

BILAC Brightens Oahu

From November 5th to the 7th **BILAC** (Big Island Liturgy and Arts Conference) once again impressed its participants as it held forth for a second year in its new home on the Marianists' Kalaepohaku Campus of Saint Louis School and Chaminade University. Through the theme of *Malama Pono* (*nurture righteousness*), keynote speakers and artists from the mainland and Hawaii gathered to renew understandings of liturgy and our life as Church. Local composer, Joe Camacho, wrote the theme song entitled *Malama Pono*, a song that truly captured the spirit of the weekend renewal.

BILAC is a spiritually renewing weekend that includes keynotes speakers and workshops along with an experiential approach to deepening the prayer of the community. Bishop Remi DeRoo, retired Bishop of Victoria in British Columbia was the youngest bishop at the Second Vatican Council. His keynote address stressed that the style of the Council marked a significant change for the Church in that it stressed dialogue and cooperation rather than dogmatic statements. He emphasized the importance of the faithful in the continuing renewal of the Church. Msgr. Ray East from Washington D.C. brought an African-American exuberance to his preaching as he emphasized our call to promote the justice and peace of the Reign of God.

A veritable "Who's Who" of famous composers of liturgical music such as David Haas, Marty Haugen, Donna Pena, Bob Hurd, Kate Cuddy, Tony Alonso, Bobby Fisher as well as several more enlivened the weekend with two concerts. These concerts featured some of the composers' more famous pieces along with their more recent compositions. The concerts brought together new and old music in a way that was simultaneously engaging, entertaining and deeply prayerful.

These same composers along with the keynoters and other guest presenters offered a wide variety of workshops. Some workshops were very technically oriented and showed participants experientially how to be cantors. Others demonstrated helpful techniques in guitar playing and the use of the piano. Additional workshops included themes such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, storytelling, Scripture studies, acupressure, justice for Hawaiians and numerous other topics.

The messages were reinforced by the beautiful liturgies and prayer services prepared by noted liturgical composer, Lori True. Word and song were integrated into a liturgy that was enhanced by the sacred gestures led by Carla DeSola, a true pioneer in liturgical movement. Bishop Remi DeRoo presided at the closing liturgy while local Hawaiian priest, Fr. Alapaki Kim, preached a homily that brought together the meaning of the Sunday Scripture readings and the meaning of St. Damien's life.

The Marianist Brothers and Priests opened up their communities to the guest artists by providing most of the housing. The guests joined the Brothers in prayer, meals and companionship. At the same time, the Marianist Lay Communities worked hand in hand with volunteers from the Lokahi Community from Volcano on the Big Island to provide support services for the book store, registration table, meal service and for countless other needs. Saint Louis students from Marianist L.I.F.E. (Living in Faith Experience) served as campus guides by ushering attendees to the appropriate rooms for their workshops. Chaminade University's College L.I.F.E. (university level Marianist Lay Communities) provided refreshments at the concerts and helped with golf cart shuttling for physically challenged participants.

The weekend officially ended with a luau after the closing Eucharist, but continued hospitality was extended to the guest artists for two more days. It is only after the conclusion of the conference itself that the guest presenters focus on renewing their spirits by having relaxing times with one another and the Marianists, religious and lay. After a Sunday morning potluck brunch at the Brothers' House, the artists had a day at the beach where Bro. Jerry Bommer, rector of Chaminade University, hosted a barbecue. Another relaxing day was held at the Franciscan Sisters' Our Lady of Kea'au Center.

Although it was sad to say, "good-bye," everyone is looking forward to next year's BILAC from November 4 to 6, 2010. (*Information will be available at www.marianisthawaii.org and from Bro. Dennis Schmitz, S.M. at 735-4801.*)