

## Talk story

### OFFICE FOR SOCIAL MINISTRY

# Our immigrants, migrants and refugees

*"May these migrants meet brothers and sisters under every sky, who share with them the bread and hope of the common path." (Pope Francis)*

Our Holy Father often calls us to reflect on how we can encounter Christ by walking with migrants on our shared journey of life. Pope Francis said, "Migrants are often able to enrich their new environments by offering their professional skills, their social and cultural heritage and their witness of faith — which can bring a new energy and life to communities of ancient and Christian tradition, and invite others to encounter Christ and to come to know the Church."

Thus, this is a vital part of our faith's shared blessing and kuleana.

Recently, the Office for Social Ministry hosted a gathering of 15 public and private organizations to talk story about immigration rights and citizenship. On Aug. 9, Unite Local 5 union organized the meeting of 40 people representing a range of groups that included Catholic parishes, Protestant churches, Catholic Charities Hawaii, the University of Hawaii Law School, Volunteer Legal Services, and the ACLU.

Other organizations such as Micronesians from We Are Oceania and Partners in Development, Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE), Aloha Immigration and Aloha Dream Team were also part of the conversation. Joining them was Hawaii congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa and her staff.

The topics discussed included the plight of immigrants in general and the experience of migrants here in Hawaii and what we can do to accompany them on our journey together.

Many in the diverse group shared stories of their own to help identify challenges facing migrants today.

A nun working with Catholic Charities shared her own experiences as an immigrant from Mexico who came to the United States, secured a green card, taught in schools, and eventually became a U.S. citizen. She is now working for the rights of other immigrants

to achieve citizenship.

Young migrants from Micronesia shared their challenges of being promised certain services by the United States through a Compact of Free Association agreement with our country, only to discover that those services have been eliminated or severely reduced. They voiced concern for their people back home who continue to fulfill their responsibilities under the compact but are being forced to migrate because they are losing their land to climate change.

Lawyers spoke about clients, including legal permanent residents, who once dreamed of citizenship but are now afraid to apply because they live in fear of deportation, job loss and family separation. Out of some 9 million legal permanent residents in the United States, about 55,000 live in Hawaii.

Many discussed possible solutions such as offering free English and citizenship classes, collaborating with faith-based and non-profit organizations to increase the capacity of legal services for migrants and working with local unions to assist migrant workers in applying and preparing for citizenship.

Becoming a U.S. citizen will give migrants the right to vote, the right to petition their families to reunite with them in the U.S., and the right to apply for a myriad of jobs that require citizenship. Most importantly, they will be protected against immigration raids and deportation.

The Catholic Church has a long illustrious history of assisting immigrants, migrants and refugees to attain citizenship. If you are interested in being part of that history of the church accompanying the journey of migrants and immigrants today, please contact Catholic Charities Hawaii, 524-4673, or the Office for Social Ministry, 203-6734. Stay tuned for more in the Talk Story column from Pope Francis on how we can encounter Christ and share bread and hope with our brother and sister migrants around the world!

Mahalo,

*Your friends at the Office  
for Social Ministry*



Photo courtesy of Catholic Charities Hawaii

### Laulima House donation

The First Hawaiian Bank Foundation on Aug. 3 awarded a \$100,000 grant to Catholic Charities Hawaii for its Laulima House Campaign. Pictured from left are First Hawaiian Bank senior vice president Vernon Wong, Catholic Charities Hawaii president and chief executive officer Terry Walsh and Laulima House Campaign chairman Jerry Rauckhorst. Catholic Charities purchased the Laulima House property in 2015 with the goal of expanding its programs to meet the growing needs of the community. "We are extremely grateful for First Hawaiian Bank's support," said Walsh. "Laulima House will allow us to enhance services to those in need, especially children and their families."

### Chaminade forum to address various afterlife beliefs

Chaminade University of Honolulu will present "Perceptions of Afterlife and After Death in Various Religions," 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Sept. 4, in the Mystical Rose Oratory on campus.

Representatives from 12 religions (Baha'i Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Hawaiian Spirituality, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Juda-

ism, Native American Spirituality, Seicho-No-Ie and Sufism) will speak. Breakout sessions will allow discussion among participants.

The event is open to the general public, with lunch and morning refreshments included. For more information and registration details, contact Saleem Ahmed at 395-5329.



Photo courtesy of the Serra Club of Honolulu

### Serra Club hosts seminarians

The Serra Club of Honolulu hosted the diocesan seminarians on Oahu at a luncheon at the New Empress Restaurant in Chinatown before they headed back to school. Pictured standing are William "Pila" Tulua and Kevin Clark. Seated is Clifford "Chance" Billmeyer, Serra chaplain Msgr. Gary Secor and diocesan vocations director Father Rheo Ofalsa. Also at the luncheon but unavailable for the picture was seminarian Romple Emwalu. Founded in 1970, the Serra Club of Honolulu is part of a worldwide Catholic organization of lay men and women dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and vowed religious life. For information about Serra, contact Jack Kampfer at 621-0852.



### Maryknoll Sisters to celebrate 90 years in Hawaii

Hawaii's Maryknoll Sisters will celebrate the order's 90th anniversary of mission presence in the Islands at a thanksgiving Eucharist liturgy, 10:30 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 7, in the Maryknoll School Community Hall, 1402 Punahou Street, Honolulu. Msgr. Gary Secor will be the celebrant.

Ten Maryknoll Sisters came to Hawaii from New York on Sept. 5, 1927, at the invitation of Bishop Stephen Alencastre, to serve as Catholic school teachers. Four went to St. Ann School in Heeia on Oahu's windward side, and six opened Maryknoll School, the parish school for Sacred Heart Church, Punahou.

Soon the sisters were running seven elementary schools and assisting at the hospital stations for Hansen's disease patients in Pearl City and Kalihi.

In 1944, Bishop James J. Sweeney again turned to the Maryknoll Sisters to establish a diocesan department of social services, the predecessor of Catholic Charities Hawaii. In 1945, more Maryknoll Sisters came to open the office for the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD), today called the Office of Religious Education.

At their peak in the early 1960s, Maryknoll had 165 sisters in Hawaii staffing seven elementary school, three high schools, Catholic Social Services, the Catholic Schools Department, the CCD office and other diocesan departments.

Over the years Hawaii contributed at least 15 women to their ranks.

Today, 11 Maryknoll Sisters serve in the Islands.

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*Holy Ghost Gift Shop, Kula, Maui, has invited us to place items on consignment for sale there - if you are on Maui stop by & take a look, they have a great assortment of religious items; hours: Mon-Fri 9 am-1 pm & after weekend Masses. We still are putting items for sale on Craig's List, under Jewelry, Household, Books, Business, & the "Buy & Sell" groups on Facebook.*

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