

# Hawaii Catholic Herald

VOLUME 88, NUMBER 22

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2025

\$1



## Hawaii and the Holy Land

Isle knights and dames welcome the Equestrian Order  
of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem's Western USA  
Lieutenancy for its annual meeting

*See story, Pages 12-13*

### OBITUARY

**Jim Severson, who  
provided expert  
financial advice  
to the diocese for  
decades, is fondly  
remembered**

*Pages 3-4*

### HAWAII

**A first-class relic  
of St. Faustina is  
joyfully enshrined  
at Our Lady Queen  
of Angels Church in  
Kula, Maui**

*Page 6*

Bishop Larry Silva  
celebrated the Liturgy  
of the Eucharist Oct. 4  
during a votive Mass at  
the annual meeting of  
the Equestrian Order  
of the Holy Sepulchre  
of Jerusalem's Western  
USA Lieutenancy.

# Faith, hope and charity from the Holy Land to Hawaii

By Lisa Dahm

Hawaii Catholic Herald

**WAIKOLOA** — A cardinal, eight bishops, numerous priests and deacons, and more than 500 knights, dames and their guests from five states gathered in Waikoloa on Hawaii island earlier this month for the annual meeting of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem's Western USA Lieutenancy and to pray for the Holy Land.

The multi-day event focused on strengthening attendees' faith and worship, with Masses, adoration, holy hours, seminars, meetings and opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation.

Dressed in their distinctive capes — white for knights, black for dames, all bearing the order's signature red Jerusalem crosses — attendees also demonstrated their commitment to charity, following in the footsteps of their founders who cared for those in need in the Holy Land.

During the Oct. 3-6 meeting, the knights and ladies raised more than \$230,000 for the Latin Patriarchal Seminary of Beit Jala for the installation of a potable water system.

## A long history

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem can trace its origins to 1099, after the First Crusade, when people banded together to protect the Holy Land. Its modern form took shape in the mid-19th century.

It's the only lay institution of the Vatican state tasked with strengthening Christian life and propagating the faith in the Holy Land and throughout the world.

The order supports the Holy Land through spiritual prayer, financial support and social work. There are approximately 30,000 members worldwide, divided among 52 lieutenancies.



Photos by Lisa Dahm / Hawaii Catholic Herald

Altar servers Cyril Jaius Altares, left, and Mark Rebellon, second from left, joined Hawaii's knights and dames for a group photo. Front row, starting third from left: Father Alfred Omar Guerrero, Msgr. Gary Secor, Bishop Larry Silva, John Constantino, Sacred Hearts Father Lane Akiona, Father William Kunisch II and Father Rheo Ofalsa. Standing from left: Drexel G. Bautista, Father William "Pila" Tulua, Jessica Reed Holmes, Honolulu area co-councillors Danielle Burgos and Deacon Ricardo Burgos, Mandy Thronas-Brown, Ryan Brown, Michelle Souza, Vincent Souza, Nichole DeWitt and Michael DeWitt. In attendance but not pictured was Wallace Matthews Jr.

The United States contains nine lieutenancies; Hawaii, Arizona, Utah, California and Nevada comprise the Western USA Lieutenancy. Its grand prior, Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles, has been a member of the order for many years and said the order comprises active Catholics who participate in parish life and in their dioceses.

"I think it's important because it really supports the Holy Land and connects us to the life and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ," Archbishop Gomez said. "Especially in this difficult moment, it's important to be praying for everyone in the Holy Land."

Bishop Alberto Rojas of the Diocese of San Bernardino, California, joined the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in 2020. He is a knight of grand officer and a chaplain.

"It's a very beautiful group

*"We're one family;  
I see this as a way  
to build a legacy for  
the church and for  
future generations.  
... My hope is that  
my children — and  
their children — will  
carry this forward."*

**Danielle Burgos**

Co-councillor of the Honolulu Area within the Western USA Lieutenancy of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem

of people who, by donating and praying, live a spiritual life," Bishop Rojas said.

The bishop said many members in his lieutenancy are doctors, and they go on missions to different countries for the order.

"There's just a lot of beautiful work being done," he said. "It's a great blessing in many ways, and I'm very happy to be part of it."

## Emotional pilgrimages

Margaret Romano, lieutenant for the Western lieutenancy, said the order isn't just about service — it's about growing in faith, offering retreats, hosting Zoom rosaries and bringing in speakers.

Pilgrimages are also an important element, though those have been canceled since the Israel-Hamas war began two years ago.

Romano said her pilgrimage

experiences have "changed her completely."

Deacon Ricardo and Danielle Burgos are the co-councillors (co-directors) for the Western lieutenancy's Honolulu area. Danielle Burgos also recalled a meaningful pilgrimage her family took that included the canonization of Father Damien de Veuster.

"We first went to Italy, and then to the Holy Land. It cemented our faith," she said. "We took our three children, and after that, the Bible became real to us — no longer just a book but a lived experience. It was amazing."

The couple were inspired to join the order after returning from their trip.

"Our order plays such a vital role," Danielle Burgos said. "It reminds us that the church is present and active in the

Please see next page



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

# Interisland shipping of Herald to undergo change

To our readers:

The Hawaii Catholic Herald has an important update regarding the shipment of our biweekly issues from Oahu to other islands.

Due to factors beyond our control, there will be a slight delay in the Herald's deliv-

ery to Hawaii island, Maui and Kauai. The company we work with to prepare and send out the Herald is taking a new approach to interisland shipment that will use the U.S. Postal Service to deliver the newspaper to customers on those islands.

The delays will on aver-

age be a few days for subscribers on Maui and in Kona, Hilo and Lihue.

Readers can also find stories online at hawaiicatholicherald.com, and view complete issues in PDF form at digital.hawaiicatholicherald.com.

We apologize for any

inconvenience the delays might cause, and we are truly grateful for your continued support of the Hawaii Catholic Herald. Amid the ever-shifting landscape of publishing in Hawaii, our dedication to sharing news, features, catechism and more across the islands'

Catholic community remains steadfast.

Mahalo for your understanding.



Celia K. Downes  
Editor/director

Continued from previous page

Holy Land. These Christians are not forgotten.

"Just as St. Damien ministered to those isolated on Molokai, we can support those in the Holy Land who feel similarly forgotten."

## Range of support

In addition to initiatives at the lieutenant level, the order also pursues large-scale projects.

One, called Ensuring the Future, is a North America-wide effort to raise money to repair and rebuild Catholic schools in the Holy Land. There are about 40 Catholic schools serving both Christians and Muslims across four countries — Jordan, Israel, Palestine, and Cyprus.

The order also supports the seminary in Beit Jala, just outside of Bethlehem, through an "Adopt-a-Seminarian" program in which members sponsor seminarians and pay for their tuition of about \$5,000 a year.

Father Bernard Poggi, rector of the Latin Patriarchal Seminary of Beit Jala, attended the Waikoloa conference amid his travels across the U.S. to spread the message of the work at the seminary.

"I'm having a very hard time now getting visas for new students," Father Poggi said. "There's a great demand for people to come to the seminary. We have a lot of people who apply each year and who don't get their visas, so it's

very disheartening."

There also is a 70% unemployment rate among the Christian community in Bethlehem after three years of the pandemic, according to Father Poggi.

"And now with two years of the war, people don't work because most of them were working in the tourism or pilgrimage mission," he said.

At the beginning of the war, tens of thousands of people lost their work permits. This prevented Christians who were working in Jerusalem from supporting their families.

"The church is trying to keep hope alive," Father Poggi said.

He said the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem has helped more than half of those who are unemployed, thanks to the support of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

"It's important because the voice of Jesus Christ is still heard in the Holy Land," Father Poggi said.

He reminded people in the West of their responsibility to help keep that faith alive.

"Hawaii is a very beautiful place," Father Poggi said. "We heard about the two great saints in Hawaii, St. Marianne Cope and St. Damien of Molokai. I think that for us to see these people who dedicated themselves to people who are suffering reminds us that we must do the same in the Holy Land."

Father Alfred Omar Guerrero, director of both the Office



Sacred Hearts Father Lane Akiona, center, joined Bishop Larry Silva to give a presentation on St. Damien de Veuster, St. Marianne Cope and layperson Joseph Dutton, servant of God. Above, he was among the many clergy in attendance at a rite of solemn investiture Mass Oct. 5.

of Vocations and the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Honolulu, was invested into the order less than a year ago.

He said he found Father Poggi's talk inspiring, and that his words have helped him to refocus on how the diocese can support young men in discerning their call.

cerning their call.

## Hawaii connections

Through a seminar by Bishop Larry Silva and Sacred Hearts Father Lane Akiona, attendees learned more about St. Damien and St. Marianne as well as Joseph Dutton, whose

sainthood cause is currently being pursued.

"We thank God for gathering us as a community of believers and ask for the same apostolic zeal as these saints," Bishop Silva said during the presentation. "May their example inspire us to serve those suffering from war, poverty, and discrimination. May we labor without ceasing until peace and healing prevail."

The dames and knights in Hawaii include Bishop Silva, Msgr. Gary Secor, Father Guerrero, Father Akiona, Father William Kunisch II, Father Rheo Ofalsa, Father William "Pila" Tulua, Wallace Matthews Jr., John Constantino, Drexel G. Bautista, Jessica Reed Holmes, Deacon Ricardo Burgos, Danielle Burgos, Mandy Thronas-Brown, Ryan Brown, Nichole DeWitt and Michael DeWitt.

Danielle Burgos said what she loves most about being a member of the order is that even though they live in Hawaii, they can still contribute to supporting the Holy Land mission.

"We're one family; I see this as a way to build a legacy for the church and for future generations," Burgos said. "My hope is that my children — and their children — will carry this forward."

For more information on the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, visit the Western USA Lieutenant's website at [www.eohsjwesternusa.org](http://www.eohsjwesternusa.org).