

Kula's Catholic Community

The three churches serving the Kula Catholic Community are, in order of age, St. James the Less Mission in Ulupalakua, Holy Ghost Mission in Waiakoa, and Our Lady Queen of the Angels in Keokea where the Catholic community's rectory and office are also located. The distance between Holy Ghost and St. James is about fourteen miles, and Our Lady Queen of the Angels is located about midway between.

St. James the Less Mission

To early missionaries, Ulupalakua was like a relay station lying directly in their path when they were on their way from Kaupo to Hali'imaile. It is reported that there was a Hawaiian-style chapel located there where the traveling missionaries stopped to rest, say mass, give instructions, and administer baptisms. Father Bouillon is quoted as mentioning Ulupalakua as the place where in May 1851 he baptized several catechumens. In 1950, the wood frame building was replaced with a simple hollow tile structure. At that time old-timers said that the old church had already served the ranch employees for 75 years, taking it back to 1875. Father Julian Fierens (1947-1951), then pastor of Our Lady Queen of the Angels, saw to the building of the church with the help of George Yamayoshi as contractor. In September 2002, after countless hours of labor under the direction of Frank Martin and his family and many generous donations, the renovation of St. James was completed, and the new church was dedicated.

Holy Ghost Mission

Beginning in 1879, thousands of Portuguese Catholics immigrated to Maui from the Azores and Madeira Islands for jobs as contract laborers for the sugar plantation. Along with their families, they brought with them their devotion to the Catholic Church, the Holy Ghost, and the traditions surrounding the crown of Queen Elizabeth of Portugal. Completing their contracts, many moved to the Kula area as independent ranchers and farmers.

Father James Beissel arrived in the Makawao Catholic District in 1882, and by 1886, he was managing the district and offering masses in the home of a parishioner in the Kula area. The increasing number of families in the district led him to initiate the building of the mission church that was to become the

Holy Ghost Mission. The two acres of land on which it was built were donated by Louis and Randal von Tempsky in Waiakoa, and the building was financed by weekly auctions of cattle by local ranchers.

Father Beissel himself designed the church, whose octagonal design is still unique in Hawaii. His inspiration may have come from either the shape of Queen Elizabeth's crown, the design of Charlemagne's chapel, which he had seen at home in Austria, or similar chapels on the coast of Portugal. Work began in December 1894 with all able men donating their skills and labor, and by the end of 1895 the church was complete, with the exception of a few details, and the first masses were held.

The richly decorated altar and the Portuguese language Stations of the Cross were commissioned by Father Beissel in 1895 and were carved by the famous artisan and master woodcarver, Ferdinand Stuflesser, from Groden, Tirol, Austria. Shipped in nine separate crates around the Cape of Good Hope to Hawaii, the altar and stations were hauled by oxcart from Kahului Harbor to Waiakoa and reassembled by the faithful members of the parish. They are recognized now as examples of museum-quality ecclesiastical art of that time. In January of 1899 Bishop Ropert Gulstan of Honolulu arrived to officiate at the formal dedication the church.

On April 29, 1983, the church was placed on the Hawaii Register of Historical Places, recognizing it as a landmark with significance in Hawaiian history, architecture, and culture, and sometime later it was added to the National Register. In 1991, under the leadership of Father Michael Owens, a major restoration of the church and altars was initiated, requiring the closure of the church for about one year. In 1995, the parish was able to celebrate its Centennial year in its resplendent, restored condition. The last payment of the restoration debt of about \$1.25 million was celebrated on May 17, 2000, under the leadership of Fr. Tom Heinzl, who served the parish from 1992 to 2006.

Today the church is widely known as a popular tourist attraction and choice for weddings and is still a vibrant working parish noted for its annual Holy Ghost Feast and for its delicious Portuguese sweetbread, baked fresh on the second Sunday of each month.

OUR LADY QUEEN OF ANGELS

The need for a church to serve the needs of the patients and residents in Keokea became evident shortly after the construction of Kula Sanatorium in 1936. Father Louis Boeynaems of Makawao purchased the two and one-half acres for the church from Mr. Ah Fook, a neighboring businessman. The church was designed with the help of a Maui Dry Goods draftsman to the specifications of Father Boeynaems. Local contractor, John Miguel, completed the construction, and Father Victorinus Claesen, Vicar-Delegate, blessed the church on December 8, 1940. He appointed Father Martin Termote (1941-1943) to be its first pastor. A short time later Father Termote built a cozy rectory close to the church, and Father Julian Fierens (1947-1951) later added the hall for church and community activities. Our Lady Queen of the Angels was to become the parish church and residence of the pastor because of its location in the center of the district, its proximity to Kula Sanatorium, and because it had the necessary space for the required buildings. Holy Ghost and St. James then became missions of Our Lady Queen of the Angels as part of the Kula Roman Catholic Community, served by one priest. The parish community celebrated its 50th Jubilee year in 1990.