



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

August 31, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Diocese of Honolulu,

Peace be with you!

“...*The whole world should be enrolled.*” These were the words of the evangelist Luke, relaying the decree of Caesar Augustus calling for a census. We know from this familiar story that Joseph dutifully and responsibly went from Galilee to Bethlehem to be enrolled with Mary, who was with child. Joseph and Mary understood the importance of being counted among the population.

The Census remains just as important today. Much more than merely counting people in our country, the collected data is used to determine “the distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funding each year; local government planning; business decisions, and more.” Federal programs that benefit from the Census data include efforts that address poverty, hunger, homelessness, childcare, emergency services, and public safety. Much of this is beneficial to our diocese and to all of Hawaii’s Catholics whose mission includes serving the common good and tending to the needs of the marginalized.

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau strives to reach the country’s entire population, including the U.S. territories. But each year the greatest challenge for the Bureau has been reaching “hard-to-count” populations - including members of “racial and ethnic minority groups, people who rent their home, rural residents, non-English speakers, households with children under age 5, and people living in complex households.”

As a Church, we serve many different communities, including those listed above. **I ask that all our faithful prayerfully consider being counted in the census -- regardless of citizenship.** The Bureau assures us that your information is protected and confidential. Federal law protects your responses, which cannot be shared with law enforcement, immigration agencies, or housing authorities.

Just as Joseph and Mary, we too ought to understand the importance of being counted. In every face of our community is the face of Jesus. So you count. Our kupuna count. Our children count.

Information on how to respond to the census can be found at the US Census Bureau website:

www.2020Census.gov

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Larry Silva
Bishop of Honolulu