

My Call to Vocation



“We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But if that drop was not in the ocean. I think the ocean would be less because of that missing drop (Mother Theresa)”.

My experience as a priest is tiny with just 17 years as a priest ordained in the year April 12th 2007. I felt inadequate to share my story before you all, however the quote of Mother Theresa gave me the courage to do this not for my sake but to thank the Lord having given me this call to priesthood.

My vocation story began with major influences in my childhood:

My Grand Mother her name was ‘Anne’ who was a devote woman and faithful to her daily Rosary, come what may she used to pray 6 p.m in the evening every day. In spite of her lack of formal education she used to share the stories and miracles of St. Anthony of Padua and that made a profound impact on me, she died at the age of 105years. Thanks to my grand mother for her love and support.

Secondly, my dad and mom were working as chefs in a catholic diocese school (boarding) seeing them go to daily mass, I used to join them thus it became our routine to participate in the daily mass and it helped me to appreciate the value of the sacraments.

Thirdly an indelible impression was laid in my young mind was when I heard the story of Mother Theresa in my 8th grade. My teacher explained her life so well that “she started her call within the call” with a such a commitment in spite of all her challenges. I could not see Mother Theresa in person though since she died in 1977 in India.

4th indelible impression was made by Fr. Ignatius who encouraged me to the vocation thus I joined seminary in 1996 soon after my 10th grade. Thus, seminary gave me the ample of opportunities to learn and discern my vocation as a gift from God.

Some of my challenges

I come from a family of 7, myself and 1- younger sister, 3- elder sisters, 2- elder brothers. However, we lived in a joint family and my home was like a meeting point for

my dad's siblings who were 15 in number. Since my dad was only earning member, it was not an easy part financially to run our family, later my mother joined in the work. Making me to study in a catholic school was my dad's desire which was an expensive to my mother and father.

There were times I was sent out from the class for not paying the tuition fees, until then I don't realize that my father and mother was struggling to make the both ends meet.

However, thanks be to God for good sponsorship programme like C.F.C.A(catholic fund for children and ageing) in our diocese that helped the poor students. Interestingly the sponsor from whom I received the support was from U.S.A. family. Till date I do not know the family's name but I saw them in a photo (still is in my memories) they are old enough that time.

I am glad that I could get this opportunity to serve in the diocese of Saginaw by the grace of God, thanks to American Family who educated me financially, may their souls rest in peace, because by their help I could pursue my school education and I that I could be here.

My Journey in Priesthood

I am glad for the formation that I received under the guidance of P.I.M.E (Pontifical institute for foreign missions) and O.F.M orders (order of minor friars) called Franciscan's fathers, Pallotine Fathers, and by my diocesan fathers.

After my 10th grade I joined in seminary.

My orientation course in Sts. John and Paul Seminary (1996-1997) South India

Junior and Senior studies at St. Mary's College (1997-1999)

Philosophical studies at St. John Maria Vianney (2000-2002)

Theological studies at Christu Premalaya Theologate at North India (2004-2007)

Ordination on 12th April 2007

Soon after my ordination (My Assignments):

Associate pastor at Our Lady of Good Health Church (1 year) in India

Associate pastor at Holy Trinity Church (1 Year) India

Served as a Pastor at St. John De Britto Church (5 years) India

Served as a Pastor at Immaculate Conception of Mary (3 years) India

Served as a pastor at Queenship of Mary (5 years) India

Served as a pastor at St. Peter's Church (15 months) India

Parochial Pastor at St. Thomas Aquinas (10 months) Saginaw, U.S.A

Present as Parochial Pastor at Ave Maria Church, Lexington, U.S.A

The question- How did I come to Diocese of Saginaw

My call here in Saginaw was nothing but the providence of God. My friend who was working in this diocese Fr. Raj who encouraged me to come to this diocese. Meanwhile Covid happened and things stopped.

Finally, I came in contact with Bishop Robert Gruss, and that's how I chose to come here in 1st September 2023.

The first question bishop asked me was, do you know how to cook? I said, 'yes'. Second question he asked me was, did you ever drive in the Snow? Prior to Michigan I did see snow at my friends place in North India but never seen snow on the roads. I said to Bishop that I will learn how-to drive-in snow.

However, I started my journey by the grace of God it all worked well so far, with all your support and encouragement I could experience the warm welcome of people in the community. I will remain grateful to all of you and especially for the guidance of Bishop, Fr. Bill and my Mentor Fr. Andy Booms and all of you my dear brothers and sisters.

Thank you for helping me to serve the Lord and people.

“Priesthood is not a profession it's a vocation”. Vocation to priesthood is a vocation of Love that participates in the mission of Jesus Christ.

Fr. Bala Showry Madanu