



# The Hawaiian Benedictine

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## *The Supreme Truth*

What is the highest truth of all?

What is the truth that is most important for our lives?

I suppose people might come up with different answers to those questions. But it seems that in the New Testament, the over-arching truth is this: *God loves us!*

What is the high point of the whole Bible, the history of salvation? Isn't it the fact that God's only begotten Son became a human being? When we celebrate Advent and the Christmas season, don't we contemplate the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation, the Enfleshment of God as one of us?

But what is the truth behind that mind-boggling event? Recall what Saint John wrote: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son..." (John 3:16 NRSV)

God loves the world. God loves the human race. God loves me and God loves you. God loves each and every person with an undying faithfulness. No matter who we are, God loves us. No matter what we have done, God still loves us. That is the supreme truth, the bedrock of all truth.

That is the point of the whole Bible. That is why the story about Jesus the Christ is Good News. God is not the fearsome SuperBeing whom we must fear and placate. God is a loving Father who cares for us far more deeply than we can imagine. That is the understanding of God that Jesus had. Jesus spent his whole ministry trying to convince people that God was on our side, not out to get us. He was eager to draw as many people as possible into his experience of God.



Jesus acted as a person who knew that God was lovingly concerned about the welfare of every individual. He never deviated from that message, even when he perceived that rich, powerful and learned people did not want to hear it and would kill him for preaching it. Even when he had been nailed to a cross, he still clung to his experience of God as his *Abba*, his loving Father. He begged his Father to forgive his torturers. That is why God raised him to new life in the Resurrection—to show forth the divine love and the truth of Jesus' life and message.

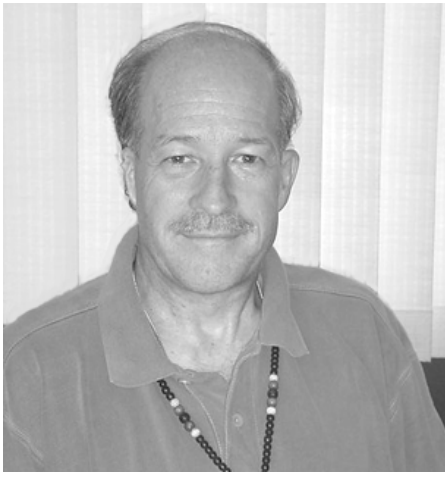
In that light, nothing is more important for us than that we accept Jesus' manifestation of God as our loving Father. Too often we let our sins cause us to doubt the divine affection. When things go wrong in our lives, we think that God is punishing us, that God does not love us any longer.

But God's love does not change. God's love is total and permanent. Saint John even dared to say that God *is* love (I John 4:16).

What would happen if we told ourselves many times a day, *God loves me?* How would our day go if our first thought upon awakening was, *God loves me?* What more positive and powerful thought is there? We often struggle against our sinful tendencies without much success. What would happen if we kept reminding ourselves that God loves us, that we are his dear children, that his infinite love

surrounds us every second of every hour of every day? The father in Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son is an image of God. That father loves both his sons, no matter how they act. His affection is warm and enduring. It is, however, but a pale reflection of the depth of God's love for each of us.

*Continued on Page 2*



## ON MY MIND

*Dear Friends,*

*It has again been several months since our last newsletter. It is a major challenge to keep up with everything such as health care issues and the necessities of life which make demands on our time.*

*Our many wonderful volunteers and Diana, our one paid assistant, help keep us going, but there are things, like newsletters, one cannot reasonably expect them to do.*

*Br Edmond is visiting from the Pecos Benedictine Abbey and is helping me with this issue - "Divine intervention?" The issue mentions some of the other events and accomplishments of the past few months.*

*One of the recent highlights for me was attending my nephew Sam Schneider's ordination to the priesthood in Superior WI on June 4th. Fr. Sam was then able to visit us in Hawaii for a few days in early July.*

*I am sad to say that our novice, Benjamin Martinez, will be leaving us. He has made a much appreciated contribution to our community life over the past two years. We pray the Lord's hand be upon him.*

**Fr. David**

*(Supreme Truth: from Page 1)*

Jesus told us that the first commandment was to love God with our whole heart and soul and mind. A tall order. Is it even possible unless we are acutely aware that God loves us the same way? We tend to limit our love to people who love us. If we were more aware of God's intense affection for us, maybe we could actually obey Jesus' prime directive.

Responding to God's love for us, we could then extend our love to all our sisters and brothers everywhere, to the whole human race, fulfilling the second great commandment. God loves every human being with the same intensity with which he loves us. If we could grasp that fact deep down in our souls, perhaps we could throw our racism and hatreds and prejudices into the trash and bring about a new world. If I draw my life from the well of God's love, my

attitude toward everyone else will change. If God loves these people, who am I to hate them? If God loves these strangers, who am I to deny them assistance?

God loves us individually. Each one of us humans is special to God. In other words, we are all God's children. We are all brothers and sisters.

We can make that relationship a reality in our society if we feed our souls on the divine love poured out on us unstintingly. Once we deeply experience even a fraction of the love God has for us, our whole outlook on life will be changed. We will begin to live a new kind of life, a life in the Spirit—walking in the light of the Supreme Truth.

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

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On July 11th the community celebrated the Solemnity of St. Benedict with the assistance of Bishop Larry Silva. It was also the 4th anniversary of our becoming a Benedictine Monastery under the auspices of the Diocese of Honolulu. Bishop Larry also installed Fr. David in a new 4-year term as Prior of the monastery. The election was held in late May right after the community retreat given to us by Fr. Xavier Nacke, OSB of Conception Abbey, MO. Please continue to keep Fr. David and the community in your prayers. Pray for Bishop Larry as he ministers to the diocese. Pray for vocations.



## BY THE WAY...

Priest of the 3rd generation, Fr. Samuel Schneider, Fr. David's nephew and Fr. Michael's grand-nephew visited the community for a few days in early July. Fr. David had been back in WI to attend Fr. Sam's June 4th Ordination. It was such a blessing to have Fr. Sam (on the right) celebrate the Eucharist with us. He will be spending the next few years ministering in his home Diocese of Superior, WI.

Malia Ferry (left to right- Malia, Sr. Ann, Sr. Geralyn) was with us for about 6 weeks in June and July to



help with Sr. Ann's care. Malia had volunteered to help care for Sr. Ann during

Sr CC recently gave talks at a Damien High School staff retreat day. About a week later, Sister spoke at Maryknoll High School as part a team giving the staff retreat for the beginning of the new school year. Sr. CC was invited back to give a presentation the following day to the student athletes at Maryknoll. (as seen in the photo below - Sr. CC is the one in front, wearing her white habit and giving the double shaka sign) Sister frequently is asked to speak to youth groups.



Fr. Sam will then serve some years as a Naval Chaplain.

We have a couple of new signs along our entrance road (one of which is shown to the right) thanks to Luke Benevitas and his Eagle Scout project. They also made a new sign for us down at Mary's Grotto. This was the 3rd Eagle Scout project done at the monastery in the last few years.



the month that Sr. Geralyn was on vacation, and then stayed a couple of extra weeks. Malia was so attentive to Sr. Ann's needs that she

(and all of us) were sad when her time here came to an end. She was able to end her stay in Hawaii by making a BCC youth and young adult retreat.

The annual BCC (Basic Christian Community) retreat day for all who have made a BCC retreat weekend will be Saturday, Sept. 16th. It will be held at the Benedictine Monastery in Waialua. Set aside the date and prepare for a renewal of the Holy Spirit's graces upon your daily living of His message - "Spirit Alive, Spirit On Fire".

The day begins with praise and worship at 9:00 am and Mass at 9:30 am. Family members are welcome. Please call Sr. MaryJo at 285-0254 if you need additional information.