

# Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church

## Parish in Paradise

Newsletter

Nov / Dec 2022 ♦ ISSUE 36



▲ The Spanish Community of OLMC and Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with a procession and Mass on Sunday, Dec. 11, 2022. Celebrants were Fr. Serapio Lopez Cruz and Fr. Julio Faes. All were invited to join the celebration.

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Jeremiah 29:11 says, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”



## ➡ From the desk of the pastor

From glory to glory, my God is changing me. I am full of joy. On Sept. 12, 2022, I left the Virgin Islands’ shores heading to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, for training to become a chaplain. The struggle to get there was real. I was leaving my Parish for three months. This was the longest I had ever been away from my parish. I did not know what to expect. I heard many stories. The unknown was a little frightening.

I think this is one of the hardest things I might have done in my life. We did physical training every morning. For the first month, we could not leave the base. We marched to classes and for our meals. We ate in silence and followed the rules. At times I asked myself, “am I going to make it?” Every morning, I woke up and I went on my knees asking God for the grace to complete the day. That was my prayer every day. All my life, God has been faithful. I knew he was not going to give up on me now. I got into my room and laid out all my friends – St. Michael, St. Joseph, St. Therese, and Mary, our mother.

Our day began at about four in the morning and classes ended at five in the afternoon. The academics were very heavy. Many of us used coffee or vitamins to keep our eyes open. We had more than 80 men and women training to become Chaplains.

It was just an excellent group of people. There were many people with prior service, and they were extremely willing to help others like me with no prior service. We were our brothers and sisters’ keepers. We shared our love and looked out for each other.

We prayed and attended other churches, which was very interesting. I attended my first Jewish, Muslim, and Mormon services. I concelebrated on weekends at the Catholic Masses and listened to confessions. It was amazing to see the number of young men and women who attended the weekend Masses. The Catholic attendance was the largest.

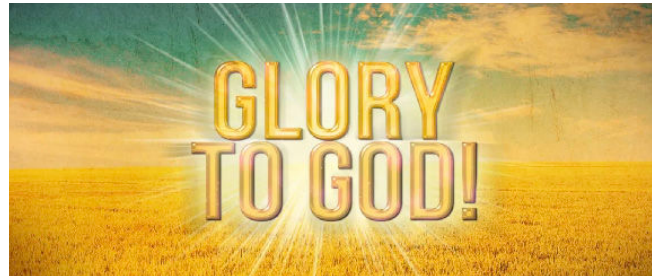
In my last month of training, I injured my back. I was on painkillers, and the pain at times seemed unbearable. I was prayed with by some of the brothers and thanks be to God, I was able to finish my training. The pain eventually subsided.

What a mighty God we serve. I am so grateful to the many people who sent cards, mail, texted or called. I graduated as a Chaplain with the rank as a Captain and is assigned to a unit in San Juan, Puerto Rico. I am so grateful to God for giving me this opportunity to serve the men and women in the U.S. Army. I thank my Bishop for seeing the need for priests to serve in the Army. I thank Fr. Serapio for celebrating the Sacraments with my parish in my absence. I thank my staff and parishioners. Thank you! Thank you!

In Christ,

Rev. Fr. Anthony Abraham, Pastor

## Our Lady of Charity Transitional Homeless Shelter



◀ Our Lady of Mount Carmel has been approved for a 20-year lease (with option to renew for another 20 more years) from the Government of the Virgin Islands to build a homeless shelter in Cruz Bay. OLMC hopes to break ground this year on the new *Our Lady of Charity Transitional Homeless Shelter*.

## St. Therese Chapel permit approval



↗ Our Lady of Mount Carmel has been approved for the Major CZM Permit by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources for 6R-2C Carolina. OLMC hopes to break ground this year. The first structure to be built will be *St. Therese Chapel*. A thanksgiving Mass will be held at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 21, 2023. All are invited.



Fr. Anthony Abraham and the parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Carmel extend our thanks and appreciation to Fr. Serapio for filling in for Fr. Anthony in November and part of December. He was truly a blessing to everyone. Fr. Serapio also met with the Spanish community twice a week to enhance the Spanish Mass and for Bible Study. May God continue to bless him.



## Thanksgiving Luncheon



^ Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church held our annual Thanksgiving Luncheon on Thursday, Nov. 24, 2022. The luncheon was sponsored by the Westin St. John Resort and Villas. More than 100 persons were served.

## Christmas Choir



^ Our Lady of Mount Carmel's Choir participated in Sing St. John's Holiday Celebration on Friday, December 23, 2022, in the Frank Powell Park. OLMC's choir joined other church choirs, Ocamo Youth Choir and the St. John Recovery Choir in singing the "Hallelujah Chorus," under the direction of Kristen Carmichael-Bowers.

## Advent lighting



^ A visiting couple light the Fourth Advent candle at the 6 p.m. Mass.

## Homeless Christmas gifts



^ The children of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the homeless and less fortunate in the St. John community were blessed with Christmas gifts from benefactors, including the late Sarah Barone's family; and parishioners. We would like to say thank you to all who contributed gifts or money to purchase gifts for the children and homeless. It was greatly appreciated.

# Running with God

By Claudia Verdant

Last year July, I woke up one day and thought, “I can run a half marathon.” That thought had so much conviction and power behind it that I knew that I could do it. Up to that point, I had never run more than 10 kilometers/6.2 miles before. Even as a St. Johnian, I never participated in the annual 8 Tuff Miles Road Race. I just never had a desire to. However, that one morning in July I just knew I could do it. I could run those 21 kilometers / 13.1 miles to complete a half marathon.

I started researching half marathon training plans, tips for running long distances, ways to fuel the body while running, runner’s diets, running attire, best running watches, etc. For months my search history and bookmarks were all about completing a half marathon. I joined a local running group and I also sent my sister my race registration information as a way to validate my goal.



Looking back at it now, I’m amazed I did it. However, the prep work was not always sunshine and unicorns and Hebrews 12:11 captures my sentiments clearly.

On October 2, 2022, I was able to enjoy the fruits of my labor and completed my first half marathon in 2 hours, 29 minutes and 35 seconds.

I know that I could not achieve my goal without four key factors.

## 1. Prayer

I started each run with a prayer. Each time my watch beeped indicating I completed a kilometer, I thanked God. I thanked Him for what I had just accomplished and thanked Him in advance for each kilometer still yet to come. I also thanked Him as I iced my knees after my runs.

## 2. Faith

My faith was compulsory. I had to have faith that God would see me through this (Matthew 9:28-29; Matthew 19:26) and I had to have faith in my training plan.

## 3. Diligence

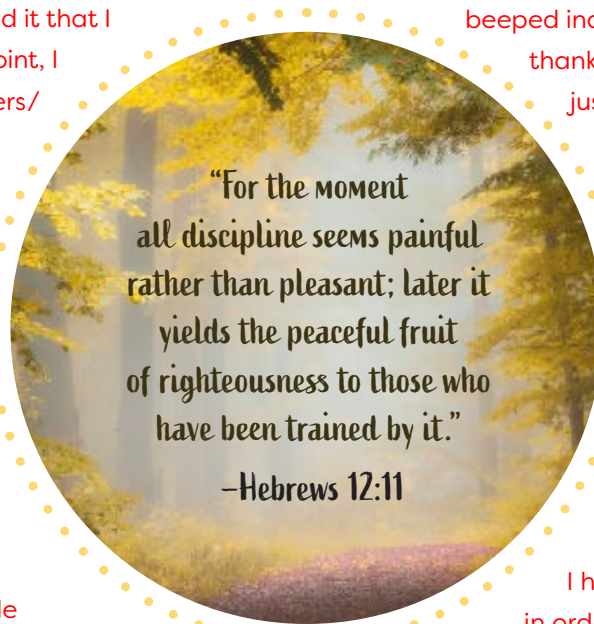
I had to engage that power of diligence in order to accomplish my goal because it was tempting to find an excuse not to train and to hit the snooze button on the alarm clock.

## 4. Positive Declarations

We all know of the power in our tongues and I used different positive declarations while training and running to stay motivated.

My running experience was reminiscent of Luke 24:13 where the two disciples were walking seven miles to Emmaus and encountered Jesus. At times I was conversing with the God who listens, at times I was the one trying to listen, and at other times I was just trying to focus on my breathing.

When I crossed the finish line I was overwhelmed at what I had just done and the work I put in for months. I was excited and already thinking about signing up for another half marathon and excited to continue running with God.



◆ Claudia Verdant, a St. John resident, is a Major in the U.S. Army. She is also a parishioner of OLMC.

## Post inaugural service



^ A Post-inaugural Ecumenical Service for V.I. Governor Albert Bryan Jr. and Lt. Governor Tregenza Roach was held at OLMC on Tuesday, January 3, 2023. Pastors from various churches participated in the service. Cabinet members and other dignitaries were in attendance.

◆ Photos courtesy of Government House FB page

## Legislature service



^ The 35th Legislature of the Virgin Islands held its Pre-Swearing-in Ecumenical Service on Sunday, January 8, at OLMC.

◆ Photos courtesy of the US Virgin Islands Legislature

### Our Lady of Mount Carmel Mission Statement

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church will provide support to all through the liturgy, worship and education. We pledge to provide our parish community and our visitors a prayerful experience in an environment of friendliness and courtesy. We are committed to proclaim the Word of God in unity and love towards each other.

#### Our mission is:

**Evangelization:** to evangelize ourselves, our families, our parish and our local community.

**Liturgy:** to celebrate our faith with joy through vibrant and prayerful worship.

**Education:** to educate and become educated in the truths of the Gospel and in the formation of conscience.

**Service:** to reach out in love and service to those in need.

**Stewardship:** to develop the material, financial and human resources of the Church and to manage them as faithful servants.

The **OLMC Parish in Paradise Newsletter** is composed by Fr. Anthony Abraham, Simonia Dagou, Lisa Etre and Brenda Rector Wallace.

To submit an article or for questions regarding OLMC Newsletter please contact: Lisa Etre by email at: [olmc@hotmail.com](mailto:olmc@hotmail.com)

Graphic Design: Julie Vazquez

#### DEVOTIONS:

**Eucharistic Adoration** Daily: 24 hours a day

#### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturdays at 5 p.m.; after Masses; or by appointment

**Baptism:** By Appointment; 3 weeks preparation

**Weddings:** By Appointment; 6 months preparation

#### Regular Mass Schedule

**Weekend: Saturdays:** 6 p.m.  
**Sundays:** 7:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.  
12:30 p.m. (Coral Bay)  
5:45 p.m. (Spanish)

#### Weekdays:

**Tuesdays:** 6 p.m. (Coral Bay)  
**Wednesdays:** 6 p.m.  
**Thurs & Fridays:** 7 a.m.



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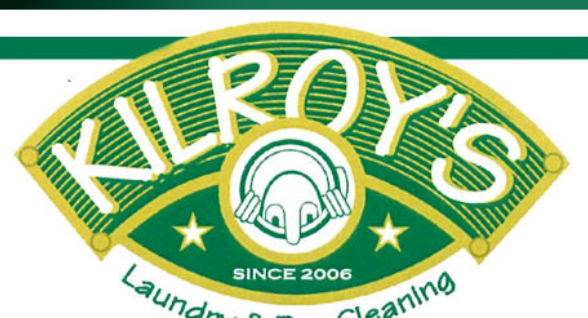
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