



Our Lady of Kea'au

September 2008

September Retreat. The September Retreat will continue the film, "Journey to Assisi." Narrated by Father Bodo, this video follows several groups of pilgrims visiting Assisi and other places associated with Saint Francis. Father Bodo reviews the Saint's life and teachings and Sister Beatrice and Sister Patricia amplified Father's remarks with discussions of their own visits and their own applications of the teachings. The August Retreat, held on the actual Feast of the Portciuncula, was particularly timely. It's safe to say that most everyone attending gained a richer understanding of why the OLK Portciuncula is so named. And it is equally safe to say that everyone enjoyed watching the film on the new giant-screen television.

Activities. After a busy summer, things become a little quieter in September. Father John and the Westside Hawaiian Waters Sports group will be visiting one weekend. Once again, Ho'omau will hold its graduation ceremony at the OLK Longhouse. The faltering economy has led to some cancellations of earlier reservations.

Visitors. In Honolulu to attend the St. Francis System Annual Board Meeting, Sister Grace Anne Dillenschneider, Sister Medatrice and Sister Elizabeth John spent an afternoon at Our Lady of Kea'au. "What a change there's been here," remarked Sister Grace Anne, who has followed the center's progress since its inception.

Projects. Despite the summer heat, there has been much construction at Our Lady. Wide concrete stairs, complete with hand railings, now provide another safe path from the Longhouse to the Kramer Conference Center and the main lawn. The stairway is beautifully landscaped with a rock garden and beauganvilla hedges. Norman, Eddie and Wilfred literally did the heavy lifting on this project. Near the swimming pool, a shady coolaroo now provides some respite from the sun; an outdoor kitchen will complete the area one of these days. New ceiling fans are whirling away cooling the dining lanai. The nearby men's restroom has undergone extensive renovation. The sprinkler system has been upgraded; ironically, just as Eddie began testing it after completing the bulk of the project, it began to rain heavily. Water coming down from the sky met water coming up from the ground, guaranteeing sufficient irrigation!

Foodbank Walk for Hunger. Sister Patricia led an enthusiastic delegation on an arduous, mile-long trek around the Civic Center as part of the Honolulu FoodBank's third annual fund-raising event. OLK was represented by about a dozen volunteers and residents. Various agencies raised \$80,000 for the Foodbank. We don't know yet the total for Our Lady, but that amount will be augmented by matching funds contributed by the Harry C. & Nee Chang C. Wong Foundation. We sincerely thank all who participated physically or fiscally.

God's Blessings. The Lord was certainly working in strange ways when He prompted some of the homeless who live across from the OLK front gate to give us a thousand-pound pig. Although it had been a pet, fate is cruel and 'ere long, the porker will end up in an imu. The Saint Francis Healthcare System employees visited over a weekend, and when the festivities were over, they left us a variety of games. Once again, the generous support by our friends for the Hunger Walk insures that there will be ample ingredients for our Wednesday meals. And thanks, once more, to Richard and Dorothy Yamaguchi for providing fresh starfruit for the homeless in August and September.

We Get “Feedback” on Wednesdays. As the City & County closes more parks and beaches to the homeless, and as more and more people become homeless because of the weakening economy, we are finding it necessary to prepare more meals. A few months back, we were comfortable distributing a total of 110 meals; now some weeks we prepare 160 meals or more and still do not have enough.

Even so, we are able to continue building personal relationships. As much as possible, volunteers greet individuals by name and give them a jolly, encouraging word as well as the prepared meal. And the homeless reciprocate! Recently we received a wonderful thank-you note addressed to “Dear Chef and the Rest of You;” after thanking us, the writer requested a repeat of her favorite menu, shepherd’s pie. Another week when we encountered unexpected difficulties packaging the meals, one of our regulars telephoned to make sure everything was all right at Our Lady. The two-way interaction fulfills the Franciscan charism of joy.

Artwork. One of the defining characteristics of truly fine art is that it lends itself to various equally appropriate interpretations. For instance, consider the wooden sculpture in the Longhouse. The inscription reads, “The Joy Is Within Me. This koa, stone and concrete sculpture was created by Jerry Vasconcellos. It represents his interpretation of St. Francis of Assisi.” Sister Beatrice calls the piece, “Dancing Francis.” Volunteer Al Shaver looked at the work and suggested it reminded him of canoe paddles and imagined that Saint Francis was enjoying a beloved local activity. Spend a moment with this unusual statue and let it speak to you; what voice do *you* hear?

Meet Wilfred Jr. Maintaining a sanitary, properly balanced swimming pool is not easy. Among his many tasks, Wilfred Morales has cleaned and checked the water chemistry. Now he has a faithful helper, someone almost as dedicated as he is. Or, more precisely, something—a robot, affectionately known as Wilfred, Jr. Like any adoption, much thought and planning was required. First, Sister Beatrice and Wilfred had to determine which robotic cleaner best matched our needs. Then, they had to locate one at a good price and get it to Hawaii. Thanks to the cooperation of Wilfred’s brother on the Mainland, this last step was comparatively easy. By the way, when Wilfred travels to the Mainland or elsewhere, Teri is the aunty for Wilfred Jr.

Website. Be sure to check our website www.ourladyofkeauau.org frequently for up-to-date news and announcements of activities. You’ll find many resources on the website that will give additional insight into our mission and how we try to achieve it. In addition to back issues of the newsletter, pictures of the artwork at OLK, scenes of our volunteers in action and the like, there’s also a page for prayer requests and links to a variety of interesting, relevant websites. Check it often as it’s very much a work in progress.

Volunteer Service Sheets. Be sure to fill out and return your volunteer-service sheets. Good works are not enough these days; accountability is also required.

Name the Newsletter. Our newsletter deserves its own identity. Please help us create a catchy, appropriate name. All suggestions will be considered, and we have a nifty prize for the person whose suggestion is selected. By the way, if you suggest a Hawaiian name, please provide a translation and explanation.

Volunteer Opportunities. There’s always something interesting to do at Our Lady of Kea’au. Are you interested in designing a solar-power system that would both defray the Center’s operating expenses and help the environment? If so, think of the Longhouse as your laboratory. Are you a certified lifeguard? If so, please consider helping out when we host outside groups. Building skills of all sorts are needed—carpenters, stone masons, electricians and plumbers are invited for a busman’s holiday. Are you a shade-tree (or professional) mechanic? The electric vehicles (golf carts) require a lot of maintenance. If you like watching birds or gazing at stars, if you like typing, if you enjoy organizing things—whatever it is, it can probably benefit Our Lady!

Our Lady of Kea’au is a subsidiary of St. Francis Healthcare System.
Sister Beatrice Tom, OSF, Chief Administrator
Sister Patricia Rapozo, OSF, Assistant Administrator