Dear SS.CC. Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings from Fairhaven, Massachusetts! I begin this newsletter to you on this Solemnity of the Sacred Heart assuring you of prayers for good health and length of days for all.

I arrived here on the 29th of May and was greeted by Martin Gomes at the Boston airport. The brothers have been very welcoming and kind. As you know we have ten men in "retirement", two who serve as nursing homes chaplains and three who administer the three SSCC parishes of St. Joseph, St. Mary and Our Lady of the Assumption.

The men at Damien Residence are actively engaged in ministry and are animated with a wonderful sense of mission. Their individual schedules may vary, but the SSCC men are on the go. The five brothers who are in the parishes and do not reside at Damien come to have meals regularly. I know they come to see the guys who live here; the fact that this residence has an excellent cook may also be part of the reason for the frequent visits!

During my time here, I had the chance to meet Bishop Edgar da Cunha, Bishop of the Fall River Diocese – a very gracious man who let me know how delighted he is with our SSCC presence in his Diocese. He quickly pointed out that in the almost four years that he has been Bishop in the Diocese, he has never received a complaint! Two things are evident: our men are working hard and they are genuinely happy with their ministry and life here on the East Coast.

We also held a meeting of the Provincial Government soon after my arrival, on June 5. All Brothers have received the first quarter 2018 budget to actual Finance report that was presented to us at that meeting by our Province Accountant, Cindy Epperson. We thank Cindy for her continued efforts on behalf of the Province. Clearly, the future life of the United States Province will not depend upon money alone, but on the very Unity that defines us as members of the Sacred Hearts.

At a meeting of the Province Corporation, held on Wednesday, June 6, we were given an review of the sale of our Retreat House property by the real estate agents handling that for us. They explained there has been no significant movement on the sale of our Wareham property and, following their recommendation, the council made the decision to reduce the price for what the agents feel is the most active part of the selling season. We remain hopeful.
As you know, additionally we are looking at the lease/rent of our Bethany property in Kaneohe. There are currently two viable proposals which will be communicated to the Province as more information is received and we move forward. This may mean a five to ten-year lease. There is a lot of work involved to make sure that we are doing this properly.

A bit of good news! We have successfully completed the sale of the house on Palapalae Street on the Island of Molokai. You may recall that we recently had a community of three men there. Kris Kaitapu is now the only brother on top-side with Pat Killilea still residing in Kalaupapa. Kris lives in a comfortable rectory about ten miles from St. Damien Church and still ministers to three churches on the Island on Sundays.

On the Development front, we are grateful to the Lord for the recovery of Soane Uiagalelei. After what was supposed to be a minor procedure, he spent many days under heavy sedation. Currently, his health seems to be heading in a good direction. Your prayers have been so appreciated!

As avenue to our Praesidium requirement for on-going education, this year, we are asking every member of the Province to read and study the document on the “Protection of Children”. This policy manual is familiar to all the brothers, but with our re-accreditation last year, it has been updated with some new standards and now includes the respectful treatment of vulnerable adults. As of this writing, all members of the Province have received the document and have signed off in compliance with this policy.

As was previously announced, Fr. Brian Guerrini has been assigned to Queen of Peace Parish in Harlingen, Texas. He starts on August 1, 2018. We thank this good priest for his willingness to serve in Tonga and wish him well.

Fr. Paul Zaccone has asked for a three month leave of absence from the community. He will be undergoing a procedure on his knee and also helping with the care of his mother in Nebraska who is very ill. We wish him a productive time in the months ahead.

I had the opportunity to offer Mass at our three parishes in the Northeast. While Fr. Stephen presided at Mass and did a Mission Appeal at a parish in a neighboring Diocese, I was also able to offer a Mission appeal to the parishioners at St. Joseph, who were very attentive and appreciative. All three parish communities are alive and well. The good Catholics of the area love and respect their priests and brothers.
On Saturday, June 9, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, SSCC sisters and brothers, along with friends of the community, gathered at St. Patrick’s Church, Kaimuki, to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Profession of Marie Christine Plateros, and the Golden Jubilee of Richard McNally. Rich was the main celebrant and homilist of the Mass during which he and Marie Christine renewed their vows.

After the Mass there was lunch at the Pagoda Restaurant in downtown Honolulu. Providing entertainment during the meal was Richard Kupo and He’eia. All the brothers and sisters present serenaded Marie Christine and Rich with a song especially composed for the occasion and Pat Killilea crooned “The Whistling Gypsy Rover” to round out the entertainment!

On June 16th I leave for India to attend the Regional Assembly of our Brothers there. I applied for a Visa three months ago, but as of this writing, have not received it. As in all things, it is in the hands of the Good God!

United with you in the Sacred Hearts,

Very Rev. Herman Gomes, ss.cc.