



# The Hawaiian Benedictine

Newsletter of the:  
Benedictine Monastery of Hawaii

With the canonical title of:  
Mary, Spouse of the Holy Spirit Monastery

Winter 2018

Issue #130

## *A Time for God*

*Ora et Labora*, “Prayer and Work,” is a Benedictine motto. In his Rule for monks, St. Benedict organizes the day into definite times for prayer, work and holy reading. He was keenly aware of how work tends to monopolize our time if we don’t place limits on it.

Perhaps we moderns are the busiest generation that has ever existed. Our “labor-saving” inventions seem to have made our lives more hectic. There never seems to be enough time. We seldom even think about praying. As Morton Kelsey used to say, with emphasis, “Busyness is not *of* the devil, it *is* the devil.”

St Benedict put *Ora* first. That’s a bit of wisdom that applies to every Christian. If we don’t put prayer at the top of our list, chances are we will forget about praying. If we don’t pray every day, God could become irrelevant for us. Any relationship requires frequent contact to keep it strong. That goes triple for our relationship with God.

God pours out love on us twenty-four hours a day. We crave divine protection twenty-four hours a day. Does it make sense that we can’t find a few minutes to commune with our loving Father? Yet it seems so hard. So many things demand our attention. Life is full of distractions.

I believe St. Benedict reveals the solution to our dilemma: set aside a time for prayer and make a habit of praying at that time.

Now we probably can’t have as many prayer times as nuns and monks. But can’t we at least uncover a little space somewhere in our day when we can talk and listen to God?

It’s extremely important that we do so. Church, religion and even God are becoming increasingly irrelevant in modern society. We must all protect ourselves from this trend. And the best way to achieve that is for all of us to have our own prayer dimension. And the best way to insure that is for each of us to have a set time for prayer to which we are faithful.

On Sunday, of course, the choice is obvious: participate in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the greatest, the most powerful, the most wonderful prayer we have. To enter into all the prayers and readings of the Mass, one with our community, in union with Jesus in his entire

work of salvation—that is essential. Nothing else can replace that.

But what about the other days of the week?





## ON MY MIND

**Dear Friends,**

*It is hard to believe that we are in the first week of Advent already, as I write this, in a push to get this issue to the printer so we can get it to you before Christmas. It will be a great achievement to get all four issues out to you this year. Thank you Jim and Bill.*

*Isabelle and Caleb with me in the photo above are the grandchildren of Sr. GERALYN's friends from Texas at a time before she joined Our Lady of Guadalupe Abbey in Pecos, NM. Alex and Joanie were in Hawaii visiting their son Christopher and his wife Gabriella (the children's parents) who are stationed at Schofield Barracks not far from us. The family joined us for Sunday Mass to celebrate with Alex and Joanie on their 40th wedding anniversary and the renewal of their vows.*

*Scott has indeed arrived and has been adapting quickly to community life and helping in a number of areas around the monastery. He is a good cook, which is always appreciated. I'm just not sure about the funky green spinach and fruit smoothy stuff he makes for breakfast.*

*As we journey through Advent and prepare to celebrate Christmas, I pray the Lord Jesus guide the waiting and the wonder, for you and your families also.*

*The love and peace of Jesus,*

**Fr. David**

*(Time for God: from Page 1)*

We have to analyze our daily schedule and find a time when we can drop everything else and give ourselves to prayer. Maybe there's a ten-minute break somewhere during the day. Maybe it's only a five-minute break. Maybe it's a time when we must be physically busy, but we can connect with God in our mind or with our voice.

There are probably a thousand ways to pray. What form of prayer seems to be the one that brings you closest to God? It could be the rosary. It could be psalms from the Bible. It could be just sitting in peaceful silence, aware of the loving presence of God. It could be prayers from a book. It could be the Jesus prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior, have mercy on me a sinner"). It could be litanies. It could be pouring out to God what is in your heart. It could be carrying on a conversation with God, explaining your needs and desires and then listening for what the Holy Spirit may say in response.

Or it could be something different every day. The constant must be the doing of it.

As St. Basil the Great expressed it: "The best form of prayer is one that implants the clearest idea of God in the

soul and thus makes space for the presence of God within us."

The essential thing is finding the type of prayer that creates a real contact with God, and being faithful to praying that way every day.

Each of us is unique. Each of us therefore must discover a style of prayer that expresses what is in our heart. It may take a while for us to find what that style is. But it is vital to determine the time for prayer and to make a habit of praying at that time, even if our prayer does not seem fulfilling at first. We must learn by experience how best we pray.

What do I do if I just can't find a block of time to set aside for prayer? In that case, pray short prayers all day long. Fit them into your busy day at every opportunity. "Arrow prayers" or aspirations require only a second or two: "My Jesus, mercy," "Lord, help me," and especially, "Thank You."

It's not the words that make the prayer, but the heart that is in the words.

"Prayer is an act of love; words are not needed. Even if sickness distracts from thoughts, all that is needed is the will to love." (Saint Teresa of Avila)

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

The time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son.\* She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Lk. 2:6-7)



May Jesus, Mary and Joseph find room in your hearts this Holy Season! — The Hawaiian Benedictines

# Monastic Focus: Apostolates

Since the beginning of Our Lady Spouse of the Holy Spirit Monastery here in Hawaii, an apostolic thrust has been a key aspect of our monastic presence. While apostolic work is not an essential aspect of monasticism, St. Benedict does make provision for welcoming guests in chapter 53 of his Rule. The first verse of this chapter is striking “All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ”. In this way Benedict joins together the twin commandments of love of God and love of neighbor. And this love of neighbor is precisely what motivates us as Hawaii Benedictines to spread the love of Christ to those whom we meet, especially in giving and hosting retreats.

From the very beginning Fr. Michael and Sr. Mary Jo have been spiritual directors in the Basic Christian Community of Hawaii. Msgr. Gary Secor replaced Fr. Michael when he retired. As the BCCH website states: “BCC is nothing more than an attempt to recreate the closeness of the early, small, apostolic communities, to recapture some of the fire of the apostles, and to spread the Good News, both through personal witnessing and lifestyle changes.” Those who know Fr. Michael and Sr. Mary Jo can appreciate that the apostolic love and zeal that they brought to the foundation of the monastery shines forth as well in BCCH. The monastery in turn is deeply indebted to the members of BCCH and their continuing generosity to the monastery.

When Sr. Geralyn first came to Hawaii she was deeply involved in the Hope Alive Program counseling victims of abuse, neglect, and pregnancy loss, including abortion. In 2009 she used those skills as a staff member to help start the Rachel's Vineyard apostolate in Hawaii. RV ministers to those who have been wounded by the widespread practice of abortion. As their website says: “Weekend retreats offer a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment where women and men can express, release and reconcile painful post-abortive emotions to begin the process of restoration, renewal and healing.”

Sr. CC, the youngest professed member of the community, has also been very active in the apostolate. Her youthful, vivacious personality has made her a favorite presenter at conferences and retreats for young adults, youth, homeschool families and military wives around the islands.

It goes without saying that the monastery continues the Benedictine tradition of hospitality. There are rooms available for personal or group retreats or for those who wish to volunteer at the monastery. Please contact Sr. CC 637-7887 to discuss arrangements. A central part of the apostolate at the monastery has been to involve guests and volunteers in the Sacred Liturgy and the Divine Office. Fr. David and Fr. Michael celebrate Mass and Fr. David also helps diocesan parishes in need of priestly support. In addition, the professed brothers and sisters at the monastery are available for spiritual direction. Priests are available for confessions.

In all of these ways the monks and sisters of the Benedictine Monastery of Hawaii let the contemplative light dwelling within them manifest the glory of God.



BCCH finishes their 2018 program with an Advent Retreat for adults



Sr. Geralyn (4th from the left) with the Rachel's Vineyard Hawaii Staff at the RV International Leadership Conference (see Daily Log p.4)



Sr. CC “hanging loose” while giving talks to children at St. Michael's Elementary School

## FROM THE DAILY LOG:

MS- Fr. Michael Sawyer      GS- Sr. GERALYN Spaulding  
DB- Fr. David Barfknecht    CC- Sr. Celeste Cabral  
MJ- Sr. Mary Jo McEnany    SW- Scott Whittaker

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**September 23-27:** GS as one of the original members of the Rachel's Vineyard apostolate in Hawaii which began in 2009, attended its International Leadership Conference in Malvern, PA, along with other staff members of RV Hawaii (photo p. 3). They are shown together with Dr. Theresa Burke, the international founder of the RV ministry, along with Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director of Priests for Life. He is the Spiritual Director for the RV program, which is now in 49 states, 70 countries and 25 languages (see retreat schedule of places and dates at [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org) ).

**October 1-5:** CC takes a group of women to Kalaupapa for a retreat and an opportunity to volunteer.

**November 8:** The community celebrated the birthday of our newest member Scott Whittaker, by attending the 135th Anniversary Mass of the official arrival of Mother Marianne Cope and her Franciscan Sisters to the Hawaiian Islands.

**November 9:** MJ and GS were privileged to venerate the 1st, 2nd and 3rd class relics of St. Padre Pio at the Basilica of Our Lady of Peace. Long lines of the faithful honored the saint throughout the day.

**November 22:** Thanksgiving was shared with many guests who became "ohana" (family). After eating, we each recalled our blessings. One guest was delighted to find other cribbage fans including GS.

**December 1:** St. Paul had a thorn in the flesh, and DB has had a "thorn" (roots) in the septic system. He prayed (and worked) and with the help of some generous friends the problem was resolved. Thanks be to God!

**Fall 2018:** MS, as our 93 year old Founder, continues to inspire both the community and our visitors with his prayerfulness, humorous quips and his cheerful disposition in spite of the trials of advancing years. Like the Energizer Bunny he just keeps going!

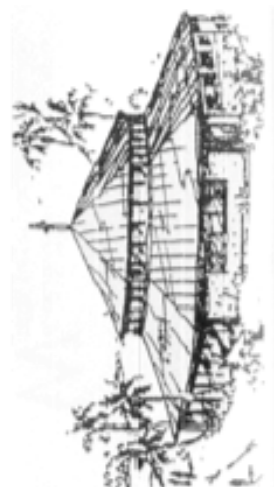
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Permit No. 1237  
Honolulu, HI

Winter 2018 Issue #130

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

Benedictine Monastery of Hawaii  
P. O. Box 490  
Waialua, HI 96791-0490

RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED



## CALENDAR

### Dec.

- 15 BCCH Workday at the Monastery (all cells)  
Monastery Christmas Decorating
- 29 St. Michael's Parish Religious Education  
Retreat. 9:30am-1:00pm. (Monastery)

### Jan.

- 6 Oblate Sunday. Dcn. Jonathon Ocampo:  
"Contemplative Prayer in a Noisy World"
- 19 BCCH Youth Retreat for St. George's Parish  
at Waimanalo

### Feb.

- 3 Oblate Sunday. 2:00pm speaker TBA
- 16 BCCH Pre-Retreat Monastery
- 22-24 BCCH Adult Retreat, #118 (for information call  
Sr. Mary Jo at 285-0254)  
St. Anthony Retreat Center
- 27 BCCH Thanksgiving Mass - 6:30 pm  
St. Anthony Retreat Center

### Mar.

- 3 Oblate Sunday. 2:00pm speaker TBA
- 30 RCIA Retreat St. John's Mililani. Dcn.  
Modesto (Monastery)

### April

- 6 Catechist's Retreat, St. John's Mililani.  
9:00am-3:00pm (Monastery)
- 7 Oblate Retreat at the Monastery. Bill Myszkier:  
"The Call to Holiness, a Call to Love".  
Mass at 10:00am, 1st talk, 12:30pm

**The Hawaiian Benedictine** is distributed quarterly by the Benedictine Monastery of Hawaii free to benefactors, friends and anyone who requests it.

Editor: Fr. David Barfknecht  
Address: P.O. Box 490  
Waialua, HI 96791

Phone: 808-637-7887  
Fax: 808-637-8601

E-Mail: [monastery@hawaiibenedictines.org](mailto:monastery@hawaiibenedictines.org)  
Web: [www.hawaiibenedictines.org](http://www.hawaiibenedictines.org)

