



SSS Grapevine

An Internal Publication of the Province of Saint Ann,
Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament for the
Eymardian Family

May 14, 2023 – 2023.7

Celebrating “Internationality” in the Province of Saint Ann



Father Joselito Hitosis SSS
(Philippines)

On April 28 and May 2, we welcomed two international priests back to the Province of Saint Ann – USA. Blessed Sacrament (SSS) Father Joselito (Lito) Hitosis came from the Philippines after a vacation from his previous assignment in Hilo, Hawaii arriving in Holiday, Florida, to be the new parochial *vicar* (*assistant priest and the updated term from Canon Law*) for the parish of Saint Vincent de Paul. He joins Father William (Bill) Fickel SSS, the pastor, and Father Dominic Long SSS, the current parochial vicar. He will also collaborate with the Filipino Community in the Diocese of Saint Petersburg since they need a chaplain now. Holiday, Florida will have a community of three again, a sacred Trinity of ministry!

As of July 1, 2023, Father Fickel will retire as pastor and serve full-time in the formation and ministry needs of the Aggregation of the Blessed Sacrament (*Associates*), who are in several parishes in the dioceses of Saint Petersburg and Orlando. Father Bill will continue to serve generously and live in the Holiday community and serve as Vicar Provincial for the Province of Saint Ann. Father Dominic will become pastor on July 1 and be officially installed on September 24 — more details to come about his installation later.

On May 2, Sri Lankan SSS Father Christian Christopher took the long flight. He arrived in Houston, Texas, to become one of the chaplains in the hospital ministry in the extensive medical center of Houston, near our parish Corpus Christi. Father Christian will reside in the Houston community and assist with Masses in our parish.

He replaces Father Ravi Earnest Sebastin (*now part of the USA province, originally from India and assigned as parochial vicar of the parish of Saint Jean Baptiste*) and Father Peter Van Tuong Nguyen. (*Father Peter was able to take a sabbatical this year for a spiritual direction class in University Heights, Ohio, another suburb of Cleveland across from John Carroll University, and is returning to his native Vietnam this June.*) Father Christian is no stranger to hospital ministry, having served at Lenox Hill Hospital, New York City, several years ago. We are grateful to Fathers Peter and Ravi Earnest for their dedication and service in Houston for four years.



Father Christian Christopher SSS
(Sri Lanka)

Father Mark del Rosario will be coming soon to San Antonio, Texas and our parish on the riverwalk, Saint Joseph Downtown. He has been serving in the Diocese of Pueblo, Colorado as a pastor there for many years, a mission of the Philippine Province. Now Father Mark will be collaborating in Saint Ann Province as pastor of this historic church as of July 1. He will replace Father Norman Pelletier, coming to the Provincialate in Highland Heights, Ohio (Cleveland) this summer to work in the Center for Eucharistic Evangelizing and with our Associates and their formation. Although a USA citizen, Father Mark will remain a Philippine Province member and work with parochial vicar Father Joseph Thai Minh Tran of the American Province. We are grateful for Fathers Norman and Thai and their hard work in this parish.



Left to Right – SSS Fathers Christian Christopher (Sri Lanka), Joseph Doan (Vietnam), Ravi Earnest Sebastin (India) and Thomas Smithson (USA)

Fathers Choy Ramos and John Keenan filled in for Father Norman in the spring while he recovered from open heart surgery. We thank both of them for their willingness to step in and be of service.

Internationality was a central theme and goal of our August 2022 USA Provincial Chapter. Working with American Homeland Security to obtain the necessary visas is a long and arduous process. More SSS students and priests will be coming soon, and their visas are in process. We will be pleased to share their stories at a later date. (*Please pray for the process!*) In the meantime, we are so grateful to the Sri Lankan and Philippine Provinces and the patience of the Vietnam and Indian provinces working with us in securing visas. These SSS men heard the Eucharistic call to

come and serve with us. Stay tuned for more exciting news and collaboration as we grow in our international Eucharistic mission for the USA.

It was a joy to commission Fathers Christian and Ravi Earnest on May 11 with a potluck gathering with our Associates in the Houston community rectory. The Holiday Community will celebrate a special welcome gathering with Father Lito next week and use the prayer I shared in Houston as we blessed Fathers Christian and Ravi Earnest.



The Holiday Community - Father Dominic Long, Father Joselito Hitosis and Father William Fickel



Blessing of Missioners

Adapted by John Thomas Lane SSS, Provincial Superior,
from the *Book of Blessings* 454 – 468, “Blessing of Missionaries.”

INTRODUCTION:

**My dear friends, as we take part in this celebration,
we are reliving a practice of the early Church,
eager to send and receive members
to other peoples and places
and to welcome new members
into the household of the faith of Christ.**

**The sending of our sisters and brothers
and the receiving of new ones to our ministries here
assists the ministry of God.**

**Our God invites us to send workers into the great harvest
so that the Gospel may be lived and preached
to everyone
and your people may share in the word of life
and be strengthened by the power of the sacraments.**

BLESSING: *(with hands extended)*

O God,
we bless and praise your name
and your goodness to your people.

In your mercy and providence, you sent your Son into the world
and send us the Holy Spirit as the fruits of his labors.

You sent apostles,
the bearers of your love and power,
to proclaim the Gospel of life to all
and in the waters of baptism, cleanse those who believe.

LORD GOD,
look kind on your servant Father Christian Christopher
who we welcome as your messenger of salvation and peace
marked with the sign of the cross +.

Guide **Father Christian Christopher** with your mighty arm
and with the power of your grace
strengthen him in spirit
so that his words echo the voice of Christ
and others may be drawn to obey your Word.

Fill his heart with your Holy Spirit,
so that becoming all things to all people,
he may lead many to you
and sing your praises in your holy Church.

Through Christ our LORD.

AND NOW WE PRAY OVER FATHER RAVI EARNEST:

God our creator,
who never cease to bestow your bounteous fruits
on those who devote themselves
to your faithful service.

Through the generosity of your kindness
you have guided **Father Ravi Earnest Sebastin**
in his ministry and work
to the service of our parish family and the hospitals of Houston.

Grant that he may have many faithful years of blessing and service

as he moves to New York City and our parish church of Saint Jean
Baptiste
to be its parochial vicar.

Remain with your servant Father Ravi Earnest
and guide him in accord with your will.

Give him protection and grace
by night and day
and in your merciful providence,
look with love on his future journey
and with the power of your grace
strengthen his spirit
to always sing your praises in your holy Church.

Through Christ our LORD.



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