



# The Hawaiian Benedictine

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## ***Lent to Pentecost***

The spiritually richest part of the year is upon us!

In the Church's calendar, the period from Lent to Pentecost is the pinnacle of each passing year—as well as of time itself.

The life of Jesus Christ, his ministry, his suffering and death, his rising from the tomb, his ascension to heaven, and the sending of the Holy Spirit to his disciples—all of this makes up the Good News, the message of salvation, the high point of all time and history, the greatest story every told, the ultimate reality.

Each year the Church invites us to focus with renewed intensity on these sacred events. Of course, we have heard the Story before. The liturgy, however, calls us to make a special effort to enter into it again. Why? Because it is the most momentous thing that has ever happened, vitally important for the world and for us individually.

Yes, we have heard the Gospel before, many times. But we still don't grasp it fully. In fact, We can always discover new meanings, new applications. No one will ever comprehend it completely. Therefore we can always deepen our appreciation. We can always participate in it with greater devotion and dedication. It can always have a more powerful impact on our lives.

What we have to realize is that the liturgy is not simply a remembrance. Indeed we do recollect what Jesus said and did, but the reality is far greater: "Christian liturgy not only recalls the events that saved us but actualizes them, makes them present. The Paschal mystery of Christ is celebrated, not repeated. It is the celebrations that are repeated, and in each celebration there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that makes the unique

mystery present" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1104*).

Participation in the Eucharistic liturgy, then, is not just fulfilling an obligation or going to church. As Pope Pius XII said, it is "the worship rendered by the Mystical Body of Christ in the entirety of its Head and members" (*Mediator Dei*).

Our faith is this: everything Jesus said and did, suffered and achieved, is made present when the People of God come together to celebrate the Eucharist.



In the Vatican Council the Bishops affirmed that at Mass we celebrate the Eucharist, "...in which the victory and triumph of His death are again made present, and at the same time [we give] thanks 'to God for his unspeakable gift' (2 Cor. 9:15) in Christ Jesus, 'to the praise of His glory' (Eph. 1:12), through the power of the Holy Spirit."

If we do not attend Mass on Sunday, we miss out on this enormous blessing. Even if we go to Mass regularly, however, it can become a routine. The liturgical year, especially the Easter cycle (Lent, Easter, Pentecost) is designed to help us break out of any apathy we may have fallen into. It is the premier opportunity for us to recharge our faith and come more alive in the Holy Spirit.

During Lent—through fasting, self-denial and almsgiving—we get our heads on straight so we can better appreciate the message of Jesus and all that he suffered for the sin of the world. During Eastertide we rejoice in Jesus' victorious rising from the dead and ascending into heaven where he offers himself as our high priest, constantly interceding for us. And at Pentecost we open ourselves to receive the Holy Spirit, whom the Father and the Son send down upon the whole Church and upon every baptized believer.

Guiding us all along the way is the Church's

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## ON MY MIND

### **Dear Friends,**

*I am writing this at the end of a marvelous two-week visit by my sister Mary and her husband Mike. (They will spend the next two weeks at a B&B on the other side of the Island.) We are also preparing for Ash Wednesday and the seasons of Lent and Easter.*

*Some progress is being made around the monastery: the rehab of the St. Michael building is almost finished except for re-coating the roof; the work on the water system upgrade is in progress; Fleming, the sheep, is energetically eating as much grass as he can every day; but the lawn mower decision and solar voltaic upgrade are still awaiting attention (as well as a fairly long list of other things).*

*Br Scott just made his triennial vows (3-year commitment) to our monastic life and Br. Augustine made a 6-month commitment as he continues his discernment, looking towards making his own triennial vows in July. We also had a month-long visit by Fr. Francis, from Vietnam. It was a joy to have him with us, and he was especially generous and gifted in assisting Fr. Michael.*

*I pray that your Lent may be truly fruitful and your Easter celebration be glorious. May the Good News of our Lord's dying and rising be the source of hope and confidence that sustains you each and every day.*

**Fr. David**

Check out our new website at:  
[www.hawaiiibenedictines.org](http://www.hawaiiibenedictines.org)

*We ask that you pray for vocations for our community and for service in the church.*

*(Lent and Easter: from Page 1)*

magnificent liturgy, with its daily selection of readings from the Bible that proclaim and explain the many facets of our salvation. Even if we cannot celebrate these holy seasons with daily Eucharist, we can still prayerfully ponder those powerful Scripture passages that lead us into a fuller grasp of the holy mysteries.

Dismissing the notion that we have heard it all before, we can try to make ourselves receptive to hearing the Great Story as if for the first time. It is a living story. What we recount is not a dead history but an enduring power. The story never grows old, never fades. It is the ultimate reality and endures forever.

“The Liturgy is the expression of Christ's love, his prayer in his Mystical Body, into which our own prayer is gathered and integrated. It is not subject, as our personal prayers, to moods. It never fails, day after day from the rising of the sun to its setting, in age after age, to

adore God, to express sorrow for sin, to praise and thank God, to offer sacrifice, to petition for peace. It is the perfect expression of every individual, the voice of the inarticulate lifted in a hymn of love. At the same time it is the chorus of the whole human race made one in communion with Christ” (Caryll Houselander).

Let us all stir up our faith and give ourselves wholeheartedly to the Church's liturgical celebrations in this holiest time of the year.

*article by Jim Scully,  
long-time friend of the community*





# Monastic Focus: Community

Have you ever wondered how God assigns us to a particular family? Given the order and symmetry which are observable in the universe from the vast galaxies down to the smallest leaf, it seems unlikely that we are randomly selected to be born into one family rather than another. I imagine that God, in an act of loving wisdom, places us in the community of people where our particular soul is best able to mature in the art of love and surrender. What can our parents, grandparents, and siblings teach us that no one else can?

Our own family is the first community to which we belong, followed by many other communal associations along the way. Perhaps each and every one of these associations is intricately planned. The same is true of religious life. How does a person choose one religious community over another? Maybe it is less a matter of choosing and more a matter of being divinely led, or even assigned. Just because this assignment is divine, however, doesn't mean that it automatically implies rainbows and sunshine (not even in Hawaii). God is in the business of making saints, not couch potatoes. I've learned that God doesn't really care about my comfortability. We grow only through a process of struggle that is coupled with love. The people with whom we share life serve as our irreplaceable teachers, friends, partners, and guides on the path of holiness.

How did a handful of people from Hawaii, Wisconsin, Missouri, Louisiana, Washington, and Vietnam all find their way to a mountainside on an island in the middle of the ocean? The wind of the Holy Spirit blew us here. And we are all exactly who each of us needs in order to learn that we are loved and in order to learn how to love. I am sure that God smiles to see how we respond to his cooking, as he turns up the heat a little and adds a few more spices. God's latest recipe called for the addition of Br. Scott and Br. Augustine. On February 2nd, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, (which is also celebrated as the World Day for Consecrated Life), Br. Scott made his first vows as a professed member of the community, and he received the habit of the Hawaii Benedictines. Br. Augustine, who is currently a temporarily-professed member of Christ in the Desert Monastery, also made a six-month commitment to our community and received the Jesus Beads. Speaking of cooking, Br. Scott is still struggling valiantly to convert the community to a healthier lifestyle with his daily green smoothies. Br. Augustine brings a Vietnamese flavor to the menu as he prepares a variety of delicious soups. We are also learning some Vietnamese vocabulary, such as con gà (chicken), con cừu (sheep), and con gián (cockroach).

**Brother Scott**



I am so thankful that God has brought me to a new family in Hawaii. Previously I was a member of Christ in the Desert Monastery in New Mexico. I moved to the Benedictine Monastery of Hawaii five months ago. I feel at home here and I praise the Lord for His plan for me. We never know what He is preparing for us. I felt like this was my new home as soon as I arrived. Everyone here has young souls and they are so kind. The Liturgy is so nice. I love everything here. I appreciate how the Brothers and Sisters work in many different ministries helping others, but then we return back to the House of God to praise Him and live in His mercy. When I was in New Mexico I lived as a silent monk. People used to ask me if I ever wanted to go out and serve in active ministry. I used to think about it, and now God has brought me to this wonderful active community. I enjoy meeting new people and hearing their stories. Sometimes it helps when we just sit down and listen to our brothers' and sisters' stories and pray for them.

I made a six-month commitment along with Brother Scott on 02/02/2020. Please pray for me in my new home.

God bless you,

**Brother Augustine Nguyen**