



Congregation of the Sacred Hearts United States Province

April 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

For more than an entire year, the reality of our world has been overwhelmed and besieged by an enemy among us who was not only elusive but non discriminating in whose lives it chose to devastate. We found words like “*social distancing*”, “*quarantine*”, “*vaccine*” “*asymptomatic*” and “*Covid*” becoming part of our daily vocabulary. The virus was often all anyone could think or talk about and it has been a scary and sad time for everyone. Reasons to celebrate and even the ability to do so have been overshadowed by the fear of contaminating one another, so much so that what would have seemed almost an impossibility to us, the closure of our Churches, became a reality.

But in the midst of all of that, in spite of so many obstacles, our SSCC Province DOES have reasons to celebrate—and they are numerous and far-reaching. From the wonderful blessing of the Diaconate Ordination of our Brother William “Bill” Gural, on March 6, 2021 in Fairhaven, Massachusetts, to the upcoming Final Profession and Diaconate ordination of brothers in the Region of India which will take place in May, to the youthful energy and enthusiasm witnessed in our 2021 Novitiate in Hemet, California, by both the five novices and their formators.

As you read and reflect on the following, listen to the humbling words of a new Deacon; rejoice with the three Indian brothers as they reach this milestone in their religious journey after many years of commitment; and marvel at the life-giving spirit emanating from the novitiate community in their newsletter – but more than anything, give thanks to our Good God who has brought us so many reasons to celebrate as Brothers and Sisters in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

“Becoming A Deacon” by Br. William “Bill” Gural, ss.cc.



What graces, blessings, and honor to be ordained a Deacon in the Catholic Church! I am very grateful to Bishop Edgar da Cunha for celebrating this powerful and beautiful sacrament. I am thankful for my family (both of origin and Sacred Hearts), to the St. Joseph parishioners and friends, brothers, and sisters in Christ, who have blessed me with prayers, love, and their example of following Christ. I especially thank Fr. Stephen Banjare, ss.cc. for welcoming me back to St. Joseph, and for teaching me by word and example.

The liturgy was so moving, inspiring, truthful, and beautiful. The message I heard over and over again was of God’s gift of love to us in His son, and of the call and responsibility of being a faithful servant. There was great joy in my heart to receive this ordination, and I believe this joy comes from the Holy Spirit. What a blessing to be strengthened and enriched by the Holy Spirit, not only for me but for all the baptized! I am grateful for the sea of love and joy that I was bathed in on this glorious day.



I am reminded of the words Bishop Edgar gave in his homily, that I will not be happy if I use this ordination for myself. I will only be happy if I am Christocentric and live out this ordination to serve God and others. Bishop Edgar directed me, and us of all, towards the goal we all hope to reach— Christ’s eternal company. Christ says “*Well done, my good and faithful servant*” to those who serve with love and humility the vulnerable, suffering and rejected.



I feel very blessed now to be proclaiming the gospel, serving at the altar, and being a minister to and with the people. I am endeavoring to heed the words of Bishop Edgar to remain a humble servant and to believe what I read, teach what I believe, and to practice what I teach. It is humbling to be serving as a deacon Christ’s faithful flock, witnessing their goodness, and experiencing their love and respect. I hope I can live up to their honor for ministers of the gospel, to be a faithful and good servant, and to help in kindling the flame of love for God and neighbor here and wherever I am sent.



A Celebration in the Region of India

The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
Cordially invites you for

Final Profession of

Br. Arockia Nahshon Kulandai,ss.cc.
Br. Arockia Vananthiyan,ss.cc.
Br. Robert Joshi,ss.cc.

On 14th May 2021 at 5.30pm
to be received by
Fr. Ajith Kumar Antony Dass,ss.cc.
Regional Superior.

Diaconate Ordination of

Br. Arockia Vananthiyan,ss.cc.
Br. Robert Joshi,ss.cc.

On 15th May 2021 at 5.30pm
to be Conferred by
Most Rev. Thomas D'Souza,
Archbishop of Calcutta.



Venue:-

at Sacred Hearts'
Formation Community
Dangadighila,
Purbapara, Kharda, 700119
Near Karotkol more of
Kalyani Highway.



Bro. Arockia

Bro. Nahshon

Bro. Robert



**Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
United States Province**

JOURNEYS
SS.CC. Novitiate Newsletter



Happy Easter!
**The Novitiate Community
Hemet, California**

The Fathers:

Fr. Rich Danyluk, SS.CC.

Fr. Jeremiah Holland, SS.CC.

Fr. Pat Crowley, SS.CC.

Fr. Martin O'Loughlin, SS.CC.

The Novices:

Marc Roque- Texas

Tavite Uluilakeba- Fiji

Gaberieli Saunivalu- Fiji

Sepulona Lutelu- Samoa

Juan Carlos Martinez- California

Inside this Issue:

**Meet the Novice Master,
Fr. Rich Danyluk**

**Meet the Assistant Novice Master,
Fr. Jerry Holland**

Meet Fr. Pat Crowley

Meet the Novices

Novice Master's Message



Four old novices (Jerry, Pat, Martin, and I) and five new novices (Charlie, Sepulona, Tavite, Gabby, and Marc) gathered in Hemet, California on January 3 (Damien's Birthday) to be guided by the one real novice master who is The Way. A journey once taken alone, we now choose to take together. Moving forward as one body into a future filled with possibility, we choose not to use maps, but we walk confidently, and we walk with hope because we have chosen to be lights for each other. We each travel forward along a way we have not gone before; we travel as one who is led, arms outstretched, as one who is called forth to life. We all still travel in

need, dependent on the God who called and is calling each of us like Lazarus to new life, for strength and assurance dependent on each other, God's instruments for love. Leaving behind paths that have brought us from Fiji, Samoa, Ireland, Texas, and California, we choose to journey forward. As the journey brought us here so now we begin anew, in company with each other. God who began this good in me seventy-three years ago seems to think I need my eighth novitiate. The first in Wareham in 1967 with Rich McNally and Bill Moore, in 1983-1985 an International Novitiate in Hemet; in 1990-1992 with Pat Fanning in Hemet; in 1994 in the Philippines and now back to Hemet. Still trying to grow in wisdom, age, and holiness. The age gap ranges from 24 to 85. T.S. Eliot says, "Old men ought to be explorers." Here and there does not matter, we must be still and still moving into another intensity for another union, a deeper communion. That together we can live and learn and love each other is a gift we are all grateful for. These five new novices are very patient with the four old novices as we continue our exploration and deepen the roots of our "yes." Relying on your prayers, and a promise of ours.

Fr. Rich Danyluk, SS.CC.
Novice Master (2021)

Fr. Jeremiah Holland



Novitiate 2021

My initial and basic attitude to the opening of the novitiate of 2021 is one of gratitude and a certain feeling of unworthiness to be a part of such a Holy Spirit- inspired event . This was all the more evident due to the many problems created by Covid-19, especially travel restrictions. It was exciting to prepare this place to host a novitiate class again and for Pat Crowley, Martin O'Loughlen, and I to welcome back Rich Danyluk.

During these past three months, I often think of how different and unique each class is. I fondly recall the last one here of Lomano Fifita and Soane Siua directed by Fr. Pat Fanning. I find it amazing how much covid has restricted certain aspects of the novitiate, even simple gestures of greeting and of course gathering. Hopefully when all of us are vaccinated this will change .

For me there is something exciting and challenging to experience young men beginning their journey as members of the congregation and the richness in faith and energy and excitement they bring. It is also a privilege for me to guide and advise them regarding food and meal preparation. I am impressed at how well the novices work together, help each other on work projects, especially when they involve physical labor. I look forward to the rest of the year and thank God for the privilege of journeying with these fine men and Rich Danyluk.

Fr. Patrick Crowley



Greetings for a blessed Easter filled with God's choicest graces and blessings!

May it be for you one of much joy and peace in the Lord! The tomb is

empty: Jesus Christ is risen, and the story of humanity will never again be the same. How beautiful this theme is expressed in the Easter Exulted: "The power of this holy night dispels all evil, washes guilt away; restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy.

It is springtime in California. In *Songs of My Soul*, Philip Keller depicts the aftermath of the winter rains: "In our western mountains and desert valleys some four thousand diverse species of wildflowers carpet the countryside...the coming of April flowers, the refreshment of spring showers, the sheer loveliness of shining cumulus clouds towering high against the sky edge relaxes our pent-up bodies. We rejoice in the wonder of it all. Somehow, suddenly we are at rest."

This year the Hemet Community has been blessed with the arrival of five Novices. For those of us in our latter years — their presence bespeaks a future full of hope. We are blessed in their presence and in their diversity of cultures! Their youth and vibrancy of spirit echoes very profoundly the words of Isaiah the prophet: "Remember not the events of the past, the things of long ago consider not; see, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not

perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland rivers." (Isaiah 44. 18-19)

These young men bring with them a great spirit of openness and a desire to imbibe more of our congregational spirit. May their "yes" to the call of God find their fulfillment in their hearts' desire!

John Kirvan in his book: *Silent Hope* quotes Abraham Joshua Heschel: "The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living." He then closes his reflection with a beautiful prayer which I believe gives our Easter Celebrations a greater depth of meaning.

"You who are beyond mystery hear my prayer. Let wonder loose in my soul. Let hope begin. Unwrap the mystery of your presence for without it, without you, I am living half a life. Without wonder, without hope my life is not, will not be worth living."



Our first picture together.

Marc Roque



Kumusta Mga Kaibigan! (Hello friends!) My name is Marc Sherwin Roque, and I am one of the novices in this year's SSCC Novitiate.

I am currently 24 years old, which makes me the “baby” of my Novitiate Class. I am a 100% Filipino, who was born and raised in Edinburg, Texas. I am an active parishioner at Sacred Heart Catholic Church (also in Edinburg, Texas). I graduated from Robert Vela High School in 2014 and I received my Bachelor's Degree in Political Science (2016) and a Master's Degree in Public Administration (2017) from The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

All my life, I have always been active at my local parish. I have been an Altar Server, an Assistant Catechist for Confirmation Students, a Eucharistic Minister, a Fourth Degree Knight of the Knights of Columbus, a Life Teen Core Member, and a Rosary Maker. Since I was a young kid, I have always had that passion to serve and to help others. Saying Yes to the religious life was not part of my original plan, but the Call intensified since graduating High School and I felt now was the right time to “give in” and answer the Call that is coming out from my heart.

Beauty is Everywhere

I cannot believe how fast our first three months went. It felt like just yesterday I arrived here in Hemet, California. The desert landscape here in the Novitiate is beautiful and serene. Every morning before morning mass, I make my way up to our Cross on a hill that is on our property (about

half a mile away from the main house). And every time I go up there, I take a moment to stop and look around to see the beauty of God's Creation. On top of the hill, I feel like I am at the highest point here in Hemet. With the San Jacinto Mountains to the East, Mt. Baldy on the West, and the San Bernardino National Forest to the North, I always take a moment and just think: why did God create all this? What was He trying to accomplish by making these mountains and forests? These types of questions are questions I cannot answer, so instead I just take in all the beauty that is around me. I should not be questioning God's reasoning, but instead live in his presence and just take it all in.

I live with four novice brothers and four priests, all of whom are all awesome individuals. All of us come from different backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles, but that doesn't stop us from working well with each other. Also, we always make each other laugh constantly. There has not been a day that passed by where I went without laughing. My brothers really do bring out the joy within me.

What I look forward to each day is dinner time. I am not talking solely about the food, but the joy we as a community (the five novices and the four priests) share at the table every night. The camaraderie, the laughter, and the stories we all share at the dinner table bring a lot of happiness into my heart, because it reminds me of my family's dinner time at home. Dinner time is indeed the best way to put an end to my day.

Overall, it has been an enjoyable past three months for me. I am thankful for the opportunity to be here and experience this part in my discernment process. But the one thing that I am truly appreciative for is going on this journey with four awesome guys and four amazing priests who are all supportive towards my vocation. I cannot ask for a better group of men to be on this journey because each one of us has a story,

a story that is beautiful in its own way, just like the desert landscape around us. Everywhere I turn, from seeing the mountains to seeing the faces of my brothers, I am starting to notice the beauty in all of God's Creation.

Tavite Uluilakeba



Bula Vina'a, (Greetings). My name is Tavite Uluilakeba, I am thirty-four years old and I am from the islands of Fiji, in the South Pacific. In the years 2019 to 2020, I was in the Fiji Formation House studying at the

Pacific Regional Seminary and part of the Pre-Novice Program with the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. I am currently in my novitiate year, journeying with four of my brothers.

A YEAR OF BLESSING

2021 has been a year of many blessings for me as a novice in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, a blessing in the sense that God has brought me to a place far away from home and into a more developed country with a very advanced way of living compared to life in Fiji.

I am amazed by the many priests who give their lives in serving and maintaining this novitiate place, a peaceful and a blessed one. It has been a great source of strength and life giving for me to witness the greatest symbol of Love being embodied in those I live with especially with the four Priests: Fr. Jerry, Fr. Pat, Fr. Martin, our beloved Novice Master Fr. Rich, and my four novice brothers who I share this place with.

However, Fiji has no such thing as a winter season and experiencing one for me is a challenging one and somehow draws some

energy out of me. Often, I find myself trying to get warm rather concentrating on my readings or whatever task I am given. That for me is the greatest hurdle, trying to adjust myself to the weather and the new norm that I am called to hear in this novice year.

Nevertheless, I try to find beauty in every new encounter I face here. That includes having the experience of snow for the first time. I remember I was in the Chapel during Adoration when I saw snow falling. Father Rich saw the glamour in our eyes as they opened with amazement to what we normally see in movies, and he insisted that we take a picture on the snow. We took a picture, the three of us from the Pacific, which we proudly showed off to our families and our brothers from Fiji.

Finally, I hope to complete this year in coming to the realization and acknowledgement of God's love for me and to be able to share that love to others, especially to my brothers who I live with every day.

Gaberieli Saunivalu



Bula Vinaka, my name is Gaberieli Saunivalu I am 32 years old. I am from Fiji and currently a novice. I am so blessed to be part of this community, journeying with the guidance of our

three priests. As I pray and continue my discernment in this vocation as a novice, I ask that you pray for me too as I continue to embark on this wonderful yet challenging journey in my life. Vinaka Vakalevu.

A Whole New Experience

Took me two years waiting and praying whether I will be able to go to the novitiate or not, let alone studying at the seminary at the same time. Being with the community for two

years and being continuously told of the experience of novitiate and how good it will be for me was something that made me look forward to. So here I am finally made it to the novitiate as a novice.

Reflecting on the past three months, a lot has happened ever since the day I arrived. Coming from a small island nation there was not much to see and experience, however it is different here in the states.

There is a lot to see and experience not only with the place but also what the novitiate has for me, and these three months really have opened my eyes to realize the difference in the weather, the different cultures and the way people do things.

However more importantly I have come to know three important things these past three months, that really has given me time to reflect. Apart from getting used to the different seasons and the different cultures, the topics that have really got my attention is Spirituality, who am I as a person and community living.

These three aspects of formation even though I live it somehow, I find that is so much more to unearth. In addition, I can say that so far after three months in Novitiate, I feel that there is more to look forward to with regards to novitiate and the experience of meeting and engaging with the people of God here in the land of the free.

Sepulona Lutelu



Talofa Lava and Greetings with Love. My name is Sepulona Lutelu Tolai Faumuina. I originally hailed from the paradise of the South Pacific region called SAMOA. This is my 3rd year as a son of my new family, The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. I am

blessed to be part of this family and this year I am taking my Novitiate Program in Hemet, California. God has blessed me with my life in this vocation; I will be 35 this year on July 30. I am a happy individual who loves to share my life of service to the best of my ability to whomever needs me. Jesus said, *I come to serve not to be served.* Faafetai tele lava

Making this Year a Year Favorable for the Lord

America, when will I see you? I always dream about this yearning. The longing to experience what is called the “greatest nation” in the world. On the 1st of January 2021, God blessed me and I set foot for the first time ever in the land of Los Angeles. Despite the sadness of the downfall of COVID-19, we managed to travel to the States.

Life is becoming changeable. As an islander I lived in a strictly traditional way of life. Now partiality with the European cultural aspect is unusual. Changes occurred and blessed indwelling’s community life experiences. The modern significance ethos drives my observation not to be judgmental but perceive with a joyful heart.

At the very first community dinner gathering, I fell in love with the retirees (old goats they called themselves - very strange to me), an example of simplicity services. My parish priest never serves me food or washes my dining dish, even my own dad. This is life giving and a blessing commencement of my novitiate program.

Native culture might last out, but no culture is perfect. It is just analogous to community lifestyles. Our SSCC Rule of Life # 42 explains “we do not form communities of the perfect.” When we deny our attachment to what is dearest to us, we have space to endure new adventures.

This first month of arbitration drives my searching for myself intensely. Commencing prayerfully trying to identify who I am and letting go of the materialistic dwellings bring

terrific inner peace. One thing for sure, my superiors here are people of wisdom and spirituality. Every time they share their own life strains and fortunes, by listening to them, it generates the enthusiastic heart to move forward and not look back.

I do have confidence and believe I will enjoy this year in building up my spirituality and know that amid this busy world, there is always a silent campground for God. I am blessed to be part of this community. I am fortunate to live in the diversity of anxiety and culture. I will never have this year again and I will make the best of it with love and respect.

Juan Carlos Martinez



Hello, my name is Juan Carlos Martinez. I was raised in the Pico-Union neighborhood of Los Angeles, California. I initially studied for priesthood for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles at St. John's Seminary but left after

college. For ten years I served as a catholic schoolteacher and principal. I then spent twelve wonderful years as a staff member at Holy Name of Mary Church in San Dimas where I served as Youth Minister, Religious Education Director, and finally as Director of Pastoral Ministries. Through my work at Holy Name of Mary, I learned about the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts. My novitiate experience has been one of prayer, reflection, stillness, and active listening. I feel like I'm on a year-long retreat. It has been great! I am excited to see how the year will unfold and what God has in store for me and my novitiate brothers. I continue to entrust my vocation to our Blessed Mother under her title of Santa Maria de Guadalupe and am confident that our Good God will lead me by the hand to wherever He needs me.

God's Delight

It is interesting that as my first month as a novice comes to a close I continue to be moved and re-shaped by the words of scripture that God takes delight in his people. I heard it for the first time in a new light on January 9. The responsorial psalm response was "The Lord takes delight in his people." (Ps 149:4). Fr. Pat talked about not being afraid of believing that God takes delight in each of us and to let go of our aversion to the fact that God could actually feel this way for us so willingly and so generously. He spoke on the importance of allowing ourselves to be transformed by those words. He encouraged us to give ourselves permission to plant those words in our heart, allow them to take root in us, and nourish them so that they may bear fruit in our lives. His homily was an invitation to claim God's delight in me and own it! I felt like I had been splashed with a bucket of cold water after a long, hot, and humid day. The experience refreshed me, consumed me, and ultimately had a traumatic effect on me. Is it really possible that the God of all creation takes delight in me (little ol' me)? Moreover, how have I failed to allow myself to believe those words for so long? Why was I so quick to believe those words in relation to others but not for me?

Intellectually, I have always known that God takes delight in me. He has done so since the beginning of time and will continue to do so until He calls me home. My intellectual conviction, however, had never really metamorphosed into an emotional one much less a spiritual one. It never made the journey from my head to my heart. It was as if I had to be shocked and then knocked off my proverbial high horse for the words to really have a transformative impact on the way I live and, more importantly, the way I see myself. The realization shed new light on everything I heard, everything I experienced, and everything I did. I finally got it and I am now beginning to see things with new eyes.

Coming to terms with God's delight in me is helping me be more open to the wonder and possibilities of where God is calling me. It is helping me accept the movement of the Holy Spirit in a way I hadn't before, or more accurately didn't want to before. The experience of leaving my life, work, and dog behind, moving to a place I didn't know, living with people I hadn't met, dramatically re-orienting my life's journey, and putting myself completely in the love and care of others has been made easier in the light of actually believing and feeling that I am a beloved son of God in whom He is well pleased.



Brothers at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels



Brothers proudly holding their Covid-19 Vaccination Cards



Community trip to Malibu Beach