEW PARISH CHURCH OPENS IN KAILUA TO SERVE ROMAN CATHOLICS

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu announced the newest parish in the islands, the second one in Kailua. The new parish was established to serve the newly developed area of Enchanted Lake and the growing Kailua community. Founded in August 1962, the parish was named St. John Vianney after the patron saint of all Catholic priests.

Mr. Joseph Pao pledged to donate the church, in memory of his parents Joe and Mary Pao. The Kailua Heights Joint Venture Company and the Kaelepulu Investment Company donated and developed four choice acres which comprised the parish campus.

The pastor of the new church was Fr. John B. Read, ordained in Kentucky on May 31, 1952, and the assistant pastor was Fr. Patrick Freitas, newly ordained from Maui. A residence for them was built simultaneously with the new church. The church building was completed and dedicated on February 24, 1963, as a modern, functional, 425-seat building of steel and concrete construction. At the end of its first year, the parish rejoiced in 135 Baptisms, 110 First Communicants, 75 Confirmed, 20 Converts, and had grown from 650 to 750 registered families.

It was a gala occasion when Bishop James Sweeney dedicated St. John Vianney Parish School on September 5, 1965, in the presence of hundreds of parishioners, priests, religious and friends. Bishop Sweeney had favored a new Kailua parish school if a community of sisters could be obtained. Fortunately, Mother Agna, Superior of the Franciscan Sisters of Charity of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, was making a visitation of their two island convents: one at Kekaha, Kauai, and the other at Cathedral School in Honolulu. With a Superior's vision she saw the need to open a school in the Kailua area, thereby increasing the number of her sisters in Hawaii and promoting the faith with a new island foundation.

Father John Read and other charter parish members launched a \$150,000.00 fund drive for the new school. St. John Vianney Parish School opened its doors with Sister Mary Ann as its first principal, after returning to the islands. Ten years earlier she had been principal of the Cathedral school in Honolulu and her acquaintance with Hawaii and many of the parishioners gave the school a "head start" during her four years as principal.



NEWLY OPENED PALI TUNNEL AND HIGHWAY

Oahu grew substantially in the 1960s. The growth that occurred on Oahu during that period spilled over into the windward side. Into the 1960s, Kailua was the second largest community and the fastest growing community in the state. Towards the end of the decade, with the completion of the Castle Medical Center, the pending tunnels on the Pali Highway, the relocation of Kailua High School and the opening of Hawaii Loa College, Kailua was becoming a truly livable community for families.

Due to very high tax rates on real estate sales most old-time Hawaii landowners chose to lease their land to residential developers rather than sell on a fee-simple basis. Kaneohe Ranch at one time had leased their land for over 5,000 single family residential lots in Kailua and Kaneohe.

The town of Kailua had a population of over 40,000 residents and was growing. The Enchanted Lake area, consisting of over 250 homes, did not have a Roman Catholic church until St. John Vianney parish was established in August 1962. The group met under a tent located at 940 Keolu Drive. Attendance demanded four regular Sunday Masses, CCD classes were large and well attended. Many men and women rallied under the respective banner of the Holy Name Society and the Ladies Sodality.

After the new church and rectory were completed and occupied, they were both blessed and dedicated in a beautiful ceremonial Mass on Sunday February 24, 1963.



CONGREGATION MET IN TENT BEFORE CONSTRUCTION OF CHURCH



CHURCH UNDER CONSTRUCTION



BISHOP SWEENEY BLESSING CHURCH



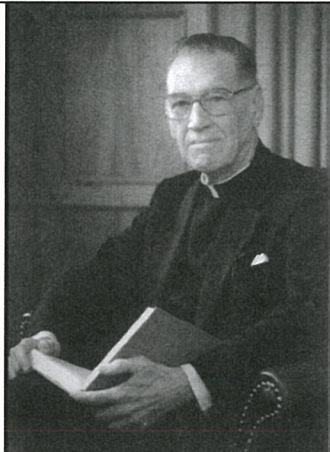
CHURCH DEDICATION MASS

**JOSEPH PAO
DONATED
CHURCH
IN MEMORY
OF
HIS PARENTS**



Mr. Joseph Pao promised to build the church and turn it over to the diocese if a priest would be sent to serve the Enchanted Lake - Keolu Hills area. Fr. John B. Read was appointed as the first pastor to serve the parish.

**FR. JOHN B. READ
FIRST PASTOR
OF
ST. JOHN VIANNEY
CHURCH**



Our first pastor became a priest late in life. His past included being a mortician in Covington, Kentucky and service in the US Navy. He served as associate pastor of the Cathedral for two years and then was appointed the editor of Hawaii Catholic Herald until the founding of St. John Vianney Parish.

He loved life and people and had a great devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. His sermons were short, to the point and well-remembered. The first thing he organized in the parish was the Sodality which he said would always care for the needs of the church.

Fr. Read resided at St. Anthony's while St. John Vianney was being built and the new parish was being set up. He would visit his parishioners, taking care of their needs and paving the way for the future. Gary Secor became the first altar boy as he attended Fr. Read with the funerals that took place at St. Anthony's while St. John's church was being built.

Fr. Read was a man that did not know what "no" meant and gave 100% of himself. Fr. Read served as pastor until 1976 then became Secretary to the Bishop and Assistant Chancellor of the Diocese.

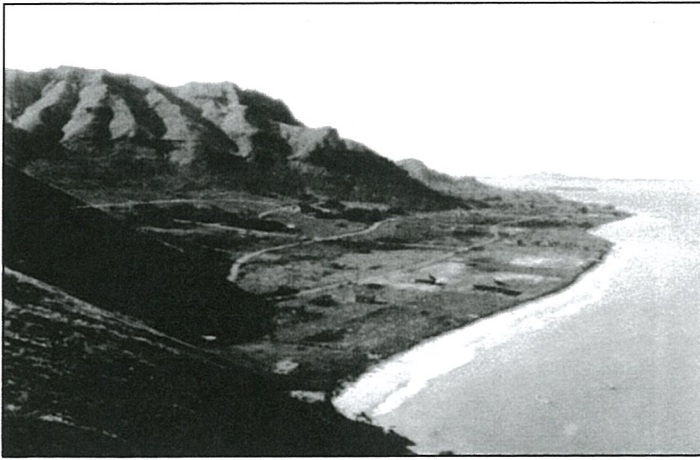


In less than three years, St. John Vianney parishioners clamored for a parochial school. Plans for a school and convent were submitted by architect Ray Akagi and approved by the Building Commission and the Bishop. The Franciscan Sisters of Manitowoc, Wisconsin agreed to staff the school.

Rising in the middle of the Keolu Hills home development area in Kailua was the latest of Oahu's parochial schools, St. John Vianney. The school was a modern concrete two-story building, with eight classrooms but opened with only the first three grades. The second floor of the two story structure was used for the CCD classes (600 children) and provided meeting rooms for parish societies and a Cub Scout Program. A new grade would be added each year until an eight-grade capacity was reached. The school opened September 2, 1965 and accommodated 120 students, but planned to graduate its first eighth grade six years later, by then occupying the entire building.

The school principal was sister Mary Ann, O.S.F., former principal of Cathedral School, Honolulu. Sister Mary Ann was the first principal of Cathedral School after it turned to co-educational instruction ten years earlier. She returned to the Islands to assume the responsibilities of starting St. John Vianney School. With her were Sisters Regina Marie and Arlene OSF. The Sister's Convent, completed in November 1965, was a delightful serviceable home with a large living area, a chapel, and separate rooms for 10 sisters.





Early History of Kailua

It is possible that Kailua was home to Hawaiian families at least 1,500 years ago. The earliest settlers are thought to have lived, fished, and played on the slopes surrounding Kawai Nui Marsh.

A report on archaeological excavations of the marshland concluded that when the marsh slopes were first occupied about 500 AD, agriculture was not possible. Early Hawaiian occupants of Kailua apparently lived beside a lagoon or bay open to the sea, hundreds of yards shoreside of today's shoreline.

In the 16th century, Kailua attracted the ali'i. During the reign of King Kakuhihewa and his successors, Kanekapu, Kahoowaha, Kauakahiakahoo-waha and Kualii; Kailua replaced Waikiki as the residential seat of the Alii Aimoku of Oahu. Many legends were born, including the menehune, who were known for working at night in Kawai Nui Marsh, and mo'o, who took the shape of a large lizard that attracted fish.

Kailua was densely populated even before the arrival of Captain James Cook, and was the ancient capital of Oahu's kings. The biggest event in Kailua and the entire Windward side was in 1795 when King Kamehameha I conquered O'ahu in his quest to unite the Hawaiian Islands.

The King granted Kawai Nui Marsh and old Kailua, which included large freshwater fish ponds and saltwater ponds at Mokapu, to warriors and chiefs who had helped him. The land was used in various forms for agriculture (e.g., sugarcane, rice, and taro), and eventually was used primarily for cattle raising. Many ancient temple ruins, such as those at Ulupo Heiau State Historic Site, are in the area.



20th Century Kailua

Kailua was a small town of barely 3,000 in the 1940s. However, the events of World War II changed the appearance of Kailua. Kaneohe Ranch sold portions of land to the government for expansion of the Naval Air Station (now Marine Corps Base Hawaii) and the Army's Fort Hase. Finally, in 1942, Kaneohe Ranch closed down its cattle-raising operations entirely, freeing thousands of acres for post-war development. Harold K.L. Castle, owner of Kaneohe Ranch, donated the land for churches, schools, and a new hospital.

In 1946, a small Liberty House (now Macy's) shop opened with three employees and upgraded to a full-line department store in 1953, with nearly 50 employees. The first bowling alley, a branch office of the telephone company, and the very first supermarket in Hawaii opened in Kailua in 1947. A new four-lane highway, tunneling through the Ko'olau Range, was completed in the late 1950s. By the end of the 1950s, Hawaii had become a state and Kailua became the official postal designation (previously known as Lanikai).

By 1960 the population was up to 24,400. Castle Hospital (now Castle Medical Center) opened in 1963.



KAILUA MOVIE THEATER 1962