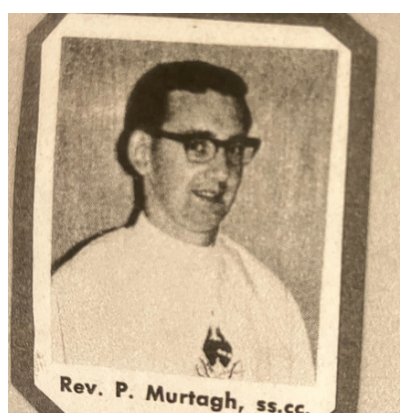


HEARTS ON FIRE

VOCATION

OCTOBER 2025
ISSUE 3



ARTICLES IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- **Our Common Vocation by Fr. Lane Akiona, SS.CC., Provincial**
- **Journeying with the Novice Master**
- **An Instrument of God's Love ; Novice Iowane**
- **Profound Gratitude; Novice Mark Makasini**
- **A Deeper Spiritual Life; Novice Atonio Masilekaleka**
- **Seeking my Vocation; Novice Paletesio**
- **My Privileged Time of Discernment; Novice Mathieu Vaitulukina**
- **Brother Jeremiah Nestor "Nez" Marcello Post Novitiate**
- **Br. Apisalome "Pisa" Veitoyaki, ss.cc. Post Novitiate**
- **New Brothers at Saint Patrick's**
- **Fiji Mission Project**
- **Revealing the Hearts**
- **Which Way Religious Life? An interview with Fr. Eric Cruz, ss.cc.**
- **Missionaries of Hope Among all Peoples**
- **Prayerful Quotes**



OUR COMMON VOCATION BY FR. LANE AKIONA, SS.CC., PROVINCIAL

"To make the Kingdom of God present, we seek the transformation of the human heart and we endeavor to be agents of communion in the world. We work for a just and reconciled society. We are available to the needs and demands of the Church wherever we are sent."
Constitutions, Art. 2.

The essence of our Sacred Hearts vocation is to contemplate, live, and announce the love of God made flesh in the hearts of Jesus and Mary. It entails an opportunity of self-surrendering on our part to live what we profess and put into action what the dual hearts of love truly mean for this 21st century. The challenge of living out our SSCC vocation requires that we are attuned to the changing tide of the world and society values. These values usually are in conflict with the precepts and morals in which we are formed. None the less, we as a Congregation have many models to help align ourselves with those who have gone before us, like Damien, the martyrs of Spain, of France and numerous other brothers, who are our examples. As they lived and responded to the challenges of their times, we are called to do the same in our times. We each must discern how to become agents of this love through our witness in action and deed. Damien's words help us focus on our common vocation "we imitate Jesus Christ in his interior and exterior life, in his spirit and in his body, from conception to sepulchre, and so we can have the confidence that we will be like him in his resurrection and glory." (personal diary)

JOURNEYING WITH THE NOVICE MASTER



As I began the new year with this new responsibility, I was left with one concern: "How can I not be an obstacle to the work of the Holy Spirit in my ministry to journey with the novices as a Novice Master?" Fr. Rich Danyluk, SS.CC. whom I shadowed last year continues to check on me and avail himself when I am in need of help. Pat Crowley constantly stands as a reminder to trust in the Holy Spirit. Jeremiah Holland did not let his eyesight stand as an obstacle to his willingness to help the novices feel loved. Moreover, Fr. Juan Carlos Martinez, SS.CC. who started this year as a huge help in setting up and preparing the novitiate to be a home for the novices. The mission was made easier with the people I just mentioned, to name a few. As a rookie to this ministry, I needed all the help I could get, and the community did not hesitate when I sought their help. That was the best witness I could offer the novices to learn from as a foundation of their vocation and their journey with us as SS.CC. to know that they have brothers to lean on.

Like in every ministry, challenges were not exempt. One of the main challenges I faced was my constant fear that I was not fulfilling or I might be lacking in some area in what I am supposed to do. While it was a cross, I would gladly say that it was a blessing in disguise for it showed me my limitation and taught me to be humble enough to not only seek help but to acknowledge my limitation and to reach out for help.

I hope that these young men (novices) who have answered God's call and chose to come and see how we SS.CC live our life is a means to love and express their faith. I pray that they not only come closer to God but with each other.

In the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary,
Fr. Semisi Pulotu, SS.CC.

AN INSTRUMENT OF GOD'S LOVE : NOVICE IOWANE



Leaving the shores of my beloved paradise the island of Fiji which once described by St. Pope John Paul II "the way the world should be" in my voyage of discovering and listening deeper into this soft voice that often echoes through the silence of my heart from my childhood and is still echoing through the silence of the Hemet Desert. As I began my journey last year back in Tonga as a pre-novice, we had a brief introduction on what Novitiate life was going to be like. With anticipation of taking the next phase of my discernment journey and using my 2 years as a diocesan seminarian at the Pacific Regional Seminary to my advantage, I was still struck that this was a lot of self-reflection. Coming from an islander background, being used to more of communal way of living and being an extrovert, I had been overwhelmed by my own fear on how I was going to cope in isolating myself from the world and being away from home and most importantly because novitiate life was totally a new thing for me.

I can describe my time here in the Hemet, California for this novitiate year as a time of solitude. It was quite unsettling at first because I had to silence myself from the outside world and everything that I am accustomed to and to journey within myself, and it was through this silence that I found clarity, answers, and presences. It was more of a time of self-discovery, and I must admit that I have learnt and have known more of myself now than ever before, which enables me to bring the best out of myself and fully offer that to the community and to fully Contemplate, Live and Proclaim the Love of God in my day to day life. I am profoundly grateful to all the team that is looking after us here in Hemet. Our Novice Master Semisi Pulotu and his assistants Fr. Patrick Crowley and Fr Jeremiah Holland and all our brothers that have spared their time to visit us and have shared their own inspiring experiences and knowledge and how

beautiful and unique this life can be if we open ourselves and let the Spirit lead us. As I continue my novitiate journey, I am excited of what is yet to come, embracing it with openness, that I may continue to be transformed into the better version of myself and continue to thrive and persevere through challenges and, God willing, fulfill my purpose or my call to be an instrument of God's Love to our broken world.

Iowane Tuiviani

PROFOUND GRATITUDE: NOVICE MARK MAKASINI



As I continue my novitiate journey within the congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I wish to express my profound gratitude for this formative experience. The novitiate has truly been a time of grace for me one marked by deeper prayer, personal reflection, and immersion in the charism and spiritual life of our Congregation. Through guided discernment, spiritual direction, and communal living, I have gained greater clarity about my vocation and the motives guiding my response to Christ's call.

This year has allowed me to grow in self understanding, strengthen my relationship with God and more fully embrace the spirit of love and mission entrusted to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. I recognize that my readiness for priesthood is sharpened through each day of prayerful listening, learning, and serving in community. It is with renewed resolve and openness to the Holy Spirit that I seek to move forward in my journey to serve God's people and the Congregation.

With gratitude,
Mark Makasini

A DEEPER SPIRITUAL LIFE: NOVICE ATONIO MASILEKALEKA



Coming to the United States for the first time was both exciting and eye-opening for me. Setting foot in a country known as the "Land of the Free and the Brave" was an incredible experience, especially for someone who grew up on a small island nation like Fiji. The opportunity to be in the U.S. was amazing, but what made it even more meaningful was knowing I was here for a purpose—to spend my novitiate year. The anticipation and joy of that realization gave me one of the best feelings I have ever had.

When I first arrived in Hemet, I immediately felt a sense of peace. The quietness of the place, away from the hustle and noise of the city, made it the perfect environment for reflection and growth. This quietness allowed me to cultivate a deeper spiritual life and to focus on my calling. I was deeply grateful for the chance to spend my novitiate in such a beautiful and tranquil setting. After eight months of living as a novice, I encountered many experiences that deepened my discernment to join the Sacred Hearts. Community life—through shared prayers, Adorations, meals, work, and social activities—each played a significant role in helping me discover my true self. The support and guidance of the formators made it possible for me to dive deeper into this journey of self-discovery.

My pastoral work at Holy Name of Mary Parish gave me the chance to witness firsthand the impact the Sacred Hearts Fathers have on the lives of parishioners. Observing the dedication and faithfulness of the senior priests, despite the challenges and ups and downs they faced over the years, was particularly inspiring. Their unwavering commitment to serving with love left a lasting impression on me and inspired me to pursue my own vocation with the Sacred Hearts. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to spend my novice year in Hemet. The experiences I have shared, and the inspiration I have received, have confirmed in my heart that I am invited to join Sacred Hearts.

Thank you, Atonio Masilekaleka

SEEKING MY VOCATION: NOVICE PALETESIO



There is a tremendous sense of gratitude for myself for having this opportunity in our novitiate formation this year. It has been a year and a half since our recruiting to the Congregation to the Sacred Hearts. I have noticed a big change in my lifestyle together with a spiritual growth while seeking for my vocation in this religious order. Since the beginning of our novitiate program, I have gained a profound understanding of my own self, the essence of the gift of our unique charism, and the richness of spiritual life. With the guidance and the teachings of our Novice Master and his Assistants, I am able to acknowledge God's presence in every individual. In living together and spending time together in prayer, at conference, at meal, and in the performance of manual labor on the property, I have learned the value of common life and brotherhood.

A few weeks ago, I experienced a new way of deepening my relationship with God through our pastoral works. It has been a profound journey of sense discovery and growth. It has strengthened me with the skills and insights needed to continue my ministry as a follower of Christ with a deeper understanding of the human condition. I can carry with me the lessons of empathy, simplicity and perseverance. I will always carry my Religious Mission as it has been a part of my life for future ministries.

Our mission has its origin: to contemplate, to live and to announce the word of God's love, which was made flesh in Jesus. "Mary has been associated in a particular way with the mystery of God made man and with his saving working is; what is expressed in the union with the heart of Jesus and with the heart of Mary. Our consecration calls us to live the dynamism of saving love and fills us with the zeal for our mission." SS.CC. Constitution # 2

Paletesio Finau To'oa

MY PRIVILEGED TIME OF DISCERNMENT: NOVICE MATHIEU VAITULUKINA



My time of discernment here in the novitiate has been a great opportunity for me to reflect and learn more about myself and what I should learn from it. At the beginning of this year, I started to learn more about me because I did believe that coming out of the island of Futuna, I would have the opportunity to share my point of view or my perspective and mostly to grow. I grew step by step from my mistakes which helped me to build a strong and powerful foundation.

As I journeyed along with my brothers I grew a bond with each and every one of them. We have been through storms and lightning but coming at the end of the day, as brothers and family, the most joyous experience I've ever had is recognizing God's presence always remaining with us and His endless love. I am delighted in being part of this community which had taught me how to see the needs of others but first how to love others. It has a strong impact on my life and that would change my perspective. I am blessed being here to discover more about life itself and what it has taught me, exploring more about the world that God has created it. I have the privilege of meeting everyone whom I met this year, starting with Fr. Patrick Crowley and Fr. Jeremiah Holland, who taught me to be in comfort in my own skin, and everything is a learning process which helped during this year. I am thankful and grateful for having them in my life and journeying together with them. They are a symbol of simpleness and humbleness which taught me there is always a possibility to change and be a better version of oneself. I embrace this moment being here and the courage to move on with God's help I trust.

Mathieu Vaitulukina

BROTHER JEREMIAH NESTOR "NEZ" MARCELLO POST NOVITIATE



Brother "Nez" took his temporary vows to the Congregation in January of 2025 in Suva, Fiji. He is originally from the Philippines, from the Pangasinan province where he was raised. Vocation to the consecrated religious life has always been a calling in his heart, beginning in high school when he joined the Missionaries of the Divine Word (SVD) as he was recruited by a well-known priest in the Philippines named Father Jerry Orbis SVD. Before taking temporary vows with the SVD Brother Nez decided he didn't feel it was the right fit. He discerned with various orders, but none seemed right for him. So, he went on in life making a career out of his talent and love for music. After moving to the United States, he found himself working as a Choir director at Queen of Peace Church in Harlingen, Texas under Father Bill Penderghest, SSCC. Brother Nez built up the choir from that time to be a flourishing and full group of parishioners who passionately love their ministry to the Parish. Still, Brother Nez felt the call to a religious vocation never left him. He felt it all the while he was working as a choir director, but he tried to deny it, yet he sees now that the call was always there.

In 2023 Nez finally spoke to Father Bob Charlton about his desire to try religious life with the SSCC. He feels he has finally found his match in this Congregation, as our charism emphasizes the mercy and compassion of God, which is the essence of his own faith in the person of Jesus Christ. "When you come to know that He is compassionate and merciful, everything falls into its right place," Nez says, "rather than basing religion on a set of rules, the SSCC charism tends towards expressing the mercy of God." "Vocation is a gift," Brother Nez says, "each of us comes with different qualities to offer," and "the strength of my vocation is all found in the Eucharist...⁶ the Eucharist is enough for me."

Brother Nez discerned during the novitiate that he felt called to give his life to the Congregation, though not through the ordination to priesthood. He reflects, "I feel drawn the service of the community, though not to having a public persona...I'm more of a background person than a star of the show." Living with Nez is a blessing. He is always energized to contribute to our common life, whether it is through his fantastic cooking, his music, or his gardening. He is naturally inclined to serve with love, and I look forward to what he will accomplish in the future.

Written by Fr. John Sawchenko, SS.CC.

BR. APISALOME "PISA" VEITTOYAKI, SS.CC. POST NOVITIATE



Marc Roque (MR): What encourages you to join this vocation?

Apisalome "Pisa" Veitoyaki (AV): There are many reasons that encouraged me to join this vocation. First, I have been inspired through the life of Jesus - where he chose to sacrifice his life and say Yes to carry our crosses up to Mt. Calvary without any hesitation. I will never be perfect like Jesus, but I want to follow his footsteps on being a person who can be with the people of God. Secondly, living in this modern chaotic world - I have seen many of my friends being tempted and get trapped with what this world has to offer. I have been a witness to how my friends seek comfort in drugs, alcohol, and other substances. I want to be the person that God can use to help my vulnerable brothers and sisters get out of their addictions. These are just some of the many examples that encouraged me to join this vocation.

MR: How did you find the community?

AV: I get to know this community through Fr. Lui Frank SSCC when he came and visit me back in 2021 in our home island of Taveuni. However, during that time I was already looking into joining the Society of Mary (SM Fathers). But Fr Lui asked me to consider joining the Sacred Hearts Community.

I have to admit...I wasn't so sure whether to join or not. But after more than 2 years of discerning and praying – I decided to say Yes and I officially signed up with their Pre-Novitiate Program on 22nd March 2023. Ever since then, I have been living with the community.

MR: Can you tell me what you like most about being a Sacred Hearts Brother?

AV: The thing that I like the most about being Sacred Hearts Brother is that we are seen as a brother first – before our ministerial positions. This kind of mindset allows the brothers to correct each other, whenever any brother does something wrong within the community. Therefore, I never fear in correcting a SSCC Priest, Deacon, or Final Professed...because we are brothers first, our ministerial position does not make you better than any brother.

MR: Do you have any advice you would like to share to anyone wanting to join our community?

AV: That is an easy one...follow what your heart is telling you and allow yourself to be spiritually poor. That means being totally dependent on God and in his providence!

Interviewed and written by Br. Marc Roque, ss.cc.

NEW BROTHERS AT SAINT PATRICK'S



Interview with Brother Vishal Khute by
Bro. Emmanuelle del Castillo, SS.CC.

Brother Vishal Khute is from India. His journey began in 2013 with candidacy in Bengaluru which led to my first profession as a religious brother in 2018. After a year of pastoral ministry, he completed his theological studies in 2022.

Manny: How did you encounter the Congregation?

Vishal: As a child I wanted to join a religious congregation, and came to join the ss.cc through my

friends (no prior knowledge about the congregation). I contacted Fr. Stephen, despite my own parish priest trying to recruit me to the diocese.

Manny: Can you speak about your seminary experience?

Vishal: It was a different life, from living with his family to living in a structured life. It was also a mix of cultures and living in diversity. It wasn't easy, it was very tough.

Manny: What would be some favorite memories?

Vishal: Learning new skills, art, making flower arrangements, altar decorations and learning how to live in community, sharing my life with the brothers, coming to know their lives. It was good memories as we journeyed together.

Manny: What has helped you during initial formation?

Vishal: My own determination to be a religious and prayer life.

Manny: What was your reaction when you found out you are going to Hawai'i?

Vishal: Although it is my first time being outside of India, I was very excited and looking forward to this new stage and journey of my life.

Br. Manny is teaching at St. Patrick's School in Kaimuki, Honolulu, HI.



NEW BROTHERS AT SAINT PATRICK'S (CONTINUED)

Interview with Fr Andy Healey by
Bro. Emmanuelle del Castillo, SS.CC.

Father Andy is originally from Patterson, New Jersey. He entered minor seminary at age 17 and was ordained as priest in 1959. He was a missionary in Japan for 48 years, and was also sent to the Philippines for about 12-15 years. When Andy was being told that he would go to Japan, Philippines, and even Hawai'i, he reacted by being shocked, but accepted his assignments.

Emmanuelle: Who initiated your journey with the Congregation?

Andy: I speaking with my parish priest, who asked me if I wanted to join the diocese, and I said, "No, I want to join religious life". He introduced me to Fr. Cosmos, who was happening to be passing by, and next thing you know it, I was entering the congregation.

Manny: What do you remember from your seminary days?

Andy: For one, there were many of us. 100 of us.

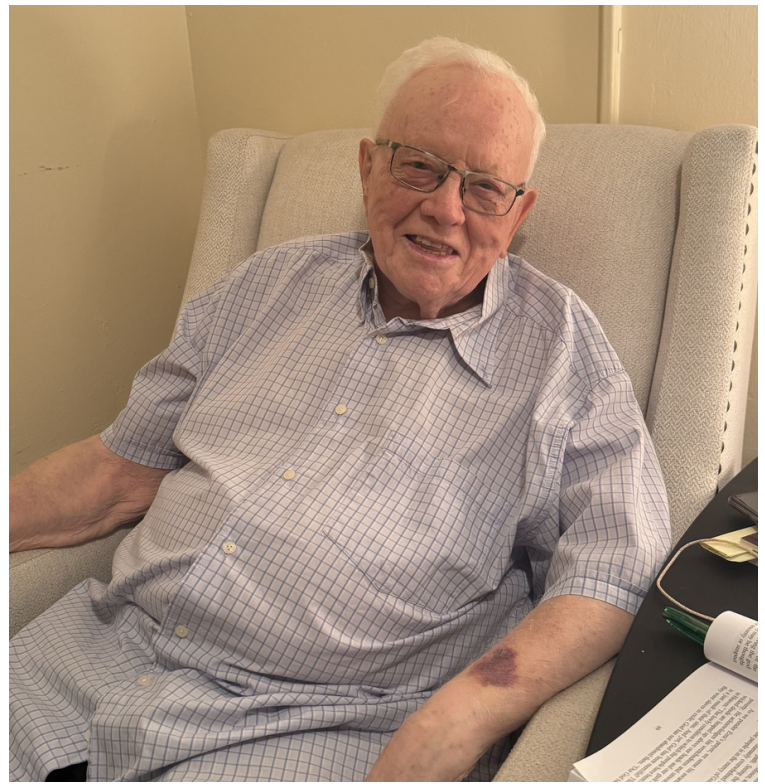
Manny: What is your best memory of ministry?

Andy: In Japan, there's a number of memories. Probably the best experience that I had (there were a number of them), in Japan, most of your apostolate, as a priest at the time, is that you taught the catechism. You are a teacher of the catechism. Some of the highlights of that is when the person comes and gets baptized. It is quite thrilling.

You are dealing with older people, a lot of times teenagers. You are going through the catechism, especially with younger people, they are going to ask a lot of questions.

Like I remember one lady, when it came to the resurrection and she's being honest and asked, "Do you really believe in that?" I almost wanted to cheer, "Yes, I do!"

Manny: Any other difficulties while in Japan?



Issue of abortion. Marriage, having one husband and one wife. One difficulty was learning the language and culture.

I have been happy with the places I've been sent to. Just like the Philippines, it is beautiful. It is not the country itself that makes it beautiful, but it's the people you love.

Emmanuelle: Any advice you want to give to the younger guys in the congregation?

"Coming into a new culture. You are going to have your good days and you are going to have your bad days, that's for sure."

You have to emphasize the importance of community; there's a temptation of doing of what you want to do. I enjoyed community. Most of the time I was a parish priest (except in Southern Japan). When it came to Sundays, guys will gather in Tomebe. We would have night prayer together; next day we would have meetings or we would be free. That helped me a lot. Have a spiritual director, even when you become a priest.

Manny: How do you enjoy Hawai'i so far?:

It's fun coming here; it's like living in a foreign country. Hawai'i is America, but it feels different. In a good sense that it is different.

FIJI MISSION PROJECT

Peace be to your minds and hearts.

I'm sure you don't need a two-year-old priest to tell you this, but you have made a difference in people's lives. In this case, you have made a huge difference in the lives of Litiana and her family.

What used to be a small house with a single bedroom is now a big house with five bedrooms, let alone a better kitchen and better bathrooms. Basically, the house is better now than it was before, and we could not have done it if not for your help. Most likely, the current project will be completed by next month, and I believe that Fr. Lane Akiona will bless the house upon its completion.

With your continued help, the brothers in Fiji will be able to continue assisting the poor in Fiji with their basic needs of shelter, food/drink, clothing, etc.

For the past few months, our parishes have collected \$40,000.00, which will cover Litiana's house and also start our Mission Budget. We will welcome any type of help that will come. Here in region of Los Angeles, California, one Fijian community and two Tongan communities have reached out and want to take part in the project. I invite and encourage all of us pray about assisting those that we know. People want to help, but they don't know how. We can help them help the poor.

May we, the hands of God in this world, continue to reach out to the farthest that we can go, so that God may touch His people through us, especially the poor and the needy.

Side note:

More pictures and details on the projects will be shared after the completion of Litiana's house.

Fr. Saia Fainga'a, SS.CC.



REVEALING THE HEARTS

This photo shows my mini project for our cook Liti's family. We Sacred Hearts sponsored the building project extending their house. Liti and Mao asked if I could do our Picpus logo and it will be a remembrance for them about our community especially the shelter we offered to them.

And the reflection beside the picture is something I found it meaningful especially answering this call (Vocation). Because I sometimes wondered if this is my real calling or not, but here is the story. For example, in the reflection it said **"In Eden, the command was clear: Be fruitful. Do multiply. Fill the earth and Subdue it"**. For my understanding is that this calling is not just become a priest and serve a parish. There is more when it comes to God. Being present and supporting one another is something a lot of people need today, even if we have nothing to give. Doing the work of God is to serve whom ever you come across in life. Be fruitful to them, Do multiply the gift of God to them, Fill the earth with Joy and subdue it under God's Love. Because they are not distraction, but as a helper. Not as an idol, but as a companion. And that is how I feel doing my pastoral work at the parish as well. And again, **"Adam was not incomplete because he lacked a woman. He was incomplete because his mission required a partner"**.

Br. John Vitilio, SS.CC.

1st year seminarian at Pacific Regional Seminary, Suva, Fiji



WHICH WAY RELIGIOUS LIFE? AN INTERVIEW WITH FR. ERIC CRUZ, SS.CC.

"Never before have there been so many Catholic boys and girls with the mental and physical qualifications for the priesthood or religious life. Never have so many youths been without canonical impediment and with every moral endowment for the life. So why are there so few accepting what they admit is 'the highest possible vocation'? It is simply that they lack the desire for such a life. They don't want it!"

Very Rev. Godfrey Poage, C.P. Religious Life in the Light of Vatican II, 1967

DL: Well, hello, Fr. Eric! How are you? Tell us a little bit about yourself, and what it is you are doing in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary?

EC: Thanks, Fr. David. It's really a joy to have this conversation with you. I'm originally from the Philippines, the third of five children of my parents, Severina and Virgilio. Ever since I was 15 years old, I've always felt that God was calling me to the priestly vocation. I even joined the diocese back home, but after four years I had to step away. At that time, I never imagined that 14 years later I would find myself in the seminary again; this time with the Sacred Hearts.

I first came to know the Congregation in 2014 through Fr. Marisi Palepale, when I volunteered at his parish in Metro Manila. Unexpectedly, after a few weeks of volunteering, he asked me if I would want to join their religious community. I said "Yes" and that was the beginning of my journey with the Sacred Hearts. I was sent to Fiji, along with the brothers in formation, and attended the Pacific Regional Seminary. I graduated in 2020. I was ordained in January 2023 at Holy Name of Mary in California. Soon after, I served as Chaplain at Damien High School in La Verne, while also taking on the role of vocation director. I just wrapped up my time at Damien, and now I'm focusing fully on vocation ministry.

DL: So, the personal touch has made a big difference to you.

EC: Yes, it truly made a big difference. What I heard and witnessed about the Sacred Hearts and their ministry deeply moved me.



They lived among the poor, serving them and creating opportunities to improve their lives. That experience impressed me and inspired my decision to become part of the community.

In our vocation efforts, we take part in gatherings of young people and religious, such as the LA Religious Education Congress and SEEK. These events allow us to meet young adults who are active in their faith, some of whom are discerning a vocation to priesthood or religious life. We also encounter others within our own parishes. In the South Pacific, our brothers even travel to villages and other islands to promote vocation. Whenever possible, we invite them into our communities to meet the brothers.

DL: Yes, Fr. Columban provided the personal touch for me, visiting my home twice. Hey, any luck with finding vocations from men leaving the military life?

EC: Currently, we don't have established ways to reach out to former military personnel, but I'm hopeful that in the near future we can develop dedicated programs or initiatives to connect with them.

DL: That quote above is one I found interesting. 1. It's not totally true. 2. It's interesting that young people in the 60s thought Religious Life to be a high calling. 3. It's good to know your struggle has been around for over 60 years. Your thoughts?



**FR. ERIC IS BETWEEN FR. BALA SINGH,
INDIA REGIONAL SUPERIOR AND GENERAL
COUNCILLOR FR. ENRIQUE RAMIREZ**

EC: While many young Catholics are healthy, educated, and morally upright, only 2-3% consider religious life very seriously. In the 1960s, religious life was widely respected as noble and sacred, even by those who didn't pursue it. Today, fewer young people see it as a life worth imagining. When I speak with students at Damien High School, most feel priesthood isn't their calling.

DL: Yeah, seekers sometimes find their way. Also, presence. We SSCC are present in the world, but in parishes. And if parishes are a turn-off to youth, what will that do for us?

EC: If young people aren't drawn to our parishes, we must stretch ourselves to reach them. Our presence must go beyond church structures and walls – meeting them where they are, knowing who they truly are rather than how we perceive them, so that we can minister to them more effectively and, hopefully, invite them back to the Church.

DL: I know it is true about stretching ourselves. Have you ever heard of Theology on Tap? Does meeting young people in a bar setting, talking about God, bring about inquiring minds?

EC: Yes, I've heard a little bit about it and saw some videos. These familiar settings, like bars, cafes, and restaurants, help spark curiosity because young people feel more comfortable, conversations are tied to real-life issues, and there's room to ask questions, share doubts, and hear different perspectives. These social environments can make exploring faith feel natural and engaging, reaching people who might not attend a formal church event.

DL: Lastly, it just seems to me that our secular culture robs young people of the possibility of following Christ as religious men and women. There are too many distractions. How do we deal with this real beast?

EC: We remain hopeful that our faith, especially that of young people, will flourish even in an age marked by secularism, relativism, anxiety, and social media overload. While secular culture presents many distractions that can hinder young Catholics from hearing and responding to Christ's call, we still see signs of renewal. A number of young adults are rediscovering Eucharistic adoration, Marian devotions, pilgrimages, and other faith gatherings that offer them a sense of belonging and an encounter with Christ.

DL-Thanks, Fr. Eric

Written by Fr. David Lupo, SS.CC.

REGIONAL VOCATION RECRUITERS

California: Fr. Eric Cruz, ss.cc.
Email: freric@hnmparish.org

Fiji Island: Br. Marc Roque, ss.cc.
Email: marc.roque01@gmail.com

Hawaii: Fr. Maiki Kamauoha, ss.cc.
Email: maiki143@yahoo.com

Massachusetts: Fr. Patrick Tukidia, ss.cc.
Email: ptukidia@rcchawaii.org

Texas: Fr. Paulo Lui Voreqe, ss.cc.
Email: priv8docs@gmail.com

MISSIONARIES OF HOPE AMONG ALL PEOPLES

I would like to take a moment to share my thoughts and reflections on the profound message delivered by His Holiness Pope Francis for World Mission Day. His words resonate deeply, urging us to embrace our mission with compassion and dedication. In Matthew 28:18-20, we find a pivotal moment where Jesus passionately imparts the Great Commission to his disciples, urging them to "go and make disciples of all nations." This profound mandate echoes in Acts 1:8, where Jesus, with a deep sense of purpose, assures his followers that they shall be his "witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The mission of the church, therefore, is not merely an assignment; it is a divine calling, a vital expression of what it means to be an integral part of the body of Christ.

The concept of mission is intricately woven into the fabric of religious life, particularly within Christianity. At its heart, it encompasses the earnest endeavor to spread the gospel and the transformative teachings of Jesus Christ to all corners of the earth, ultimately fostering a profound relationship between individuals and God.

Pope Francis articulates a powerful vision, asserting that the call to mission is not confined to a select few but resonates with every Christian. He reminds us that we are a missionary people, tasked with embodying this mission in our daily interactions, even when faced with our own frailties, distractions, and hardships. This calling beckons a Church that is willing to step beyond its comfort zone, reaching out to those in need, and proclaiming the Gospel in ways that resonate meaningfully within their lives.

For the upcoming 2025 World Mission Day, set for October 19, 2025, Pope Francis emphasizes the theme "Missionaries of Hope Among All Peoples." This theme carries profound importance, especially as it aligns with the current Jubilee Year, where hope emerges as the cornerstone of the Christian mission.

In his message, the Pope passionately calls Christians to walk in the footsteps of Christ, becoming true messengers and architects of hope within the world. He beautifully conveys that Christ's ministry of hope continues through his disciples, who are entrusted with the mission of reaching out to all peoples. This journey involves bending down to lift up those who suffer from poverty, affliction, despair, and oppression, offering them "the balm of consolation and the wine of hope" to soothe their wounds.

Christians are invited to be both bearers and builders of hope, tasked with sharing the Good News while engaging with the real-life situations encountered by those around them. In a world often overshadowed by isolation and materialism, Pope Francis cautions against the pervasive dangers of self-centeredness and urges Christians to cultivate an atmosphere of closeness, compassion, and tenderness. He emphasizes that the profound experience of the Gospel, lived out within a vibrant and nurturing community, has the power to restore humanity to a state of wholeness, health, and redemption.

The Pope underscores that the true missionaries of hope are deeply rooted in prayer, for "the person who hopes is a person who prays." He views prayer as the essential missionary activity and the primary source of strength for those who carry the hope of Christ. Pope Francis urges a renaissance of the mission of hope, beginning from a foundation of prayer—especially prayer that draws from the sacred scriptures, with particular attention to the Psalms.

Pope Francis' message for the 2025 World Mission Day serves as a compelling invitation for the Church to reinvigorate its missionary vocation by becoming "missionaries of hope among the people." This profound calling entails emulating Christ's example, actively being bearers and builders of hope, and renewing the mission of hope through committed prayer and a spirit of community. Central to his message are the vital elements of hope as a fundamental Christian virtue, the transformative power of prayer, and the urgent need for Christians to engage profoundly in sharing this hope with others.

Fr. Arockia Vanathiyan, ss.cc.

(THIS PIECE BY FR. AROCKIA WAS WRITTEN FOR OUR LAST ISSUE ON MISSION AND WAS INSPIRED BY POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE ON THE WORLD MISSION DAY 2025. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR POPE FRANCIS' BEAUTIFUL VISION AND MISSIONARY LEGACY AND FR. AROCKIA'S REFLECTION.)

"THAT HEART APPEARED TO BE AFLAME WITH LOVE....
(SPEAKING OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS)

LOVE SETS THE BONDS OF ALL VOCATIONS, THAT LOVE IS EVERYTHING, THAT
THIS SAME LOVE EMBRACES EVERY TIME AND PLACE. IN ONE WORD, LOVE IS
EVERLASTING. "

THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX



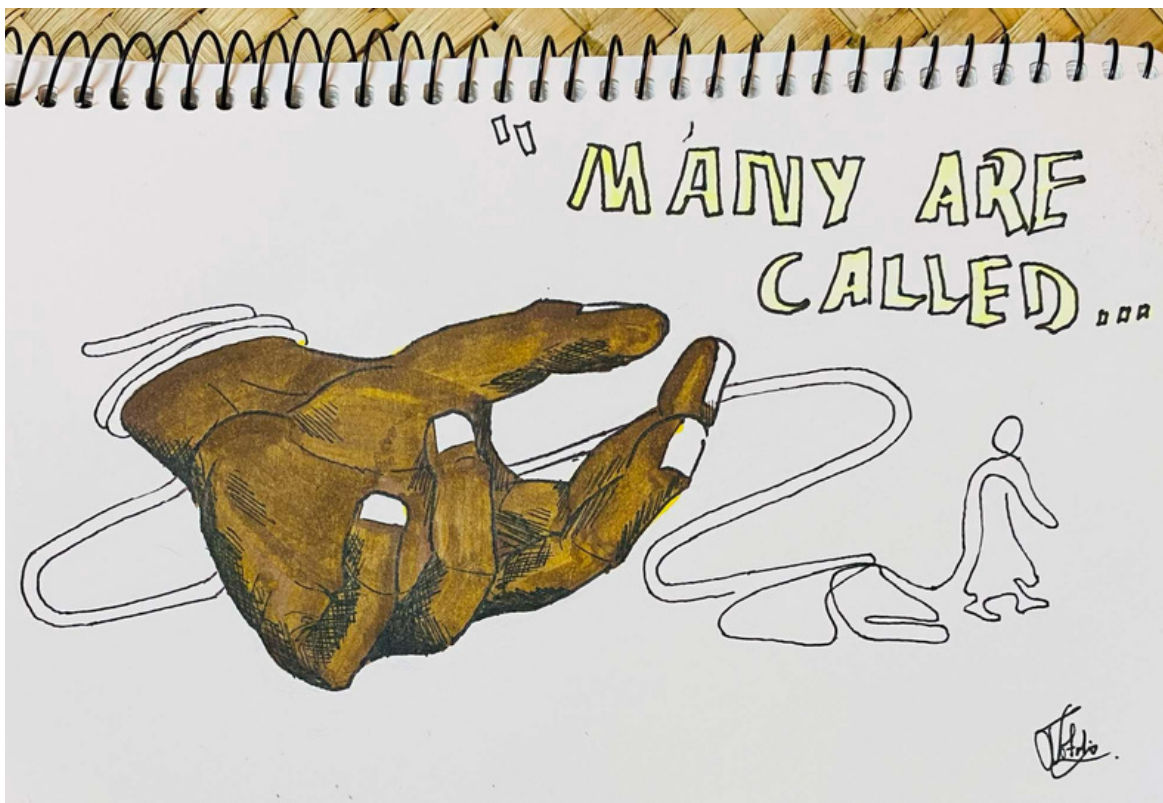
**"THE JOY AND
CONTENTMENT OF THE
HEART THAT THE
SACRED HEARTS ARE
LAVISHING UPON ME
MAKE ME THINK MYSELF
THE HAPPIEST
MISSIONARY IN THE
WORLD".**

ST. DAMIEN FROM A LETTER IN
1887 TO HIS BROTHER PAMPHILE
IN THE CONGREGATION

RULE OF LIFE #4

*"You will never fulfill your
vocation without a deep daily
listening to the Holy Spirit."*

WITH GRATITUDE AND ATTRIBUTING CREDIT TO:
THE WRITERS
THE INTERVIEWEES



A PASTOR WANTED TO SAVE THE CHURCH MONEY SO HE HAD THE PAINT THINNED WHEN THE CHURCH WAS PAINTED. WHEN A DOWNPOUR CAME, THE PAINT WASHED OFF THE CHURCH. THERE WAS A LOUD CRACK OF THUNDER AND THE PASTOR HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAY: "RE-PAINT, AND THIN MORE MORE!"





"WE PREACH **LOVE**"

SSCC. Rule of life

2150 DAMIEN AVE., LA VERNE, CA 91750

909-593-5441

INFOSSCCUS@GMAIL.COM