

EDITORIAL

La Salette

VISION & MISSION



By Fr. Thomas Velloppallil, ms

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Dear Co-missioners,

Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are scarce and on the decline in our times. Probably there was never before, or at least it feels like, desperately prayers are constantly raised for attracting young people to serve God. Concluding the message for the 2018 World Day of Prayer Pope Francis said, "Today the Lord continues to call us to follow him. We should not wait to be perfect in order to respond with our generous "yes", nor be fearful of our limitations and sins, but instead open our hearts to the voice of the Lord." We would lose the chance to dream big and to play our part in the unique and original story that God wants to write with us.

I am prompted to write this newsletter during my last visit and vacation home to India between mid-December and mid-January. Around that time there were six young men that were ordained to the priesthood for the La Salette Matha Province. There was such enthusiasm, energy and hope expressed by these young priests. I was quick to conclude that our efforts and prayers will certainly find fulfillment and fruits in God's own good time. So please PRAY, PRAY AND PRAY for vocations as you enjoy reading the story of these six priests from India.



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Fr. Thooyanathan, MS was born on June 31, 1989, at Perambur in Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India. He was a member to the Holy Cross Church in the Archdiocese of Madras- Mylapore. His father Francis worked in the railway department, until he retired. His mother Pushparani was a house wife who passed away on August 26, 2004. He has two brothers and two sisters. After graduating from high school at the age of 15, he joined the La Salette seminary in 2005. He made his first religious profession on May 1, 2013 and officially became a member in the Congregation of Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette in the Matha Province of India. His final profession was on May 1, 2017. It was his dream come true when he was ordained as a La Salette priest in his home town on 15th of



life with the La Salette family and I feel happy and proud to be a La Salette missionary”. The motto of his priesthood is “To be a reconciler to the unreconciled”. He feels this core message of the Blessed Mother at La Salette is a worthy message to carry out. Her invitation to the world is to unite everyone with God. He would like to work for this unification with God and one another as a La Salette missionary through simple and humble service.

Fr. Jesbin, MS was born as the third and youngest son to his parents who loved God and loved each other on 26th February, 1990. He began to serve as an altar boy from the age of eleven and as he was growing up, he felt something deep within him prompting him to seriously discern the priesthood to dedicate himself completely to the altar of God. One of the highlights of his young life that he still remembers very well was receiving his first communion after which he was able to serve as an altar boy to serve at Holy Mass. After graduating from high school he decided to join the La Salette congregation at the age of 15. He completed his novitiate and made his first religious profession on May 1, 2013, and final vows four years later in 2017. There is a great sense of gratitude to God who called him to serve at the altar with his school-mate Fr. Kuriakose. They grew up together and were ordained together on the same day in January 2, 2018. I was privileged to be at their ordination while I was on vacation at home in India. Through my gracious vocation, he says, “What I am is God’s gift, and what I become is my gift to God”.



Fr. Sajith John, MS was born in Kannur, Kerala on April 14th 1983. His dad, Mr. John is a mason and his mom, Mrs. Komala, a housewife. Ranjith is his elder brother and Sajana, his younger sister. From early childhood young Sajith had a dream to become a priest and a missionary, but due to poor grades in school he was not accepted to enter the seminary to pursue his dream. So he followed the same profession of his father and worked as a carpenter for a number of years. He always remained very active in church while continuing to cherish his dream of becoming a priest. Finally, through the assistance of his uncle, Fr. Rojan, who is a priest in the La Salette congregation, he was able to enter the seminary. His hard work coupled with openness to the grace of God made it possible for him to make his religious profession in 2013. He took his final vows in 2017 and was ordained a deacon that same year. Fr. Sajith said when the bishop placed his hands on his head in prayer, “I couldn’t hold back my tears of joy thinking how God led me through disappointments and challenges to the altar of God.” In only a couple of months Fr. Sajith received his first assignment as associate pastor in a very poor mission parish in the diocese of Punaloor, in the north of Kerala with Fr. Anoop Manthara as pastor. Adhering to the message and mission of Pope Francis, the Indian La Salette Province is venturing into new geographical and existential peripheries of the country by accepting to serve the poorest of the poor. Fr. Sajith says, “Though the people are poor and their village remote, they have great faith.” He is so passionate about serving God’s people there and looks forward to empowering them spiritually in all aspects of life.



Fr. Jobins Jose Veluthedathu Parambil, MS, was born on April 28, 1990 at Nadavayal in the district of Wayanad in Kerala. His father Jose is a farmer and his mother Shiny Jose is a housewife. He has a younger brother Robin Jose who has completed his post graduate studies and waiting to be employed. Young Jobin joined the congregation of Missionaries of Our Lady of La Salette on June 13, 2005. After completing higher secondary education, he took a degree in philosophy from Suvidya College in Bangalore in 2011. He finished a year of novitiate and took his first religious profession on May 1, 2013. He pursued his theological studies at St. Joseph’s Seminary Mangalore and graduated in 2016. He made his final commitment to religious life May 1, 2017. He was ordained to the Priesthood on December 28, 2017 by His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Jose Porunedom, the Bishop of Mananthavady.



Fr. Kuriakose Chennelil, MS, was born on November 1, 1988, at Kuravilangad in the district of Kottayam, Kerala. His parents are Joseph and Marykutty. He has three elder brothers. His father is a businessperson and his mother is a housewife. Soon after high school, he joined the La Salette seminary with a strong determination and great zeal to become a missionary. He graduated from philosophy studies at Suvidya College in Bangalore and completed his theological studies at St Joseph's Seminary in Mangalore. He took his First Vows on May 1, 2017, and became a deacon a month later. He was ordained to the priesthood on January 2, 2018, by Bishop Joseph Srampikal. He wrote, "It was my long cherished desire to become a missionary priest and serve as a reconciler for the world by spreading the message of reconciliation." When he came to know about the La Salette congregation, he had a special love for the La Salette mother and the message she gave to the whole world through Maximin, and Melanie; "Come my dear children, do not be afraid" and "make this message known to all my people". The message of reconciliation is one of the most difficult challenges to practice in one's own life and is one of the pressing needs of the present world. When Mary at La Salette invited the children "do not be afraid", he felt that she in fact was exhorting him to become a messenger of reconciliation by reconciling with God, with one another and with nature without any fear. He believes that Mary at La Salette will give him the same inspiration and grace as Maximin and Melanie to be an instrument of reconciliation throughout his priestly ministry and as a religious.



Fr. Manibhushana Rao Gompa, MS was born on June 24, 1988 at Yerukonda in the Vizianagarm district in the state of Andhra Pradesh. His parents are Thomas and Enama Gompa. He has four brothers and three sisters. His father is a farmer and his mother a house wife. Right after completing school, he joined the La Salette seminary in 2007 with a great zeal to become a missionary priest. His first profession was on May 1, 2013 and he took his final vows on May 1, 2017. He was ordained a priest on January 17, 2018. When the La Salette province of Matha launched its first mission in the state of Andhra Pradesh in 2007, he was the first recruit to become a La Salette missionary for that new mission. Before he joined the seminary, he did not know anything about La Salette. When the Blessed Mother appeared at La Salette she invited the two children by saying "come near my children, do not be afraid, I am here to tell you the great news". Reflecting on this invitation in his personal life he believes that Mother Mary invited him to be closer to her, not be afraid to share her good news to the shattered and broken world, and to be a true messenger of reconciliation. Mary's last words at La Salette reminded the children to make her message known to all God's people. He believes that this must be the vision and mission of every La Salette missionary. He is very happy to share the mission of the La Salette congregation: to make known the message of reconciliation to every nook and corner of the world, to cross geographical boundaries, and to reach new horizons through prayer, penance and zeal for the greater glory of her son Jesus Christ.



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Should you wish to do so, our legal title is:
North American La Salette Mission Center, Inc.