

SS.CC Jubilarians - 2022



**Fr. Santhosh Thottankara, ss.cc.
Silver 25th Jubilee of Profession**

“My vocation was a divine intervention in a very mysterious way to save me”

I was born to a simple Thottankara family. My parents Ouseph and Clara were simple people with strong Catholic faith and a strong devotion to Mary which was nurtured by daily family rosary at home before dinner and regular Sunday mass at our local Parish church. I am the 5th among six children: 5 boys and 1 girl. My father was a businessman and a farmer.

My vocation is a calling from God with a miracle of a second chance to life. I wanted to be a Lawyer since I was good at arguing and very naughty more time to play and less to do family chores but my mother used to always remind me that I should be a good boy since I was born on December 3 on the feast day of St. Francis Xavier.

One afternoon after playing cricket with my local friends I got into a bus to pay the gathered neighbors' electricity bills to the electricity office in the town. While traveling in the bus which stopped for me to get down but while I was getting off from it they took off without making a full stop. So I fell from the bus onto the pile of rocks for road repair. I became unconscious, hitting my head onto the rocks. I don't remember anything after. Later I heard that People gathered from the streets and rushed me to the nearby hospital and from there transferred to a specialty hospital for head injuries. All thought I was declared dead on arrival and the doctors said they will operate on the blood clots in the brain but they can't assure that I will make it. The church bell rang in my home parish announcing my death but after 5 days of coma I came out unconscious. I could remember the words of my mother echoing in my ears that I should be a good boy like Francis Xavier. I felt God's call in me as his plan to save me. I followed the call to become a priest.

I finished high school and I joined the Sacred Hearts formation. It was a divine intervention to lead me to the sacred hearts though I never knew or heard about them. I decided to enter the La Salette congregation. Circumstances led me to sacred hearts. The La Salette vocation promoter came to my home and selected

me to join them and I was all set to join them. When I passed my high school, I wrote letters to the vocation promoter but they had moved out of their previous seminary to a new place and I didn't get that information in time. I went to the seminary and entered there and the rector of the minor seminary introduced me to the Sacred Hearts and I stayed there and started my formation journey.

I have been involved in formation since I finished my theological studies. I was a pre-novice master and vocation promoter and assistant to the theology formation in the Philippines from 2005-2010. I worked as hospital chaplain in the Philippines before returning to India. I became a formator for candidates and pre-novices and rector for philosophy formation in India (2010-2017). I was in charge of the initial formation for India and then became the coordinator for initial formation CAP and Tahiti. I served as a regional counselor for two terms in India. After many years of my formation ministries and leadership, I came to Hawaii in 2017 and worked as parochial vicar at St. Patrick Church. Then I became a pastor at Our Lady of Good Counsel Church in Pearl City in 2019 and continue now as the pastor here. I am serving the people with full spirit and joy.

25 years of religious life lived with its joys and struggles has made me a better religious of the Sacred Hearts. Being in formation ministry is totally different from being in parochial ministry. Parochial ministry will really test you to the core and bring the best out of you when you are rooted in Jesus with prayer and faith. Parishioners will love you and also criticize and challenge you. Parochial ministry will mold you to his will and mission.

Being a Sacred Hearts religious is a unique calling and a blessing. The Eucharist, reparative adoration and family spirit have a great impact in my life as a religious. The congregation's spirit of brotherly love and compassion is remarkable. We live simple lives with mutual respect and appreciation for one another. It's a privilege to belong to a global family with brothers and sisters beyond borders. I can go anywhere in the world where our brothers are present and be accepted as one of them. I can relate to them as one among them regardless of my ethnicity or nationality.