



SSS Grapevine

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Recent Pastoral Visits to New York and Hawai'i

*By Father John Thomas Lane SSS, Provincial Superior
with Father Robert Stark SSS*

During October, I had opportunities to have one short pastoral visit in New York City and one longer one in the state of Hawai'i on two of the islands.

October 9 – 11, I visited briefly with the leadership of the Congregation of Notre Dame, the sisters who have worked side-by-side with the Blessed Sacrament Community in New York City's Eglise Saint Jean-Baptiste for 123 years. We are discussing our collaboration and living situation for since 1988 we have shared our Blessed Sacrament building. Currently, 12 sisters live on the residence's 3rd, 4th, and 5th floors. Our five men live on the 2nd floor (*with one on a special wing 3rd floor area*). The parish offices are on the first and garden levels over the building.

In addition to visiting and planning with the sisters for the next five years, Father John Kamas and I visited the bishop for the vicariate of Manhattan in the Archdiocese of New York, Bishop Edward Whalen. Bishop Whalen has a long history with the CNDs and the SSS. He remembers fondly being brought to the novena of Saint Ann Shrine. With that in mind, we requested the official document recognizing the Saint Ann Shrine. We shared that the Diocese of Cleveland recently designated the Diocesan Shrine of Saint Ann in the Blessed

Sacrament Community Provincialate Oratory of the Blessed Sacrament. This came about because it was noticed that we do not have our shrines in the official Catholic Directory. Bishop Whalen will research this for us, for this parish's Shrine of Saint Ann goes back to 1892.

The bishop and I worked on our archdiocese-SSS memorandum of understanding, a six-year commitment document to serving in the archdiocese. Since the parish we used to serve for many years, the Church of Saint Andrew, closed, we requested two Eymard items return to the Congregation, and this is being worked out as all of the church's items are being cataloged, stored, or sold. Lastly, we discussed plans for the 125th anniversary of the SSS in the United States and the first foundation there at Saint Jean's. We are getting dates finalized for 2025.

From the island of Manhattan to the islands of O'ahu and Hawai'i on October 19 – 30, I came to make a pastoral visit with our American religious Father Bob Stark, who is the director of the Diocese of Honolulu Office for Social Ministry, and the two Filipino SSS Province communities. With the pastor at Mary, Star of the Sea Honolulu, Father Frankie de los Reyes SSS, away for a meeting in Manila, I assisted the parochial vicar, Father Junvic Diolata SSS, with some Masses. Father Paterno Labasano SSS is a hospital chaplain, visiting the many in Honolulu daily to assist Catholic patients. These four members live in Honolulu. Mary, Star of the Sea is a unique parish with an early childhood center, grade school to 8th grade and a senior living center all surrounding a soccer field. The field is the roof of the underground parking lot. Families come from all over the island to this very special school, with the campus located east of Diamondhead.

Over on the Big Island, Father Apolinario Ty SSS and Father Ferdinand Tomo SSS live at Saint Joseph, Hilo. There is a pre-K (3-year-olds) until high school (grade 12) Catholic school that is part of the parish's life. Though small, at 200 students, it dramatically impacts the area. Father Sammy Loterte SSS lives at Saint Therese, Mountain View, and has another mission church. When I visited on Thursday at Mountain View, they distributed food and clothing to those in need, which they do once a month on this day. For the last weekend of my stay, I went to Waimea on the Big Island and celebrated Masses here at Annunciation Parish and Puako and Ascension mission church for Father Anthony Pangan SSS, who was away at a Filipino national convention in New Jersey. The hospitality and kindness of the parishes was wonderful.

In between pastoral ministry, I was able to write an upcoming talk, *Eucharist as a Noun, Verb, Adjective, Adverb, and Interjection*, for the Southwest Liturgical Conference (SWLC). It will be taped live before a congregation on Wednesday, January 3, at 6:30 p.m. at Saint Paschal Baylon, Highland Heights, and part of the SWLC convention later in the month. I also

wrote an article for *The Priest Magazine*, “Faithful Stewards of Your Mysteries: The Priest & the Eucharist,” that will be published in the July 2024 issue. Lastly, I revised and edited the fourth edition of the *Novena with Saint Peter Julian Eymard*. We hope to have this updated version in early 2024, based on the retablo images in the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament, Saint Charles Borromeo Church, Albuquerque, NM. Father John Kamas SSS, assisted me in a 3rd edition – now we update for now, with Mona Grigsby-Suarez, Co-director of the CEE, translating this again into Spanish.

It’s been a busy and great month, and we are getting ready, too, for the General Chapter!

I have asked Father Robert Stark to share something of our four days on the two islands:

Pastoral Visit – By Robert Stark, SSS

Father Lane and I began our time together with an early traditional Hawaiian breakfast in the SSS community of Mary, Star of the Sea, Honolulu, HI, where I have lived with the SSS parish Team since October 2010—currently, Fathers Frankie, Junvic, and Pat and I live together, for which I am very grateful. We discussed some of my pastoral activities there, which are part of my ministry as the Director of the Diocese Office for Social Ministry. I celebrate the Eucharist many days, the weekday dawn Mass with parishioners on their way to work, weekend Masses, including the monthly Saturday Ohana Mass involving families with persons with special gifts (*what others sometimes call disabilities*), and the weekly Sunday Mass with the migrant Chinese community. On Sunday afternoons, we prepare food – with a mixture of parish migrants – including Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Portuguese, and Kama’aina, people who have lived in Hawaii for some time. This food is delivered/shared with houseless (*homeless*) families in Honolulu.

We drove to the Chancery, first to make a pilgrimage visit (*walking through Bishop Street Mall to Chinatown and back among the many homeless/houseless in Honolulu*), to the historic Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace, where the relics of the two saints of Hawaii, Saint Damien de Veuster and Saint Marianne Cope of Molokai are kept and where Saint Damien was ordained and Saint Marianne worshipped. Then we visited the Diocesan downtown offices with Bishop Larry Silva, who has been Bishop of the Diocese of Hawaii for the past 18 years (*he is the first Hawaiian-born Bishop of Honolulu*). Bishop Larry shared his gratitude and appreciation of the work of the SSS in Hawaii and shared some of his experiences with the diverse Hawaiian populations. Bishop Larry is the head of the USCCB Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs. We met with some of the Diocese’s lay and religious women staff, including Sisters of Saint Francis, the religious community of Saint Marianne Cope, who, along with the Sacred Heart Fathers, have inspired me. Bishop Silva has worked extensively with them since he arrived in Hawaii.

Later in the day, we visited the statue of Saint Marianne Cope at Kawelo Basin, where she arrived in the mid-1800s and helped transform the health care and education system in the Hawaiian Islands. *(Her statue points towards Kalaupapa, Molokai, where Saint Damien and she worked with persons with Hansen's Disease (leprosy) and where both died after many years of accompanying many of the most vulnerable in Hawaii, which is why they are both so beloved by the Hawaiian people.)*

We also visited the mountain diocesan offices near the bishop's home, where the Office for Social Ministries is located. We spoke with some of the staff, including those who work with the Saint Augustine Foundation. This foundation raises funds for Catholic tuition scholarships for low-income children and youth who otherwise could not afford to attend Catholic Schools. We also visited the Mercy House community next to the bishop's residence, where formerly incarcerated women come for temporary housing and continue healing while being trained and certified peer specialists in many jobs in Hawaii. These houses were previously the homes of the bishop's housekeepers but have been renovated by parishioners and women from prison to be places of healing and new beginnings. We had a long conversation with Kimmy, formerly incarcerated for almost 20 years, who, since working with Mercy House, finished her college degree and is working on her Master's while working and inspiring others inside and outside of prison to build healthy, healing communities of Aloha.

Also, we visited the Big Island HOPE Services Hawai'i, the non-profit born out of the Office for Social Ministry 11 years ago, and has become the leading community-based organization on the Neighboring Islands working to end houselessness. The visit included seeing the houseless shelter in a Saint Joseph Parish property next to the church and the rectory in Hilo, where the SSS community lives. This shelter is for the elderly houseless, many of whom have recently been released from the Hilo hospital. There are two other HOPE Services Hawai'i shelters in Saint Joseph parish, one for women and children and another for men.

We also visited the temporary housing units (19) in the Sacred Heart parish community of Paho, which were built for those made houseless by the volcano eruptions in Puna—one of the poorest areas in Hawai'i. These "tiny homes" temporary shelters are now next to 12 permanent entire homes, which were recently built by HOPE Services Hawai'i and will house elderly formerly homeless/houseless persons. We ended the visit by visiting with HOPE Services staff back at their main office in Hilo, where we met with some of the management team *(who have been formerly homeless and/or incarcerated as well as with persons from the diverse community they serve, including the Chuukese Micronesian community which is the most marginalized population on the Hawaiian Islands.)*

Lastly, during the visit, we also had some time to discuss my work with the Migrants and Refugee Section of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development in the Vatican. This section, established and initially directed by Pope Francis, is now part of the “Listening and Dialogue” section of the Dicastery headed by Cardinal Michael Czerny SJ. Cardinal Czerny and I did our doctorate studies together at the University of Chicago more than 40 years ago, and I have been working with the section since its beginning in 2016. The work involves being part of the Americas team and a regional coordinator for Central America and Mexico in coordination with South and North America. I am currently in meetings with bishops and pastoral workers on the border of the United States and Mexico, as well as in El Salvador. I will follow up on the work after the Synod in Panama, Costa Rica, and Guatemala.

The Diocese of Honolulu and SSS province asked and allowed me to share my ministry time with the Dicastery, for which I am very grateful. This work also made it possible for me to visit often and stay with the SSS General Curia community in Rome, which I appreciate.

Some Photos from my New York and Hawaii visits:



Annunciation Church



The big Island of Hawaii – SSS Fathers Ferdinand, Poli, Lane and Sammy



Saint Therese Church (exterior)



Saint Therese Church (interior) with
Father Lane and Father Sammy



Father Robert Stark, Bishop Larry Silva and Father John Thomas Lane



Bishop Edward Whelan, Father John Thomas Lane and Father John Kamas in New York



SSS Fathers Paterno Labasano, Junvic Diolata and Robert Stark



Statue of Saint Marianne Cope



Parish complex of Mary Star of the Sea in Honolulu