

November, 2023

Greetings and prayerful wishes.

I am writing this monthly letter on October 24th, which is also my 29th Ordination Anniversary. I thank God for calling me to the ministry of priesthood and strengthening and guiding me through these years of my varied ministries as a priest and religious. Please join me in thanking God for these fruitful years as a priest, now privileged to serve you as your shepherd at Mother of Perpetual Help. I have not shared much about my life, family and personal life, to most of you, except with a few of you whom I interact with more frequently. I hope knowing your pastor will help you to reach out to me and relate to me more freely for all your pastoral needs.

I am the first child of my dad and mom and am blessed with another four siblings, three sisters and one brother. My father went to his eternal home six years ago at the age of 76 after suffering from a stroke. My mother is 76 years old and lives with my brother, his wife and three children in our home in Kerala, India. My two sisters are married and live near my home area. One sister has two children and the other sister has three. My youngest sister is settled in Sydney, Australia with her husband and son. I am blessed with six nieces and three nephews. My hometown is a lovely hill station in Kerala, India, about 2000 meters above sea level with plenty of tea, black pepper and tea plantations. Perhaps this is why I like the Wisconsin weather and I love nature and farming of all kinds.

I began my seminary formation with the Order of St. Camillus after high school and pursuing Philosophy and Theology studies. I was ordained in 1994. I was blessed to have a variety of ministry experiences, including the first two years in parishes, one year in Seminary as Rector. In 1997 I came to Milwaukee and studied at St. Luke's Medical Center Clinical Pastoral Education and was certified as a chaplain. I continued my studies in Boston the next four years to become an educator in Clinical Pastoral Education at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center.

After completing my studies, I went back to India in 2002 and began my ministry with HIV and AIDS patients, including children for the next 17 years. I also started a special care program and residential school for AIDS orphan children and have raised about 150 children who are now living healthy and joyful lives. During this period, I also served the Order in India as its leader for 6 years and served as the Health Secretary of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, coordinating the healthcare ministry of the church in India. In 2019, during my jubilee year, I took a short sabbatical and came to Milwaukee and joined St. Camillus in the care of the seniors in Wauwatosa. It must be God's plan that I was led to our parish when Fr. Jeff was sick and was later assigned as your shepherd.

I enjoy being with you all and feel God brought me here at this stage of my life to fulfill His plan. I thank you all sincerely for accepting me, even with my "accent" and working together to make our parish a dynamic faith community. This weekend I am going to visit my family, children and my friends after 4 years. I will be back in two weeks. Please keep me in your prayers as you know you are always in my prayers, especially at all Masses.

With Prayers and Blessings,

P.S. Please be aware that your quarterly online WeShare contributions will **not** be reflected in this month's letter. Hopefully, it will be available for next month's letter. Thank you and sorry for any inconvenience.