



The Hawaiian Benedictine

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Apostles of God's Love

It's that season of the year when the Liturgy draws our focus to the Incarnation. Once more it's time to turn our thoughts to the loving Son of a loving God becoming—amazingly--one of us.

Surely the birth of Jesus is a happening of surpassing importance. In its day, however, it hardly merited a ripple of attention. "Some poor couple's baby was born in a stable? Who cares? Tell me the important news."

Yes, at the time, the birth of the Savior was an item of no interest. If an angel had not informed shepherds of it, no one would have noticed. Imagine the joy of those shepherds, veritable outcasts from society. They knew that God had honored them with a striking manifestation of divine love.

Their reaction was to spread the great news to everyone they met.

We have heard and believed in the Good News. We too have experienced Jesus and have faith in him. The core of that faith is that *God is Love*. The story of Jesus, from crib to cross, is the unfolding of God's love for God's human creatures. It is important that we often ponder that love, because the more aware of it we become, the more we want to share it with others.



Here in our little Benedictine community in Waialua we try to do that by living a prayer-centered community life and creating a place where others can come and be refreshed spiritually. All believers, however, are called to spread the news of God's unfailing love in some way. We can all think of ourselves as bearers of God's love to others.

As Christians, we believe that "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them" (I John 4:16 NRSV). In this regard, it is vital to realize that although our lives are made up mostly of little things, we can do these little things out of love for God and neighbor. And that is missionary work.

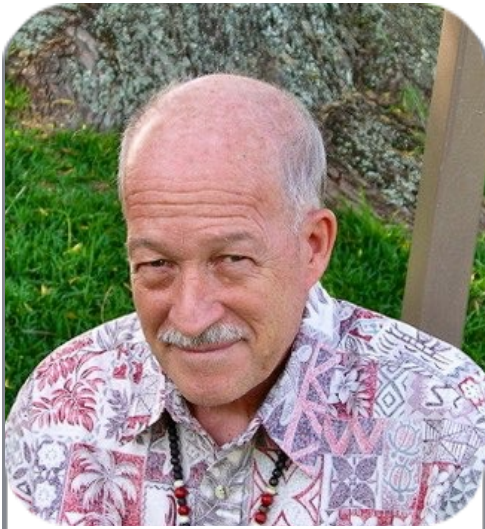
As Mother Teresa (now a canonized saint) pointed out: "...love begins at home, and it is not how much we do...but how much love we put in that action."

The Father pours out love upon us constantly. By becoming conscious of that through prayer and meditation, we become grateful and want to be part of God's care for all creatures and even for the world itself.

Some of us will be called by God to do great things. But all of us are called to do the ordinary day-to-day things that make life better for others. We should not undervalue these "little things." They can bring home to people the fact that God loves them, and that is not trivial.

"Each tiny act is an extraordinary event, in which heaven is given to us in which we are able to give heaven to others...."

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ON MY MIND

Dear Friends,

Advent and the new liturgical year has begun and our expectation for the celebration of Christmas has started. I usually experience this time of year with a dose of anxiety as well, because of all the extra things that need to be attended to. (an opportunity to grow in discipline and trust I suppose.)

Besides our five permanently professed members we have Br Scott, nearing the end of his novitiate. Anthony, Bill and Pinky are oblates in residence. Br. Augustine is also here. He is considering a transfer from another Benedictine monastery, We also have a new male sheep, Fleming (seen in the photo with the bell). This marvelous combination is making the prayer life and lawn care much more manageable. The rest of us are getting older day by day, but doing remarkably well considering everything.

We are about to get the exterior of St. Michael building painted, have begun a serious assessment of our solar voltaic system, and will start soon, with our neighbor, to upgrade the water system which has been two years in the planning. We are also looking at purchasing a better lawn mower. It is our many generous friends who make all these things possible. We are most grateful to all of you.

May our Lord Jesus, having chosen all of us, be the source of your joy and consolation as we celebrate His incarnation.

*Christmas Blessings,
Fr. David*

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Whatever [we do], it's just the outer shell of an amazing inner reality... at each moment, the soul grows in grace and becomes ever more beautiful for her God." (Venerable Madeleine Delbrel)

Once we realize that we are bearers of God's love, we will have the motivation to share that love with others.

We need only to look around. Is there someone in the family who needs encouragement? companionship? a phone call? a helping hand?

"We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do" (Mother Teresa).

Is there someone in the neighborhood who needs a ride to the doctor? a lawn mowed? a garden weeded or harvested? a conversation? a welcome?

Is there someone far away who would appreciate a text, an email, a letter, a phone call?

Are there ministries in the parish that need volunteers?

Are there elderly people in nursing homes who crave a visitor?

Is there a civic group whose ideals you can embrace?

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus says, "... and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward" (Matt. 10:42 NRSV).

The shepherds had to stay with their sheep round the clock, yet they found a way to share with others what they had seen and heard. We can do the same. Yes, we are busy, busier than ever. But even in the course of our work we can find moments when we can bring a ray of God's love into another's life.

All we need to do is be observant. See a need and try to meet it in some way. Each of us has been gifted by God's love in many ways. By sharing those gifts with others, we are giving expression to God's love for all people.

"Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier" (Mother Teresa)

*by Jim Scully
long-time friend of the Monastery*



"Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy ... For unto you is born this day a Savior who is Christ the Lord."

Luke 2:10-11

May the blessings of the newborn Lamb of God be with you throughout the coming year.

- The Hawaii Benedictines

Monastic Focus: Apostolates

As Jim Scully mentioned in the lead article we each have received a call to love. The initial call is to be a disciple of Jesus, to learn from Him. But this is not simply a matter of book-learning. It is an encounter with Christ that has transformative effect in our lives. The essential transformation is a change of focus: we are not only meant to receive His love but to communicate His love to others. We are to be Apostles of Love. Three members of our community share how this call has transformed their lives.

Sr. Geralyn: “Monastic religious are fundamentally persons who are apostles, who seek God daily in prayer, through the sacraments they receive and the vows they take. They are people who desire to love God, self and neighbor more and more. Given the above, when I came to the Benedictine Monastery of Hawaii, I received an additional invitation from Jesus - to reach out to those seeking healing after abortion. Jesus’ eyes were pleading: “Will you do this for me?” His heart was desperate with intense love, coming from deep suffering, to seek and console His brothers and sisters. I responded to this invitation through my involvement with two programs: The “Hope Alive” Program: International Hope Alive Counseling Association (IHACA) for seven years and more recently, the Rachel’s Vineyard Program for the last ten years. Both are volunteer outreaches outside the monastery while I continue my life as a monastic inside the monastery.”

Sr. Mary Jo: “Hearing the call early in my grade school days, I wanted to follow Jesus in the religious life as a Sister, following my high school graduation. Being only 16 my mother requested I wait a year, so this I did and with my parent’s permission I entered at 17. I have always loved the church, the sacraments, the Mass and devotion to Our Lady and began attending daily Mass my freshman year through my senior year in high school. I began teaching elementary school after the novitiate and always loved teaching about our faith, and all that it contains. Always the religion class was my favorite to teach and share, wanting the students to love the church, our faith and its practice allowing their lives to reflect the Jesus, the Father and Holy Spirit of their Baptismal Vows. Later in the experience of the Charismatic Renewal, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit became powerful in praying with people, allowing the Holy Spirit through His Gifts to be present in people’s lives. This has continued to be a humbling gift of the Lord to allow Him to touch, heal, reveal His love and all other ways God works in individual’s lives. I am grateful to be an ambassador of God’s love through counseling, spiritual direction and my role in the Basic Christian Community of Hawaii with Fr. Michael and presently with Msgr. Gary Secor.

Sr. CC: “I am filled with great joy in serving our amazing Lord. My heart is full when I am serving Jesus to all ages. Every morning I ask the Lord, “Use me for your amazing Glory!” In life when you find your purpose it is true, sincere joy. Wherever God sends me I am ready and willing to serve Him.”



Sr. Geralyn with staff from the Rachel's Vineyard Apostolate



Sr. Mary Jo teaching the RCIA group from St. John's Mililani



Sr. CC "having a ball" with homeschool children during their monthly retreat