

**Diocese of Honolulu** • Office of the Bishop • [www.catholichawaii.org](http://www.catholichawaii.org)  
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Feast of St. Damien, May 10, 2011

To Pastors and Parish Administrators

Dear Father:

Two years ago on the Feast of St. Damien, I wrote you about addressing homelessness and affordable housing as an important priority action of our Diocesan Strategic Roadmap Witness to Jesus. That letter called for a Diocesan Task Force on Homelessness and Affordable Housing to develop resources and a plan of action to mobilize our gifts of time, talent and treasure to implement the Diocesan Roadmap. Today, on the Feast of St. Damien, I write to you about the enclosed plan I have wholeheartedly approved to help engage parishes in constructing, restoring, converting or preserving more than 700 units of housing for persons making less than 30% of the average income in Hawaii.

This plan targets affordable housing as it relates to homelessness. It is a compilation of many peoples' best ideas to address homelessness by increasing affordable housing. This plan was a collaborative effort involving all the Office for Social Ministry and Office of Affordable Housing (OSM/OAH) Team, with substantial input from the Task Force on Homelessness and Affordable Housing and many Catholic parishes who have led by example through their services to the homeless for the past several decades.

Just before the beginning of Lent this year I sent a letter alerting you to the mailing of a Resource Kit from the Office for Social Ministry to help parishes address the issues of Homelessness and Affordable Housing. At that time I urged you to use this resource to raise awareness in your parish and to generate the formation of a Homeless Housing Ministry team as part of your social ministries committee. Several parishes have already made significant progress in this effort, including the following examples:

- On Oahu a parish homeless housing ministry was formed, resulting in individuals volunteering their services, such as the head of a university's architectural department, an owner of transitional houses, and a CEO of a durable tent factory.
- On the Big Island a homeless housing ministry has decided to expand their parish food pantry ministry to include workforce training and employment support; plus they are also partnering with Habitat for Humanity in building affordable housing in their area.
- On Maui several parishes have come together in supporting families who are struggling with foreclosures and have partnered with other faith based organizations and communities organizing to get legislation passed to insure banks meet directly with persons facing foreclosure.

- On Kauai parishes are exploring expansion of their homeless outreach ministries to broader services, including involving more of the youth.

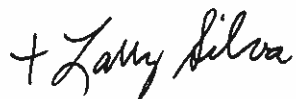
Hopefully you have been able to identify members of your parish to participate in this priority action of our Strategic Roadmap Witness to Jesus. In the coming weeks the Office for Social Ministry will be contacting each parish to help provide resources and training for the creation of housing ministries. This will include offering a special workshop to train and support your homeless housing ministry.

I look forward to hearing how each of the parishes will be participating in this important part of implementing our strategic roadmap and Witnessing to Jesus, our Risen Lord, as we move toward Pentecost together.

Let us pray to St. Damien and Blessed Marianne for their inspiration in this collective faith effort to Witness to Jesus, our Risen Lord, as together we move forward together doing the Father's will with the Spirit in building the kingdom.

Mahalo for all you do!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Silva". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Reverend Larry Silva  
Bishop of Honolulu