

DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN FOR 2016 – 2020

STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL

Dear Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Diocese of Honolulu,

Peace be with you!

Over the past several months I have met with parish leaders in each of our nine vicariates to receive input on the renewal of our diocesan pastoral plan. I am grateful to all who shared their insights so that we can be good stewards of the resources of time, talent, and treasure that the Lord has entrusted to us for his mission. I am particularly grateful to James Walsh, Director of Pastoral Planning, for his great work on the development of this pastoral plan.

Those who are familiar with our last pastoral plan *The Roadmap for Our Mission* will notice similarities between this current plan and the *Roadmap*. While the priorities may be similar, I want this pastoral plan to help us all direct our attention **outward**, and not simply to focus on the internal structures and programs of our diocese and parishes. This is in keeping with the mandate of Jesus himself: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Let us hearken back to the beginnings of the Catholic faith in Hawaii. In 1827, when the first Catholic missionaries of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary arrived here, they found a beautiful place with a beautiful culture, but one that knew little or nothing of Jesus Christ and his saving Gospel. The missionaries and all who supported them offered their time, talents, and treasure to make it possible for the Gospel of Jesus to be proclaimed in virgin territory, because they were all convinced of the saving power of the Word of God, who was made flesh in the person of Jesus. The Catholic faith they shared with the native Hawaiians and others who were living in Hawaii was a faith that transformed cultures. It respected the language and culture of the host country, but at the same time called it to conversion, to see things from a different perspective, and to shine a new light on marriage and family life, on economics and education, and on respect for human life and human dignity. They did not simply tithe on their time, talent, and treasure, but they gave all they had to bring the joy of the Gospel to these islands. The Catholic faith in many ways was counter-cultural, and although embraced by many, it was also suspect by others to the point of being outlawed for ten years (1829-39). Yet our ancestors in the faith never gave up in spite of the difficulties, the challenges, and even the persecutions. Because they took seriously their call to be stewards of the Gospel, we enjoy the legacy of the Catholic faith that grew from the seeds they planted.

Today we live in a culture that is no longer centered on Christ but rather on the individual and that almost acts as if each person is his or her own god, making decisions of life and death, about what is moral and immoral, all without reference to a Supreme Being who made us and has

revealed to us the most life-giving way to live. There are wonderful people, but we have been lured into what I call “ego-theism,” the notion that “I” am god, who make all the decisions of life and death, of right and wrong, for myself. This notion ultimately is destructive of our communion with one another, taking us farther into isolation and making it much more difficult to agree about the common good. While our current culture is certainly familiar with Jesus, it tends to sideline him as a heroic figure of history who presented us with wise teachings, but who disappeared from the scene, just like other heroic figures before him.

Even though we Catholics are subject to the temptations of the culture in which we live, our vision as Catholics is very different from the prevailing cultural vision. In many ways we are challenged to be like those early missionaries, coming into a culture that needs transformation through the healing light of the risen Jesus, facing virgin territory in planting and nurturing the seeds of faith in Jesus Christ. The mandate of Jesus to “Go, ... make disciples” may not take us to foreign lands but today challenges us to offer our time, talents, and treasure for the transformation of the very culture in which we live. Just as the early missionaries to Hawaii were faithful and dedicated in spite of trials and persecutions, we, too, need to be strong in sharing our faith and giving witness to Jesus.

Our Church is alive and thriving, and our parishes and diocese are venues for celebrating the faith with others who share this gift that has been given to us. But it must also be said that we Catholics have had a tendency to focus more on those who come to us rather than prepare ourselves to go out to others who do not yet fully know the saving power of Jesus. So even though this diocesan pastoral plan *Stewards of the Gospel* contains many elements of the *Road Map*, our vision in implementing it must be different. We should always be reminded that our parishes and diocese, our programs and institutions, are not ultimately for ourselves and our own spiritual growth. They are meant to equip us for our mission of taking the Gospel of Jesus to those people and places that have not yet embraced our Lord and his Way.

The mission that Jesus gives us is clear, and it is meant for our own time as much as it was for times past. Yet we must be wise in our use of resources of time, talent, and treasure. Therefore, a pastoral plan is necessary to help us be good Stewards of the Gospel, so that it may reach every person on these beautiful islands of Hawaii. I ask you to reflect on these priorities in your parishes, your vicariates, your families, your circles of friends, and wherever you find yourselves, so that, like those first missionaries, we can give faithful witness to Jesus.

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

DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN FOR 2015 – 2020

STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL

PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES

PREAMBLE

The Pastoral Plan of the Diocese of Honolulu, *Stewards of the Gospel*, outlines four strategic priorities: Faith Formation, Leadership Development, Strengthening of Marriage and Family Life, and Youth and Young Adult Ministry. All are interwoven with the vital threads of Stewardship, Evangelization, and Social Ministry to help deepen our faith and to send us forth as joyful missionaries equipped to witness to Jesus by living and sharing our faith with all in Hawaii.

This pastoral plan builds on our previous Road Map, *Witness to Jesus*, and helps us all direct our attention outward, and not simply to focus on the internal structures and programs of our diocese and parishes. This is in keeping with the mandate of Jesus himself: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

The mission that Jesus gives us is clear, and it is meant for our own time as much as it was for times past. Yet we must be wise in our use of the resources of time, talent, and treasure. Therefore a pastoral plan is necessary to help us be good Stewards of the Gospel, so that it may reach every person on the beautiful islands of Hawaii. Let us reflect on these priorities in our parishes, vicariates, families, circles of friends, and wherever we find ourselves, so that, like those first missionaries, we can give faithful witness to Jesus.

FAITH FORMATION

Faith formation is a life-long process of growth in prayer, relationship with the Lord, and knowledge of his teachings as articulated by the Church Jesus founded. In order to be good stewards in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others, we must know our Catholic faith and be ready to joyfully share it with others. Faith formation is not primarily for our own personal spiritual enrichment but to equip us to share our faith effectively so that it can transform our culture.

Faith formation is for all Catholics of all ages:

- Parents are the first to form their own children in the faith. Our faith formation must equip parents to be stewards of the Gospel.
- Catechists and Catholic school teachers of all subjects have a special role to play in handing on the faith to our children and youth and preparing them to be evangelizers. Our faith formation must prepare them to hand on the faith to our youth in such a way that our youth are committed to the mission of being stewards of the Gospel.

- Our Catholic schools are an effective infrastructure for formation in the faith. To assure that this valuable infrastructure is available to us Catholics and others for generations to come, we must do all we can to make them available, accessible, and affordable to all Catholic parents and their children.
- All Catholics are called to shine the light of faith on family life, the economy, business, health care, education, and political life. Faith formation of all adults must equip them to effectively be stewards of the Gospel in all of these venues and many others.
- The death and resurrection of Jesus, and his continued presence with us in the Eucharist and the Church, is to be the center of our faith formation, so that it will not be ourselves we preach, but Jesus Christ. The Word of God and the Eucharist must be presented as true encounters with the risen Jesus, encounters that can transform lives and cultures.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF CLERGY AND LAITY

God bestows special gifts of leadership on certain members of our community, and we commit ourselves to the discernment and development of these leadership gifts so that the work of being stewards of the Gospel can continue for generations to come.

- We need to develop leaders who have the vision of taking the Gospel out to the “highways and byways” of the world in which we live, and not simply of fine-tuning our internal parish and diocesan programs.
- Leadership is needed in faith formation, so that as many people as possible can be given the tools to evangelize.
- Leadership must be developed to do pastoral planning, to discern the needs of a community for protecting human life in all its stages; to enhance the human dignity of the poor; to find economic, social, and political means to end poverty; to strengthen and develop marriage and family life; and to transform a culture that suffers from violent and bloodless/legal forms of violence into a culture of true justice and peace.
- Leadership is needed to be good stewards of our time, our talents, and our treasure so that the mission Jesus entrusted to us can be advanced.
- Leadership is needed to keep our vision focused not on internal matters of our parish and diocese but on our mission of outreach to those who have not yet heard or committed themselves to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (evangelization).
- Leadership must be as disciples of Jesus Christ, submissive to him, the only true Shepherd; and it must be based on the Word of God and flow from the sacramental life of the Church.

STRENGTHENING OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

The Body of Christ, the Church, is the Bride of Christ, united intimately to him in many ways, with the ultimate expression of intimacy in the Eucharist, in which the two become one so that the Body of Christ can be fruitful. Marriage and family life are the best means for supporting this vision of Christ’s union with the Church.

- We must evaluate how we convey the beauty of the teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage, sexuality, and family life from the earliest days in a child’s development,

through childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood; then strengthen these teachings so that upon them can be built strong marriages and families.

- We must be good stewards toward those families who are suffering from violence, separation, chronic illnesses, or poverty, bringing them healing and strength in the name of Jesus.
- Families and individuals who suffer from poverty must be given special care and attention, so that strengthening family life, many of the roots of poverty may be eliminated.
- Families must be given the means to be aware of themselves as the “domestic church,” where the forgiving and healing love of Christ is encountered, and from which all are sent out on mission, nourished and clothed in the Word of God.
- Leaders must be trained to reach out to Catholic families who are not living truly Catholic marriages, to present to them the beauty of the sacrament of Matrimony and to invite them to enter fully into it.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Youth and young adults are not only future stewards of the Gospel, but they have gifts and talents that enable them to share the good news of Jesus even now. Youth ministry is not simply for their own personal development and growth as Christians, but to equip them to offer all of their time, talents, and treasure as stewards of the Gospel.

- Young Catholics must be given formation in the faith that helps them realize that Jesus is alive, present, and active in their lives and in the world. Helping them digest the Word of God and to understand the intimate encounter with Jesus we are offered in the Eucharist are keys to their formation.
- Young Catholics must become aware from their earliest days that the Church is essentially missionary, and that their own participation as stewards of the Gospel can bring many to Christ in their schools, on their sports teams, in their places of work, in their social networks, and in the wider community.
- Youth must be formed in the mind of Jesus in his concern for the sick, the poor, the hungry, and for those who go astray, and be given formation in how to reach out to others with Christ’s love.