



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

November 20, 2023

"We who have the blessing of believing in God and in the power of the Lord Jesus also have a responsibility to stand in the midst of winds and fires of grief and frustration and to amplify the whispering voice of God's constant presence of loving care so it will be our guide and our hope." (Bishop Larry Silva, homily at Sacred Heart Mission Church of Maria Lanakila Parish, Maui, August 13, 2023)

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we approach the season of gratitude, our hearts swell with thanks for the blessings of faith, family, and friendships. Yet, amidst our celebration, we're mindful of the profound needs among our sisters and brothers in Maui. The wildfire that swept through Lahaina claimed more than a hundred lives, leaving devastation in its wake. Miraculously, Lahaina's Maria Lanakila Church was spared, but most of the school was destroyed. The wildfire left 84 Sacred Hearts students and 12 staff members without homes. However, these setbacks did not stop the school from functioning. Maria Lanakila Parish's Sacred Hearts Mission Church in Kapalua immediately offered its parish space for classrooms and a safe space for keiki.

On All Souls Day, I stood amidst the Sacred Hearts School community, witnessing resilience in laughter and dedication to relief, response and recovery efforts. Blessing newly constructed tent classrooms, I saw a community rising from the ashes, embodying hope and determination. In gratitude, I share a heartfelt video capturing this journey: <https://hicathcomfdn.org/SHSTuition>. It begins with a song, a beautiful prayer saying "Thanks be to God" in multiple languages. The story illustrates a profound faith, resilience, and aloha as Sacred Hearts School emerges as a beacon of hope. While temporarily located at the mission church, Sacred Hearts School is working diligently to find a "temporary-permanent" home for students with more space for classrooms and a playground until the school can rebuild in Lahaina in 3-5 years. Funds have already been raised for these efforts but impacted students need tuition assistance so they can keep coming to Sacred Hearts School. This is not just a story of survival; it's one of thriving and rebuilding Lahaina's future. So, we have established the Sacred Hearts School Tuition Assistance Fund with the Hawaii Catholic Community Foundation with a goal of \$4 million (we have already raised \$1 million) so each child who is in need of tuition assistance can be assured of a Catholic education while their families rebuild their lives. I appeal to your grateful and generous hearts to support the tuition assistance fund, ensuring that education's light continues to shine for those in need. To contribute, visit <https://tinyurl.com/MauiSHSFund> or scan the QR code on the back of this letter.

As we enter the season of giving, may the inspiring story of Sacred Hearts School move your grateful hearts. Supporting the Sacred Hearts School Tuition Assistance Fund makes you a beacon of hope and a partner in rebuilding lives and futures.

In closing, I echo sentiments shared during the Maui Eucharist: *"In our collective prayers, we ask for strength, resilience, and healing for the fire victims. May our faith guide us as we navigate challenges, knowing with God's grace, all is possible."* Mahalo to all who have been so generous with time, talent,

and treasure in helping this community recover. It's inspiring to see the work and hope so many not only talk about, but live.

May your generosity and faith in action amplify the whispering voice of Christ's constant presence of loving care and may God's abundant blessings be upon you and your loved ones. With a grateful heart and a prayer for continued witness to Jesus. Mahalo.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Larry Silva*

Most Reverend Larry Silva
Bishop of Honolulu

