

Divine Mercy Conference 2006: A Follow-up Event on the Dedication of Honolulu Diocese to The Divine Mercy

Bishop of Honolulu Dedicates Diocese to The Divine Mercy

On April 23, 2006 (Feast of Divine Mercy Sunday), Bishop Larry Silva dedicated the Diocese of Honolulu to The Divine Mercy. The dedication took place during a special Mass celebrating the Feast of Mercy. The Diocese of Honolulu (which includes all of the Hawaiian Islands) is believed to be the first diocese to dedicate itself to The Divine Mercy.

The bishop made his intention known to the priests of the diocese in a February 21 letter in which explained why he was making the dedication. *"I want to do this with one special intention in mind,"* he wrote, *"an increase of local vocations to the priesthood, diaconate and religious life in Hawaii."* He urged all pastors to have Divine Mercy celebrations in their own parishes. *"I would like to encourage you to consider some celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday in your parish, joining in prayer for this special intention for an increase of local vocations."*

A Timely Event - A Follow Up

Through the missionary efforts of the Eucharistic Apostles of Divine Mercy (EADM) in Hawaii, a powerful conference took place five months after Bishop Silva's dedication of the diocese to The Divine Mercy. The conference which was held on September 8 – 10, 2006 was a timely follow-up of the bishop's dedication and it resonated his special intentions for vocations. EADM Hawaii, an apostolate under the guidance of its founder and director, Dr. Bryan Thatcher of Florida, is a lay outreach ministry of the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception based in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Its missions are:

- 1) To encourage the laity to propagate the Divine Mercy and the Truth of the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist;
- 2) To encourage members in the exercise of the Faith through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and
- 3) To form small faith groups, called cenacles, which meet regularly to pray for and encourage vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, as well as to pray and work for an end to the scourge of abortion in the world, and to experience the splendor of our Catholic Faith through the study of Sacred Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Diary of Saint Faustina Kowalska;

These missions were presented to Hawaii's new bishop during a special meeting with the EADM Hawaii Board of Directors which included young adults representing

the Young Apostles of Mercy. Bishop Silva acknowledged the works of the Divine Mercy apostolate and imparted his blessings on the Hawaii group. In his letter, he wrote: *“The mission of professing and proclaiming the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is one that is much needed and that will bear much fruit. Taking the message of Divine Mercy to all by studying the Sacred Scriptures and the writings of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska will also bear much fruit in bringing healing to a world torn by discord and dissension, a lack of respect for life in all its stages and a growing secularism. May the Lord who has begun the good work in you bring it fulfillment!”*

Divine Mercy Conference 2006

God’s good work continued... EADM Hawaii had a very successful three-day conference at the Hawaii Convention Center. The conference theme was **Apostles of Mercy** which was magnificently depicted in a painting produced by Tommy Canning, an artist from Scotland (www.art-of-divinemeracy.co.uk). St. Faustina, Pope John Paul II, Blessed Mother Teresa, and Hawaii’s own saints - Blessed Damien and Blessed Mother Marianne Cope of Molokai - were the Mercy Saints chosen as the model apostles for this conference.

Each guest speaker representing the Mercy Saint spoke passionately on the life of the saint and captured the audience by their zeal and experience of God’s mercy.

- ❖ The conference was blessed with two local religious - Fr. Herman Gomes, SSCC, who is considered the expert historian on the life of Blessed Damien and Sr. Marion Kikukawa, OSF, the Vice Postulator for the Cause of Blessed Mother Marianne.
- ❖ Blessed Mother Teresa’s life and works was presented by Fr. Patrick Torres, MC, who is the Vocations Director for the Missionaries of Charity Fathers in Tijuana, Mexico. He also emphasized during a homily that devotion to the Eucharist and Our Lady is the answer to the Church’s vocation crisis.
- ❖ Dr. Bryan Thatcher spoke about St. Faustina who is known as the Secretary of God’s Mercy. He also talked about the urgent need for Christians to become Apostles of Mercy now.
- ❖ Mrs. Trish Short, a pro-life advocate, and founder of “Artists for Life” ministry in Maryland had a profound testimony that touched the hearts to tears.
- ❖ Mr. Dan Lynch, Director of the Apostolate of the Missionary Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe talked about Our Lady as Mother of Mercy and Gifts from Heaven – the Images of Divine Mercy and Our Lady of Guadalupe.
- ❖ Highlighting the call to vocations was guest speaker Fr. Donald Calloway, MIC, the Vocations Director for the Marians of the Immaculate Conception. His well-spoken testimony that led to the miracle of his priesthood left such an encouraging sign for the youth of today. Calling himself as the “Poster Child of Divine Mercy”, his talk drew many youth to hearing the call. Fr. Calloway also talked about Pope John Paul II as the Great Mercy Pope. It was a powerful and passionate presentation that resulted in a standing ovation.

- ❖ Fr. John Grigus, OFM Conv, Director of Marytown Perpetual Adoration Program and founder and director of the *Harvest Vocation Prayer Ministry* in Chicago, highlighted in his homily, the Eucharist being the "Tabernacle of Divine Mercy". He also rendered a powerful conclusion for the conference with an urgent message of "Divine Mercy – The Final Hope for Mankind".

The fullness of the three-day weekend event included a grand welcome with the procession of the Knights of Columbus and other lay organizations carrying colorful banners. The conference also included an International Rosary (each decade recited in different ethnic languages), confessions, Holy Masses and Eucharistic Adoration.

It is befitting to say that the success of this event was preceded several days before the conference with the visitation of the Missionary Image of Our lady of Guadalupe brought to Hawaii by Dan Lynch. A few parishes were blessed by the image as intercessory prayers were continued each day for the success of the conference. Not only did it revitalize the faithful but it also brought many youth to the conference that stirred the "calling to vocations".

Other celebrants who helped to make the weekend masses special were Fr. Michael Sawyer, a Benedictine priest and Fr. Gary Secor, the Vicar of Clergy and Vocations Director for the Diocese of Honolulu. The conference culminated on the last day with the presence of Bishop Larry Silva who imparted his blessings as well as encouraging remarks. After celebrating the closing Mass for the conference, he encouraged the attendees to be hopeful in the mercy and love of God even though statistics show a bleak and dark future in the dwindling number of vocations, as well as decrease in mass attendance where parishes has had to close. His final remarks celebrating this memorable event left each one with words to ponder on "***We do not live by statistics but by faith in the good works of God.***"

By the Fruits You Shall Know

Faith in the good works of God.... One of the good fruits of Bishop Silva's dedication of Hawaii to The Divine Mercy resulted in EADM Hawaii organizing a "vocations fair" during the recent conference. Although EADM Hawaii has had on numerous occasions desired to do something to promote vocations, the bishop's special intention helped the ministry to actually carry out these inspirations from the Holy Spirit.

Working with various lay organizations who help support vocations and contacting the vocation directors of different religious congregations, EADM Hawaii was able to provide vocational materials and assistance to those in attendance. A special youth session, led by the Young Apostles of Mercy, emphasized the need to hear God's calling. The conference was blessed with the presence of two guest speakers who are vocation directors. Their testimonies and messages had profound impact on the young people who attended the youth session. As a result, there were definitely a

number of inquiries about vocations. A few young people upon hearing these priests were encouraged to pursue their desires on asking what to do with such callings, whereas before, they would just shy away or ignore the inspirations.

Quite a number of individuals, after the conference also had expressed their desires to know and learn more about Divine Mercy. Some have expressed their interests to form or join EADM cenacles. In particular, a group of very dedicated Samoan ladies wanted to help in the works of Divine Mercy. They already meet regularly in their parish to pray and study about Divine Mercy. Rose Balayan, the main facilitator of EADM Hawaii encouraged them to formally join the family and become part of the EADM worldwide ministry. Rose provided them with the cenacle formation guideline materials approved by the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception. On fire with God's Divine Mercy, these ladies immediately formed a youth cenacle in their parish. During the first session, over twenty young people attended! These Samoan devotees hope that they will be able to help plant seeds of vocation and holiness in these young people.