

*(As printed in the August 13, 2017 Parish Bulletin)*

*After getting to Eureka, the first box I unpacked was my suitcase of warm clothes. I am not complaining rather find myself lucky to enjoy this soothing cool climate. What a treat after the basking heat! Accompanied with the cool weather, I am blessed with warm hearts. It is like cherry on my sweet cake. This comes as a miracle in just a week's time. I feel fortunate and humbled to be chosen by Bishop Vasa to serve you.*

*This being my first column in the bulletin, I think I should tell you a little about me. I am Fr. Bernard John D'sa. I was born and raised in the smallest state "Goa"- India. My state was the Portuguese colony until 1961. The Portuguese brought Christianity to Goa in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, so I am not a first generation catholic. Though the population of India is 1.3 billion and Christianity is just 2.8 percent.*

*My family lives in India, i.e. my mother and my other two older siblings. My dad passed away in 1998. I was ordained a priest on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1994. After completing my masters program in Education and Political Science, I was appointed as a high school teacher for a brief period. Then, I was given an assignment of a Principal. My apostolate has been basically been in school, for fifteen years at least. Later, I was invited in the USA to serve as a teacher in a Diocesan catholic school , which I did for a short period and then requested the Bishop to give me an opportunity to have some pastoral experience which I missed a lot for being in schools.*

*I was then appointed as an Administrator of Queen of Peace Church, Clearlake in Lake County. During these three years, the priesthood came alive to me as I unfolded myself pastorally. The Lord assisted me to touch the lives of the people with His love and compassion.*

*Now I am here amidst you, called to serve and feel blessed. Trusting in the Divine Providence and in His Graces, I wish to undertake my apostolate as your shepherd. I request for your prayers and be assured of my humble prayers always.*

*God bless you.*

*Fr. Bernard.*