

Pa'a Kai

Cathedral Sermons Flavored by Hawai 'i



The Rev. Moki Hino

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The Reverend Moki Hino interprets the message of Christianity through the experiences of ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Stuart Ching, Curator, 'Iolani Palace

Rev. Canon Moki Hino's sermons are, interesting, brilliant, prayerful reflections of family and of native Hawaiian personalities, which he skillfully weaves into the teaching of their stories.

Uncle Hartwell Lee Loy
Hawai'i education administrator and a cathedral kupuna

His sermons are personal in nature, a poetic experience that spans and transcends time, generations, family and geography; woven in a way that brings spiritual cognizance to the listener.

Billy Richards
Cathedral member and crew member of Hokulea's maiden voyage

Father Moki is one of the few clergy who takes the lesson of the day and makes it understandable and applicable to the lay congregation. His delivery is part folksy - full of family, cultural and local anecdotes, which interests and captures his audience. Father Moki has the gift of engaging both seniors and teenagers alike.

Aunty Paulette Moore,
Former school teacher and a cathedral kupuna

Moki's quiet and reflective sermons never cease to transport me to the heart of the gospel message of the day as it applies to me in my life. The call of God is immanent and concrete. Moki's down to earth images, contemplative style and honest self-reflection facilitate my hearing the Good News, and hopefully, spreading it to others.

Sandy Theunick, Headmistress of St. Andrew's Priory School for Girls and a cathedral member.

This book is dedicated to Mrs. Flora Chang.

‘O ‘oukou no ka pa ‘akai o ka honua

You are the salt of the earth

Mahalo

I would like to thank my church family at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Honolulu, Hawai‘i for their words of encouragement and affirmation; The Very Rev. Joy Rogers, Dean of St. James Cathedral in Chicago, for showing me what preaching is all about; my cousin Sharon Nakamura for faithfully coming to the cathedral to hear me preach; and Auntie Paulie Jennings who sat, read and gave her blessing for every cathedral sermon I preached. Special thanks go to Catherine Tarleton for guiding and encouraging me; and my mother, Leilani Hino, for reading, editing, making suggestions and encouraging me to forge on, find a publisher and print the book. But most of all, my deepest gratitude goes to those who entrusted their stories to me for they are the salt of the earth.

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Introduction

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus says, “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

As a student at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary I learned the sermon is the pivotal point that helps the congregation and the presider move from the intellectual realm of the Liturgy of the Word to the spiritual realm of the Liturgy of the Table and culminates in reaching out for the body and blood of Christ at the communion rail. I think of the sermon as the salt of the liturgy, giving it flavor and tying the whole experience together.

In the Hawaiian Islands the making of salt, *pa`a kai*, is an art form—an old way of life. Salt is also an instrument of purification. It reminds me of a ritual I went through in Japan in the 1990s. When I returned to the office after a cousin’s funeral, the secretary came out and sprinkled me with salt to ward off the effects of death before I returned to work. I also remember a university professor of Hawaiian ancestry talking about doing the same thing in Honolulu when he returned home from funerals. He’d sprinkle himself with salt before stepping back into his house.

As Canon Pastor I hoped that my sermons gave flavor to the cathedral’s Sunday liturgies and I wanted to invite people to see themselves in stories of Hawai`i, urging all to go forth into the world as loving hands to God’s people in Hawai`i, and beyond its shores.

I selected fourteen sermons based on the Via Lucia. The Via Lucia marks fourteen points in the story of Jesus, beginning

with His resurrection from the tomb and culminating in his sending the Holy Spirit to God's people at Pentecost. Each sermon represents a station on the Via Lucia. My prayer is that the sermons gave flavor, *pa`a kai*, to lives of those who listened. In turn I hope that these fourteen sermons will touch you, that you will see yourself in the stories of Hawai'i. I also hope that you will see yourself as a vibrant and joyful part of Christ's loving presence in the world today because you are the salt of the earth.



John 1:29-42

John saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother

Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

The Venus Vesper Light

Last year during the season after the Epiphany I lived on Maui where I was the chaplain at Seabury Hall. A big part of my job was to work with the kids on service projects. One week in February, 2007 twelve kids and I took a helicopter to Kaho`olawe to plant *a`ali`i* bushes in the dry, eroding soil of the island's northern slopes. On our last night there, I left the base camp for a short walk on Honokanai`a Beach. The air was crisp, a light breeze came off the ocean and the sky was full of stars that shined above—no ambient moonlight to compete with their twinkling beauty. I had the beach all to myself and on this moonless night I turned to look out on the ocean. I thought I'd made a mistake because I saw that the moon was out. I saw its reflection shimmering in the water. I stood for a while and then it hit me. It wasn't the moon at all. It was the planet Venus—with no ambient light to diminish it, it shimmered like the moon on the waters off Kaho`olawe's shore.

I stood on the beach and watched the shimmering Venus vesper light off the shore of a desecrated Hawaiian Island. Hawaiian lore points out that Kaho`olawe is laid out in the shape of a fetus, an unborn child. Hawaiian lore also says a lava tube connects Kaho`olawe to Haleakalā on the island of Maui the same way an umbilical cord connects mother to child. Kaho`olawe is also called the *piko*, the navel, because it's the closest landmass to the latitudinal center of the Hawaiian Islands.

When traveling from Tahiti to Hawai`i in canoes, ancient navigators would use the stars to aim for Kaho`olawe, the *piko*, the child in its mother's womb, making sure they wouldn't go too far north or too far south and miss the island chain completely. For those ancient navigators Kaho`olawe was the child under the star. And that thought ran through my mind as

I stood looking at the shimmering Venus vesper light on the waters off Kaho`olawe in the season after the Epiphany, reminding me of another story about another child found underneath another star in another land.

That Epiphany image led me to an Easter insight when I learned that before they started out for Tahiti and launched their canoes from Kaho`olawe, the ancient navigators memorized the location of the constellation, the Southern Cross, from sea level. In order to get home to Tahiti the navigators used the Southern Cross to lead the way.

Imagine these voyagers setting off from Kaho`olawe and watching this beautiful constellation gradually rising higher and higher in the night sky as they went south. It's as if the crucified Christ ascended before their eyes, giving them hope, giving them promise that they would find their way—the same way the appearance of Christ gives hope and promise to the people in this morning's gospel reading.

“He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God. And as he watched Jesus walk by, John the Baptist exclaimed, ‘Look, here is the Lamb of God!’”

John the Baptist is ecstatic and full of hope and promise when he sees Jesus coming toward him. And Andrew and Simon Peter are full of hope and promise at hearing John's proclamation, “Here is the Lamb of God!” And *they* follow Jesus—two disciples following the Messiah, the Anointed One—chosen by divine intervention, dedicated to the service of God. And in following Jesus, it seems as if Andrew and Simon Peter are anointed as well—that *they* are chosen by

divine intervention, that *they* are dedicated to the service of God. And if that's what it means to be anointed, then perhaps the island of Kaho'olawe is anointed as well.

Like the Anointed One, the island of Kaho'olawe is severely mistreated. Like the Anointed One, the island of Kaho'olawe is resurrected after extreme pain and unspeakable suffering.

First, in the late 1700s goats are introduced to Kaho'olawe and they go wild. Then in the 1850s sheep farmers lease the island and the grazing sheep and wild goats destroy the native plants and leave the island bare. Kaho'olawe's soil erodes in the Hawaiian wind and rain, turning it into silt that falls into the sea and chokes the coral reefs that encircle the island, the reefs' becoming like a wilted flower lei.

Then the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor and the U.S. military enforces martial law and takes control of Kaho'olawe for fifty years. The island, the *piko*, the child, becomes a target for almost every kind of ordnance and explosive known to humankind. It almost makes one weep to remember that in 1965, the U.S. Navy simulates a one-kiloton nuclear explosion on the island and sets off 500 tons of TNT, blowing a crater into Kaho'olawe that extends below sea level, cracking the cap rock and releasing thousands of gallons of precious fresh water into the ocean. Kaho'olawe, the *piko*, Hawaii's child laid out under the stars, the beacon for which ancient navigators aim, Kaho'olawe is stripped of its vegetation the way Jesus is stripped of his garments at the foot of the cross. It's bombed over and over again like it's being flogged before our eyes. Finally, a crater is blown into the island like a hole made by driving a nail into a wooden cross.

But we remember that we are an Easter people in an Easter faith and like the Southern Cross ascending into the sky before the navigators' eyes, the decimated and seemingly defeated Kaho'olawe comes back to life before our eyes.

It starts in 1976 when Hawaiian activists begin protests and secretly land on Kaho`olawe, occupying it when it's placed strictly off-limits by the authorities who won't drop bombs when they know that there are human beings on the island. And these activists leave Kaho`olawe's shores feeling transformed and committed to a cause to serve their Anointed One, much like Andrew and Simon Peter are committed to their cause to serve their Anointed One.

In March 1977 two Hawaiians occupy Kaho`olawe for almost three months and have little or no contact with folks outside. Concerned, their friends George Helm, Kimo Mitchell and Billy Mitchell decide to land on Kaho`olawe to see if everything's okay. The three men take a boat and jump into the waters off Kaho`olawe's shores with two surfboards and an inner tube and land on the island to begin their search. After two days and seeing no sight of their friends, they attempt to rendezvous with their prearranged pickup boat that never comes because it sinks near Kihei, Maui, the boat's plugs mysteriously pulled.

So the three men decide to paddle back to Maui. George Helm and Kimo Mitchell are on one surfboard and Billy Mitchell is on the other. Halfway home, Billy sees George and Kimo struggling in the rough surf near Molokini. He heads back to Kaho`olawe in a vain attempt to find help. He never sees his friends again. After a lengthy search the two men are officially declared lost at sea, piercing island hearts and stirring them to reclaim their island, their culture and their heritage, blossoming into a movement that eventually leads to the end of the bombing of Kaho`olawe. And the island of Kaho`olawe becomes the Messiah of the Hawaiian renaissance.

Those who are anointed by the island's history and its story have worked to ensure that Kaho`olawe is resurrected as a cultural icon and healed by the loving hands of those who

volunteer to reinvigorate the land by working on service projects to replant native flora, doing things like calling kids from Seabury Hall to the island so that their priest can stand on its shores on an Epiphany night and bask in the vesper light of Venus.

And beside the vesper light of Venus the Southern Cross rises in the night sky as the ancient navigators head south for Tahiti; not only to lead the way for the voyagers, but also to lead the way for George Helm and Kimo Mitchell; to lead the way for those who are moved by their loss at sea to work toward the renaissance of the Hawaiian culture; and to lead the way for those who have a desire to help Kaho`olawe heal by volunteering time to replant the native flora in the island's eroding soil.

The story of George Helm and Kimo Mitchell and the ending of the bombings on Kaho`olawe show us that while we may be wounded, the power of the Anointed One is always with us. And if like Andrew and Simon Peter we choose to follow, the hope of the Holy Possible in our midst can heal us in ways that may seem unimaginable to us now; as unimaginable as the end of the bombing of Kaho`olawe seemed to George Helm and Kimo Mitchell; as unimaginable as the renaissance that followed seemed in the wake of their loss at sea.

The image of the Southern Cross rising in the night sky (the constellation that the Hawaiians use to find their way home) helps us remember that healing is possible and that the peace bestowed upon Kaho`olawe is the peace for all of us. And emerging from the shadow of the ascending Southern Cross, the cross of Jesus is ever-present and affirms that he is the Messiah, the Anointed One. And as I stand in the vesper light of Venus on the Kaho`olawe shore, I think of the words from John and I close my words and leave them with all of you:

“I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.”

Matthew 15:21-28

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus

answered her, ‘Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.’ And her daughter was healed instantly.

Mikey

I preached this sermon at St. James' in Waimea, my home parish, on the occasion of the third anniversary of my ordination to the transitional diaconate, a period where one serves as a deacon before ordination to the priesthood.

Six years ago the doctors at the North Hawaii Community Hospital finally gave up and decided to send Auntie Irene home to live out the last days of her life. Her son and daughter set up a hospital bed in the living room of Auntie Irene's Kapulena house. A constant flow of people came in and out of the living room to whisper soothing words and hold Auntie Irene's hand as she moved from this world to the next.

Then one night he appeared. He wanted to sleep at the foot of Auntie Irene's bed. He wanted to put his head on her stomach. He wanted her to see him, but he was forced to stay outside. The family tried to shoo him off. They didn't encourage him to stay, but he was persistent. He wouldn't leave. He settled for curling up and sleeping on the grass underneath the kitchen window as if he was waiting to hear Auntie Irene call out greetings to guests dropping in for coffee the way she always did when she was well.

No one could understand why the stray dog, rather skinny and a little beat up, suddenly appeared two days after Auntie Irene came home to die near the bronze urn that contained the ashes of Uncle Mike.

Some of us began to wonder if Uncle Mike was closer to Auntie Irene than we realized. Some of us began to wonder if Uncle Mike was just outside the kitchen window. One of my cousins said, "I wonder if that dog is actually Uncle Mike and if he's here to take Auntie Irene with him." After that everyone was convinced it was true. They fed him. They gave him a bath.

They put blankets in the garage to keep him warm while he slept by the door. Finally, they named him Mikey, after Uncle Mike. Along with everyone else in the family, Mikey kept vigil. As we watched and waited for Auntie Irene to move from this world to the next, Mikey gave the family joy in the midst of grief, wagging his tail at folks who came to visit and snuggling up to others who reached out to scratch his head.

Then one October morning, Auntie Irene took her last breath and her life on earth was done. The mortuary came and took her body away. They cremated her and her daughter, Lynn, brought her ashes home. In the midst of our grief we worried about who would adopt Mikey and give him a home, but Mikey took care of the problem himself. On the morning of Auntie Irene's funeral my cousin, Jon, went out for a run. He gave Mikey a bowl of food and patted him on the head before he jogged down the driveway. Mikey looked up and wagged his tail and when Jon came back up the driveway, he found Mikey's warm but lifeless body under the kitchen window. His mission was complete.

Mary Kawena Puku`i writes of dogs as death portents in *Nānā I Ke Kumu, Look to the Source*. In Volume II she explains:

“The dog, highly empathetic with man, might have picked up the tension, worry, and sorrow in a family. Or, human master may have received telepathic or `ike pāpālua information coincidentally at the time the dog howled. Whatever their reason, the disturbed dog has become accepted as the message-bearer of sad news.”

In today's gospel reading Jesus looks at the desperate Canaanite woman and says, “It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.” I hear the words of Jesus and I think about Mikey. If he were one of the dogs at the master's

table, would he howl? Would he have a death message? What would that message be—that pathetic little black dog that took Auntie Irene home? What would his skinny, stray-dog message to the Canaanite woman at Jesus’ feet be? Would it be a message of death? I’d like to think so.

I’d like to think that Mikey’s message would be the death of an attitude, the death of exclusivity. At first Jesus resists, but then he heals the Canaanite woman’s daughter and instead of proclaiming his healing powers, Jesus proclaims, “Woman, great is your faith!” He redirects everyone’s interest from miracles and points them toward the faith of a desperate woman, a Canaanite, a stranger to the covenants of Israel.

At first Jesus takes the barrier of exclusivity very seriously. He rebuffs the woman, refuses to hear her plea. He tells everyone that he is sent exclusively to the lost sheep of Israel. Yet the woman’s faith breaks down that barrier and she shows Jewish Christians that faith and faith alone breaks down the barrier between Gentiles and Jews.

We know how liberating that was for the Canaanite woman. But what does it mean to us? Have you ever wanted to belong? Have you ever been marginalized? Have you ever been excluded? I know what it’s like to feel unwanted and excluded. But because of all of you, I also know what it’s like to feel wanted and included. When I walked into the doors of the Episcopal Church at age thirty you reminded me of my baptism and invited me to the Eucharist and it changed my life. And you didn’t stop there. Seven years ago I walked into Saint James’, this church, this parish, a stranger, someone who’d been living overseas and who wanted to come home to Ahualoa and who needed a church home. You invited me in. Three months later when I walked into Hollis Wright’s office and said that I felt a call to the priesthood, you didn’t exclude me. You didn’t marginalize me. You affirmed my call. You supported me. You sent me to seminary. You sent me money.

You sent me warm clothes. You sent me letters. You sent me prayers. You sent me love. And when I came home again, you ordained me right here on this spot. Three years ago, you ordained me to the diaconate and seven months later many of you traveled to Maui and you ordained me to the priesthood. There were no barriers. There were no sentiments of exclusivity. That's the Holy Possible in our midst and it reveals itself when we reach out to others in God's love.

Two thousand years ago Jesus broke down barriers and invited the Canaanite woman into the fold because of her faith. What would that act of love mean to the excluded and marginalized person today? What would it mean to the homeless person to be invited in? What would it mean to the person suffering from HIV/AIDS to be invited in? What would it mean to the uneducated to be invited in? What would it mean to the poor to be invited in? What would it mean to the addict to be invited in? What would it mean to the unchurched, the seeker, to be invited in? What would it mean to me? What would it mean to you? What would it mean to the church?

And what would that world look like? Think about that for a minute. What would that world look like? It's hard for me to imagine what that world would look like, but I know that God would gaze down upon it and smile. And even though he lies in the rich soil of Uncle Mike and Auntie Irene's macadamia nut orchard in Kapulena, I know that Mikey's spirit would smile as well. He'd wag his tail and put his head on your knee so that you could scratch it. and MIkey would do all that not as a portent of death but as a portent of new life and as a portent of the words of Christ that we strive to embrace as our own:

Great is your faith.

Great is your faith.

Great is your faith.



Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

My Great Grandmother

This is my story and it's not unique. It's the story of anyone whose roots in Hawai'i began on the dusty plantations amidst jagged blades of cane. It's also the story of many of us sitting in this cathedral sanctuary today. It might even be your story. I invite you to listen to a common experience and maybe hear a common truth.

In 1898 my great-grandmother came to Hawai'i on a ship from Yamaguchi, Japan to work the cane fields in Haina on the Big Island's Hāmākua Coast. She came to Hawai'i seeking a better life. Instead she got a life of sweating in the heat of a dusty cane field, sunrise to sunset, six days a week, under the constant threat of the luna, the overseer and his bullwhip as he rode by on his majestic horse. And my great-grandmother's dream of a blessed life in a golden land turned into a nightmare on a rocky shore on the Big Island's Hāmākua Coast.

But if you look at her photo—the photo that sits on my nightstand, you would never know that. You would never know, because she's standing on the lawn of the Buddhist temple by a small cedar tree, a bonsai, a tree that has been dwarfed. She's wearing a simple cloth kimono. Her hands are folded demurely in front of her. She's wearing her gray hair in a bun. And she's throwing back her head and laughing.

It's as if she's standing *on* that cedar bonsai, looking out toward a grand ocean and a vast world, standing *on* that cedar tree with a smile on her face, because she's triumphed.

You would never know from her smile that she almost died from seasickness on the steamship that took her from Japan to a rocky shore on the Hāmākua Coast. You would never know that she vomited so much that she came close to perishing from dehydration. You would never guess from her smile that she was rowed in a dory from the steamship to the lava cliffs in

Haina, terrified when a crane lowered cargo nets, scooped her up from the dory, and plopped her on the rocky shore. You would never know from that smile that she lost her first child, a baby boy, on the dusty plantation and in the fields of jagged cane that she hates so much. You would never know from her smile that she insisted that her firstborn babe be buried in the Buddhist cemetery up *mauka* and not in the plantation graveyard – even if she had to carry the cadaver of her infant in her arms up the long, steep hill. You would never know.

But like so many others who work the plantations in the Hawaiian Islands, she not only prevails, she triumphs. She triumphs when God bestows God's grace on her and her legacy—her children, her grandchildren, her great-grandchildren, all of whom are educated; all of whom contribute to life in the Hawaiian Islands and life in the world. That's why she stands on the temple lawn by the small cedar tree, wearing her simple cloth kimono, folding her hands demurely in front of her, her gray hair in a bun, throwing back her head and laughing. Laughing by the cedar tree she planted in memory of the baby boy she lost on the dusty plantation amidst the fields of jagged cane she hated so much.

The cedar tree is so small that it looks as if she's standing on top of it, looking down the hill at the brown dust on the plantation and out toward the deep blue ocean that she sailed on from Japan to a rocky shore on the Hāmākua Coast, hoping a better life.

The view from the verdant temple lawn is a great contrast to life on the rocky shore, the dust, the heat and the hardship. My great-grandmother stands by a cedar tree on a hill. Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree in Jericho. Both of them have a bigger,

grander view of the world and a bigger, grander view of the Son of Man.

Zacchaeus, a short little man from Jericho, could not see the Son of Man on account of the crowd. The crowd grumbles about him. The crowd calls him a crook. The crowd judges him. The crowd makes assumptions about him. Zacchaeus is a tax collector and tax collectors get rich by collecting and keeping too much.

But Zacchaeus chooses differently. He chooses not to cheat. But still the crowd makes assumptions, assumptions about Zacchaeus and who he is, assumptions that he blasts apart when he says, "Master, I give away half my income to the poor—and if I'm caught cheating, I pay four times the damages." Assumptions that Jesus blasts apart when he says, "Today is salvation day in this home! Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham!"

The crowd. Who is the crowd? At a Big Island plantation on the Hāmākua Coast in the late 1890s, the crowd is the one who exploits and objectifies his or her fellow human being. The crowd is the one who doesn't care if a woman dies vomiting on a boat. The crowd is the one who doesn't care if a woman is terrified of being scooped up in a net. The crowd is the one who doesn't care if a Japanese woman's child dies. The crowd is the one who doesn't care if her firstborn has to be conscripted to the dusty dirt of the plantation graveyard. The crowd is the one who says the woman is poor, uneducated and has nothing to offer but hard labor under the sweltering Hawaiian sun.

Are you part of the crowd? Am I part of the crowd? Are we part of the crowd? Do we label people? Do we judge people? Do we make assumptions about people? Are we part of the crowd? "My God, is he ever high-maintenance." "Wow, she really needs to see a shrink." "Aw, they just want to be in

control, run the show, and be the center of attention.” I shudder to think how often I say those kinds of things. I shudder when I think about how often I might be a stumbling block in someone else’s desperation to see the Son of Man.

The crowd. How does it feel to be on the receiving end of the grumbling of the crowd? To feel so bogged down and overwhelmed by the messages from the crowd swirling around us like a whirlpool? To feel like no matter what we do and no matter how hard we try, we can never find a moment’s peace? To feel like there is no end to the dust and dirt of life’s challenges and the hardship that inevitably accompanies it all? “My God, they really hate me.” “Wow, I just want to hole up in my room and make the world go away.” “Aw, I just can’t do this anymore.” “The Son of Man is far away. The Son of Man is elusive. The Son of Man is beyond my reach.”

Thank God for grace. Thomas Aquinas says that grace does not abolish human nature. Grace *directs* human nature. Thank God for grace.

Zacchaeus climbs the tree and sees the Son of Man. He stands up for himself and claims his truth. "Master, I give away half my income to the poor—and if I'm caught cheating, I pay four times the damages." Zacchaeus shows us that we are not consigned to a life of doom. Zacchaeus shows us that we do not have to stay stuck in the dust and the dirt. Zacchaeus shows us that we do not have to buy into the labels, the judgments and the assumptions. Yes, we may have to accept that the crowd is there and that the crowd will do its thing. We cannot abolish it. Yet when we accept that, we can rise above it, climb the tree and see the Son of Man.

We can redirect our human nature, climb the tree by forgiving one another and by honoring the promises we make in the Baptismal Covenant that we are about to proclaim. Then, with God’s help, by seeking and serving Christ in all persons, loving

our neighbors as ourselves, and, with God's help by striving for justice and peace among all people, and respecting the dignity of every human being. We can climb the tree by coming to the table for spiritual nourishment and spiritual food. We can climb the tree. We can redirect our human nature.

That's what my great-grandmother did. She and my great-grandfather put in their three years on the plantation. They chose not to be bitter and angry. They chose to redirect their human nature and they choose to move on. And they somehow came up with the money to buy a plot of land. They worked the land to farm vegetables, they figured out a way to educate their children, and finally, after sixty years in Hawai'i, they chose to become citizens of the United States.

And one day years later, their family gathered on the temple lawn and my great-grandmother stood by the cedar tree she planted years earlier in honor of her baby boy who died on the dusty sugar plantation amidst the fields of jagged cane she no longer hated. We know that because she smiled. She smiled because of God's grace, a grace she may not have known about in her head, but a grace she felt in her heart. She looked over the temple lawn, down toward the old plantation, and out at the deep blue ocean toward the land from which she came and, like Zacchaeus, she saw the Son of Man, she felt the Son of Man and she knew the Son of Man.

John 17:1-11

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

"I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them.

And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. "

Manu `Ō`ō

*ʻO ka manu `ō`ō i malama, a he nani kou hulu
ke lei `ia.*

*Mukiki ana `oe i ka pua lehua, kahea ana `oe i
ka nui manu.*

Precious honeyeater, your beautiful and soft
feathers are woven into a lei.

You sip the *lehua* blossoms. And are called
away by other birds.

So goes the first verse of the Hawaiian song, “*Manu `Ō`ō*,” a
love song about the honeyeater, the `ō`ō, and the red *lehua*
blossoms in the rain forests of the Big Island that it loves.

Whenever I hear this song, it takes me home to the Big
Island—no matter where I am. And it doesn’t matter who
sings it—Lorna Lim, Na Palapalai or Cody Pueo Pata. The
song takes me home and I’m in the rainforest that surrounds
Gram’s house as I imagine the `ō`ō sipping honey from the
lehua blossoms that cling to the `ohi`a trees in our yard on the
Hāmākua Coast.

Whenever I hear this song, I can see the precious honeyeater in
my mind’s eye, flitting from *lehua* blossom to *lehua* blossom—
the glossy black feathers on its head, body, wings and tail; and
the beautiful, precious, yellow tufts at its wings. I hear the
song and the honeyeater is known to me, even though the only
place I’ll ever see it is in my mind’s eye because it’s now
extinct. The `ō`ō is no longer with us yet this beautiful bird is
persistent in its desire to be known and it’s known to us in
Hawaiian song.

Last October at Ward Centre a *kumu hula* sat in a wheelchair
with his *ipu*, his gourd, and chanted about the chief, the *ali`i*’s,
bird catcher whose sole job was to trap the `ō`ō by putting

breadfruit or *kukui* gum onto the branches of the *ʻohiʻa* trees and then plucking the *ʻōʻō*'s yellow feathers. The bird catcher then freed the bird so that it could grow more feathers for another plucking at another time. The feathers were collected, woven and tied into beautiful yellow capes worn by the *aliʻi*.

As the *kumu hula* chanted in his wheelchair, a robust young man in a red *malo*, a loincloth, danced and portrayed the *aliʻi*'s bird catcher. Toward the end of the chant he lay on the ground and writhed in mourning as the *kumu hula* cried, “*Auwe! Auwe!*”! for the *ʻōʻō* is no longer with us, hunted to extinction by outsiders who also wanted its vibrant, yellow feathers and who did not choose to trap the bird and then set it free but instead harvested its precious feathers by killing it. The *ʻōʻō* is no longer with us yet this beautiful bird is persistent in its desire to be known and it becomes known to us in hula and Hawaiian chant.

And as if that isn't enough, back home on the Big Island in the district of Puna, a cinder cone spews lava 1,500 feet into the air, arching over and back to the ground. I can take the image of the *aliʻi*'s precious bird and superimpose it onto the shape of the spewing lava and they become one and the same. And that's why the site is called the “Hill of the Honey Eater” or *Puʻu ʻŌʻō*. “*Auwe! Auwe!*”! The *ʻōʻō* is no longer with us yet this beautiful bird is persistent in its desire to be known and it becomes known to us in the lava spewing 1,500 feet into the air from a cinder cone on the volcano back home.

I think about the *ʻōʻō* and its desire to be known and I'm struck by the words in today's gospel. They mesmerize me when Jesus says:

*“I have made your name known to those whom
you gave me from the world.
They were yours, and you gave them to me, and
they have kept your word.”*

And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you”.

Indeed Christ makes God’s name known through his teachings, his miracles and his ultimate sacrifice of love on the cross. And Christ makes God’s name known through his resurrection from the tomb, showing us the holy possible and the gift of our paschal mystery, our participation in his death and in his resurrection. And as he’s getting ready to ascend into heaven and return to God, he asks one last thing of God on our behalf:

“Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one”.

And like our precious honeyeater, our ὁ ὁ, Christ wants to be known after he returns to the Father. He longs to be known by us as much as when he comes to us in human form so we can have the fullest possible experience of him. And after all he does for us while he’s here, it seems a simple thing for us to do in return, doesn’t it? To strive to know and be known by him?

And we constantly affirm that that’s what we want to do. “Risen Lord, be known to us in the breaking of the bread”. “Lift up your hearts”. “We lift them up to the Lord”. “Thy kingdom come”. All of these are statements of desire to be known to Christ and for Christ to be known to us. The beautiful thing about our faith is that we don’t have to stop with these statements of desire. They’re only the beginning of our journey to know and to be known.

We know Christ and are known by Him in so many ways, especially in our cathedral community—when one of you reaches out a hand from your hospital bed to ask for prayers because you want to go home to be with the love of your life. When one of you, on the day before you die, lets your priest wipe your feet with a towel because you’re too weak to hold a

cup of water and it spills onto the floor and all over you. When you stand at the copy machine folding Sunday bulletins, talking story and laughing with each other. When two of you stand before this altar, declare your love for one another and the priest's white stole is tied around your hands in holy matrimony. When one of your grandchildren stands and looks into your open grave at Valley of the Temples and says, "I'm going to miss my grandpa". When you get excited about helping out a mission church in Saipan and bring your bags of used clothing into the church office. When one of you reads us a story about a boy in Baghdad and asks to help make it possible to send blank CDs to soldiers so they can record their voices reading the same book you read to us so their children can hear their deployed parents' voices reading them a story. When sixteen of you say, "Yes", when your priest asks you to come and sing for his auntie's funeral. When you offer to share a service bulletin with a homeless man who suddenly decides to stand in front of our bishop during regional confirmations. When you offer him a tissue to wipe away his tears.

And Christ is known in the stories of your lives—your stories of hardship, your stories of grief, your stories of triumph and your stories of grace in the light of Christ who is known to all of us in this special gathering place that joyfully reflects God's love and in the bread we're about to break together.

The refrain of "*Manu Ō`ō*" goes like this:

"Ho`i mai ho`i mai, ko aloha ma ne`ia – come to me, come to me, my beloved".

And the `ō`ō comes and the `ō`ō is known—known in songs, known in chants, known in hula and known in lava spewing fifteen hundred feet into the air from a cinder cone on the volcano back home on the Big Island.

And when we say the same words to Christ, he comes to us and he is known to us—known in the prayers at the Eucharist, known in the faces of those in our midst and known in the stories of our lives and the stories of the special place in which we live. And then the last line of “*Manu Ō‘ō*” rings true for all of us:

“Ho`okahi a`u mea niu aia `oe, `o kou aloha ua hiki mai—one greatest thing I love is you. Your love has come”.

Matthew 6:24-34

Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

"So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

Go For Broke

My great grandparents came to Hawai`i from Western Japan in the 1890s. Three of them worked in the cane fields and another opened a general store on the rim of Waipio Valley after the feudal government in Japan was overthrown and he lost his status as a *ronin*, a lordless *samurai*.

Ties to the homeland were very important to my great grandparents. Their boys were dual nationals, natural-born citizens of the United States and, at the same time, subjects of the Emperor of Japan. All their children were made to attend Japanese language classes every afternoon where at the beginning of every lesson, they were required by their instructor to bow to the flag of the Rising Sun and pay homage to the Emperor of Japan.

They pledged allegiance to the Stars and Stripes at school in the morning. They bowed to the Emperor and the Rising Sun in the afternoon. They served two masters. It was the same for many *nisei*, second-generation Japanese-Americans, in the first half of the Twentieth Century before the Second World War. Then on December 7th, 1941 the Empire of Japan bombed the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor and the *Nisei* very quickly learned that, “No one can serve two masters”.

And the lesson began very quickly. Later that day the Army placed the newly federalized Hawai`i Territorial Guard, made up of ROTC cadets and volunteers from Honolulu high schools, the majority of them *nisei*, under its direct command. The following month the 317 *Nisei* members of the Hawai`i Territorial Guard, American citizens, were discharged without explanation and classified 4-C—enemy aliens.

The discharged members of the Hawai`i Territorial Guard knew that no one could serve two masters—the flag of the Rising Sun and the Stars and Stripes. They had to choose.

They were compelled to prove their allegiance to the country of their birth. So they firmed their resolve and petitioned the commanding general of the U.S. Army in Hawai`i to allow them to assist in the war effort. They formed the Varsity Victory Volunteers and performed construction jobs in the Hawaiian Islands for the United States. And when the U.S. Army called for fifteen hundred volunteers from Hawai`i, ten thousand *nisei* men came forth.

Ultimately, three thousand *nisei* from Hawai`i and eight hundred from the mainland were inducted into the U.S. military and the 442nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team was formed. In addition, the Hawai`i Provisional Battalion sailed for training on the U.S. Mainland and became the 100th Battalion, a predominantly *nisei* brigade and one of the most highly decorated units of World War II. More than eight hundred *nisei* soldiers from the 100th Battalion and the 4-4-2 gave their lives to America on the battlefields of the European front. “No one can serve two masters”. They served only one.

The *nisei* soldier lived into the truth of his allegiance to his country and in spite of being denigrated, rebuffed and objectified, he responded to the call to serve with honor, dignity and pride. The *nisei* soldier tells a story. It’s the story of serving one master, the Stars and Stripes. It’s the story of knowing that it is a very small thing to be judged by a human court who gives them labels like, “enemy alien”. It’s the story of bringing to light things hidden in darkness, like one’s allegiance. It’s the story of disclosing the purpose of the heart by responding to the call and serving one’s country with honor, dignity and pride. It’s the story of paying a price—with one’s legacy, with one’s limbs and, when necessary, even with one’s life. It’s the story of the words of this morning’s lessons flying off the pages of scripture and into our collective consciousness and the experiences of special people in our lives, shining new light on the meaning of our Baptismal Covenant where we strive to seek and serve Christ in others and to respect the

dignity of every human being. It's a story that teaches us that indeed, "No one can serve two masters".

When we are called to make a choice, we bring to mind the story of the *nisei* soldier, the *nisei* soldier who chooses to serve the country of his birth, even if it costs him his life. And he is rewarded with the knowledge and the truth that he serves only one master.

You and I make choices every day. What do those choices cost us? What are the rewards? I think about that a lot as I reflect on the work that we do in our cathedral community—when we rally around causes, when we cook meals for those who are hungry, when we take time to get the altar ready for the Eucharist, when we do what we have to do to come to this table for spiritual nourishment and spiritual food. What does it cost us? Time? Family? Friends? What are the rewards? Spiritual fulfillment? A sense of community? Knowing that we serve only one master? And where do we get the wherewithal to do it?

I submit to you that we get the wherewithal from our community of faith, from our Eucharist, from our Baptismal Covenant, from our prayers and from the stories of our lives—stories like the story of the *nisei* soldier from Hawai'i who is determined to be found trustworthy when his mother and father's country attacks the country of his birth. "No one can serve two masters".

And in the end the words Scripture come to life in the words of a mother born in the Land of the Rising Sun and under the rule of the Emperor of Japan as she bids her only son, a newly inducted member of the 4-4-2, as she bids her only son farewell and sends him off to war:

"Moshi kono ie ni haji wo kakeru koto wo shitara, kikimasen. I will not listen to any

excuses if you do anything to bring dishonor upon this family. *Hoshi no hata wo yoku mamori nasai*. Defend well your starry flag”.

“No one can serve two masters”.



Hebrews 5:1-10

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect,

he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Princess Ka`iulani

This morning's reading from The Letter to the Hebrews says:

“Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God”.

This means that the high priest is selected to be a symbol of his or her people before others and before God. And he or she should be gentle with others in their weaknesses because he or she represents them through the experience of confronting his or her own weaknesses. They know what it's like to feel overcome by defeat, sorrow and feelings of hopelessness. And so no one asks to become the high priest. That kind of thing comes from the ego. But rather he or she is called to the position. That kind of thing comes from God.

That may be the case with the person whose birthday we honor this morning, Princess Ka`iulani, the half-Scottish, half-Hawaiian heir presumptive of the Hawaiian throne, daughter of Miriam Likelike and Archibald Cleghorn, niece of Kalākaua and Lili`uokalani, brother and sister to her Hawaiian mother and advisees of her trusted Scottish father.

Princess Ka`iulani was often hailed as “the Hope of Hawai`i”. And I wonder what it was like for this exquisite-looking princess with her beautiful round eyes that drew you into the reality of her sadness. I wonder what it was like to take that all on, to have the hope of not only her parents and her auntie and

uncle, but also the hope of an entire nation thrust onto her from such a young age. Is that something she would have asked for? I don't think so. That's why when I look at my favorite photo of her, not the famous photos of her with regal profile in beautiful white *holuku* (the long flowing Hawaiian gowns we all know so well) but the photo of her sitting on a rock in a simple dark kimono, holding a parasol. I see that yes, she looks beautiful in that photo. But her shoulders seem to sag just a little, as if she is trying to hide the weight of the world or at least the weight of the Hawaiian Kingdom that has been thrust upon those shoulders.

And then to be away at school at Great Harrowden Hall in England and receive this telegram from home:

“Monarchy abrogated – Queen deposed – break news to Princess”.

In light of all the expectations, it's no wonder to me she catches cold while riding in the rain in the hills above the Parker Family home at Puu Opelu in Waimea. It's no wonder she eventually succumbs to illness at the age of 23 at Aina hau, her home in Waikiki. And it's no wonder legend says that at the hour of her death her pet peacocks roaming freely on the grounds of Aina hau begin to screech uncontrollably, as if they too mourn the loss of their princess and the Hawaiian people's hope of what might have been.

It seems like the story is over, doesn't it? Like it all ends when they place Princess Ka'iulani's casket in the marble vault in the Kalākaua Crypt at Mauna `Ala, the Royal Mausoleum.

And I'm sure many of us have felt the same way at different points in our lives—the loss of hope, the end of dreams, the loss of a job, the death of a loved one, the end of a marriage, losing a home. These are things that many of us face—or may

soon have to face. And maybe we think it's all over and that there's no hope.

But then we remember that we're baptized into an Easter faith. This morning's reading from The Letter to the Hebrews continues:

“In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him”.

The loss of hope. It seems like even Jesus Himself felt a loss of hope while he was with us on earth. He knew what was coming and he cried out to God in pain and sorrow and offered up prayers. And even though God answered, Jesus had to suffer. But the story doesn't end on the cross. It lives on as an Easter story—a story of resurrection, reminding us that as Paul says in his Letter to the Church in Rome:

“We are convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

With the love of God made manifest in the resurrection, we rise from the tombs of our seeming hopelessness and defeat and move toward something new. We focus on God, change our lives and dream new dreams.

The story of Princess Ka`iulani does not end with Bishop Willis, his clergy and the choir of Saint Andrew's Cathedral gathering at her Mauna `Ala tomb. It doesn't end with the bishop's reading the "Episcopal Service of the Dead". Nor does it end with the "Resurrection Hymn". The story, in fact, doesn't end at all. Because of Princess Ka`iulani's Easter faith and because of our Easter faith, the story lives on.

Yes, she rode in the Waimea rain and caught cold, took her last breath at Ainahau and died. Yes, the peacocks wailed the way the women wailed at the foot of Christ's cross at Calvary. Yes, the bishop read from the "Episcopal Service of the Dead". Yes, they laid her coffin in the tomb when she was only 23. And yes, her father went back to Ainahau to live alone.

Upon her death in 1899, the following words appeared in *The Call*, a San Francisco publication, giving tribute to Princess Ka`iulani:

"Every one admired her attitude; they could not do otherwise. Her dignity, her pathetic resignation, her silent sorrow, appealed to all. Some loved her for her quiet steadfast sympathy with their woe, her uncomplaining endurance of her own; others [replaced "the whites"] admired her for her stately reserve, her queenly display of all necessary courtesy, while holding herself aloof from all undue intimacy. All were attracted by her sweetness and grace; it was impossible not to love her".

No, her story doesn't end there. It lives on. It lives on beyond the sepulcher in the Kalākaua Crypt and makes it way into the fragrant wind for which Mauna `Ala is named, or it's borne on the wings of the *kolea*, the golden plover, that looks for food in the Mauna `Ala grass, or it's alive in the hands of the people who visit the Royal Mausoleum and pay homage to the young

princess whose body lies beneath its rich Hawaiian soil. Princess Ka`iulani's story rises out of the Kalākaua Crypt, into the ether and descends upon human hearts, touching them with love and inspiring artists, authors, musicians, poets, playwrights, *kumu hula* (hula teachers), activists, historians, teachers and even preachers to weave her story into their life's passions and maybe even into their dreams, whatever those dreams might be.

As the story continues, it moves on in a Christian way, proclaiming an Easter resurrection and making known God's love—God's love made manifest in our love for Princess Ka`iulani, her love for us and the legacy of her inspiration to those who are touched by her story, weaving her story into their own and doing good works for the world.

And so this morning we thank God for Princess Ka`iulani, for her graceful strength in bearing the burden of a people's hope and for her royal legacy which people continue to draw on today. And we thank God for her beauty, for her purity, for her love and for her witness to a baptized people in an Easter faith who have the courage to move beyond hopelessness and dare to dream of holy possibilities in the sight of God.

James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Lili`uokalani in Chicago

I preached this sermon at St. James' Cathedral in Chicago, Illinois at the invitation of the Dean, The Very Rev. Joy Rogers, who preached at my priestly ordination in Maui.

I am sent forth to you this morning from a royal cathedral, a royal cathedral founded by Hawai`i's King Kamehameha the Fourth and his consort Queen Emma, the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Honolulu—the cathedral that becomes the spiritual home of another queen, Queen Lili`uokalani, our last reigning monarch. The queen lost her throne in a coup by prominent Hawaiian Island businessmen and moved into her private residence at Washington Place, a two-storey mansion next to our cathedral where she lived under house arrest.

Bishop Willis, The Bishop of Hawai`i at the time, walked through the gate between the two properties to call on Lili`uokalani and to tend to her spiritual needs. He was the only clergyman in Hawai`i at the time to do so and Lili`uokalani was so touched by his gesture that she became a baptized member of our cathedral congregation and regularly attended our Sunday services where she drew near to God and God drew near to her so that she could honor her Christian faith by doing her utmost to forgive those who took her throne and placed her in captivity. And when she died in 1917, it was the Episcopal Bishop of Hawai`i who officiated at her funeral.

Ninety-two years later, I pray in the cathedral on weekday mornings and I sit where Lili`uokalani sat—in the wooden pew in the first row. I sit where she sat and I see the same pulpit, the same arches above the altar, the same stain glass windows, the same candle flame by the tabernacle. I sit where she sat. I see what she saw. But I wonder how she felt as she sat in the first-row pew and listened to the words in today's reading from the Letter of James:

“Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you”.

What feelings does Lili`uokalani have about being deposed from her throne, being placed under house arrest and living on parole? Is she resentful? Is she angry? Is she bitter? Maybe she is, but we know from the history books that she doesn't feed into these emotions. She draws near to God, God draws near to her, she lets it all go and moves on, grounded in faith, to forgive and carry out good works.

Every Sunday at the cathedral we sing the words in “*Ke Aloha O Ka Haku*”, The Queen’s Prayer” written by Lili`uokalani after she lost her throne. It’s a standard hymn in many Hawaiian Island churches and it talks about drawing near to God. This is what we sing:

*‘O kou aloha nō, Aia i kalani,
A ‘o kou ‘oia ‘i‘o he hemolele ho‘i*

Oh, Lord thy loving mercy is high as the heavens.
It tells us of Thy truth and is filled with holiness.

*Kou no ho mihi ‘ana a pa‘a hao ‘ia,
‘O ‘oe ku‘u lama, kou nani ko‘u ko‘o*

Whilst humbly meditating, within these walls imprisoned,
Thou art my light, my haven, Thy glory my support.

*Mai nānā ‘ino ‘ino, Nā hewa o kānaka,
Akā, e huikala, Ā ma‘e ma‘e nō.*

Oh, look not on their failings, nor on the sins of men.

Forgive with loving kindness, that we might be made pure.

*No laila ē ka haku, Ma lalo kou `ē heu ,
Kō mākou maluhia, Ā mau loa aku nō*

For Thy grace I beseech. Bring us `neath Thy protection.

And peace will be our portion now and forevermore.

Maybe because she sits in the pew and looks at the sanctuary light by the tabernacle, maybe because she listens to the words from the Letter of James from her seat, maybe because she walks under the arches to take communion at the altar, maybe because of the Hawaiian cathedral that she embraces as her spiritual home, Her Majesty does not feed into her resentment, her anger, and her bitterness, but instead she lets them go, draws near to God and God to draws near to her. She spends time in prayer, she works as an advocate for social justice on behalf of the Hawaiian people, and she strives to forgive those who take away her throne, place her under house arrest, a force her to live on parole.

Lili`uokalani draws near to God and God draws near to her. And it's then that the profound words and beautiful music flow forth from a Hawaiian heart that's free and unlocked from the bondage of destructive emotions, unlocked and set free with the key of forgiveness toward those who oppress her, proclaiming in song that it's because of God's grace that she can forgive—God's grace in the words of scripture, God's grace in the sacraments and God's grace alive in our hearts.

I pray in the cathedral on weekday mornings and I sit in Lili`uokalani's pew and look at the manmade beauty and

magnificence around me, the manmade beauty and magnificence she saw as well, and I trust in my heart that when she hears today's words from the Letter of James, she believes them to her core.

Could Lili'uokalani have imagined back then the incredible gift she gives us today? The example of victory in a life with God in the midst of seeming political defeat? Back home in Hawai'i we recall her time in our cathedral and we remember that while her Hawaiian kingdom was taken away, the kingdom of God was with her until the day she died. Her legacy is embodied in the place she sat to worship and we remember the importance of reaching out in love the way the Bishop of Hawai'i did when he walked through the wall separating Washington Place and St. Andrew's Cathedral, walked through the wall and the gate to minister to a woman in need of spiritual comfort, a woman who, out of gratitude, walked through our doors and to our font to be baptized, reconciling her resentment, anger, and bitterness, drawing near to God and mirroring that grace by forgiving her oppressors and composing beautiful songs.

Perhaps Her Majesty's spirit travels across land and sea and looks at us in Chicago this morning and asks, "Are you resentful about something? Are you angry about something? Are you bitter about something? Something that happened at home? Something that happened at work? Something that happened at church? Has someone hurt you? Has someone victimized you? Has someone oppressed you"? If our answer is yes and we feel resentful, bitter and angry, that's natural, it's expected, it's normal, and it's okay. But the question and the lesson from Lili'uokalani is, do we feed into it or do we let it all go, draw near to God and forgive?

Lili'uokalani draws near to God, she forgives and she's set free, free to work as an advocate for social justice on behalf of the Hawaiian people, free to tend to the educational needs of

the underprivileged children in her former kingdom by establishing the Lili`uokalani Children's Trust, free to write beautiful words and music, giving us Hawaiian song and perhaps softening our hardened hearts to let go of our destructive emotions and forgive as well, empowering us to say yes to whatever good works God is calling us to do in our lives today.

We follow the example of the woman who sat in the royal cathedral. We follow the example of Lili`uokalani, Her Majesty the Queen. We sit in the pew and listen to the music, we take in the word, we come to the altar, we accept the body and blood of Christ and we have faith that as God gave her the grace to forgive others and live in peace, God also gives us the grace to forgive others and live in peace.

I pray in the cathedral on weekday mornings and I sit where Her Majesty Queen Lili`uokalani sat, the woman who was deposed from her royal throne. I sit where she sat, in the pew in the first row. I sit where she sat and I see the same pulpit, the same arches above the altar, the same stain glass windows and the same candle flame by the tabernacle. I sit where she sat. I see what she saw.

And because of her story and her legacy, we have a glimpse into her Hawaiian heart, feeling what she felt as she listened to the words in today's reading from the Letter of James so that, like her, we can learn to draw near to God and forgive. And in the shadow of Lili`uokalani's honorable legacy and in the presence of her indomitable spirit, may we also hear the words and may the words become words that we embrace as our own:

“Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you”.

Genesis 22:1-14

God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you." Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

Matthew 10:40-42

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

The Healing Heiau

It's a bright, sunny morning on the Big Island and I'm standing at the top of the slope and looking down the grassy hill toward the rocks and the deep, blue ocean beyond the cliff line, hoping to see a humpback whale or two spouting or breaching in the distance. I'm glad I've got a baseball cap on. It shades my eyes, but it doesn't keep the sweat out of them, and dust begins to cling to the perspiration on my face. Am I hot or am I nervous? I might be both. The descent is steep and I feel like I have to slow myself down by putting strain on my shins, because I'm not walking toward something, I'm being pulled in. As the land levels, I take a few more steps and can almost touch the rock wall of Mo'okini Heiau on the northernmost tip of the Big Island.

Mo'okini Heiau is a *luakini*, a place of human sacrifice and a place where *kahuna* (priests) and *ali'i* (chiefs) communicate with their ancestors and with their gods. As I stand by the rock wall, Auntie Momi Mo'okini Lum, a descendent of Kuamo'o Mo'okini and the current high priestess of the *heiau*, explains to me that legend says in ancient times the stones that make up the *heiau* are carried from Pololu Valley, about fourteen miles away, by a human chain of men in just one night. I'm at the *heiau* because Auntie Momi beckons me; not with emails, letters, and phone calls, but with thoughts, premonitions and prayers.

And on that day she invites me through the rock wall and into the sacred space of the *heiau*, takes off the kukui lei I've given her, places it on the altar and says a prayer to send me off to seminary. When she's done she looks at me. Her eyes drink in my soul. "You'll be okay", she says and sends me on my way. Auntie Momi helps me release my pent-up emotions of fear and anxiety. The guardian of a site formerly set aside for human sacrifice, the guardian is a healer and she has faith that I will go on to help and to heal not only others but also myself.

I'm blessed. I'm sent forth. And one who belongs to the land holds my heart in trust at home on the Big Island. It's a heavy moment for me but then I walk toward the front of the *heiau* and see a large lava slab with a concave dip in it and things get even heavier because I look at this rock and know the backbones of human beings fit snugly into its curve and that human sacrifices are carried out on its surface. I look at the sacrificial rock and I ask myself, "What is it like to feel the pores in the lava rock digging into your back as you see the final blow that will take away your life? Do you taste the dust? Do you feel the breeze? Do you smell the ocean? Or is your heart racing in pure terror at the blow that's about to come" ?

That's what strikes me about today's Old Testament reading. Abraham binds his son Isaac and lays him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reaches out his hand and takes up the knife to kill his son. We hear over and over again how faithful Abraham is, how he passes God's test. But as I look back and remember the lava slab at Mo`okini Heiau, I think about Isaac. What does the story look like from his point of view? What does Isaac feel?

Our reading this morning seems to portray him as being sweet and compliant. But is that what it's really like? Is Isaac sweet and compliant or frozen in sheer terror? And in that moment, just that one moment (never mind what happens afterward), in that one moment what does it feel like to know that you are expendable, that you can be forsaken—expendable and forsaken at the hand of the one who gives you life?

The question I have in all of this is: What do we say to the children who *don't* prevail? To whom the final blow really does come? The victims of physical, mental, sexual, and emotional abuse? The victims of domestic violence? The victims of child labor? The victims of child prostitution? The victims of human trafficking? There are, after all, many ways

to carry out human sacrifice and slay the spirit of the youth in our midst. And we don't have to look back to the Old Testament. We don't have to look to foreign countries. It's all alive and well right here and right now in Honolulu, Hawai'i. All we have to do, for example, is walk half a mile from here to Prospect Street at the Miller Street overpass and look at the plaque, the stuffed animals and the balloons that memorialize young Cyrus Belt, the twenty-three month old toddler who was thrown from the overpass and into westbound H-1 freeway traffic earlier this year on January 17, Cyrus Belt who succumbed to an untimely death. What do we say to the children to whom the final blow really does come?

Like Abraham, we have free will. How are we going to use it? Are we satisfied to remain complacent and perpetuate cycles of abuse that have been handed down generational lines? Are we going to settle for the status quo? Or are we going to make a conscious choice to follow Jesus and embody God's love to those in our midst? Abraham passes God's test. Are we going to pass God's test by living into our Baptismal Covenant?

And how do we do that? The Gospel this morning gives us a good answer, I think.

“Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple – truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward”.

There are many ways to give a cup of cold water to one of these little ones. We can pray. We can raise awareness. We can demonstrate. We can honor our roles as mandated reporters. We can fight, reach out and be the angel of the Lord who calls to Abraham and says, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him”. Most of all, we can love. Surely that will have its ripple effect on a wounded world desperate to

be transformed so that little children never have to fall to their deaths from Honolulu city overpasses.

With our free will we can transcend a world of abuse and, together, we can enter God's kingdom. And if it seems like it's too much for just one person to do, we remember that we don't do any of this alone. We rely on the grace of God, we rely on the Holy Spirit and we rely on each other. That's why we're a community of faith. Alone, perhaps we can do very little. Together, we can transform the world so that we can be made a holy temple acceptable to God where the evil of abuse is abolished and where the love of God and Christ reigns supreme.

I stand by the rock of sacrifice on the grounds of Mo`okini Heiau on the Big Island's Kohala Coast. Centuries ago it is a place where those who are offered up are killed and spend their last moments in dread and fear. But on this day Auntie Momi Lum helps make it a place of faith, hope and love for a man who is yearning to go off and study so that he can become a healer and a priest.

The Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways; and not only for me. Listen to the words of Auntie Momi Lum when she tells visitors young and old:

“Put your fingertips almost together, not quite touching. Do you feel that? It feels like gum. It's your energy. When a child is injured, the mother rubs the sore spot. She's pushing out the pain”.

What used to be a place of human sacrifice is rededicated to the children of Hawai'i and in 1978 Auntie Momi lifts the ban, the *kapu*, on the *heiau* and makes it safe for children and a place of healing for someone like me. Like a loving mother, she

pushes out the fear and anxiety of the world today and the pain of human sacrifice from long ago.

Mo`okini Heiau has become a place of blessing for children and our cathedral can also become a place of blessing—with our thoughts, with our actions, with our prayers and with our Eucharist. With that and with God's presence and God's grace, we can transform a world of pain into a world of love, making the world a holy temple acceptable to God, a holy temple that is pleasing in God's sight.

Matthew 4:12-23

When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the
Gentiles –
the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned.

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The Nets

There are many Hawaiian sayings associated with the skill of fishing and the old Hawaiian fishermen on Ni`ihau sometimes cite one that goes like this:

Kahi `ē nō ka mālie ho`omākaukau ka makau—
the calm is far off, make ready the fishhooks. In
other words, there might be rough waters now,
but don't wait for the calm.

In today's gospel reading Andrew and Peter immediately leave their nets and follow Jesus. They don't wait for the calm. Then James and John leave their nets, their boat, their father and follow Jesus. They don't wait for the calm either.

During my junior year at UH Mānoa I shared my dorm room with a guy from Hilo, and Hawai`i being Hawai`i, it turned out that his auntie was married to my uncle! When I came home after a day of university classes I'd find him sitting at his desk tying a net, like one of those that you see people throw off the rocks so it twirls toward the water and lands on whatever fish it might be able to trap. My roommate spent months on end sitting there tying this thing night after night after night. It was his treasure. Eventually he put lead sinkers on the ends and a loop in the middle so that when he got around to going to the beach, he'd throw it, watch it twirl toward the water and see it land on whatever fish it might be able to trap. The lead weights would sink and close the fish off at the bottom of their school so that he could pull on the loop in the middle and yank the whole thing up out of the water with the fish trapped inside. His net was a work of art.

My roommate's net reminds me of a photo of my Uncle Francis Funai of local baseball fame. In the photo Uncle Francis stands on a lava rock with half a fishing net draped elegantly on his left arm, his right hand on the other half of the

net at the loop, ready to throw. I can feel his anticipation, his delight as it flies through the air and his excitement as it lands on his catch. And like my roommate, Uncle Francis probably spent months on end sitting and tying his net night after night after night. And his net was a work of art as well.

We all have intricately woven nets in our lives that we treasure and hold as works of art. Are we willing to leave them behind to follow a call? I can't imagine either my roommate or my uncle leaving their beautiful fishing nets on the rocky shore. If I had a hand-woven net that I made all by myself months on end and night after night after night, it would be too precious to leave behind on the rocky shore. I believe that even more when I look at photos of old Hawaiian nets, those beautiful works of art made of *olonā* cord. I think of the hours it must take not only to tie the nets, but also to strip the *olonā* bark and then to lay the strips in running water to make them supple enough to twist into cordage. And I think of another photo in the book *Nā Mea Makamae*, a photo of a Hawaiian fisherman displaying his catch of small crabs gathered along the shore. I think of the look of pride on his face and in his body language as he looks not at the camera but at his handmade *olonā* fishing net. He's proud of his craft and proud of the things he catches inside—crabs, small fish, whatever happens to land in his work of art.

And I wonder: is this what the nets are like back in the days of Peter, Andrew, James and John? Do they spend months on end, night after night tying their nets? Do they take delight in lowering them into the water? Do they feel the excitement as they pull in their catch? Do they take pride in their craft? And if the answer is yes, don't you think it's amazing that they immediately leave them behind to follow a call? To follow Jesus? To follow Jesus of Nazareth? Can you and I do that? Maybe they take the words in the Hawaiian saying and embrace them as their own:

Kahi `ē nō ka mālie ho`omākaukau ka makau –
the calm is far off, make ready the fishhooks.
Don't wait. Act now.

As I sit and ponder I realize that, yes, their nets are beautiful and their nets are works of art. But their nets are also heavy— heavy because of the sinkers, heavy because of the weights and heavy because of the catch that's trapped inside. And what can we learn from that image?

Many of us lead very blessed lives but we also have things that weigh us down. What are those things? Anger? Resentment? Jealousy? Fear? The need to be right? The need to win? What are the things that weigh down the nets in our lives, those beautiful works of art? And are we called to follow? Follow like Andrew, Peter, James and John? Are we called to follow Jesus? And if so, are we called to leave something behind on the rocky shore?

And what do we leave behind? If we're not really sure, the vows we took at our baptism provide some pretty good suggestions, like leaving behind the spiritual forces that rebel against God. Anger, resentment, jealousy, fear, the need to be right and the need to win might fall into that category. How about leaving behind the evil powers of this world that corrupt and destroy the creatures of God, the sinful desires that draw one from the love of God? What might those sinful desires be in our Twenty-First Century world? Greed? Racism? Sexism? Classism?

And if we follow Jesus like Andrew, like Peter, like James and like John—and if leave our nets on the rocky shore, do we get something in return? The more cynical folks among us might say that, yes, subservience, slavery and blind obedience are what we get. But I think we get something better than that.

I think we get freedom, freedom from the sinkers, freedom from the weights on the edges of our nets, freedom to live into our Baptismal Covenant, freedom to move closer to the presence of God, freedom to feel the anticipation as we get ready to throw the net, freedom to feel the delight as it flies through the air, freedom to feel the excitement as it lands on our new catch and freedom to see the beauty of it all.

So as you stand on the rocky shore, take delight and throw your net, your work of art, into the air. Watch it twirl toward the water. See it land on your catch. And then let it go.

*Kahi `ē nō ka mālie ho`omākaukau ka makau –
the calm is far off, make ready the fishhooks.
Don't wait. Act now.*



Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Joseph and the Dream

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream—a succession of images, a succession of thoughts, a succession of emotions passing through his mind as he slept. And they came in the form of an angel, an angel with a message, an angel with a charge. Joseph dreamt and Joseph listened, dreamt and listened in the Holy Land two thousand years ago.

In the Hawaiian Islands, we have a proverb:

He manu hānai ke kanaka na ka moe. Man is like a pet bird belonging to the realm of sleep.

Listen to the words Mary Kawena Puku`i as she elaborates on this Hawaiian proverb in `Ōlelo No`eau:

Dreams are very important. By them one is guided to good fortune and warned of misfortune. Like a pet bird, man is taken care of.

He manu hānai ke kanaka na ka moe.

In the Hawaiian Islands we have proverbs and we have stories.

I'm a *hapa haole*—half Japanese, half Caucasian. Back home on the Big Island and in the old cane fields of towns like Honoka`a, Kapulena and Kukuihaele, I know several second generation Japanese-American men and women around my grandparents' age who were born on the territorial pre-war sugar plantations. These men and these women are also half Japanese, half Caucasian—*hapa haole* like me. Their Japanese immigrant mothers and fathers knew my grandparents' mothers and fathers. They worked the fields together. They worshiped at the local Buddhist temple together. They had hometown club picnics together.

And at some point some of these Japanese immigrant women became pregnant. And like Mary, they kept things in their hearts; but not necessarily things that an angel like Gabriel came to tell them. They kept secrets. They didn't really know whose children they would bear.

Their husbands were there when they gave birth. And when they looked at their newborn children, they discovered that their babies were not pure Japanese. Their babies were *hapa haole*—part Caucasian. The husbands knew their wives were forced into the desires of the plantation's higher-ups and the husbands didn't forsake their wives. They didn't quietly dismiss them. Instead they gave these children their Japanese surnames and took them home to raise as their own. It's as if an angel appeared to them in dreams, giving them guidance and telling them what to do. Like a pet bird, the husbands were taken care of—taken care of, perhaps, in their dreams.

He manu hānai ke kanaka na ka moe.

The husbands took the *hapa haole* children and raised them as their own. Do the words of a Hawaiian proverb flutter in from the island ether and sink into their hearts? Does the story of Joseph somehow flow in from the collective consciousness and sink into their thoughts? As if they embrace words from a Bible that their Buddhist ears have probably never heard and their Japanese minds have probably never known? As if they become like Joseph, Joseph who is in turmoil, Joseph who is about to quietly dismiss his bride, Joseph who is taken care of, taken care of by an angel, an angel who says, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as you wife.”?

When Joseph awakes from his sleep, he does what the angel of the Lord commands him and takes Mary as his wife. When the Japanese husbands leave the birthing rooms, they take the *hapa haole* children as their own. And I wonder: does Joseph just

wake up, sit at the breakfast table, and say, “Okay, I’ll go ahead and take Mary as my wife!”? Something tells me that it isn’t that easy. Something tells me that he struggles. Something tells me that he ponders. Something tells me that he thinks. Something tells me that he discerns. “Is this for real?” “Is this the right thing to do?” “What will others think?” “I’m so angry!” “I feel betrayed!” And how does Joseph work through all these feelings and come to the decision to listen to the angel, the angel in the dream, and take Mary for his wife? Does he talk to his confidants? Does he talk to Mary? Does he pray?

I also wonder: do the Japanese husbands just walk away from the birthing rooms and say, “Okay, we’ll take the children as our own!”? Something tells me that it isn’t that easy for them either. Something tells me that they also struggle. Something tells me that they also ponder. Something tells me that they also think. Something tells me that they also discern. “Is this for real?” “Is this the right thing to do?” “What will others think?” “I’m so angry!” “I feel betrayed!” And how to they work through all those feelings and come to the decision to take the *hapa haole* children as their own?

When I ask my grandmother about it, she says, “Well, back then they had to accept it. Their livelihoods depended on it. They couldn’t challenge the higher-ups.” “*Shi kata ga nai*,” Gram says in Japanese. It can’t be helped.

Maybe the Japanese husbands listen to an inner voice, an inner voice that tells them to give the children their surnames, an inner voice that tells them to take the children for their own, an inner voice that tells them to raise them, an inner voice that tells them to love them. The Japanese husbands on the plantations are taken care of. They listen to an inner voice. They know what to do. Joseph, a righteous man, is taken care of. He listens to an angel in a dream. He knows what to do.

And if we listen to *our* angels, maybe we'll be taken care of. Maybe we'll know what to do.

He manu hānai ke kanaka na ka moe.

So, who are *our* angels? Does someone appear to us dreams and move us to do something we wouldn't normally think of doing? Do we see a homeless person on the cathedral lawn who touches our hearts and spurs us into action? Do we listen to family members and friends and follow their advice? Or do we just feel stirred by a still, small voice from within ourselves that induces us to make a choice, a decision, that doesn't seem right, but in our hearts we know that it is? Who are our angels?

And what do we dream? Do we dream that an angel comes to us and tells us to give loving care to the homeless man that sits on our cathedral lawn? Do we dream that an angel comes to us and tells us to work with immigrant children from Micronesia who aren't getting the education they deserve? Do we dream that an angel comes to us and tells us to spend some time with someone who is all alone this Christmas? Do we dream that an angel comes to us and tells us to visit a fellow parishioner hospitalized in Queen's, in Straub or over in Kaiser? Do we dream that an angel comes to us and tells us to take communion to someone in Hawaii Kai, in Kaimuki or in Pearl City who can't come to church? Do we dream that an angel comes to us and tells us to anoint the head of a woman dying of Alzheimer's in Foster Village? What do we dream? Do we dream about a child? Do we dream about a tiny baby lying in a manger? Do we dream about the savior of the world? What do we dream?

He manu hānai ke kanaka na ka moe.

So, at the foot of the majestic mountains listen to the angels in your dreams. In the path of the gentle, whispering winds listen to the angels in your dreams. Under the warmth of the tender

rains listen to the angels in your dreams. On the soft sands of the expansive shores listen to the angels in your dreams. Listen to the angels in the cane fields. Listen to the angels in the bustle of the city. Listen to the angels in the stories of your lives. Listen to the angels in your dreams and trust. Listen to the angels in your dreams and have faith. Listen to the angels in your dreams and believe. Believe in the ultimate angel and the ultimate dream—the Christ child that’s ready and waiting, ready and waiting to come into your midst, into your lives and into your hearts.

He manu hānai ke kanaka na ka moe.

Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Mark 1:4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Hula and the Water

Not long ago I acquired a limited edition of a book written and signed by the late Winona Beamer who was a *kumu hula*, Hawaiian storyteller and educator—a book entitled *Na Hula O Hawaii*. I love to hold this book in my hands. I love the heavy feel of its leather bound cover, the smoothness of its gold page edges, the ridges on its yellow ribbon marker. But even weightier are the words of wisdom and knowledge written inside where Kupuna Beamer shares her *mana`o* through the following words:

There is so much to understand before one can really dance hula. A student of hula can't simply pick a flower out of the air. Perhaps the flower blossoms high on the tree, but its life comes from roots deep in the ground. The plucking of a flower has to acknowledge those roots. It is necessary to impart this kind of dance philosophy to hula students so that the dancer's poetic pantomime conveys the story with graphic dimension.

Kupuna Beamer continues:

Teachers are discovering that the totality of nature is basic to the hula: that the dancer's waistline, for instance, represents the horizon; the lower part of her or his body, the land and the sea, the upper part of the body the sea and the sky. This simple pattern is the basis for limitless poetic gestures, the outward language of the hula. The inner language of the hula is almost fathomless, drawing its great power from the Hawaiian language itself, and from the depths of each person who dances it.

The notion of the hula dancer's entire body, whether the upper body or the lower body, representing the sea (the water) fascinates me, especially this morning as we baptize six new Christians in the water in the cathedral's font. Like the hula dancer's movements depict more than simply picking a flower out of the air, our gestures and movements at the font depict more than simply scooping up water in a sterling silver shell and gently pouring it over the head of a new Christian.

From *Kupuna* Beamer's hula point of view, what is the water in the font? Surely to her it's much more, than water that flows from the tap of a Honolulu faucet. No doubt *Kupuna* Beamer might ask something like this:

What is the totality of the water, the water that was there at the beginning of creation? Where did the water in the font really come from? Did it not fall from the sky? Did it not evaporate into the air from a river, a lake, a stream or an ocean?

And we can ask questions as well. What if the water goes back to the River Jordan, where John baptizes Jesus, where the Holy Spirit anoints him as the Messiah and sets him on his course of public ministry and ultimately to his death and his resurrection? What if the waters in our font begin there, recycle themselves over and over and come to us so that we can baptize new Christians into our fold this morning?

What if the water in our font is from the same source as the water in the Sea of Galilee on whose surface Jesus walks? Or what if the water in our front is from the Pool of Siloam where the blind man is healed? Or the water at the wedding at Cana where Jesus performs his first public miracle and turns it into wine? What if the water in our font is from the same source as the water for which Jesus thirsts on the cross?

Perhaps the water of the biblical past evaporates into the air and comes back to us, collecting itself in our font this morning where we sanctify it and embrace it as we reaffirm our Baptismal Covenant, where we claim it as our own and encompass and inject ourselves into the story of Christ, the totality of who He is as a man, the totality of who He is as our Risen Savior.

So while the pouring of water over the head of a new Christian with a sterling silver shell seems a simple action; like the hula dancer's pantomime, it is actually much deeper and profound.

As our Prayer Book says, it is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the church. The bond which God establishes in baptism is indissoluble. There is one Body and one Spirit; there is one hope in God's call to us; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; one God and Father of all.

When we look upon the waters of baptism in our font, we acknowledge that water is a gift from God. We remember that the Holy Spirit moves over it in the beginning of creation. We remember that through it, God leads the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt and into the land of promise. We remember that in it Jesus receives the baptism of John and is anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us through his death and resurrection from the bondage of sin and into everlasting life.

And in thankfulness and gratitude, we gaze upon the symbolism of the paschal candle and remember that in baptism we are buried with Christ in his death, we share in his resurrection and we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. And because of that, we obey the words of Jesus and bring into the fellowship those who come to him in faith and baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

As the hula dancer does so much more than just pick a flower out of the air with a simple gesture, we know that we too do so much more than just pour water over the head of a new Christian with a sterling silver shell. So, as you look into the baptismal font, reflect upon the water.

Reflect upon the water and remember how the Holy Spirit moves over it at creation. Remember the people of Israel moving through it out of Egypt and into the land of promise. Reflect upon the water and remember Jesus in the River Jordan as John baptizes Him. Remember the Holy Spirit as she anoints Him as the Messiah. Reflect upon the water and remember the Sea of Galilee and Jesus walking on its surface. Remember the wedding at Cana and how Jesus turns it into wine. Reflect upon the water and remember the Pool of Siloam where the blind man gains his sight. Remember Jesus as he thirsts for it on the cross. Reflect upon the water and remember his death and resurrection. Reflect upon the water, drink it all in and know that we are saved. Reflect upon the water, welcome the new Christian into our fold and embrace him and her into the loving arms of Christ. Reflect upon the water.

As the hula dancer does so much more than just pick a flower out of the air with a gesture, we do more than just pour water over the head of a new Christian. We remember the source of the water, the stories it holds and its power to save. We claim its totality, its source, its roots as our own and we carry it into the future as Christ commands us, ever bearing in mind the words in his powerful charge to us in The Great Commission:

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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Sisters and brothers, let the service continue and let us live into Christ's commandment as we reflect upon the water and claim the totality of the water as our own.

Matthew 17:1-9

Six days after Peter had acknowledged Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the Living God, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Hiroshima

I never know where a message, an insight or an inspiration will come from. One of them comes to me in 1982 on a hot and humid morning in Guam. I'm a high school student and Pope John Paul II rides by on a tiny makeshift golf cart and waves to the crowd that gathers for Mass in the capital's town square.

I think to myself, "Why is this guy here? Why would he want to come to a place like Guam?" I'm kind of down on my home when I'm a kid and it doesn't make any sense to me until I hear the Roman Catholic bishop explain it in a television interview. John Paul is going to Japan from the Philippines and he wants to travel the route of the Enola Gay, the bomber that flew from Tinian to Hiroshima to drop the atomic drop. Stopping in Guam allows him to do this.

The route of the Enola Gay is a route I myself take many times when I live in Guam and take weekend trips to Osaka—flying over Tinian, past Iwo Jima and up into Western Japan. Each time I make the trip I remember Hiroshima, the city where I step off the train in July, 1990 to begin my two-year stint as a preschool English teacher at the YMCA. I step off the train and into the city of Hiroshima, the city where my great-grandparents are born, the city that is devastated by the atomic bomb, the city where I work with Japanese children, the city to which I decide I can never return because I can't deal with the pall of sadness that covers the hubbub of its modern urban life today.

When I arrive in Hiroshima as a young teacher, all that is left of August 6, 1945 are a set of skeletal remains—steel girders of a building with a dome, the A-Bomb Dome, dwarfed by skyscrapers built in the economic boom in Japan after the Second World War. All that is left of August 6, 1945 are the shadows on concrete walls where the blast and its white light vaporize God's people leaving behind black outlines of their

bodies in their last seconds of life. All that is left of August 6, 1945 are the A-Bomb Dome, the black shadows—the A-Bomb Dome, the black shadows and the stories that I hear during my time in Hiroshima, the city of my great-grandparents' birth.

A little boy who eventually becomes an Anglican priest sets out for the hills on the morning of August 6, 1945. A white light flashes in the sky and he comes home to his mother, but not his father. A young mobilized student is downtown the morning of August 6, 1945. A white light flashes in the sky and it takes her three days to get home because all her landmarks are gone. She's disoriented and lost. She dies of cancer in the late 1990s. A young mother (my grandfather's cousin) is cleaning house the morning of August 6, 1945. A white light flashes, the pipes break, mud and water flood the house and a man outside screams "I'm blind! I'm blind!" because he makes the mistake of looking directly into the atomic blast. A young man is downtown on the morning of August 6, 1945. A white light flashes and he survives. He thinks he's okay, but when I see him in a hospital in 1992, his stomach is riddled with cancer. A future priest, a mobilized student, a mother and a young man—lives transformed and transfigured by a blast, a bomb, a burst of white light.

Whether we remember Pearl Harbor, or Nanking, Peleliu, Bataan, Guadalcanal, whether we remember calculating the cost of a manned invasion of the Japanese Mainland, whether it's wrong, whether it's right, Hiroshima is a transfiguring moment and after the bomb falls, our world is never the same again.

I'd like to share the words of Desmond Tutu:

The most unlikely person, the most improbable situation – these are all “transfigurable”—they can be turned into their glorious opposites; Indeed, God is transforming the world now—through us—because God loves us.

Look at Paul, the man who rails against and persecutes Christians. He has a moment of transfiguration on his way to Damascus and becomes one of the greatest evangelists the world ever knows. Look at Peter, the man who denies knowing Jesus not one, not two, but three times and is transfigured into the Rock of the Church and the Bishop of Rome. Look at Moses, the man who murders an Egyptian, the man who lacks confidence, the man who leads the Jews out of bondage in Egypt and toward the Promise Land, the man who is transfigured and comes down from Mount Sinai with two tablets, the man whose face shines because he has been talking with God.

Look at our church. The church that is transfigured when we have the courage to elect a woman as our presiding bishop. The church that is transfigured when we elect a new diocesan bishop in Hawai'i a year ago. The church that is transfigured when it reaches out to newcomers who walk through our cathedral doors for the very first time. The church that is transfigured when it decides to look at a new way of doing ministry by working to adopt and implement a strategic plan.

Look at our lives. Our lives are transfigured when we become wives and husbands. Our lives are transfigured when we bury a spouse and become widows and widowers. Our lives are transfigured when we become parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, brothers and sisters. Our lives are transfigured when we baptize and welcome a newly proclaimed Christian into our fold. Our lives are transfigured when we come to this table to nourish our souls with spiritual food.

Desmond Tutu continues:

There very well may be times when God has regretted creating us, but I am convinced that there are many more times that God feels

*vindicated by our kindness, our magnanimity,
our nobility of spirit.*

Today's collect sums it up well:

*Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light
of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear
our cross, and be changed into his likeness from
glory to glory.*

How do we behold the light of his countenance in a world where terrorists fly airplanes into buildings? How do we behold the light of his countenance in a world where countries shoot rockets back and forth at one another in religious fervor? How do we behold the light of his countenance in a world where people walk into universities, shopping malls and churches and take the lives of fellow human beings? How do we behold the light of his countenance in a world where a young boy is murdered just several blocks away from our cathedral? What does it take for us to behold the light of his countenance, to be wonderfully transfigured?

Maybe we are looking for a very complicated answer when it's actually very simple. Perhaps the answer is right here at this table where we nourish ourselves with Christ's body and blood, which moves us to prayer—prayer that pays attention to God as a part of our lives, prayer which moves us to listen to God and act as God's agents of mission, God's mission of love in this world where terrorists fly airplanes into buildings, where countries shoot rockets back and forth at one another in religious fervor, where people walk into universities, shopping malls and churches and take the lives of fellow human beings, where a young boy is murdered just several blocks away from our cathedral and where atomic bombs are dropped on God's people.

Yes, the atomic bomb is dropped on God's people, but are we doomed or are we transfigured?

Remember, the Holy Possible hangs before us, the Holy Possible rises from the dead, the Holy Possible is transfigured before Peter's eyes, before John's eyes, before James' eyes, before our eyes and he promises transfiguration to us in our lives.

The atom bomb is dropped on Hiroshima, dropped on God's people. But we don't stay in that moment of history. As the collect says, we behold the light of his countenance and we are transfigured. And the stories of our lives show us that truth.

I'd like to share one more story with you.

Shortly after the atomic bomb falls on Hiroshima, ending the World War II, my *nisei* uncle serves in occupied Japan with the U.S. Army's Military Intelligence Service. He's on the American side. My great-grandmother dispatches him to check on her sister's family in Osaka, another city decimated by American bombs. They are on the Emperor's side. My uncle goes and finds them. He goes in a gleaming Army jeep, in a crisp Army uniform and finds his family standing in the rubble that was once their ironworks factory, their livelihood. They've lost everything, everything except their anger and their pride. "What did you have to do with this?" a cousin asks my uncle as he points at the rubble. And the moment of transfiguration comes. "Your mother and my mother are sisters," my uncle says. "The war is over and we are family." Then my uncle goes to his gleaming Army jeep, takes a precious bag of rice out of the back, and places it in his cousin's open arms. And we behold the light of his countenance. We see transfiguration. And we see Christ.

Let us pray:

O God, who before the passion of your only - begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant to us that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance, may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind – just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you – so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mark 13:24-37

Jesus said to his disciples, "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the

doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

The Ti Leaves in Paris

When we move into our new home in 1982, one of the first things my grandmother asks me to do is go to the Waipio side of the house and stand under the edge of the roof to see where the rain falls onto the ground. After I do that she hands me a pick and asks me to dig a shallow trench along the rain line, about three inches deep. This takes me a VERY long time. After much hand waving and nagging, the trench meets my grandmother's satisfaction and she walks along and drops *ti* leaf stalks into it, laying them on their sides. Then I have to go back and cover them up. This also takes a VERY long time. It's then, and only then, I get my weekly allowance—ten bucks.

After my payoff, I never give the *ti* plants another thought until years later when I ask Gram to make me a *ti* leaf lei to give to a friend. She tells me to go out and cut the leaves from the stalks whose trench I dug when I was a kid. The huge *ti* plants thrive, well-watered by the rain that falls from the edge of the roof. For me, time folds in on itself and it's like one minute I'm digging a trench and the next minute the plants are there, thriving under the roof. I cut the leaves and Gram makes the lei. No big deal.

In fact I pretty much forget about the whole *ti* leaf planting incident until just a few weeks ago when I hear a story about a *halau* (a school of hula) in (of all places) Paris, France. Back home if someone wants to make a *ti* leaf skirt for a hula performance, they can call Gram, come to the house, pick the *ti* leaves and weave them into a full and fluffy skirt. No problem. Our plants have tons of leaves.

But in France, it turns out that *ti* leaves are very difficult to get. So when the *kumu hula* from France comes to Honolulu, she takes back huge boxes packed with *ti* leaves, passes them out to her *haumana* (her students) and shows them how to weave

them into skirts. They treasure the *ti* leaves, keeping them for weeks in the refrigerator until the time for their hula performance comes. On more than one occasion, when the hula performance is done, the students take the skirts apart, wash the leaves and use them to make *laulau*!

Later on I learn that somehow the French students procure *ti* stalks and attempt to grow the plants in their Paris homes, one of them placing the stalks between her radiator and her curio shelf full of French antiques. The students watch the stalks in the hope that they will grow. The students watch and wait, bringing to mind the words in today's gospel, words that say, "Keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come." Their *kumu hula* says, "Someday the *haumana* hope the *ti* plants will grow enough to make their own skirts in the middle of Paris where their love of Hawaiian culture continues to grow and flourish."

This image tugs at me as we enter the Season of Advent, the time where, as Paul says in today's letter to the church in Corinth, we wait together for the "revealing of Christ." I tend to think of Advent, the revealing of Christ, as an external event, something that happens outside of us. But what if it's an internal event? Something that happens inside of us? Something that happens in our hearts?

I think of that and oddly enough, I think of the hula students in Paris looking at their *ti* leaf stalks, waiting in anticipation that they will sprout leaves someday. I think of them and wonder not only what's going on in their minds but also in their hearts. I'd like to think that their hearts are warm and that their hearts are transformed as they wait in love for the beauty of the Hawaiian culture that might unfold in a budding *ti* leaf plant in Paris, France.

And in turn, I wonder what's going on in our hearts, especially as we prepare to keep alert and wait for the coming of Christ

this Advent season. If the coming of Christ is something that goes on inside of us, what does that look like? What does it feel like? Maybe we can look at the words in the Scottish blessing I sometimes use at the end of our Sunday services. Maybe the words in that blessing give us a clue.

May the blessing of light be on you, light without and light within. May the blessed sunlight shine on you like a great peat fire, so that stranger and friend may come and warm himself at it. And may light shine out of the two eyes of you, like a candle set in the window of a house, bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm. And may the blessing of the rain be on you, may it beat upon your Spirit and wash it fair and clean, and leave there a shining pool where the blue of Heaven shines, and sometimes a star.

If that's what it looks like and that's what it feels like to have Christ within us, then I long for it with all my heart.

There is so much going on at the end of the year. I wonder if we do ourselves a disservice by getting caught up in the anxiety and the frenzy of this time of year that the secular world calls Christmas, but that we know is actually supposed to be called Advent. Do we miss feeling the warmth of the peat fire in our hearts because we're busy running to and fro from this shopping center to that, from this store to that? Do we cover up the light of the candle set in the window of our house by running from this party to that party, worrying about what to cook, what to take, what to wear and how we're going to pay for it all? Do we obliterate the twinkling of the star in the shining pool where the blue of Heaven shines in the midst of it all? And if that's the case, isn't that kind of sad? Are we watching? Are we waiting? Are we awake? Are we alert? Or

are we numb to the magnificence that's about to unveil itself inside of us?

I hate the idea of getting caught up in all of it, feeling numb and missing the miracle. I'd much rather feel the warmth and the love of the Christ within. So this year (like I've done for the past several years) I'll stay away from the shopping centers and stores. I'll try to keep myself from buying stuff for family and friends—stuff that they really don't want or need. This year I'll write checks to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Saipan and Family Promise in Honolulu and I'll ask family and friends to take the money that they might spend on gifts for me and donate it to people in need instead.

And I rather like the idea of the Episcopalian grandmother here in Honolulu who puts an Episcopal Relief and Development catalog in the middle of the dining room table during Advent and asks her grandchildren to look through it and decide what they'd like their grandma to buy in their names for God's people in different parts of the world—cows, pigs or ducks and geese for families in Asia; clean water for children in Africa; postnatal care or smokeless stoves for people in South America. I think that's a wonderful way to honor the Christ for whom we watch and wait at Advent.

There's no frenzy. There's no anxiety. All that's happening is a grandmother and grandchildren tapping into the Christ within, trying to be the peat fire, the candle set in the window of the house and the shining pool where the blue of Heaven shines and sometimes a star for a world in need, a world that longs for the presence of Christ that can be revealed in the good works and loving hands of the Christ within all of us. Wouldn't that be pleasing in God's sight? I think it would be, don't you? And the warmth we feel when we serve the Christ in our midst signals the arrival of the Christ in our hearts, the Christ for whom we watch and wait now that Advent is upon us.

So as we enter this Advent season, let's think about spending some time in silent reflection, like the hula students in Paris, France who sit, watch, wait and wonder at the *ti* leaf sprouts which might emerge from the stalk between the radiator and the French antiques. Let's sit and wait. Wait for the light, the light without and the light within. Wait for the sunlight to shine upon us like a great peat fire, so that stranger and friend may come and warm himself at it. Wait for the light to shine out of our eyes, like a candle in the window, bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm. Wait for the blessing of the rain to be upon us and beat upon our Spirit, washing it fair and clean, and leaving there a shining pool where the blue of Heaven shines, and sometimes a star. Sit and wait, wait in anticipation, wait with excitement and be alert. Sit and wait—and the inner Christ that longs to emerge from our warm and ready hearts will surely come and surely that will be the greatest gift of all.

Luke 13:10-17

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

The Woman in Kalaupapa

We jump off the fifteen-foot pier and into the water below. We're screaming, laughing and having a wonderful time while a mother humpback whale and her baby breach and frolic farther off in the bay. That's how it is that sunny afternoon on the Kalaupapa Peninsula on the island of Moloka'i. Thirteen kids and me from Seabury Hall—youthful, energetic, vibrant, joyful kids jumping off the pier into the water below, into the water below as if there's a need to cleanse ourselves in the pure saltwater, cleanse ourselves of the weight, the heaviness, the gravity of our morning—our morning spent painting Boogey's sister's house, working around the knobs on the kitchen cabinets, the old-fashioned telephone fastened to the wall and the dust on the railing on the lanai, the lanai where Boogey's sister probably sat, the lanai that looks across the street and into the graveyard, the graveyard where she knows she will end up one day. And we paint. We paint the walls, we paint the floors and we paint the ceilings as we embrace the memories that are forced upon us that morning—memories of banishment on the Kalaupapa Peninsula, memories of a woman with Hansen's disease who dies five years earlier, memories we attempt to cleanse by jumping off the pier into the pure salt water below.

Sometimes I have to ask myself, do I ever objectify other human beings? Do I make those around me impersonal, as if they are inanimate objects and not living, breathing human beings? To this day I am struck by a description that I heard awhile back that talked about the people who were boarding the ships for banishment to Kalaupapa being referred to as "walking coffins." The leper becomes a coffin, an inanimate object, no longer a person with a soul—no human face, no human flesh.

And I have to confess, I do the same thing today as they did in the late 1800s. I objectify people with labels, labels that roll so easily off my tongue. Back then they said, "leper." Today I

say, “homeless,” “drug addict,” “special ed,” “fundamentalist,” “welfare mom,” “collateral damage,” “hippie,” “conservative,” “liberal,” you name it.

What would happen if I put a human face and human flesh on the labels I use? Maybe I’d hear accounts like this one, this account of a leper, a little boy, banished to Kalaupapa without his mother, without his father, in the late 1800s.

My father came to take me home from school. But instead of taking me to the Kalihi Receiving Station immediately like the principal said they should, my parents took me home . . . The whole family cried, including my father. The next day my father took me downtown and bought me a new suit. It was my first suit of clothes – they were so nice. I looked good. I had never had clothes like that before because we were poor... So I wore that suit of clothes to the Kalihi Receiving Station. Even though we were poor, my father said he wanted me to be dressed nicely when I was taken to Kalihi to be declared a leper. They took my picture for the official record of the Board of Health wearing that suit of clothes. When the picture was taken, my father broke down and cried. So, I became a leper.

A human face and human flesh on a leper, an objectified creature of God becomes a person with a soul.

Jesus does the same thing. He puts a human face and human flesh on an objectified woman. Think about it. She doesn’t ask to be healed, does she? Yet Jesus sees her and calls her over and says, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.” In her spirit of weakness, Jesus sees her and calls her over. And when Jesus does this, he’s makes the people in the

synagogue uncomfortable, he stirs the pot, turns things upside down, takes people (the woman included) out of their comfort zones. We all remember how women in Jesus' time are demeaned, denied their proper status, oppressed by religious and social rules. The story of this woman is the story of many women in Jesus' time. And Jesus confronts the religious community and calls the woman over on the Sabbath. He lays his hands on her, a sign that he is giving her his blessing because as a creature of God she is worthy of it, the same way the lepers in Kalaupapa are worthy of it, the same way those in our midst whom we objectify today are worthy of it—those with labels, tucked safely away in their niches so they become inanimate objects and don't have to be dealt with—homeless, drug addict, special ed, fundamentalist, welfare mom, collateral damage, hippie, conservative, liberal.

In this cathedral we are stewards of our Hawaiian history, a Hawaiian history that includes the lepers of Kalaupapa. We are also stewards of this Gospel story. What are we going to do with the story? Are we going to see the woman? Are we going to call her over? Are we going to uplift her? Are we going to bestow upon her rightful status as a creature of God? Are we going to liberate her from religious and social rules which demean and condemn? Are we going to give her our blessing? What are we going to do? What are we, we who are stewards of our Hawaiian history and its stories, what are we going to do? Objectify or reach out?

Woman, you are set free.

I began with a story about my time with thirteen kids in Kalaupapa. I'd like to end with another story about the same place, but from a different time.

Last October I was a shepherd on the fly-abouts where we presented the candidates for Bishop of Hawai'i to the people of the Diocese. While we were on Moloka'i our caravan took us

to the top of one of the sea cliffs that overlooked the Kalaupapa Settlement—its houses, its churches, its roads, its graveyards, and rolling waves that crashed onto its shores.

After taking in the lookout we got back into the van and I began talking about my Kalaupapa experience and jumping off the pier earlier in the year. Questions about the Settlement began to emerge when Auntie Marilyn Cleghorn, who was a member of our search committee entourage and whose family came to Hawai'i in the early 1800s, piped in with responses. As her memories and lessons from the past began to unfold, they welled up from a woman who had the history of the Hawaiian Islands written on her face, who had the stories of Old Hawai'i shining in her eyes.

Finally she said, “My great-grandmother died in Kalaupapa.” And we all took pause. In my mind, the *haole*, white folks, didn't go to Kalaupapa. Hawaiians, yes. Chinese, yes. Portuguese, yes. But not the *haole*. This was unfathomable. This was unimaginable. This was beyond belief. But there was no denying it in her eyes, those glass eyes that were resolved to serve as windows to the truth, the truth of the memories and lessons from the past, even painful memories and lessons of a great-grandmother banished to the Kalaupapa Settlement. “My great-grandmother died in Kalaupapa.” Auntie Marilyn went on to explain how she found her great-grandmother's death certificate, listing Kalaupapa as the place where she died on Christmas Day, 1917, Kalaupapa, Moloka'i. Auntie Marilyn explained how she went down to the Settlement to search for her great-grandmother's grave, only to find it had been washed away in a storm. She set her jaw when she talked about the resistance from her family when she strived to proclaim the truth about her heritage, their heritage. She went on to give us details about her great-grandmother's refusing to change her name on health documents they way others did to avoid family disgrace, humiliation and shame. Her great-grandmother was going to keep her name, the only

thing left that would give her respect, honor and dignity—that Baptismal Covenant respect, honor and dignity that was her due.

And her great-grandmother gets her Baptismal Covenant respect, honor, and dignity many years later when Auntie Marilyn takes her children to the Settlement’s graveyard and stands at its perimeter holding hands with them and looking out over the black lava rocks to where her great-grandmother’s grave might have been.

Woman, you are set free.

Every Sunday we ask God’s prayers for the sick and suffering, the hungry, the oppressed, those who suffer from any grief or trouble, the persecuted, the friendless, the needy. But do we see them? Do we embrace them? Do we reach out to them and say, “Woman, you are set free.” Do we put a human face and human flesh on them?

Woman, you are set free.

Auntie Marilyn looks at us with pride and says, “My great-grandmother died in Kalaupapa.” And the words of the Baptismal Covenant never become truer, more profound, more solemn, than when we muster up the courage to ask her. It takes us awhile and at first we hold back, because her answer might just make the whole thing too real—too real for us to deal with, too real for us to take in. But we finally do ask her, “What was your great-grandmother’s name?” And there’s a long pause and tears brimming in a great-granddaughter’s eyes as she puts a human face and human flesh on the Christ that she knows was in her great-grandmother, on the Christ that she knows is in her great-grandmother, on the Christ that she knows will always be in her great-grandmother, a woman on a leper colony in Kalaupapa, on Moloka’i, in the Hawaiian Islands. Then, in a measured whisper, Auntie Marilyn utters her great-grandmother’s name. “Rosine Weber,” she says – a

human face and human flesh on her great-grandmother, Rosine Weber.

Woman, you are set free.

The first edition of Pa`a Kai had fourteen sermons in it, one for each station on the Via Lucia. At my grandmother's insistence, I am including this sermon in this anthology, a sermon about a woman of Hawai'i who gave me permission to preach it as long as I promised not to make any money off her story.

To this day, I feel it is the best sermon I've ever preached. And on top of that, the woman was in the second pew on the Diamond Head side of St. Andrew's Cathedral when I delivered this sermon. She listened intently and shed tears—tears for her story and tears for her mother.

I commend this sermon to you with much aloha for this woman, for Hawai'i, and for the way the gospel of Christ weaves its way into our island lives.

Luke 15:1-10

All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

So he told them this parable: "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Patience:

I see her. I see her standing and being introduced as a judge at one of the Merrie Monarch Hula Festivals in the early 1980s, I see her with her friends at a hula performance at the Hawaii Theater in the late 1990s and I see her on KGMB in a special excerpt during the Kamehameha Schools Song Contest earlier this year. I see her Japanese face and her smile highlighted by an exquisite Ni'ihau lei of white *momi* and pink *kahelelani* shells. I see her walk, walk like one who's danced hula all her life, a woman of Japanese ancestry and an auntie with a Hawaiian soul. I see her in younger days with long black hair, dancing in a *ti* leaf skirt as her adopted mother sits next to her, beating on a *hula pahu* (a drum) and chanting. I see her at her desk today—her short gray hair, a headset by her ear, a pencil in her hand transcribing and translating audio tapes from the 1950s at the Bishop Museum where she still works—where she still works after starting there fresh out of high school as a telephone operator 65 years ago. I see her. I see Patience.

Patience, the good-natured tolerance of delay, perhaps the delay of promise, the promise of something favorable to come. Patience. Also a woman's name, a woman well-known, a woman prominent, and a woman respected in our Hawaiian Islands—cultural treasure; hula master; linguist; translator and transcriber of Hawaiian oral histories; *hanai* (adopted) daughter. Patience. Patience Namaka Bacon. Auntie Pat.

Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.'

Auntie Pat is a lost sheep. When I talk to her a couple of weeks ago, the resolve in her 87 year old voice comes through the phone line crystal clear. "When I was two months old," she says, "they put a one inch by one inch ad for me in the paper asking someone to adopt me. I was with the horses and the cows. They put me in the Hawaiian Humane Society with the motherless and fatherless waifs and stray animals." Auntie Pat is a lost sheep—a lost sheep when her Japanese mother dies of Spanish influenza while giving birth to her in Waimea, Kaua'i; a lost sheep when she is sent to Honolulu at two months of age and placed in the Hawaiian Humane Society

with the children and the lost and unwanted animals; a lost sheep when she is categorized with the horses, with the cows, with the dogs and with the cats, categorized as an animal—a waif, in her words. Auntie Pat is a lost sheep.

And Auntie Pat is found, found the way one sheep out of a hundred in Jesus' parable is found, found by Mary Kawena Puku`i, Kawena, a woman now dead over twenty years, but who still ranks among the most beloved and respected of all Hawaiian scholars, found by Kawena because the arms of a Hawaiian mother cannot resist embracing an infant waiting to be cherished, waiting to be tended to, waiting to be loved. The arms of a Hawaiian mother embrace Auntie Pat—waif, lost sheep. The arms embrace her.

In today's Gospel, Jesus is drawn to men and women of doubtful reputation (sinners, tax collectors), eating meals with them, treating them like old friends. Kawena is drawn to a Japanese orphan from Waimea, Kaua`i, left in the Hawaiian Humane Society, conscripted to the fate of a lost and unwanted animal—a waif, a lost sheep.

“Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.”

Kawena says, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my child that was forsaken.”

Auntie Pat is found, found by Kawena. And Kawena faces resistance, resistance from a husband who will not *hanai* (adopt) a Japanese child, a Japanese child with no Hawaiian blood. But again, the arms of a Hawaiian mother cannot resist embracing a lost and unwanted infant waiting to be loved; no matter what those around her, including her husband, might say. When the husband says no, Pa`ahana (the inconsolable Kawena's mother) steps in and says, “I'll adopt the child for you to take care of, I'll adopt the child for you to cherish, I'll adopt the child for you to love.” And so Pa`ahana becomes Auntie Pat's legal mother and Kawena becomes her *hanai* mother, her real mother, her Hawaiian mother—raising her, taking her under her wing, teaching her, guiding her, forming her, pointing Auntie Pat toward her destiny, her destiny to become a cultural treasure, her destiny to become a hula master, her destiny to become a linguist, her destiny to become a steward of our stories, our oral histories, and our

ancient traditions. One of the only people left in Hawaii to do this work, Auntie Pat listens to old tapes and translates Hawaiian spoken in the olden days, a Hawaiian that few people today can understand. Without her, it might be lost. With her, we remember and we know about so many things—the uses of taro, the daily hygiene practices of old Hawai`i, ancient hula, songs, anthems, and chants.

And we rejoice, we celebrate, we delight, we cheer; not only because the lost sheep has been found but also because we see what the lost sheep can become. We see what might become of a motherless and fatherless waif—the orphan from Waimea, Kaua`i abandoned and sent to the Hawaiian Humane Society to live with the horses, to live with the cows, to live with the dogs, to live with the cats. We see the promise fulfilled—a cultural treasure. We see the patience it takes for it to come to fruition. We see and we rejoice.

Auntie Pat is a lost sheep. Auntie Pat is found. Who are the lost sheep in our midst today? The lost and unwanted animals? The motherless and fatherless waifs? Is it the elderly lady who gets on the bus in front of the Airport Best Western and sits next to you and smiles and says hello just because she longs for five minutes of human contact and someone to talk to? Is it the thirty-five year old man who sleeps on a towel in front of our Parke Chapel every night because he has no job and no family to go home to? Is it the *malihini*, the newcomer, who walks through that door on a Sunday morning trying to find his or her way in a new place and who yearns for someone in this Christian community to reach out a hand and say, “Welcome to your new home”? Who are the lost sheep in our midst today?

And how do we become like Mary Kawena Puku`i, Mary Kawena Puku`i whose arms embraced Auntie Pat, the lost and unwanted animal? The motherless and fatherless waif? How do we become like Mary Kawena Puku`i, not taking “no” for an answer, even from her husband, and instead saying “yes” to the Christ that she sees in a motherless and fatherless waif, an orphan, a child of God? How do we become like Mary Kawena Puku`i? Maybe we look at the elderly lady who gets on the bus in front of the Airport Best Western, look at her face, drink in her longing eyes and say “hello” back to her when she smiles and says “hello” to us. Maybe we see the thirty-five year old man who sleeps on a towel in front of our Parke Chapel and reach out a hand and ask to sit and hear his story, sit and listen even for a short little while and really hear and see who he is. Maybe we walk over to the *malihini* who walks through that door on a Sunday

morning, tell her or him our name and say, “Welcome. How are you?” How do we become like Mary Kawena Puku`i and embrace the motherless and fatherless waif?

I invite you to look up at our altar and to reflect on what we’re actually going to do here this morning. We’re about to take a broken loaf of bread, a broken loaf of bread that mirrors the broken world we live in, we’re about to take a broken loaf of bread and make it whole, make it whole by feeding ourselves with spiritual nourishment and filling ourselves with God’s presence, making us all one as we go forth from here to do God’s good works—one with the elderly lady on the bus, one with the man in front of Parke Chapel, one with the malihini that walks through that door, one with Auntie Pat Bacon, and one with Mary Kawena Puku`i.

I’m struck by a final excerpt from the Kamehameha Schools Song Contest broadcast, an image of Auntie Pat today and Mary Kawena Puku`i from times past, the two video images side by side, simultaneously dancing the same sitting hula, mother and daughter, the shepherd and her lost sheep, her waif, her treasure, her child. And they are one like we are one, showing us that our Gospel stories aren’t so far away. They’re not just back in Palestine, two thousand years ago. They’re really not that far away. They’re here in Hawai`i, this beautiful place that so many of us call home and where visitors are embraced and welcomed into the fold.

So under the shadow of our majestic mountains, surrounded by our timeless sea, in the midst of our gentle wind, listen to the stories—the stories of people like Patience Namaka Bacon and Mary Kawena Puku`i. Listen to the stories. Listen to the stories that your mothers and fathers heard in the pineapple fields and the cane fields, listen to the stories that you hear coming down the mountains through the valleys and into your hearts. Listen to the stories that your children tell you—on the playgrounds, at the beaches and in your homes. Listen to the stories and know that the Gospel is here, listen to the stories and know that the Gospel is alive, listen to the stories and know that the Gospel is embraced, listen to the stories and know that the Gospel is real.

Mary Kawena Puku`i—Hawaiian mother. Patience Namaka Bacon—waif, lost sheep, child of God. God bless them, God bless their story and God bless all of you.

Amen.



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Glossary

`a`ali`i – a native Hawaiian shrub or tree whose leaves and flowers are woven in *haku lei*, *lei* that are woven rather than strung. My mother and I used to pick *`a`ali`i* on the roadside near the Waimea Airport on the Big Island when I was in high school.

auwe – Hawaiian word for alas.

Baptismal Covenant – promises made at baptism. The Baptismal Covenant is in the Book of Common Prayer on page 304.

bonsai – a tree that has been dwarfed. My great grandfather's hobby was to nurture *bonsai* and he would admonish his kids not to splash water on them, but rather to pour water on them gently because the plants had feelings and were sensitive to harshness and responsive to tenderness.

Cyrus Belt – a twenty-three month old toddler who was murdered in Honolulu by being thrown off an overpass and into traffic on the H-1 Freeway.

Francis Funai – a famous baseball coach in Hawai`i. Uncle Francis was husband to Auntie Madeline Hino Funai, my grandfather's elder sister.

heiau – a religious site. Some refer to *heiau* as Hawaiian temples.

kolea – the golden plover. The *kolea* is a migratory bird and South Pacific Islanders noted that it flew in from the north, but never alighted on the sea; only on land. They deduced, therefore, that there must be land to the north and they set out in double-hulled canoes to find it.

kupuna – an honored elder who is a community or family leader, the authority given to do so by others who respect their knowledge, wisdom, and life experiences.

lehua – a red blossom that grows on the `ohi`a tree. *Lehua* in the island flower of Hawai`i, the Big Island. As a kid I was warned not to pick *lehua* or else it would rain. In high school I climbed an `ohi`a tree, picked a *lehua* blossom, and right away it began to pour!

mana`o – Hawaiian word for knowledge and life experience.

mauka – a Hawaiian term meaning, “toward the mountain.” In Hawai`i we use the ocean and the mountains as reference points. When I went to seminary it was disconcerting to me to live in the Midwest where there were no mountains and directions were given by saying, “east, west, north, or south.” I came up out of the subway in downtown Chicago one day and got lost, because I had no reference point. Someone later told me, “Just remember that the lake (Lake Michigan) is always east. I replied tersely, “Well, I’ve got to find the lake first!”

`ohi`a – a native Hawaiian tree on which the *lehua* blossom grows.

olonā – a native Hawaiian plant whose bark was stripped, soaked, and then woven into fishing nets.

shi kata ga nai – a Japanese phrase meaning, “It can’t be helped,” often used by my grandmother and her sisters in exasperated resignation when they didn’t know what to do or what to say. I was often the recipient of the phrase!

ti – a Hawaiian plant that thrives in wet climates, but grows in other areas as well. Some believe that *ti* wards off evil spirits. My grandmother likes to have a supply of *ti* leaves handy. She twists them into beautiful lei to give to friends and family.

vesper – vesper refers to the evening and Vespers in the sixth canonical hour, usually at 6:00 PM when Evening Prayer is said or Evensong is sung. I liked the alliterate ring that “Venus Vesper” had a so I entitled my Kaho`olowe sermon, “The Venus Vesper Light.”

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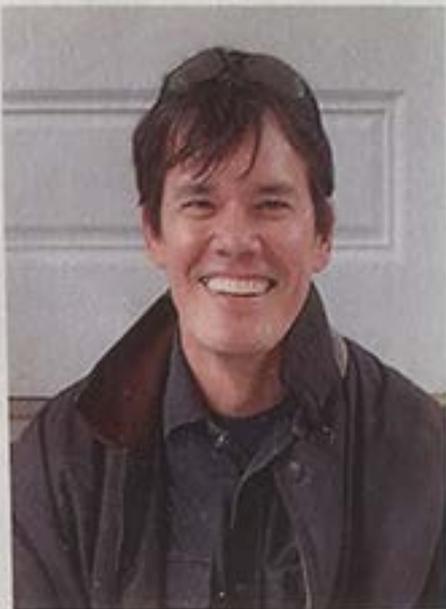
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Moki Hino is a priest in the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i. He served as Chaplain at Seabury Hall in Makawao, Maui and as Canon pastor at the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Honolulu, Hawai'i. Father Hino, whose family has been in the Hawai'ian Islands since 1890, was born and raised on the island of Guam in Micronesia. He received a Bachelor of Education from the University of Hawai'i in 1988 and taught elementary school and preschool in Hawai'i, Guam, Hiroshima, and Osaka. He received a Masters of Divinity from Seabury Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois in 2006 and was ordained to the priesthood in the Diocese of Hawai'i in February 2006.

How fortunate we are to be worshipping at St. Andrew's Cathedral when Father Moki speaks to us in his sermons. He entwines his stories -- our stories -- with those of our Lord and Christ Jesus lives for us. Moki shares a genuine and loving Hawaiian sense of place which seems to transport us to the same fields and waters that Jesus traversed. It is a remarkable experience for us.

Aunty Victoria Hollinger
Hawaiian entertainer and cathedral member

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