

THE FAMILY MINISTRY: INSPIRATIONS FROM *AMORIS LAETITIA* WORD FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

The 17th General Chapter placed emphasis on the family and youth ministry (#12-13). Several PRMs took this priority and designed a plan to improve and diversify family ministry. Understanding the realities of the family that are becoming more complex, the 18th General Chapter again stressed the concern of family and youth who need our immediate attention and care (#42).

We also committed to finding ways to address the challenges confronting the family and youth today (#43). Thus, at this juncture, we ask ourselves what we have accomplished and what needs to be done still. In fact, the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (AL) (The Joy of Love) helps us to deepen our reflection and find ways to be effective in our family ministry. Pope Francis profoundly developed further in this document what St. John Paul II had stated in his apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (FC).

Amoris Laetitia offers the vision of a pastoral and merciful Church that encourages people to experience the "joy of love." The family is an absolutely essential part of the Church because the Church is a "family of families" (AL 80). This document is grounded in the Bible and the Catholic documents. It is rich in insight, practical and comprehensive; it offers a "how-to-re-store-marriage" manual that needs implementation.

The Church's teaching is not meant to be weaponized – it is intended to be an invitation to encounter Christ, who is the face of the Father's mercy. Leading the people to meet Christ or "the gaze of Jesus" (AL 60) is the foremost duty of all of us. Then, our missionary life becomes a "message of love and tenderness" rather than "the defense of a dry and lifeless doctrine" (AL 59). This is what we learn from this document – how to express love realistically.

Challenge to walk with people

The Church must speak the truth. Concerning marriage and family, the Church should have the courage to teach moral values. Our Society is committed to stand for moral values and to teach fervently. But that isn't enough. If all of us do that, then we run the risk of turning the great truths of Christianity into stones that we hurl at those we want to condemn. We also need to walk with people, all kinds of people, especially those who are struggling in their marriage or family life. The Church that is burnished and soiled means that we feel the people's pain and can be with them in their family struggles, relationships, and emotional hardships.

The Joy of Love insists that we have to deal with the facts, however messy they may be; we have to be in touch with the reality of marriage and the family. Giving good advice, teaching moral values, delivering inspiring sermons on marriage is good. However, the challenge is to be with the real life of messy people. Comforting and guiding; inspiring and

challenging; being compassionate and being patient; and being ready to encounter, meet and discuss with the people who are chaotic in their family life are some of the ways to be with them, especially in our parishes and educational institutions where we encounter them.

Giving realistic hope

Marriage is not a state but a journey. Journeying with families means listening to the truth people speak, even amid the mess, and offering them the hope that much more is possible. This document warns us, "today, it is less and less effective to demand something that calls for effort and sacrifice, without clearly pointing to the benefits which it can bring" (AL 265). This means that the mere proclamation

AMORIS LAETITIA



THE JOY OF LOVE POPE FRANCIS

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ON LOVE IN THE FAMILY

of faith's truths is not enough to convert people's hearts. For our witness to impact others' lives, we need to help them arrive at the point where they perceive that what is announced as objectively upright is also good for them here and now. Without this step, the Church's teachings would seem to be burdensome rather than a source of joy; offering hope becomes noise in an empty vessel. Our PRMs need concrete steps or programs giving them hope.

Inspirations

Instead of being scandalized by the people's weaknesses and limitations, we should be aware that a person always knows, loves, and accomplishes the good by different stages of growth, thus trusting that "the Lord's presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes" (AL 315). Let us "stop demanding of our interpersonal relationships a perfection, a purity of intentions and a consistency which we will only encounter in the Kingdom to come" (AL 325). Therefore, our role is to form conscience and not to replace it (AL 37). Education of the conscience is of paramount importance.

"Christian families, by the grace of the sacrament of matrimony, are the principal agents of the family apostolate" (AL 200). Involve them in the family apostolate, and they know the heartbeat of the struggling families. Condemn domestic violence and create mechanisms to deal with that (AL 51, 54). Recommend natural family planning (AL 222). Although the document touches upon hot button topics, it offers room to discern and act accordingly.

Doubt about the permanence of marriage is dispelled as clearly and directly as possible: "The indissolubility of marriage – what God has joined together, let no man put asunder (Mt 19:6) – should not be viewed as a 'yoke' imposed on humanity, but as a 'gift' granted to those who are joined in marriage..." (AL 62). Divorces are increasing day by day, and we have to stress the valuable truth that marriage is permanent. For those who cannot live it out, find ways to solve it with the love of God.

The Church is a field hospital designed to care precisely for the wounded (AL 292). *The Joy of Love* calls upon the Church to be more welcoming and compassionate towards those in irregular marriages, such as those who have been divorced and remarried civilly. Therefore, be compassionate and not condemn the people; treat the wounded families, people living in irregular or objectively imperfect unions, emotionally distressed persons due to relationships, single parents, broken families, and so forth.

Being practical

A family is complex today, and a family ministry should be developed according to the country, cul-

ture, and people. The families still wield incredible influence over young people through adolescence – in nearly every realm of their lives. The five positive approaches for the family ministry could be listen to families, build relationships with families, highlight family strengths, encourage families to experiment with new practices, emphasize parenting as a relationship.

This document offers some practical aspects that would be helpful today: improvement of education for children as a primary means for passing on the faith; greater access to affordable housing, noting that "families and homes go together;" a rejection of pornography and "the commercialization of the body;" and pleas for us to show greater attention toward the elderly, the disabled, and migrants, as "they serve as a test of our commitment to show mercy in welcoming others and to help the vulnerable to be fully a part of our communities" (AL 47).

There are many facets to family ministry, whether our parish or institution embarks on a small community initiative, celebrating kids' faith milestones, or simply looking for small ways to incorporate families into what your ministry is already doing. Get involved, be proactive and be positive are the ways to go. Some of the effective ways would be: Family Sunday, Family Worship Night, giving each family a project, Family Mass where possible. Outreach programs for the families who need financial and psychological help need to be in place.

Giving hope to the people could be channeled through family counseling, family self-help groups, and reconciliation cells. Addressing distress cells and accompaniment of young people before marriage and after marriage are some of the activities one could engage in.

Year of Amoris Laetitia Family

Pope Francis declared that from 19th March 2021, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, the Year of Amoris Laetitia Family, begins: a special year to grow in family love. He said: "I call for a renewed and creative pastoral drive to place the family at the center of the attention of both Church and society." Pope Francis invites us to let "our lives become wonderfully complicated" (AL 308) because of our willingness to get involved with people's lives to announce to them the Good News and help them grow in appreciation of its demands.

Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden and the Leadership Team

GENERALATE NEWS

Pandemic and Prophetic Dialogue

WEBINAR
PANDEMIC & PROPHETIC DIALOGUE
23 & 24 APRIL 2021
14:00 to 17:20 HRS (ROME TIME)

23 APRIL 2021 (FRIDAY) CONTEXT

1. DIALOGUE WITH ECONOMIC CRISIS - Joseph Mundanikkal (INM)
2. DIALOGUE WITH SICK, INFECTED, AND AFFECTED FAMILIES - Jacek Gniadek (POL)
3. DIALOGUE WITH PSYCHOLOGICALLY AFFECTED PEOPLE - Lloyd Cunningham (USC)
4. DIALOGUE WITH PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS, AND LAY MINISTERS - Andrzej Pietrzak (POL)
5. DIALOGUE WITH FRONTLINE WORKERS - Michael Tangente (PHS)
6. **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION** - Steve Bevans (USC)

24 APRIL 2021 (SATURDAY) PROPHETIC MISSION

7. NEW PASTORAL METHODS - Nicholas Sengson (USC-Canada)
8. MINISTRY AMONG FAMILY AND YOUTH - William Odeke Owire (KEN)
9. CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION MINISTRY - Piotr Adamek (SIN)
10. PANDEMIC, MEDIA, AND MISSION - Ceren Kuhn (BRC)
11. REACHING OUT TO THE POOR AND THEIR RIGHTS - John Prior (IDE)
12. NETWORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES - Benigno Beltran (PHC)
13. MINISTRIES TO THE WOUNDED PEOPLE - Bernd-Alfred Ruffing (GER)
14. MINISTRY AND ENVIRONMENT: NEW APPROACHES - Ozanan Carrara (BRN)
15. RESPONSE TO RACISM AND OTHER DISCRIMINATIONS - Paul Dogba (GHA)
16. ENGAGING WITH RELIGIONS AND GOVT. POLICIES - Anthony Le Duc (AUS-Thailand)

THE TALKS WILL BE IN ENGLISH WITH TRANSLATION INTO SPANISH

REGISTRATION IS NEEDED FOR THIS EVENT. HENCE, REGISTER YOUR NAME WITH
FR. STANISLAUS LAZAR, SVD- mission@svdcuria.org

The whole world is experiencing the effect of the COVID-19, and the situation in each country varies. This pandemic has affected all spheres-economical, social, political, and religious-causing many problems to the people. All are affected. The vulnerable suffer more than the others. In this context, to reflect on our mission, Fr. Lazar T. Stanislaus, Mission Secretary, is organizing on behalf of the Generalate a Webinar on “The Pandemic and Prophetic Dialogue” This will be held on **April 23-24, from 14.00 to 17.20 hrs (Rome time)**. There are 16 speakers for this event. All confreres are invited to participate in this Webinar.

Kindly register your name with Fr. Lazar T. Stanislaus - mission@svdcuria.org.

Featuring the Life in the Generalate

Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden and his council have recently approved two requests to feature life in the Generalate. One request is an article for Missionskhronik, and the other is a video. These two initiatives will require photos and video recordings covering the different offices and their offices. The reasons for this initiative are:

- To inform our members and those recently joining our Society about the Generalate and its scope of responsibility.

- To present the different offices and departments in the Generalate focusing on their mission and purpose and the competence of those who hold these offices.

- To provide necessary information to those who engage with our Society in different ways. They can be our Sister Congregations, institutions, and lay partners.

Aside from the article published in Missionskhronik, the video will include footage and clips focusing on the offices and those responsible. They will inform the nature of their office and their responsibilities. The Generalate Media Department will work on these two requests.

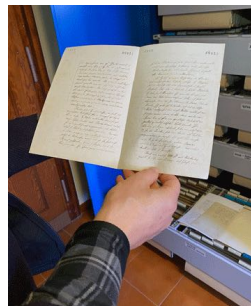
Recalling a milestone for the Generalate Archives



Fr. Andrzej Miotk with some of the original letters of the Founder kept at the Founder's Archives in the Generalate.

Six thousand five hundred sixty-one (6,561) of Arnold Janssen's letters, the vast majority of which had not yet been transcribed before and none ever published, are available in transcribed and digitally recorded form. This enormous achievement results from three and a half years of patient and persevering work by the late Fr. Franz Bosold SVD, a former archivist at the Generalate since 1998.

With this work done, it can safely be said that practically all of the extant letters of Arnold Janssen have been listed, transcribed, and electronically recorded. When Fr. Bosold began working, 1,835 letters written by the Founder had already been published. The letters were transcribed by Fr. Joseph Alt SVD and Sr. Ortrud Stegmaier SSPS.



A letter written by the Founder to Fathers Anzer and Freinademetz on February 14, 1879.

The project of transcribing the letters of Fr. Arnold presented some particular difficulties. All of the earlier letters, i.e., up to 1903, were written by hand in a specific German script (Suetterlin). That script is no longer in use, and only a few people can read it today. Fortunately enough, Fr. Bosold was one of them. While, understandably, most of the letters are in German, the Founder also wrote many of them in Latin and a few French. Around 1903 Arnold Janssen started having his letters typed.

Special Report



Broadening our vision and action of pastoral care for the family and the youth

On March 19, 2021, the Church celebrated the fifth year of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*'s publication on the beauty and joy of love in the family. On the same day, Pope Francis launched the Year "Amoris Laetitia Family."

Amoris Laetitia is full of pastoral indications on how to walk with the families and enable them to be active agents and protagonists of the family apostolate. The Society of the Divine Word continues to make these goals concrete. Already in the 17th General Chapter, we set a particular focus and concern on the family and youth ministry.

Fr. Andrzej Miotk, SVD, our SVD Historian, puts into perspective the family's place in Arnold's mission

work. Fr. Heribert Becker, SVD, a long-time educator in our SVD schools in Chile, shares his experience of involving the family and the youth to re-discover the family's importance and strength. Christenia Ventress is an active member of the SVD Lay Partners of Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Opelousas, Louisiana. She is convinced out of her experiences that we encounter God through families.

Our three contributors in this particular report highlight the family's central role and the importance of our ties and commitment to families. It reminds us of the promptings of the 17th General Chapter to broaden our vision and action of pastoral care for the family and the youth.

The Family in Arnold Janssen's spirituality



It would not be easy to find today a family like that of Arnold Janssen. This family imparted to the "Arnold Janssen Family" an essential and unique spiritual blueprint in the last quarter of the XIX century. This attempts to consider the family's place in Arnold's mission work, taking a cue from his family experience's singularity.

---Fr. Andrzej Miotk, SVD

Family rooted spirituality of Our Founder

In 1902, Fr. Arnold was aware of being a Father of an impressive family. He wrote in one letter to the children of his brother Peter: "You know that the Good Lord has made me the father of a great spiritual family of many priests, brothers, and sisters that is steadily growing. Many of them are already spread across all five parts of the world, where they work for the growth of the Kingdom of God" (AdF/31.384).

To be a father of such a large family must have exceeded even Arnold's wildest dreams. Thanks to the fundamental attitude of faith, prayer, and missionary zeal of his parents, the family became a reality, which influenced his life decisively. The Founder realized that mission work must rely on a broad collaboration with the laypeople, with families to get support for his mission work.

One of such helpful families in our SVD history was that of Emily and Francis Huch from Silesia, who played an imminent role in the Holy Cross's founda-

tion in 1892. Fr. Arnold, in difficult times, could always count on the spiritual and material support of Christian families. Arnold felt obliged to contribute to their spiritual formation since they could provide our Society with the necessary support and secure us good vocations.

The ordinary family with extraordinary spirit

The very ordinary Family of Arnold Janssen was quite extraordinary in its religious commitment where God had absolute priority. This very traditional and multi-child family lived a deep catholic identity without compromising the "spirit of the world." Their daily spiritual routine endowed them with inner affinity to see God's work among people. Beyond that, this was a multi-generational family with an unbroken experience of faithfulness to God.

Great-great Father William Janssen (+1822) exerted spiritual influence even on his grandchildren. Arnold learned from his father Gerhard, a strict educator with authority based on God's extraordinary trust. He im-

bued the heart of his children with great respect for God. His son William (later Capuchin Brother Juniperus) reported that being still bachelor, he was on a business trip and stopped overnight at an Inn. After drinking and playing cards, he withdrew into the room and would kneel to recite the rosary before going to bed.

Gerhard was very concerned about teaching children catechism and let them preside the prayers in turns. He spoke with great ardor about the Holy Spirit's action in nature, in people, and in families. When Gerhard died in 1870, Arnold took responsibility for the family.

Arnold's primary emphasis on the sanctification of the family

Arnold, in his take on the families, stressed their blessing as an essential task. He asked the priests, brothers, and sisters to pray constantly for the family's sanctification since it is the source of good vocations for the mission work. This concern resonates in his invocation: "Lord, grant us holy parents, and the Church will have holy men, mighty in word and deed!" The first Constitution (1885S/235) calls us missionaries to be generous towards all people and free from all false national pride. God wants all nations to be one great family without despising others. We should be consistently good brothers towards our siblings and incredibly grateful to our parents.

The Founder's great zeal for the sanctification of Christian marriages reveals his practice of "seven holy Masses" celebrated each year for the consecration of unions, primarily those marriages from which the Holy Spirit intended to call priests for the Church and our Society." (H. Sandkamp, *Spirituality*, Digitale edition, Rome 2010, 135) The prayer for the sanctification of Families and Christian couples turned up for the first time in the SVD Vademecum of 1899. It contained both the Holy Family's invocation for the grace of peace and virtues for families and Sts. Joachim and Anne for greater sanctification of Christian parents (Kleines Vademecum, Steyl 1899, 87).

Families at school

Fr. Heriberto Becker of the province of Chile (CHI) writes: Arnoldus Nota has asked me for some reflections regarding the pastoral care or accompaniment of families in the context of a school or college, appealing undoubtedly to my long experience in education.

It is not a question here of pastoral family care in general, parishes, movements, or other associations, but the world of formal education. It is about the educating family committed to giving life to its children to form them. First of all, it should be noted that the concepts of marriage and family today are confused. To put it in simple words: it is no longer known what family is: "Any love between two people" (German Parliament 30.6.2017) or only the nuclear group, male, female and children (one would have to include in this

Furthermore, Fr. Arnold practically contributed to the consecration of families by starting a family magazine (Stadt Gottes/City of God, 1878), organizing Retreats for lay peoples in Steyl (He personally gave 13 retreats of 3-4 days for 882 laypeople within 1878-1894), and promoting the pastoral work, especially among families in South America.

Spiritual emphasis on family

Arnold's pastoral involvement for families is visible with some spiritual emphasis. Firstly, he saw the family in the light of his Trinitarian and Incarnational spirituality specified in the Holy Family as a model to imitate. The family originates in God's plan of salvation as expressed in Founder's devotion to Holy Family: "God, Heavenly Father, it was part of your eternal design that your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Savior of humanity, should form a holy family with Mary and Joseph. In Nazareth, home life was sanctified, and a perfect example was given to every Christian family and community" (Life Calendar, Manila 1988, 176).

Secondly, Fr. Arnold continually encouraged his confreres to be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance in their pastoral work. The Holy Spirit is the communicator of Divine Love to the people and the source of pastoral creativity; He brings peace to souls and families and fills the heart with joy in God's service: "Truly, truly, truly, I say to you, whoever calls upon the Holy Spirit will seek and find me through him. His conscience will become tender like the flowers of the field. If he is the father of a family or the mother, there will be peace in his family. He will have peace of soul in this life as well as in the next. He will not die in darkness, but in peace" (H. Fischer, *You are the Temple*, Rome 1996, 178).

--- Fr. Andrzej Miotk, SVD
Generalate Historian



concept the single woman or man, due to widowhood or abandonment).

I will not get into the "horse's feet" here in this thorny issue. In this context, one should also mention whether there are truths, norms, or a kind of natural law or biblical texts given a priori or everything that is intitled with the term "family." It is a product of history, current thoughts, or evolution often managed by the constellation of power.

Experiences at school:

1) The two issues mentioned above are very much in vogue and discussed today. I have found that the vast majority of parents at school or college assume, without further differentiation and questioning, the postmodern world's paradigms. That is to say, the family is for the ordinary people, an inclusive concept and reality, from the nuclear family to the cohabitation between two people of the same sex.

The first challenge here is to accept the current world's tolerance and couples' situation in these conditions. There is a call to differentiate the realities, accompany with respect and closeness all cohabitations, and not forget that God the Father loves and saves all his sons and daughters. On the other hand, taking this into account does not necessarily mean making common causes with these paradigms. It is a matter of approaching these questions with criteria and a conscience formed in reason and the Bible and not being afraid to stand firm in the inalienable values.

2) Neuroscience has discovered that the first years of a child's life, even in the womb, are the most appropriate and vital for learning content, values, and attitudes. The same is valid for faith. For this reason, the home environment is highly decisive. Young children internalize the confidence through their mother's milk, without great discourse, but by living imbued with the witness of their parents, siblings, and even grandparents, whom today are acquiring increasingly crucial importance in their grandchildren's faith education. This fact is valuable to focus the family pastoral. The young child should not be abandoned in the acquisition of values and faith but should be motivated by example, words, gestures, and rituals.

3) Along the same lines is another observation. When I taught religion classes to students in the last grade, they told me about the causes of religious indifference and the absence of young people in the Christian community's meetings. These were their parents' fault. They were not afraid to "denounce" their parents, as the saying goes: "Like father, like son."

From this diagnosis provided by the students themselves, it can be inferred that parents' pastoral care seems to be almost more important than the pastoral care of students and religion classes. It is true, one does not take away from the other, but they complement each other. Nevertheless, this makes one reflect on the direction and priorities of faith education. I dare say that parents' accompaniment, the pastoral care outlined for and with them, occupies a place of preference. Generally, this is not taken sufficiently.



4) Sometimes, I realized that my word does not reach and does not touch people. The lesson is that it is necessary to present the divine to the human in understandable language, images, life experiences, anecdotes, parables, and experiences, as Jesus did. When I start from human reality, the faithful stop their ears and look at the preacher's face with attention to human situations. This is the well-known "anthropological turn," a term coined by the theologian Karl Rahner.

5) The closeness of the priest/brother to his people is an excellent methodology to spread the Kingdom of God's message and its goodness for human life. Of course, it is not a matter of mere social contact. But within and with it, there is the brother and pastor's visit to his brothers and sisters, the question and answer, the warm word, signs of closeness and affection. As a general rule, it is important to emphasize what is truly human, what points to authentically human life.

6) The formation of communities of parents and guardians has been very positive. One could speak of "base communities" per course. The themes are the education of children, values, faith, and biblical reading and reflection. It is not easy to arrange an hour in the afternoon, after work. It is worth the effort. It bears more fruit than talks, retreats, and catechesis itself. In a report on the Church in South Korea, I read that the Church's dynamics and the Christian faith's attraction are because it starts from homes and families.

7) It is a habit today in more and more families to make life easy for sons and daughters. Parents pamper and flatter them, level down, settle for little, and not question fads. All these hinder their growth, maturation, and autonomy. Undoubtedly, parents are well-intentioned and want the best for their children. It seems that adults are afraid to make demands, educate in a growth-oriented style, set high goals, and emphasize the value of maturity.

Many parents find it challenging to educate according to the motto: "With love and rigor." This is also valid in the area of faith. It is not a matter of forcing, but of living and showing the splendor and beauty of faith in Jesus, in the love of neighbor, in the search for the face of God, the morality and living of religion. Something similar applies so as not to give in to the individualism that prevails in these modern times. To care for the common good, help the helpless, renounce one's comfort, be available and generous: a beautiful Christian parents' mission.

--- Fr. Herbert Becker, SVD

Encountering God's presence through families



Christenia Ventress is an active member of the SVD lay Partners of Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Opelousas, Louisiana, USA. She is fully convinced that family ministry is significant in the Society of Divine Word Lay Partners Program. She joyously and proudly presents their diverse social and religious activities to enhance stronger family relationships. This is her sharing.

The desire of members of the SVD Lay Partner Associates of the Holy Ghost Catholic Church is not to target only families who are members but also families in the larger community.

Our SVD Lay Partners group is located at Holy Ghost Catholic Church, our church parish in Opelousas, Louisiana. The activities are accomplished in the Opelousas, Louisiana area, with a few exceptions.

In the activities before the COVID-19 pandemic, SVD Lay Partners made home visits sharing God's word and prayed with the families. We also listened to their stories, looked at their family photos, and encouraged them in faith. This brought great joy, especially to the elderly who were shut-ins and may have lived alone. Fr. Rofinus Jas, SVD, also brought communion, privately listened to confessions, and blessed the homes and family members.

We have also made monetary donations to needy families and school drives to support students' needs. SVD Lay Partners also sponsored their children to join SVD Youth Conference to help instill knowledge and more profound awareness of our catholic faith. We attempted to assist our youth plan for their future.

We invite all families to join us in novenas and Triduum prayers before SVD celebrations, usually scheduled on January 15th. However, due to the pandemic shutdown in 2020 last year, activities were minimal. Many families had to go into quarantine to prevent further circulating this deadly virus or protection to avoid becoming infected. Some families experienced grief involving the death of family members who have succumbed to this virus.

As a result of these issues mentioned, the SVD Lay Partner observed the need to provide continued family ministry but in a different capacity, including encouraged the families to pray novenas with international Lay Partners and participate in online mass celebrations.

To keep some normalcy in the family during this year of hardship and grief, our Spiritual Director, Fr. Rofinus Jas, SVD, encouraged the SVD Lay Partners to organize and follow through with a rosary prayer line

offered to all families who wished to participate. The rosary prayer line provided spiritual guidance to help families live their faith.

Since some families only consisted of one household member, they voiced concern about losing connection with church members and society. These members expressed experiencing a spirit of fear, fear of the unknown, loneliness, depression, and anxiety, which was often caused by negativity received through social media. Since Jesus Christ is our primary source of survival, we were encouraged to pray all day and night, trusting Almighty God. The idea was to pray as a family.

The rosary is prayed every Friday at 7:00 p.m. and opened to all families in the congregation and surrounding communities. Before starting the rosary, prayer petitions are offered, and testimonies or concerns are shared among all participants. Since many participants live alone, the telephone rosary allows them to obtain strong family ties and communication, which provided good quality mental health and developed intergenerational friendships. As a result of these activities, many family members returned to the church and joined one or more ministries. These have made many elderly feel needed and know that the church community does not forget them.

As SVD Lay Partners, we have learned a lot from the families. We have learned that we encounter God's presence through families. As a Lay Partner Group, we discover how vital togetherness in members is so powerful when we pray together among the family. As we deal with the families focusing on children and youth, we observed that the children needed more spiritual mentoring. The children must also be given a place in the church to render their services and foster their spiritual growth. We found many youths looking for a role model within their own families in the faith.

As an SVD Lay Partner's ongoing formation, let us offer more family activities such as family retreats, recollections, conferences, bible sharing, rosaries, novenas, adorations, and mission trips. We can network with other community groups to build awareness of

social justice, participate in Pro-Life Movements and provide food for the hungry.

Besides that, our Spiritual Director, Fr. Rofinus Jas, SVD, provides three monthly prayer services and workshops to all SVD Lay Partners and the community. The

intention is to learn more about the the Spirituality and Charism of the Society as well as St. Arnold Janssen and the first missionary of Society of Divine Word in China, St. Joseph Freinademetz.

--- Christenia Ventress

AFRAM NEWS

Zambia Mission (ZAM):

Focusing on the youth



The Youth Day in our parishes.

The Youth Day in Zambia is celebrated every year, on March 12. This public holiday highlights the youth's importance to the country on the anniversary of the disturbances in 1962 that resulted in the deaths of young Zambians during the nation's turbulent journey to independence. Hence youth day is celebrated nearly in all parishes, dioceses, and nationally throughout Zambia.

The youth day was held in our parishes in St. Charles Lwanga, Chindwin Parish, and Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Mukobeko Parish, belonging to the Kabwe diocese. Around 100 young people from around Kabwe participated in the event. There was a Eucharistic celebration followed by sports and games, cultural exhibition and dances and singing competition.

The SVDs involved in the whole day affair were: Fr. Silvio de Jesus Borges, SVD, Bro. Joseph Pai, SVD, Frt. Boniface Mothika, SVD, Fr. Peter Chibale, SVD, and Fr. Theophan Misengo, SVD. The SVD Novices actively participated in the event, wherein the turn-out was excellent.

The youth day also reflected the Zambia Mission's commitment, giving a hand to the young adults to take up positions of leadership. They do this at the Come and See programs. The responsibility for grooming and nurturing the youth rests on those who hold leadership responsibilities - political leaders, adults, parents, teachers, spiritual guides, and all leadership levels in our society.

Leaders from all levels must set themselves as role models and lead young people into various societal roles. Fr. Peter says, "We must lead exemplary lives and exhibit high moral standards and integrity. We must operate well above board and give hope and enthusiasm to the youth because the future belongs to them".

Fr. Peter addressing the youth, says, "You are not the next generation of leaders, but you are the leaders of today." Therefore, we are throwing you the challenge to arise wherever you are and provide that much-needed leadership amongst your peers, in your community, in your town, in the Church, or at the national level. It can and must be done".

In ZAM, our confreres are encouraged to initiate programs that will positively transform youth's mindset. It is essential to prioritize the creation of formal and informal workshops and seminars to promote vocations. It is necessary to provide platforms for help and transformation for the youth. They are experiencing frustration and becoming steeped in negative subcultures like substance abuse, disorderly conduct, waywardness, and lack of respect for elders.

--- Fr. Peter Chibale, SVD

Accra (GHA):**The launching of the book,
"The Priest, Fr. Campbell, A Missionary of Hope"**

Fr. Stephen Kofi Sakpaku wrote the book to honor Fr. Andrew Campbell, SVD, for his works of charity. He revealed that the motivation to write the book came to him on December 15, 2019, during a fundraising carol event. He got to know a litany of humanitarian projects embarked on by Fr. Campbell.

The book's launching, "The Priest, Fr. Campbell, A Missionary of Hope," was held on December 2, 2020, at Christ the King Parish Hall in Accra. The book's sales and proceeds will be channeled to the building of a modern laboratory in Wa in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The laboratory will help people with skin diseases in the northern part of Ghana undergo medical testing to receive appropriate medication. The decision to put up the laboratory was motivated by over 700 cases of leprosy in that part of the country.

Fr. Nii Lantey Campbell, as he is affectionately called in Ghana, has dedicated 50 years of his life as a priest, offering humanitarian services and undertaking many projects in Ghana. He is well known for his association with the neglected and marginalized such as cured lepers, street children, orphans, prostitutes, the sick, poor, and the needy. He is also famous for his philanthropic gestures towards people and institutions.

--- Source: Radio Angelus

**Democratic Republic of Congo Province (CNG):
An SVD, a new Ambassador of Peace**

Brother Theotime, ambassador of peace.

On February 6, 2021, Brother Theotime Ubole Koshi, SVD, the JPIC coordinator of CNG, was elevated to the universal Ambassador of Peace at Kikwit in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This title was granted to him by the organization Ambassadors of Peace. Bro. Theotime commits himself in many ways to awaken the consciousness of the rural and urban masses in several development structures. He also leads

training sessions in the context of promoting peace and the management and protection of the environment. He participates actively in activities and programs to promote religious life, non-violent communication, self-care for the Church by the Christians, and the fight against corruption and poverty.

The Ambassadors of Peace conferred the title to Bro. Theotime because our confrere responds to the objectives and directions of the organization. When Ambassadors of Peace was launched, among its purposes are to promote reconciliation, form a global network of leaders who represent the human family in its racial, religious, cultural, and ethnic diversity, and participate in peace activities.

Let us continue to support Bro. Theotime's initiatives. The title he received reflects the importance of his work. It also honors the people he works with and serves.

--- Bro. Jacques-Pacome Gabia, SVD
Secretary Provincial

Badjoude (TOG):**Penitential walk**

The season of Lent allows us to detach from ourselves. We are called to anchor ourselves on God. Our only rock. In this spirit, the penitential walk was held in the parish of Badjoude from February 25 to 26, 2021. The theme chosen for this penitential walk was "What are the three fundamental pillars of Lent?" Young people, adults, and children actively participated in the walk with Fr. Marsel Arjon, SVD, and Bro. Amakoe Emmanuel Tossouvi, SVD.

--- Bro. Amakoe Emmanuel Tossouvi, SVD

Kabwe (ZAM):**AFRAM Zone ExeCom Meeting**

The AFRAM Zonal Executive Committee (ExeCom) meeting took place from February 3-5, 2021, at the Divine Word Novitiate community in Kabwe in Zambia. The team travelled from Nairobi to Lusaka in the morning of February 3. Present for the meeting were Fr. Anthony Amissah, SVD (KEN - Chairperson), Fr. Willibrord Kamion, SVD (KEN - the Zonal Coordinator who is also ExeCom secretary) and Fr. Hugo Calis, SVD (KEN - Zonal Area Coordinator for formation).

Fr. Alexander Dhae (MAD - Vice Chairperson) was not present because he could not travel out of Madagascar due to the COVID-19 Pandemic travel restrictions. The meeting started shortly after 5:00 PM the very day of their arrival. The main purpose of the meeting was to look at some concerns about formation in AFRAM Zone including issues from different PRMs. The participants also visited the new Novitiate and the newly purchased Novitiate Land in Lusaka.

--- Fr. Peter Chibale

Moundou (TCD):**Lent on scholarly grounds**

Fr. Kallanchira doing Stations of the Cross with the students.

What's probably relatively new as a specialized ministry in the TCD Mission is our commitment to putting together a Catholic Chaplaincy/Campus Ministry program in the diocese of Moundou, where we are engaged thus far only in direct parish ministry since 2014.

Mgr Joachim Kouraleyo, the local Bishop, appointed our confrere Fr. Joseph Kallanchira in October 2019 to cater to that pastoral need with a specific request for "biblical formation." This is in consideration of the existence of several institutions of higher education in and around Moundou town. The State University of Moundou, for example, has a student population of 8.000 students, of whom about 2.000 are Catholics, members for the most part, of the five parishes in town. There are, besides, a couple of nursing schools, a government-run teachers training institute, etc., where Catholic students in their hundreds attend regular classes.

There's a new project of the Catholic University of Central Africa, with its head offices in Yaoundé, in neighboring Cameroun, in the offing. They have recently initiated beginning a University College for Chad for training teachers for the higher secondary level, outside Moundou town. So the Catholic Chaplaincy here typically would cover all of these institutions.

The Coronavirus onslaught had put a brake on the ministry throughout the year 2020. Since January of this year, however, Fr. Kallanchira is back at the university campus. They have opened a new academic semester there. Pursuing its humble beginnings, he operates from under one big shady tree that he baptized as "l'Arbre de l'Aumônerie" on the scholarly grounds. The administrative building of the university is anything but a work-in-progress for the last ten years! Among other activities, they pray the Stations of the Cross every Friday of the Lent in the open air between 11-12h, the lunch break time at the campus.

--- Fr. Joseph Kallanchira, SVD

Lusaka (ZAM):**Bible workshop for the philosophy students**

Bible workshop for the philosophy students.

Fr. Roman Janowski, SVD, the ZAM Mission Biblical Coordinator, gave a Bible Workshop to our students of Philosophy in Lusaka on March 17-20, 2021. There were ten participants from the Third Year Philosophy and a Brother candidate.

Fr. Janowski dealt with many questions which many fundamentalists raise from across pentecostal Churches. He further shared some inputs on St. Joseph concerning the Scriptures since this year is dedicated to St. Joseph.

In the same workshop, the participants participated in some Bible games and quizzes. Winners were given free pass airtime to talk with their families and friends. It brought lots of excitement and joy among the participants. The workshop was a fruitful experience, and the participants are looking forward to the next one.

--- Fr. Peter Chibale, SVD

Province of Ghana (GHA):



Journeying with the sick

Fr. Stephen E.K. Dogodzi, SVD, the Mission Secretary of GHA, quotes Bro. Paul Ayitey, SVD, "Sickness comes in a taxi but goes by foot". Bro. Paul wanted to express his desire to get well soon from ill-health. There is frustration associated with his limitation to do things for himself due to sickness. Whichever way one may look at it, illness has become part of the life journey of humanity. However, how does one journey with a sick person when sickness decides to go by foot?

Compassion. The first virtue one needs to accompany a sick person is compassion. One needs to be compassionate to be able to help a sick person. A cursory look at the Healing Episodes of Jesus in the New Testament shows that Jesus was moved by compassion to heal the sick and provide for the people. As Christians and disciples of the Lord, we are also called to exercise and practice this virtue. If you are not ready to be compassionate with a sick person, do not attempt to accompany him or her. It will not help the ill person in his or her recovery. Experience has it that sick people respond positively to people who do things for them with compassion.

Empathy. It is not enough to be compassionate to help the sick. It would help if you were empathetic as well. This means you have to put yourself in the shoes of the sick. The virtue of empathy allows you to move from suffering from the person to taking the person's place. You do not take the sickness upon yourself physically but take it as if you are the one going through it.

Patience. To journey with the sick, one needs more patience. You can be compassionate and empathetic towards a sick person. However, if you lack patience, especially towards the sick, your efforts will not yield any fruits. If a sick person tells you, be patient with me, it means that you are being impatient in dealing with him or her. He or she is asking you to bear with him or her. St. Paul, in his letter to the Colossians, admonishes us in the following words: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone" (Colossians 3:12-13).

Patience in good faith. Though it is not always easy to remain patient, the sick person responds and it helps in the healing process. To be patient with a sick person, you have to bear in mind that a sick person is no longer himself or herself. He or she has lost the essence of time and value of certain things. Understanding the suffering from this point enables one to exhibit much serenity in dealing with and helping the sick.

Giving hope to the sick. Hope is the vehicle through which one travels with the sick until recovery. Not all people recover from their illness hence, the need to have hope. Having hope is very important, although

it comes with some uncertainties. Hope is an essential element on the journey with the sick person and those closely related to them. There are times when a sick person gives up on themselves, thinking they will not recover. Other times, the people around the ill person give up on the hope of recovery of the sick person.

I have had an experience where some people have remarked that the sick person I am accompanying has reached his end. The fortunate thing is that I did not share such thoughts with the ill person. I had a strong belief that he was going to pull through. The sick person has recovered to the surprise of many, including family members who thought his end was coming. In situations like this, one needs to be like Jairus, the Roman official who had hope that Jesus will heal his daughter. Jesus gave him hope, "Don't be afraid; just believe." (Mk. 5,36)

Do not be discouraged. A person needs to watch out when taking care of the sick is not to allow themselves to be intimidated, especially by others' remarks. In my attempt to accompany sick confreres in certain times, I have heard many unnecessary comments from both the ill and others. Once, I was asked by someone, "why are you so interested in taking care of that confrere?". I did not give any answer to the person. Later on, I reflected on the question and asked myself what my motivation was for doing what I am doing. One conclusion after my reflection was this. I am doing it for the sake of charity. Christian charity means wishing the good of the other and working towards it.

Take care of yourself. There is always the temptation to run around taking care of others and forgetting to take care of oneself. If you don't learn to take care of yourself, you may end up breaking down and falling sick. I came to this realization at one point in time and so had to take some rest. I took a cue from Jesus, who always took some time off his activities to rest and pray.

Should a person fall sick and we are asked to journey with him or her, we should know that it is an opportunity of sharing in the redemptive work of the cross. I am not a trained caregiver but going through hospitals and seeing the sick's pains go through, I feel for them. The Christian call for charity towards the sick has been my motivation.

--- Fr. Stephen E.K. Dogodzi, SVD

ASPAC NEWS

Chittagong (BGD):

One year of COVID-19 in Bangladesh



We reach out to the affected people.



Programs for children.

Fr. Cyprian Pinto, SVD, is the Superior of Bangladesh Mission (BGD). He shares the journey of Bangladesh with the COVID-19 pandemic. He describes the country and its people limping back to the new normal. Here is his story.

As the pandemic reaches one year, we, in Bangladesh, had our success and challenges. Bangladesh is one of the poorest developing and densely populated countries in the Indian sub-continent, in Southeast Asia. We are limping back to "the new normal." The deadly virus was detected in the country on March 8, 2020. As of March 25, 2021, 584,395 have tested positive, out of which 529,594 have recovered. A total of 8797 have died. This densely populated country has a population of 165,836,893.

At present, the virus is under control, but the people are not yet out of danger. Immunization is in full swing, but the infection rate is steadily increasing, which is a severe cause of concern. Fortunately, the infection rate is below 5%, and the death rate is about 1.50%. The experts predict it may go up during the coming summer season.

In the parish of the Immaculate Conception in Chittagong, we are busy with all that we could do for the af-

ected people. Funds received from our Generalate, Poland Caritas, Caritas Bangladesh, and other generous people have allowed us to reach out to those in need. We handed relief materials with particular attention to the children whose schools were closed. We made sure that the out-of-school children are being attended to and cared for. We had outdoor and indoor entertainment, games, and programs for about 500 children. They came from different places and sometimes with their parents or guardians.

We hope and pray the pandemic will come to an end. This has impacted the lives of many of our brothers and sisters. We are doing our best, with the resources at our disposal, to improve their situation. Fr. Cyprian, looking ahead of the direction and future of the mission in BGD, said, "May God bless our little efforts in the coming years."

--- Fr. Cyprian Pinto, SVD

Chennai (INH):

Twenty young men admitted to the postulancy program

On January 29, 2021, Fr. Ignatius Santhuraja, SVD, the Provincial Superior of India-Hyderabad Province (INH), admitted twenty young men from the Divine Word Center in Chennai to begin their postulancy program. The event carried the theme "I have called you, and you are mine," befitting for the postulancy program's significance. In his homily, Fr. Santhuraja highlighted the need for a deep intimate relationship with the Lord. He spoke the charismatic zeal of St. Joseph Freinademetz, whose feast was celebrated that day. He called on the community of Divine Word

Center to be enveloped by our Founder's spirit aimed at establishing a life-giving relationship with all.

This year, Divine Word Center, Chennai, enjoys a vibrant community of 59 students with three staff members. On June 18, 1997, the new Divine Word Centre in Chennai was blessed by Most. Rev. Aruldas James, the then Archbishop of Madras-Mylapore, and inaugurated by Fr. Augustine Kanjamala, the then Provincial Superior of India-South (INS), with Fr. Ashok Kumar SVD as the first Rector. The Divine Word Center will celebrate the silver jubilee of its foundation in 2022.

--- INH Newsletter

Mumbai (INM):**Family Matters**

Family Matters Really Matter.' With this catchline, Atmadarshan, Center for Spirituality and Counseling in Mumbai-India (INM), launched its Family Matters (FM) YouTube channel in October 2020. Uploading a video every Saturday, the channel discusses issues that affect family life, such as relationships, conflicts, prayer, finances, health, marriage, career, etc.

When the COVID-19 lockdown was on, people began to call up to the Center seeking guidance and counseling. The lockdown had taken a toll on the people. The cramped living spaces, uncertainty over the future, loss of jobs, pay cuts, domestic conflicts etc. had created a distress situation for many. Since personal meetings were very much restricted, the staff at Atmadarshan came up with the idea to launch this digital channel dealing with everyday family problems and concerns.

With minimum investment, a mini studio was set up at the center to shoot the weekly episodes. Each episode is 5-7 minutes in length. So far, the reception has been good, with the viewers posting feedback and suggestions on what they would like to see next on the channel. To date, the channel has got around 2000 subscribers.

The staff at Atmadarshan loses no opportunity to spread the word about their digital ministry. We hope this news article would bring us both views and subscribers. Please search for <atmadarshan SVD> on YouTube to watch, subscribe and share the channel with families you know. --- Fr. Tony Menezes, SVD

Cebu City (PHS):**Free medical check-up**

The SVD, in partnership with JPIC-IDC Mobile School and Library, was able to serve 60 beneficiaries during a medical mission last week at Sitio Silangan 1, Brgy. Tinago, Cebu City. Our SVD Brothers initiated the free medical check-up. They handed out free medicine, deworming tablets, and vitamins to the kids and families.

Thank you so much to our SVD brothers for making this possible! It's always been our goal to serve these communities in need, and we look forward to helping out more. Safety measures and protocols were strictly observed during the entire activity.

--- SVD Brothers International Facebook

Hong Kong (SIN):**Online recollection on the "Church and Mission"**

The Chaplaincy to Filipino Migrants in Hong Kong organized online recollections via Facebook Live. The third part of their online Overseas Filipino workers' recollection dealt with "The Church and Mission." It was held last March 9, 2021. The speaker was Fr. Edgar Javier, SVD. Fr. Edgar is a missiology professor at the Divine Word Institute of Mission Studies at the Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay City.

The Chaplaincy to the Filipino Migrants in Hong Kong is capitalizing on celebrating the 500 years of Christianization of the Philippines. Topics like the one presented by Fr. Edgar motivated those who reflected that there is one Church. Together, we renew our mission as Filipino Catholics. Fr. Edgar Javier, SVD, reminded the Filipino overseas workers that they are blessed as baptized Christian Catholics. They have been called to be a missionary! They are gifted to give.

--- Facebook OFW Chaplaincy Hong Kong

Ledallero (IDE):**The Probanist Scholastics/Brothers**

The Probanists with Fr. Leo Kleden, SVD.

A group of scholastics and Brothers at the Formation House in Ledallero is doing their second novitiate. While in this particular period of formation, these confreres are called the "Probanist Scholastics/Brothers." 'Probanists' are what we call the formandi engaged in a program called 'probation'. This is derived from the Latin verb probare, meaning to test, demonstrate or prove. This program is guided by the motto "Servite Domino et Proximo."

The program includes various topics and themes. Some noteworthy discussions included themes like commitment, interculturality, petitio missionis, among

others. Several speakers were invited, including a married couple. Former missionaries in Africa came to share their experiences. Fr. Leo Kleden, SVD, talked about the vow of chastity, including our misconceptions and its true meaning and significance in religious life. Fr. John Prior, SVD, covered in many angles what the vow of obedience means.

The Probanist scholastics/Brothers program will run through the month of March. We wish them a fruitful period of formation. Congratulations to all those behind the preparation of this program.

--- Taken and adapted from the article of Frt.
Krispinus Ibu, SVD

Ambassa (ING):

Self-reliance programs yield positive results

The Oisho Bani Society, in collaboration with the Catholic Church, Ambassa, organized a half-day training program for fifty-eight beneficiaries on March 14, 2021. Ambassa parish started the Self-Reliance (Atma Nirbhar) program in 2019, handing five thousand rupees to every 24 beneficiaries. The seed money is meant to rear livestock (piggery, poultry, fishery, horticulture, etc.). After one year, the funds received by the beneficiaries are returned to the revolving fund committee. It worked well, and it was a successful attempt, to begin with.

On September 27, 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, we inaugurated the self-reliance program for the 58 beneficiaries of the Dhalai District. This was the time when migrant workers from different states returned to their villages. Without work, on daily wages. The Oisho Bani Society, in collaboration with the Church announced the program of rearing livestock. The selected village leaders recommended the beneficiaries' applications and are responsible for overseeing the recipients' work.

The beneficiaries also gathered for an evaluation of their self-reliance projects. Many shared their success stories, and few have returned some of their profit to the fund.

--- Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD

Kahupani (INE):

Biblical Animation in Kahupani

A Biblical Animation Program, from 8th to 16th of March, was organized in seven centers, namely Sadhumunda, Gawarbahar, Nuwagaon, Pagniabahar, Lakraberna, Mangarkunda, and Kahupani Bangla Hatha, of Kahupani Parish by the INE Province Biblical Coordinator Fr. Sunil Damor, SVD, with the help of Fr. Bartholomi Bilung, the Vicar General of Sambalpur Diocese as the primary resource person and three lay partners adding musical melody during the sessions.

The program was organized at the request of Fr. Joseph Pais, SVD, the parish priest. He had made available 500 copies of the Word of God to the Catholic families in his parish. The program's purpose was to give a methodology of reading and gist of the whole volume of the Word of God in a nutshell connecting to our socio-cultural, religious, economic, and general lifestyle in the modern-day context.

Fr. Bartholomi Bilung, SVD, enlightened and stressed that the Word of God is very much part and parcel of our life too. It touches every aspect and core value of present-day society, especially the Tribal Society's ethos and value system. The Programs were arranged in seven centers keeping in mind the convenience of the participants who are far away from the central parish. About 150 to 200 participants actively participated in each center.

--- Fr. Sunil Damor, SVD
INE Biblical Coordinator

Malang (IDJ):

Interreligious dialogue movement



Fr. Peter Sarbini, SVD, (first from left) was invited to be a speaker.

Indonesia is a country rich in ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. It is a blessing; however, it should be addressed and managed correctly and wisely at the same time. In this context, the Islamic University of Indonesia organized a national seminar on February 25-26, 2021, with the theme "Young Religious-Believers, Hate Speech, Minorities and the Future of Nationality."

The participants were religious leaders, scholars, and academics. Our confrere, Fr. Peter Sarbini, SVD, was invited to be a speaker. In his presentation, he emphasized the importance of concrete acts of cooperation between religions, enhancing peace, tolerance, solidarity, and protection for minority groups. The terminology of majority and minority should not be used anymore in this pluralistic society. All religious people are citizens who have the rights and obligations to practice

their respective religions, which are guaranteed and protected by law. The diversity of religions, cultures, and ethnicities have characterized and enriched our society. It should be taken as a valuable resource and not an obstacle to be removed.

Fr. Peter urged that religious leaders should play an essential role in building a peaceful co-existing society. They can educate the young generation to use social media wisely and fight fundamentalism. Meanwhile, our formation houses have inter-religious programs. They visit various communities of different faiths and religions. They also have live-in experiences in “Pondok Pesantren” (The Muslim Boarding School) and Vihara (The Buddhist Monastery). These moves are meant to develop a spirit of reaching out and working together to understand each other better.

--- Fr. Eko Yuliantoro, SVD

Province of Vietnam (VIE): News Updates from the Vietnam Province



The Philosophy community.

On January 13, 2021, The Priestly and Diaconate Ordination Mass was solemnly celebrated at Phú Trung Parish, Ho Chi Minh City. We are grateful to God for having four new deacons and nine new priests. The Superior General has assigned the newly-ordained priests to serve at six different countries: two in Vietnam, one in Germany, one in PNG, two in Chile, one in CAM Region, and one in the Philippines (PHS)

After three-and-a-half-year construction of the Philosophy Community building, with the contributions of the Generalate and benefactors, our confreres in the philosophy program have a proper and stable place to live and study. Currently, we have nine confreres in cursus I, twelve in cursus II, and five in cursus III; three SVD priests are accompanying the students. The philosophy community is in Gò Vấp District, Ho Chi Minh City.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the OTP/CTP Program has been postponed. Ten confreres will not be able to carry out the program as planned. A confrere was supposed to go to Colombia, two to Slovakia Province (SLK), two to Congo Province (CNG), two to the Philippines (PHS), two to Papua New Guinea

(PNG), and one to Madagascar (MAD). These candidates for OTP/CTP are temporarily taking alternative programs.

After 40 years of insistently reclaiming (even fighting) for a property, on April 3, 2019, the Vietnam Province received back our land of 15,131 square meters from the local government. The government “borrowed” and “used” our land for a very long time. The Vietnam Province is planning to build a religious center and a chapel on this retrieved land. These two facilities will be able to welcome pilgrims and religious people and to serve pastoral activities locally. At the moment, fundraising for these two projects is going on. We are also working on the building plans and costs we will submit to the Generalate for approval.

--- Fr. Hung (Joseph) Minh Tran, SVD
Provincial Superior

Philippine Central Province (PHC): Virtual Lenten Recollection 2021

The Philippine Central Province (PHC) conducted the second recollection webinar on the theme “Lent and COVID-19 Pandemic – Deepening of Prayer Life and Spirituality,” with a conference by our General Coordinator for Spiritual Animation, Fr. Peter Dusicka, held last March 22 just in time for the celebration of Holy Week. The first webinar was a spiritual conference graciously given by Father General Paulus Budi Kleden, which was held last November 30, 2020 on the theme “Advent and the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

Just like in the first webinar, the second webinar (Lenten Recollection) was also well attended by many confreres via Zoom, and deeply appreciated for its substance and relevance. There was a prayer service followed by the spiritual conference of Fr. Peter. The conference was presented in three parts: (1) Lent and Metanoia (Conversion); (2) COVID-19 and Paschal Mystery; and (3) Post-Pandemic Era and New Life. Before he imparted the final blessing, Fr. Provincial, Jerome Marquez, spoke some words of gratitude and commented that the conference was “simple and profound.” Indeed, it was a very reflective, uplifting, and Spirit-filled Lenten recollection.

--- Fr. Joaquin R. Ferrer Jr., SVD
for the PHC Spiritual Animation Team (AJST)

Indore (INC):

The effects of the New Technology on the New Generation

On March 20, 2021, Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra conducted a one-day training session for the DB Tech children of Janvikas. The theme was “The effects of the New Technology on the New Generation.” There were 80 participants for the training at Satprakashan Digital Studio, Indore.

Fr. Babu Joseph SVD, the director of Satprakashan, gave the Keynote address. He gave precise information and difference on Print Media, Electronic Media, and Social Media. Fr. Anthony Swamy SVD, the Program Coordinator of RVA Hindi, continued with the practical session. He took the whole group to the Satprakashan Communication Museum and explained the evolution of communication technology. The participants were given exposure regarding lights, camera, and camera management in the new multimedia studio. They experienced what it is like to use an audio studio.



Fr. Anthony Swamy also gave a session on emerging technology and its effects. He opened the whole computer part by part and assembled it in front of the students. Fr. Cyril SVD interacted with the participants and asked what they have learned. He encouraged the students to make this a profession so that they can make their lives better with good earning.

--- Fr. Anthony Swamy, SVD

Hwambi, Myanmar (AUS):

The worsening political crisis and our confreres

Fr. Mariusz Kubista, SVD, one of our three confreres working in Hwambi, informs about the worsening political condition in Myanmar. Referring to the situation of our confreres Fr. Marius shared the following:

We are affected by this whole political situation. For the last few days, we have heard gunshots in the streets. One day, around 2 am, the police fired at our gate. Every night our internet connection is cut off, and during the day, the internet runs very slowly. Sometimes sending communication and searching for information is very difficult.

A trip to the city is highly unrecommended. Private hospitals are closed. On the other hand, the public hospitals do not work because all the staff is on strike. We are aware that COVID-19 is still not under control all over the world. Supermarkets have been closed for a week. International Airport has been closed since Feb-

ruary 1, although we have received some news of charter flights organized by individual embassies. Banks have not opened for a month now. At the moment, it is not possible to transfer money from abroad or even to withdraw money from private accounts. This complex situation makes us feel more and more insecure.



Photo courtesy of Vatican news

Now that the army is becoming more brutal, it is often heard that the people will also start to counter-react. I recommend you to read the report published by the media group "The Irrawaddy" (<https://www.irrawaddy.com>). This report is sent regularly and distributed to all priests and religious by the Catholic Religious Conference of Myanmar (CRCM). In short, it chronicles all the important events happening in Myanmar in recent days.

As of March 20, the following information has been gathered:

- As of yesterday, the UN reported that the country is on the verge of civil war
- People in Yangon are fleeing due to martial law
- Prices of food items and fuel are going up
- Most of the private institutions like banks and hospitals remain closed.

Our confreres in Myanmar, Fathers Mariusz, Tuyen Thanh Hoang Michael Nguyen, and Devasagayam Savariyappan, are aware that the situation goes beyond control. They are allowed to leave the country. They need to contact their respective embassies for information regarding the evacuation flights. The Cardinal, in his zoom meeting, told the religious to take care of themselves and make the necessary decisions.

--- Fr. Mariusz Kubita, SVD
Community Leader

Philippine Central Province (PHC):

JPIC's Five compassionate ways



Kalinga during a disaster.

Fr. Aureenhor Ian Nercua, SVD, JPIC, and VIVAT representative of PHC, shares the five compassionate ways being carried out in the Province in the realm of Justice, Peace, and Integrity Creation. He outlines these five ways where compassion abounds. Let us get to know these five ways of compassion.

The first way of compassion: Kalinga sa Kalye (Kalinga in the streets)

The Kalinga Center meaning Kain, Ligo ng Ayos (Eat and shower thoroughly), is a dignified, systematic, and holistic way of feeding in Tayuman. The Center was closed because police and local authorities prevented the administrators from violating social distancing protocols. This reason is not valid.

So, as our response to COVID-19, Kalinga Center decided to have the Kalinga sa Kalye. We bring food packs to the beggars and homeless in different places while respecting social distancing protocols. It started from 250 food packs in March 2020 to 1000 food packs in March 2021. A unified response was volunteers, beneficiaries, other institutions, and SVDs like Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD, and Fr. Ian Nercua, SVD.

Second way of compassion: Bahay Kalinga (Kalinga Home)

The Bahay Kalinga is a home for the homeless. As they are taken in, the homeless undertake the threefold programs (Alternative Learnings, Skills training, and Livelihood and employment program). They are the ten local stranded individuals (LSIs) for 'Balik Probin-sya' (Back to the Province) and nine elderly people for the referral. A total of twelve interns have been re-integrated with their families and relatives through our 'Tulay sa Pamilya' (Bridge to the family).

The third way of compassion: Paghilom Program

Paghilom Program is a program in response to extrajudicial killings (EJK) in Metro Manila. Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD, is accompanying the victims closely. As of December 2020, this program was able to give direct financial assistance to 250 EJK families (P2.9M) during COVID-19; 42 EJK orphans provided with tablets (costing P370K) for their online school; Burial

Assistance (P250K) for EJK victims; Psycho-spiritual intervention (PSI) sessions for Batch 9 (28 widows), Batch 10 (33 widows), and Batch 11 (28 widows); and the Paghilom Livelihood Projects for 31 families.

The fourth way of compassion: bamboo planting and farming

We have the bamboo planting and organic fruits and vegetable advocacy of Fr. Ben Beltran, SVD. There is also the SVD Farm in Divine Word Seminary, Tagaytay City, led by Fr. Samuel Agcaracar, SVD. This is a response to the growing crisis on climate change and Laudato Si's promptings to take good care of Mother Earth.

The fifth way of compassion: Kalinga sa Panahon ng Unos (Kalinga during a disaster)

The Kalinga sa Panahon ng Unos Center in Tayuman responds to any disasters. Last December 2020, a summit for the SVD JPIC Team was held with the theme "Acting as one." With this, Fr. Aureenhor worked hand in hand with the laity, Dioceses, and SVDs to have a consolidated effort to respond to the victims' needs, be they typhoons volcanic eruptions. Satellite relief centers are established in our parishes, colleges, and schools.

Fr. Aureenhor shares, "I am very thankful to the laity, mission partners, and SVDs for being part of the ocular inspections and point persons for donations. With these consolidated efforts, we can provide relief goods in eight provinces. Three hundred twenty-five families received the Kalingaan Roof Aid for Albay, Oriental Mindoro, Catanduanes, Rizal, Camarines, Cagayan Valley, Batangas Surigao del Sur.

--- Based on the report of
Fr. Aureenhor Ian Nercua, SVD
JPIC and VIVAT Representatives

EUROPA NEWS

Lisbon (POR):

A Divine Word missionary in the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic



Fr. Carlos Manuel Matos, SVD, ordained a priest since 2002 works at the service of the Pastoral of Health since 2004. He started in a small hospital in Almodovar, south of Portugal, where he was also the Parish Priest. Since 2009, he does pastoral ministry at the Hospital de S. José. Fr. Carlos shares his experiences in this seven-hospital units called Centro Hospitalar Universitário Central de Lisboa (CHUCL). Let us focus on his story.

My presence is my mission

The CHUCL has all kinds of hospital services and specialties rendered to the public. In the hospital where I work as a Chaplain, we have the Emergency Room. This is where the whole hospital journey begins. That's why it's called an end-of-the-line hospital. In this sense, I am also responsible for the morgues. My mission is to assist all those who ask for religious assistance for the patients, collaborators, and families.

I am also responsible for giving a dignified end to all the deceased, primarily the indigent and poorest. For the seven days of the week, I am in contact with illness, suffering, and death. Sometimes, I am asked if I have a work schedule? Of course, I do! But there is no time to die and to ask for the Sacraments. My presence is my mission. This is where we are called to be ready and available always when it comes to proclaiming the Word of God. We share the power of the Word to those who need it most at a time that we never know.

COVID-19 challenges the logic of health care

COVID-19 has changed the whole logic of health care. So much so that there is already medical training for post-COVID patients. As the situation worsened, there were daily challenges of responding to unpredictable conditions. Suddenly, our emergency room, prepared to receive all sorts of medical needs and attention, became a gateway for COVID-19 patients by the hundreds. Everything changed. In due time, the hospital faced a catastrophic situation.

It is impossible to describe what I have experienced during these times. I have never seen many deaths and much despair. In the hospital, there was a tremendous jump in hospital capacity. Initially, there were a few COVID-19 patients. In due time, more patients were brought, and coronavirus patients occupied practically 75% of the hospital's capacity. We have entered a catastrophic plan. We applied the triage, sorting the

COVID patients according to their need for emergency medical attention. This was the problematic method of determining priority for who gets care first. Who has priority? Who can survive? Who is left behind?

Attending to the dead

From the moment the patient enters the hospital, the family is left behind. If death comes to a patient, he/she is never seen by the family again. The safety protocol is followed. You put the person in two bags. You don't get dressed. You go directly to the morgue. They are kept in cooling units until there is a vacancy in the crematorium.

There were so many dead that it was necessary to wait sometimes up to a week or more to begin the funeral. The body is placed in an urn, closed, and cannot be opened from the morgue. The family is not allowed to see their loved one. They cannot get close. Only ten people were allowed for the burial services. Amid this, I sometimes ask, what is the need for a chaplain?

A hospital chaplain, an essential worker

When the first confinement began, drastic measures were taken to avoid gatherings and contagion. Churches were closed, telecommuting was introduced, and support services considered non-essential were canceled. Some chaplains were asked to stay at home to avoid contagion. At the outset, the hospital thought of the chaplain as an essential worker. The staff counted on my presence and continuity.

I was trained to assist the patients. I started to wear a protective suit every day. When there were no visits, the chaplain was considered a bridge between the family and the patient, during the illness and even death. My support to the frontline health workers was also requested. I collaborated with the social service and psychology department. An emergency contact number was created. The professionals would call me to talk.

All this was only possible because I already had a

previous presence and contact with the health workers and patients. People already knew me. There was trust. Without this last daily presence, I would have run the risk of not being considered essential in a public and, therefore, secular hospital. A channel was created to broadcast Mass online. I also started a YouTube Channel that is called the Chaplain's Beach.

The SVD community

As rector of the Formation House in Lisbon, my priority was to keep the house safe. At that same time, one of our confreres saw his life taking a turn. As a result of a sudden illness, he was hospitalized in danger of death. He ended up paraplegic and is still fighting for his self-sufficiency. I could not leave this confrere in a hospital alone.

St. Gabriel, Austria (ECP):

We are cooks of the Good Life!



Fr. Franz Helm SVD and Fr. Josef Denkmayr SVD, cook for the good life.

The confreres of St. Gabriel mission house participated in the Family Fasting Day Campaign with their St. Gabriel Lenten soup. Parishes in Austria usually organize Lenten soup suppers as part of the Family Fasting Day campaign under the Catholic Women's Movement in Austria (KFB).

Since these suppers cannot occur this year because of the Corona pandemic, the KFB has come up with something special. The campaign with the motto "We are cooks of the good life", moved to the internet on the website www.fasten.at. As "cook of the good life," everyone can upload his/her favorite soup recipe, including a photo, and say how the soup contributes to the good life. From the 20 most popular recipes, a jury will select the two best, which will be printed on recipe cards and distributed for Family Fasting Day 2022.

The SVD Missionaries at St. Gabriel participated in this year's Family Fasting Day campaign with their traditional St. Gabriel Lenten soup, which is served at St. Gabriel on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. But the

The community took seriously all the health measures to avoid the contact and spread of the virus. We realized the COVID-19 situation is serious when the first case in the community arose. By taking the proper measures, it was possible to contain an outbreak in the community.

Fr. Carlos asks, what is the importance of a Divine Word Missionary in the so-called front line? I have no answer. I leave this challenge to the reader. Fear cannot be part of our life! The Word continues to be the Incarnate Word. Amid so much sadness and pain, it takes a very strong and assumed Word to conjugate sentences with hope. I don't know if I make myself clear!

--- Fr. Carlos Manuel Matos, SVD

cooks of the bean and potato soup were not the regular female kitchen team. However, the Rector Fr. Franz Helm SVD and his vice-rector Fr. Josef Denkmayr SVD, were professionally dressed in white cooking aprons.

The SVD "cooks of the good life" were in prominent company with their soup recipe. The wives of the current Federal President and the former head of state have also contributed recipes. With the donations, the Family Fasting Day Campaign supports more than 70 projects in countries to help women gain their rights and improve their social situation.

The recipe for the St. Gabriel Lenten soup can be found here:

<https://www.teilen.at/fft/de/aktivwerden/koechindesgutenlebens/database/78.html>

--- Text and Photos: Fr. Franz Pilz, SVD

German Province (GER):

Moving to a hermitage



Fr. Norbert Cuypers, SVD

In November 2020, Fr. Norbert Cuypers, SVD, moved from the busy Holy Spirit parish in Berlin to a hermitage located in the small village of Dörnschlade in the hilly region of the Sauerland. After four months of life in silence and solitude, Steyl Aktuell paid him a virtual visit and asked him questions. Here is an extract of the interview.

Fr. Norbert, what is the motivation to leave the Berlin community and move to a hermitage?

From the outset, I would like to emphasize that this move is not a decision against Berlin, where I gladly lived and worked for more than six years. Neither have I come to the hermitage because of a vocational crisis or loss of missionary perspective. It was the realization of a desire for more silence.

What were the first experiences?

Although the move was made after long, mature deliberation, it still gave the feeling of venturing into the unknown. Of course, life in solitude and silence is different. There is substantially more time for spiritual life. I see it as a great chance to grow and mature as a person and a religious. In the house, there is a prayer room for an encounter with God. Nearby, there is a small chapel often visited by hikers and passersby.

Which activities fill the days in the hermitage?

The morning hours are holy to me. The phone and laptop are turned off. The time is reserved for meditation, prayer and spiritual reading, and journal writing which is very important. In the afternoon I do the manual work. Nevertheless, that is also the time for the personal accompaniment of people who ring the bell, preparation for liturgies, writing articles, preparing for the following radio broadcast. The evening is again mainly a time of silence in the small prayer room.

--- Interview and photos by Renate Breuer
Steyl Aktuell

Madrid (ESP):**Twenty-five years of Filipino chaplaincy**

On the occasion of the Year of St. Joseph, Fr. Mark Angelo Ramos, SVD, did artistic work, "The Father, Nourishing our Lord, the Divine Word," at Parroquia Ntra. Señora del Espino. This is where Madrid's Filipinos have been celebrating their faith and gathering for the past 25 years.

On March 7, during the Eucharistic celebrations at 3:30 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., the community gave thanks for allowing the Divine Word Missionaries to celebrate 25 years of the almost 35 years of existence of the TAH-ANAN Philippine Chaplaincy in El Espino.

The parish of Our Lady of El Espino has served as a meeting place for many Filipinos. We want to thank the community of the Missionaries of the Heart of Mary. They have given shelter in their spaces so that the Chaplaincy maintained great stability during these long years.

Fr. Jorge Domínguez, the parish priest, praised the excellent work of the SVDs throughout these 25 years. He singled out the good work of Fr. Ramos, who runs the Chaplaincy. The 5:00 p.m. mass is always full. This year with the pandemic, they have to extend the schedule and start at 3:00 p.m.

The Philippine Church celebrates 500 years since the first Mass was celebrated in those lands. Easter Sunday will be the 500th-anniversary celebration in Madrid. Congratulations. A year-long celebration began in 2020, but the activities and programs could not be carried out because of the pandemic.

--- ESP Newsletter

Munich (GER):**Ministering during the time of the pandemic**

In Munich, our confreres Fr. Devis Don Wadin from Indonesia and Fr. Joe Arun Prakash A. from India work together in a pastoral unit that comprises the two parishes of St. Hedwig and St. Joachim. Together with the lay full-time parish worker Mrs. Steineke, they serve about 8300 Catholics. Since its foundation in 1961, the parish of St Hedwig has been the responsibility of the SVD. In 2012, the parish of St Joachim was added.

Especially in the time of the pandemic, people's desire for pastors who turn to them increases. That is why we are going new ways to stay with the people despite the virus. We visit people in their homes and retirement homes. They need pastors who will listen to them and not leave them alone during this difficult time. Loneliness increases and with it hopelessness and helplessness. We speak comforting words, give anointing of the sick, and bring Holy Communion.

Besides, since the end of March 2020, we have been sending a video message every week to reach people who have little contact and cannot come to Church. We also reached out to those who no longer want to come to Church. People are very grateful for this. We are learning to stand up to the pandemic and find answers in the Gospel to people's problems today.

--- Fr. Devis Don Wadin, SVD
Steyl Aktuell

Province of Netherlands-Belgium (NEB):**Council of Missionaries in the Netherlands (BEMIN) 2011 - 2020**

Fr. Bert Wooning, who is deeply involved in the Council of Missionaries in the Netherlands (BEMIN), shares how the organization came about, its development, and present challenges and directions. Let us take a look at Fr. Bert's story.

Background

In 2011 the provincial council of NEB felt the need to set up a kind of think tank to reflect on the situation of confreres here in the Netherlands, its significance, and its impact on our Province and the Dutch Church. This almost automatically raised the question of the best way for confreres from abroad, New Missionaries (NM), to be introduced and helped with their lives and work here.

Initially, this think tank was only meant for the SVD, but soon the SSpS and the Missionaries of Africa joined us. The Nijmegen Institute for Mission Studies (NIM), Radboud University Nijmegen, offered a helping hand. Frans Wijzen, professor of Missiology and SMA lay

missionary, and Jorge Castillo Guerra, a lecturer in missiology, an expert in the field of Christian migrant communities, came on board to help. Over the years, other congregations with members from abroad have successively joined us as well. The religious congregations are the Spiritans, MSC, SMA, Monforts, Mill Hill, Carmelites, and many NM themselves and a representative of the Dutch Conference of Religious (KNR).



Introducing the new missionaries.

Development

Over time closely related themes have come up almost automatically, such as: What does NM do here in the Netherlands? What does it mean, 'Mission in the Netherlands?'; Is there a contradiction between missionary work and working in a parish?.

With the arrival of NM, are we maintaining the existing ecclesiastical system that prevents new ecclesiastical forms more adapted to our times and the future?; And NM raised subjects such as: "Why did I come here?; What can I do here in the Netherlands?; Why do pastoral workers do things that a priest should do?".

It became increasingly clear we needed to expand our work beyond think tank meetings and discussions and practically address specific issues. There was, for example, a need to organize meetings with the NM to address particular subjects that would facilitate their social and ecclesiastical integration. This resulted in NIM following up on SVD and Spiritans by establishing an annual seven-day course at the Radboud University in Nijmegen.

The program included: Relationship between religion, state, and society in the history of the Netherlands; The Netherlands as a post-Christian country; Understanding of secularization; Missionary movement in the Netherlands over the last 200 years; among others.

A second brainchild concerns the migrant faith communities with whom many NM are closely involved. How to serve them best? This question concerning our migrant apostolate was addressed during our work-

shop in 2019 with 30 NM from various congregations.

As a follow-up, BEMIN planned a workshop for representatives of all migrant communities in the Netherlands and their pastors in 2020. Some 130 participants were expected. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus pandemic, this event had to be postponed to June 2021.

At present, our think tank is discussing the question of whether foreign diocesan priests and representatives of the various dioceses should be invited to join us. After all, the bishops are primarily responsible for Mission.

Difficulties are sometimes opposing theological and practical opinions between the bishops themselves, their diocesan priests, some bishops and religious, and the religious themselves. It mainly concerns the so-called "new" congregations that have come to the Netherlands in recent years.

We are also concerned about the danger that much know-how about Mission is lost now that the KNR discontinued its 'mission committee. Plans are underway to formalize a closer bond between BEMIN and NIM.

Conclusion

This originally pure SVD initiative has developed into an increasingly broad organization of various congregations and other interested parties dealing with the phenomenon of foreign religious and diocesan priests in the Netherlands and the significance of Mission for our time. For the future, this calls for a broader approach and new young and fresh leadership. I hope to be succeeded as chairman by an NM at the end of 2020.

--- Fr. Bert Wooning SVD

PANAM NEWS

*District of Atrato (COL):***Responding to a worsening humanitarian crisis***Humanitarian team to visit and support these displaced communities.*

Fr. Marselinus Belawa Nuhan, the Provincial of Colombia (COL), shares the situation of our confreres serving in the District of Atrato. There are two parishes administered by the SVD. We have the Parroquia Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes in Vigía del Fuerte and Parroquia San Bartolomé Apóstol in Murindó. Here is his report.

Our confreres Michal Radomski, the parish priest of Parroquia San Bartolome, and his assistant Aloysius Rabata Men needed to respond to the worsening humanitarian crisis affecting their parish. According to an official communication from the Dioceses of Quibdó and Apartado, the territorial dispute's intensification between the ELN (National Liberation Army) and the AGC (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia) has worsened. In the municipality of Murindó alone, there are 2,200 people confined with little humanitarian aid.

The inhabitants of Turriquitadadó Alto comprise 25 families numbering 140 people. They had to leave their homes when a dispute broke out between the ELN and the AGC. Anti-personnel mines were installed inside the community's houses and in front of the school. At least 20 people were trapped in the area and are incommunicado and confined by the presence of illegal armed groups.

Monsignor Juan Carlos Barreto, Bishop of Quibdó, explained that the community's greatest needs are humanitarian aid and collective protection. The people

need help after constant threats of displacement by the ELN and territorial demining. He also explained that the security forces should have "a total distance from the illegal actors to guarantee their protection work".

Fathers Rabata and Radomski, under the direction of the bishop of Quibdó and Apartado, and the indigenous and Afro leaders, and the international Red Cross formed a humanitarian team to visit and support these displaced communities.

According to official communication from the diocese, both the ELN and the AGC, in their territorial dispute, have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law and have affected the human rights of its inhabitants. As a consequence of armed groups' presence and actions, the indigenous communities have been victims of confinement, displacement, recruitment of their youth, threats to leaders and organizations, and loss of their autonomy.

We pray for the safety of our confreres and their collaborators.

--- Fr. Marselinus Belawa Nuhan, SVD
Bluradio news

Quilmes (ARS):**Twenty years of SVD presence in Hogar Madre Teresa de Calcuta**

On February 22, 2001, two Divine Word Missionaries, Father Blas Loli Libur, SVD and Brother Victor Hirch, SVD, moved to the Mother Teresa of Calcutta Home to share their life and mission. Hogar Madre Teresa is a work founded in 1988 by the SVD Bishop Jorge Novak in Quilmes, south of Greater Buenos Aires in Argentina.

Currently there are seven homes dedicated to the assistance and promotion of children and adolescents who cannot live with their families of origin. Basically, there are three groups of children. Those who are orphaned, due to the death of their parents; those who live by themselves because their parents are in prison, have terminal diseases or suffer psychiatric illnesses that prevent them to care for their children. Finally, there are children who are victims of their own families, due to addictions, alcoholism or delinquency. They also subject their children to physical mistreatment and abuse.

The Hogar Madre Teresa currently houses 70 children and adolescents and offers them an alternative place to their families of origin. They are provided with lodging, food, health, recreation, education, and training in workshops and trades. This is a coexistence modality whereby the people who assume the responsibility of accompanying the children live in the houses, assuming all the experiences of their upbringing. We do not work there, we live there.

--- Bro. Victor Hirsch, SVD

VIVAT Brazil (Brazil Subzone)

Relying on the power of homeopathy



They spoke about the power of prevention found in nature.

Fr. Jose Boeing, SVD of VIVAT International Brazil, moderated a live session with the theme Homeopathy: another medicine is possible. The Live had the objective of spreading the knowledge acquired and involving VIVAT Brazil and other groups in the dynamism of the daily use of Homeopathy. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the preventive and curative medicine of COVID-19 was distributed to 85,000 people.

There were several speakers that included Sr. Marialva da Costa Oliveira, SSps, president of Associação Brasileira de Homeopatia Popular (ABHP) and an indigenous woman, Marilza Maytapu Tuchua from the village of Pinhel on the Rio Tapajós. They spoke about the power of prevention found in nature. Homeopathy started in Germany with the work of Samuel Hahnemann.

The Homeopathic System is governed by four laws (Four pillars of homeopathy):

First law - Similar cures Similar.

Second law - Experimentation in healthy organisms.

Third law - Unique substance.

Fourth law - Minimum dose (Diluted preparations called "dynamized")

In the Homeopathic System, we should not treat part of the body but the whole body. For example, if you have a toe infection, it is not only your toe that is sick but your entire body. So, we have to treat the body, the whole "mind, and body." Diseases are imbalances!

The Homeopathic System aims to restore and recover the balance of the totality.

--- Father José Boeing, SVD,
VIVAT Brazil and REPAM

Brazil-Amazon Region (BRA):

Commitment for the Amazonian Rainforest



Some confreres accompany a Family Farming group.

The warning and call of the bishops

In their sixth Pastoral Amazonian meeting in Santarem - Brazil, in 1972, the Amazonian Bishops were very prophetic, saying that Christ points to the Amazon. In this meeting, the bishops dealt very clearly with the problems experienced and faced by the people of God in the Amazon, among them the indigenous question on migration and the environment. "The Church in the Amazon, without any favor, has historically become the most responsible for the Indians."

In addition, the bishops said, "Transamazonica and other roads are undertaking the integration and development of the vast region connected with the waterways. New pastoral problems demand our attention and our providence". As a congregation, we are in three indigenous areas with four confreres dedicated to them. The degradation of the Amazon forest is happening both in the riverine region and in the terra firma. It is an increasingly depressing situation.

The Amazon forest continues to be threatened

The Amazon forest continues to be threatened. Its destruction continues apace. In the period from August 2019 to July 2020, the deforestation rate increased by 34 %, according to data presented by the National Institute for Space Research (INPE). In this period, more than 9.2 thousand square kilometers of forest were felled. Some researchers estimate that probably the deforested area will be more than 13 thousand square kilometers for the following survey.

After the area is cleared and its central values ex-

tracted, the producers come. The forest is replaced by planting corn, rice, soybeans, sorghum, and grass for cattle raising. The small landowners sell their properties and migrate to urban areas, mainly in the periphery. The big concern is that there may be deforestation in forbidden areas such as conservation units, indigenous lands, and Permanent Preservation Areas (APPs) in the future.

SVDs are committed to preserve the rainforest

In the parishes where our confreres work, they are feeling this challenge. Faithful to the evangelical call, we assume the responsibility to make people aware of

developing a more responsible, humane, and shared economic activity. Some confreres accompany the Family Farming group in the Nossa Senhora Aparecida Parish - Trairão, the Rural Workers Union in the Santo Antonio Parish - Alenquer, and the Women's Garden group in the Santo Arnaldo Pastoral Area - Arapiuns, as well as other specific projects in the parishes where we work. With these projects, we want to show the reality that we can produce enough without additional deforestation.

--- Fr. Leonardus Gade, SVD
Regional Superior BRA

Province of Mexico (MEX):

Migrant House in Chiapas, an important JPIC Dimension



The migrants can satisfy their hunger:



Bro. Joaquin Mnich, SVD.

Fr. Juan Weibel, SVD, the Provincial of MEX, and Bro. Joaquin Mnich, SVD, Administrator of Migrant House, speak highly of the Migrant House Betania in Chiapas. They consider our ministry an important JPIC Dimension focusing on attending to the plight of Central American migrants. This is what they share.

Attending to the Central American migrants is an essential Social Dimension of Justice and Peace and Care for Creation in Mexico. For many years the migrants have been walking to the Migrant House "BETANIA - SANTA MARTHA" in Salto de Agua, Chiapas. It is a place of welcome to those who are on the road looking for better living conditions. Since January 2021, the flow of migrants has increased considerably. Between January and February, we received six thousand migrants, while last year, we received 8149 migrants.

In the Migrant House, we provide comprehensive care. The migrants can not only rest and satisfy their hunger, but they also find an oasis where they are listened to and accompanied spiritually, mentally, and legally. Their wounds are attended to, and their other medical needs. The areas of care are Humanitarian Assistance, Administration, Spirituality, Communication, Legal Rights, Nursing-Psychological and Medical Care.

We thank the Mexico-Cuba Province and other Provinces' confreres, who show interest in the project and those who support us. If any province would like to help Casa Betania-Santa Martha in any way, we would be delighted to feel that we have a joint project in the SVD. Please contact Fr. Provincial Juan Weibel and Bro. Joaquin Mnich.

--- Fr. Juan Weibel, SVD
Bro. Joaquin Mnich, SVD

OUR DEPARTED

| SVD | Name | Province | + Date-Death | Age | Vows | Year of Orders |
|-----|----------------------------|----------|--------------|-----|------|----------------|
| | Fr. Wagenpfeil, Albert | GER | 03.03.2021 | 87 | 61 | 57 |
| | Fr. Steffen, Arnold | USC | 12.03.2021 | 92 | 72 | 64 |
| | Bro. Kallakavumkal, Joseph | INC | 13.03.2021 | 77 | 52 | ** |
| | Fr. Oostrum, Piet van | NEB | 18.03.2021 | 97 | 76 | 72 |
| | Fr. Uroda, Stanley | USC | 18.03.2021 | 73 | 50 | 47 |
| | Fr. Heijdt, Gerard van der | NEB | 20.03.2021 | 96 | 74 | 70 |
| | Fr. Boko Nahak, Andreas | TLS | 21.03.2021 | 54 | 30 | 24 |
| | Bro. Rabiega, Tomasz | POL | 26.03.2021 | 37 | 07 | ** |
| | Fr. Darunday, Valentino | PHC | 29.03.2021 | 89 | 69 | 63 |

SSpS

| Sister: Rel. Name and Family Name | Prov/Reg | Date-Death | Age | Yrs. in Vows |
|-----------------------------------|----------|------------|-----|--------------|
| Sr. Marcellina, Yoshiko Hiragaki | JAP | 13.03.2021 | 85 | 58 |
| Sr. Justina, Marlies Förster | GER | 13.03.2021 | 85 | 59 |
| Sr. Maria Melanie, Pura Breis | PHN | 19.03.2021 | 82 | 56 |
| Sr. Elenora, Ida Oberarzbacher | OES | 24.03.2021 | 87 | 65 |

OBITUARIES

Fr. Andreas Boko Nahak (TLS)
21-03-2021; 67-89-91-96-97


Andreas Boko Nahak was born on March 12, 1967, in a village called Bolan, in Malaka in West Timor, and now a part of NTT province, Indonesia. His parents were Yohanes Boko Nahak and Theresia Abuk. He completed his early schooling in his hometown. He entered Lalian Minor Seminary in Atambua in 1987. He joined the novitiate on August 1, 1989 and professed his first vows on August 15, 1991, in St. Josef in Nenuk, Atambua. He did his Philosophy and Theology in STFK Ledalero in Flores, Indonesia. He committed himself to Final Vows on August 15, 1996, ordained deacon on April 27, 1997, and finally ordained a priest on September 29, 1997, by Most Rev. Bishop Antonius Pain Ratu, SVD in Betun Parish in Malaka.

As a new and zealous missionary, he was prompt to respond to the African mission. He got his first appointment to Kenya province in Tanzania. As a preparatory course to refine his English for the mission, he went to Ireland for a year, then TOEFEL course in Ireland- England. To deepen and be rooted in the mission, he did a course on Anthropology on African Culture from 2000-2002.

Fr. Boko Nahak served the mission in Africa in different capacities. As a new missionary, he served in Kavole Divine Word Parish from 2001-2004. After his first mission, he was entrusted with greater confidence to start a new mission in Tanzania. He served as an assistant priest in Burka parish in Tanzania from 2004-2007.

In 2008 he wished to return to his home country and joined the newly formed East Timor Region. He served in the newly installed diocese of Maliana. He was ap-

pointed the headmaster of a primary school in Colegio Maliana. He also taught in UNPAZ affiliated in Maliana from 2008-2012.

According to the need, he served as the parish priest of Balibo Parish from 2012-2016. He showed much of his confidence, won the trust of confreres, and served as district superior of the SVD district of Bobonaro from 2014.

He was a community member in Soverdi in Dili as he simultaneously taught in ICR, an institute of Pastoral studies. His last appointment was as an assistant in Nitibe-Baocnana Parish of Oecusse since December 2020, where he served the mission enthusiastically. In December 2020, he was appointed the Vice District Superior of Oecusse. On March 19, he drove the car and went to a mission station in Oelfab. While celebrating the Holy Mass, he started sweating and he developed an acute headache. He collapsed and lost conscience. He was rushed to the nearest hospital in Oecusse. On March 21, 2021, at 2:30 pm, he returned to his Creator.

After various coordination and many health protocols due to the pandemic, he was brought to Soverdi, Dili, the SVD Timor Leste's regional house, on March 22, 2021. The Resurrection service was held in the chapel of SSpS Novitiate in Hera. He was laid to rest with the Bishop of Dili present on March 23, 2021.

Fr. Stanley Uroda (USC)
18-03-2021; 48-70-71-74-74


Divine Word Father Stanley Uroda, 72, a missionary in Ghana and two-term provincial in the United States, died on March 18 following a battle with cancer.

"When I think of Stan, the word that

immediately comes to mind is integrity,” said Father Stephen Bevans SVD, Louis J. Luzbetak SVD Professor of Mission and Culture, Emeritus, at Catholic Theological Union, in his homily during Father Uroda’s funeral. “Stan was really the best; a great friend; a wonderful person; a decisive and yet compassionate leader; a wise counselor; a humble missionary to Ghana, Appalachia, and Vietnam; a great SVD; and a holy man,” he said.

Father Uroda served as provincial superior for two three-year terms beginning in 1996. During his tenure, he recognized the need for more missionaries in Appalachia. He expanded the Society of the Divine Word’s presence in McDowell County, a region economically devastated by coal production changes.

Born in Detroit on August 15, 1948, Stan Uroda was the second of Joseph and Julia Uroda’s four children. In September 1962, he entered the high school seminary at Perrysburg, Ohio. He began his Novitiate in Bay St. Louis on September 1, 1970. He professed his first vows on August 28, 1971, in Bay St. Louis. He professed his final vows in Marenisco on September 6, 1974. He was ordained a priest in Perrysburg on December 21, 1974.

After earning a master’s degree in Education from Loyola University in Chicago in 1976, Father Uroda was sent to Ghana for his first assignment. He served as a chaplain and teacher at St. Paul’s Technical School in Kukurantumi/Akim, Ghana. After eight years in West Africa, tropical illnesses, such as malaria and typhoid, took a toll on the young priest. In 1984, he returned to the United States.

After a year of studies at the Institute of Religious Formation in St. Louis, Father Uroda was appointed as formation director of Divine Word Theologate in Chicago. He directed and mentored Divine Word seminarians, who studied at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago until he was elected vice provincial in 1990.

While vice provincial, at the behest of the Superior General in Rome, Father Uroda strengthened the bond between the religious congregation and the Catholic Church in Vietnam. He also served on the Techny Land Committee and worked with Father Francis Kamp SVD to develop and lease the Divine Word property in Techny, Ill., that was no longer being used as farmland.

After completing his second term as provincial, he went to Appalachia to serve as a parish priest for St. Peter in Welch, W.Va.; Christ the King in War, W.Va.; and Our Lady of Victory in Gary, W.Va.

In 2005, he returned to the Divine Word Theologate, this time as rector. After nine years there, he was asked to go to Vietnam, where he lived in the Divine Word Missionary community in Nha Trang and taught English classes for students in formation.

When he returned to the United States in 2018, he became the superior for the Divine Word Community in East Troy, Wis. In 2020, he moved to Techny for health reasons. In addition to his pastoral and administrative

activities, Father Uroda also served as a board member for the Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM-USA), an organization of lay missionaries who fostered peace, social justice, and human empowerment of the poor and marginalized.

He is survived by his sisters Antoinette Alwin, Dorothy Alwin, and Mary Seder, and nieces and nephews. Father Uroda’s visitation and funeral Mass took place at St. Joseph the Worker Church in Wheeling, Ill., on March 22. He was buried at St. Mary’s Cemetery at Techny.

Bro. Joseph Kallavumkal (INC)

13-03-2021; 44-67-69-75-**



Joseph Kallavumkal was born on February 2, 1944. He has four brothers and four sisters. He completed his higher secondary education at Valiamatam. Then, he joined the SVD to become a Divine Word Missionary Brother at Trichy, Tamilnadu, on July 1, 1966. Having completed his probation period, he made his first commitment on September 8, 1969, at Catholic Ashram Palda and his final vows on September 8, 1975. After his perpetual vows, he worked as the Procurator of Catholic Ashram Palda from 1978 to 1980, till he left for the Nemi Course in Rome.

After returning from Nemi, he worked as the Assistant Director of St. Patrick Dental Clinic from 1982 to 1991. He showed keen interest in working with Divine Word Brother Aidan Courtney in his Dental Clinic as an apprentice. Bro. Joseph was so committed that he learned quickly to treat patients who increasingly came to the Clinic. And so, Bro. Aidan, who was well-known as a professional dentist among the dental circles and the people of Indore, was able to get a License for Bro. Joseph to practice from the Dental Council of Madhya Pradesh that was valid throughout India.

Bro. Joseph had a tender and caring heart for the needy patients. He treated the poor recommended by the confreres almost free or at a concessional rate. He regularly visited on Wednesdays, the outreach clinic at Nandanagar to treat needy patients. As a Dentist, Brother Joseph wanted to spend his time with the poor in the missions. During his many difficult years in the Clinic, he deeply questioned his religious commitment.

Bro Joseph tried his best to qualify himself further by taking a dental Course in different colleges. However, without success, he did not have the necessary scientific background. He also tried to go abroad to work as a dentist, to countries like Ireland, Germany, Italy, Australia, and finally New Guinea. His attempts failed despite the goodwill of the superiors both here in the province and at the Generalate level because he lacked a science background. His license certificate to practice was only valid in India.

When Bro Aidan Courtney died in 1999 and with that, he took up the responsibility of being the Clinic's Director. He continued in this position till 2018, when he requested Provincial to relieve him from shouldering this responsibility. During this period, two young Doctors joined the Clinic, Dr. Fr. Michael Prakasam SVD and Dr. Bro. Kalaimani Paulraj SVD. These youngsters were looked on by the outsiders more as his proteges since he was like a father-figure to them!

In July 2020, he had severe hematuria (blood in the urine). He had been successfully treated by an Ayurvedic doctor in Chindwara, Madhya Pradesh, for the same malady in 2011. His youngest brother Antony (Jose), and youngest sister, Philomena (Valssamma), came to Indore to take him to Aaradi, Belenge, Hebri, Udupi District Karnataka. After the initial treatment at home in 2020, he returned to Indore with a solid determination to work again and meet all his Indore friends. But since he required constant administration of medicine, also after a month, he left for Hebri. Since then, he has been undergoing treatment at Antony's home and looked after by his sister Philomena.

On March 13, 2021, since his medical condition showed deterioration, he was brought to Shri Raghavendra Hospital, Hebri, Udupi. Though Bro. Joseph was fully prepared to meet his Master and Lord. The end came relatively fast due to medical complications. He died after a prolonged fight with prostate cancer at 9:50 pm on the same day.

Fr. Arnold Steffen (USC)

12-03-2021; 29-47-49-55-57



During Father Arnold Steffen's 59 years in Papua New Guinea, he witnessed many economic and social changes on the island nation that gained independence in 1975. When he first arrived in 1957, roads in the mountainous Mount Hagen area were few, and missionaries tended to travel by airplane, on horseback and by foot. Father Steffen was so attuned to the land and its people that he was affectionately called the Mountain Goat.

People know him well in Papua New Guinea. Many people tell stories about him. He could communicate well with the people through Pidgin, and he walked everywhere. He was very energetic and strong. Father Steffen set out for New Guinea a few months after ordination. During his first decade as a missionary, he was assigned to Mount Hagen. At times, he was the first missionary to travel into mountainous regions of the Enga Province, where the residents had never seen someone from outside their village.

For his first assignment, his religious superiors asked him to establish a mission in Mun in the central highlands of New Guinea. The mission encompassed

500 square miles and about 45 mission stations. He visited each station three times a year, providing pastoral care, medicine and education for the Kanaka, indigenous people of New Guinea. He also founded mission outstations and parishes in Kuruk, Kumdi and Mabulga. Father Steffen learned the language of the Kanaka people from Father William Ross SVD, who in turn learned the language from the tribesmen by pointing to objects and then phonetically writing their responses.

In 1972, Father Steffen was called upon to serve as acting superior. The following year, he became president of Holy Spirit Regional Seminary, which consisted of three colleges, in Bomana. Holy Spirit served as the primary major seminary of Papua New Guinea and the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. During Father Steffen's time as president, the school had a student body of more than 70 seminarians from 13 dioceses and three religious congregations.

In 1975, Papua New Guinea became a sovereign nation. Father Steffen was elected regional superior in 1976. When the territory became a province a year later, he and the Provincial Council decided to move the headquarters from Alexishafen on the northern coast to the centrally located Mount Hagen. In 1981, he completed his administrative work and return to parish ministry at Banz parish and later served Monoitu parish in Bougainville.

In 1990, Father Steffen devoted himself to the Better Word Movement and created Christian Community Retreat, programs to educate Catholics about the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. He served as director of the Better Word Movement and spent almost two decades with the organization.

Arnold Steffen was born in 1929 in Dunkerton, Iowa, the seventh of Joseph, an immigrant from Luxemburg, and Mathilda (nee Meier) Steffen's ten children. In 1943 at age 14, he entered the Divine Word high school seminary at Epworth, Iowa. He professed religious vows in 1949 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1957. In 2016, Father Steffen moved from Papua New Guinea to Techny for retirement. He died on March 12, 2021.

Fr. Albert Wagenpfeil (GER)

03-03-2021; 34-58-60-64-64



Albert Wagenpfeil was born on November 26, 1934, in Obergünzburg, Bavaria, Southern Germany. He was the third child of Karl Wagenpfeil and Maria, née Brugger. He spent his childhood and youth in Altusried in the nearby Allgäu region. Here he also went to elementary school. In 1948, he began vocational training at Deutsche Post in Munich. But as time went by, the decision matured in him to become a priest and

missionary. Therefore he attended the seminary for late vocations in Fürstenried/Munich from 1953 to 1957.

Immediately after completing secondary school, he joined the SVD. He began the novitiate in St. Gabriel near Vienna, Austria, on September 8, 1958, which he concluded with his first profession on September 8, 1960. In St. Gabriel, he also studied philosophy but for theological studies in Sankt Augustin, Germany. There Albert made his perpetual profession on May 1, 1964, and was ordained a priest on October 17, 1964.

Fr. Wagenpfeil received his missionary assignment for Ghana. After the obligatory pastoral year in Munich in 1965/1966 and a six-month language course in London, he traveled to Ghana in 1967. But one year later, he had to return to Germany for health reasons. He spent four months in the hospital in Bad Wörishofen. It was decided that he should remain in Germany. For almost all of the next 30 years, Munich was to become his place of work. Released from the hospital, he became an assistant priest in the SVD parish St. Hedwig in Munich until 1971. He then worked as spiritual director of the Catholic Women's Association in the Archdiocese of Munich before becoming student pastor at St. Paul's College in Munich from 1981 to 1983.

For nine years, until 1992, Fr. Wagenpfeil also taught religion at a Catholic school run by religious. Subsequently, he engaged in pastoral care for the elderly, first in the home of the Sisters of Mercy near Munich. In 1997, he served for twelve years in the house for the elderly of the SSps in Oberdischingen.

In 2009, already severely limited by Parkinson's disease, Fr. Wagenpfeil asked for retirement. On October 19, 2009, he moved to the Wendelinus Home, the SVD retirement facility in St. Wendel. His physical infirmities increased steadily, and he withdrew entirely to his room. He spent much time here in prayer. In the morning hours of March 3, 2021, the Lord called him to Himself.

We are grateful to God for the life of Fr. Wagenpfeil. We also thank him for the good he did to many people entrusted to him in his life. May he now rest in peace.

Because of the restrictions enforced due to the Corona pandemic, the Resurrection Service and the funeral in the mission house's cemetery were celebrated only by the members of the SVD community of St. Wendel.

Fr. Victor Leones (GHA) 26-02-2021; 46-65-67-72-72



Victor Leones was born among eight siblings (three girls and five boys) on December 23, 1946, in Tayum, Abra. He entered Christ the King Mission Seminary (CKMS) in Quezon City on June 2, 1958. Four of his elder brothers also attended the Christ the King Seminary, and one became an SVD priest. One of the sisters also became a nun of

the Religious of the Good Shepherd (RGS).

He began his novitiate in CKMS on June 29, 1965. He professed his first vows in CKMS on June 29, 1967. His perpetual profession was held in Tagaytay City on June 28, 1972. He was ordained a priest on July 8, 1972, in Tagaytay City by Most Rev. Federico Limon, SVD, Coadjutor Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan. He was ordained together with fifteen other colleagues.

Fr. Leones was among the first SVD Filipinos to come to Ghana. Fr. Carlos Lariosa, SVD, and Fr. Glicerio Paraguya, SVD, also received their Ghana assignments. Fr. Victor arrived on the shores of Ghana in September 1973, few months after the erection of the newly created Sunyani diocese. The first Bishop, Most Rev. James Kwadwo Owusu, requested the Divine Word Missionaries to assist him in the new diocese, which had only twelve priests at the time. Fr. Clement Hortze, SVD, the SVD Regional Superior at the time, gladly accepted the invitation. He already had in mind the young and dynamic Fr. Victor Leones to join the pastoral team for the new ecclesiastical territory.

On March 19, 1974, Fr. Leones received his first pastoral appointment to the Sunyani Diocese. He was assigned to Our Lady of Fatima parish in Wenchi, where he served Techiman and its outstations. Fr. Leones worked in Wenchi and its surroundings, including Nsawkaw, Banda, and other outstations for close to 20 years. He guided many young Ghanaians to discover their vocations into the priesthood and religious life.

In June 1993, Fr. Leones was transferred from Wenchi to St. Joseph Parish in Kintampo in the then Sunyani Diocese. He served this parish faithfully for 17 years. Fr. Victor was actively involved in the promotion of the mission and vision of the SVD. He was kind and affable to all the seminarians who passed through his pastoral guidance. He was also a community man and a father figure to the priests and Sunyani/Techiman Dioceses' faithful.

In 2002, he was appointed the District Superior of the then Brong Ahafo district. He was elected to the Provincial council from 2005 to 2011 and became the Vice Provincial from 2007-2008. He served with humility and great devotion.

In January 2010, Fr. Leones was appointed priest-in-charge of the Holy Family Rectorate in New Longoro in the Techiman Diocese. He was a member of the College of Consultors of the diocese. He was a member of the Presbyteral Council and the Dean of the Kintampo deanery. He has been serving in the Holy Family church until January this year, when he was appointed the Spiritual Director of the Common Formation Center (CFC) in Tamale.

Fr. Victor Leones was visibly a great missionary who devoted his time to his pastoral assignments. He was gentle, humble, and soft-spoken. He dedicated his time to serve many priests and religious needs. He was very

serviceable to many religious sisters from his country, the Philippines. He nurtured and took good care of his younger confreres and seminarians and inspired many people to become committed Christians.

Before Fr. Leones could move to his new community, he fell sick on February 3, 2021, and was admitted to the Holy Family Hospital at Techiman. He was given the needed treatment and medical attention, but he succumbed to death in the early hours of February 26, 2021, at the age of 75.

During his last home leave in September 2019, he was asked if he would return to the Philippines for his retirement. His answer was: "Where God has sent me as a missionary, I would stay there until the end." Indeed, his simple lifestyle and missionary commitment are good examples to our generation. May his soul rest in perfect peace!

Bro. Franz Xaver Romer (ECP)

26-02-2021; 30-61-63-69-**



For more than 40 years, Bro. Franz Xaver Romer was on the road as a "traveling brother" in Switzerland, winning and caring for countless promoters and readers of the SVD magazines "Stadt Gottes" and the "Michaelskalendar."

Jakob Romer was born on November 27, 1930, in Benken, Switzerland. Already in his youth, he was interested in the missions. An appearance of Bro. Josef Koller SVD in the Young Men's Association in Benken in 1960 impressed him so much that he decided to join the SVD. He first entered the seminary in Marienburg on March 4, 1961. He began his novitiate in St. Gabriel on September 8, 1961. He professed his first vows in St. Gabriel on November 3, 1963. But in 1964, still, in temporary vows, he was called to Switzerland to lend administrative support in the SVD Publications. In the same year, he came to the SVD community Maria Hilf in Steinhausen, where he was to work as a traveling brother. He pronounced his perpetual vows on October 16, 1969. In 1963 he was assigned to the Region of Helveto Italica SWT.

His life's activity as "traveling brother" began in January 1965. Year after year, he visited the promoters in eight of the cantons (provinces) of Switzerland. The canton Wallis (Valais), first visited in the summer of 1966, became incredibly dear to him because, as he said with a smile, "There is always sunshine there." He saw himself as a "religious traveling merchant." Knocking on the doors of strangers was not always easy for him. He found it more pleasant to visit "his" approximately 400 promoters who distributed the SVD magazines to subscribers. He remained a traveling brother until 2008 when he retired at the age of 78. However, even later, he still distributed the magazines in the village of Steinhausen. Even at the age of 88, he was still on

the road in his VW. He drove mostly to the cemetery, where he went for his walks.

Tremendous interest in languages and world affairs, but also outstanding reliability, distinguished Bro. Franz Xaver throughout his life. In exemplary fidelity, he took over the sacristan office in Steinhausen as a retiree for more than 20 years: He led the prayers, decorated the chapel, and served at Holy Mass, thus cultivating the "Ora et labora" until the end of his life. As a traveling brother, he especially enjoyed the opportunity to meet many different people. Even in his old age, he participated with interest in discussions at the community table or conversations with guests.

Modesty and trust in God characterized Bro. Francis Xaver from his youth to his old age. In good health, he celebrated his 90th birthday last November as the "senior" of the SVD community in Steinhausen. Then in mid-January 2021, he had to undergo an operation on his leg. At the end of January, he went to the Franziskusheim in Menzingen for recuperation. Despite the excellent care, however, he became weaker and weaker. On February 26, barely three months after his 90th birthday, Bro. Franz Xaver Romer returned home to his Creator at 1:25 A.M. We wish that his favorite earthly word, "maximum," will unfold its full dimension in heavenly joy.

The resurrection service took place on March 2 in the afternoon in the St. Matthias Church in Steinhausen, followed by burial in the ground at the Erli Cemetery.

Fr. Joseph Detig (USC)

12-02-2021; 35-53-55-61-62



Father Joseph Detig, two-time provincial superior of the Western Province (USA) and an educator in Taiwan and the Philippines, died February 12, 2021, at Techny, Illinois, USA.

Joseph Detig was born on May 22, 1935, in Cheektowaga, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, USA. He entered the seminary in Girard on September 7, 1949. He began his novitiate in Conesus on September 8, 1953. He pronounced his first vows in Conesus on September 8, 1955. He went to St. Augustin in Germany for academic exchange for theological studies. He pronounced his perpetual vows in St. Augustin on May 1, 1961. He was ordained a priest in St. Augustin on December 8, 1962, with his father's eight siblings present.

Fr. Detig, the son of German immigrants, had a gift for assimilating into the cultures to which he was assigned. His joyful personality radiated happiness. He demonstrated welcoming hospitality to all who came and a willingness to serve and help wherever needed. He could laugh and move on if there were some difficult situations. What you saw in him was who he

was. And for that reason, many who knew him found God, perhaps not so much through what he said but for merely being the person he was. He was that light that gave people the chance to find God and peace.

After completing a master's degree in English literature at the Catholic University of Washington, D.C., Fr. Detig went to Taiwan, where he served as an administrator and English professor at Fu Jen Catholic University. A year later, he was assigned to the Philippines to work at San Carlos University in Cebu and then the Divine Word University of Tacloban in Tacloban City, Leyte. Again, he juggled more than one role. The Divine Word University of Tacloban had 5,000 college students in programs that included nursing and engineering and an additional 2,000 in elementary and high school.

While there, Fr. Detig served as English professor and dean of Arts and Sciences. In 1977, he returned to the United States. He was assigned as a vocation director at Divine Word Seminary at Miramar in Duxbury, Mass. During the 1970s, enrollment at high school seminaries declined. Consequently, Fr. Detig inaugurated the Home Seminary Program, which allowed high school students to consider the priestly vocation while living at home with their parents.

In 1979, duty once again called. To his surprise, Divine Word Missionaries in the Western Province elected Fr. Detig to lead them as rector of the order's Riverside Community in California. They had met

him at a Divine Word vocation meeting. Many were impressed with his down-to-earth sincerity, spontaneity, goodness, and evident leadership qualities. They sensed he was the kind of a person they wanted to live within the community. Three years later, others in the Western Province also got to know him and saw how he treated confreres with their problems and concerns. He received the confreres with a personal interest and respect that put them at ease. Hence, they elected him their provincial superior for two terms.

As provincial superior of the Western Province, Fr. Detig oversaw the administration of missionaries who served in the dioceses of Oakland and San Bernardino and the archdioceses of Los Angeles and San Francisco. He also decided to move the headquarters of the Western Province from Los Angeles to Riverside, California.

In 1987, after many years in administrative work, Father Detig longed to be a parish priest. He was transferred to the Southern Province and served as pastor of St. Anthony in Lafayette, Louisiana, for nine years and Our Lady of the Rosary in Jeanerette, Louisiana, for six years.

When Father Detig was transferred to the Chicago Province for retirement, he became a member of the Divine Word Community at Bordentown. In 2014, for health reasons, he moved to Techny.

APPOINTMENTS AND TRANSFERS

Appointments

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----|
| 02.03.2021 | Fr. Dorborkoe, John Kudjo | ROM cons/dom Collegio Verbo Divino | aft |
| 19.03.2021 | Fr. Tadan Mare, Antonius | BRN sup/dist Distrito Nordeste | aft |
| 19.03.2021 | Fr. Folta, Adão | BRN vic/sup/dist Distrito Nordeste | aft |
| 19.03.2021 | Fr. Aswin I Gusti Ngurah, Emanuel | BRN adm/dist | aft |

Transfers

| | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|---------|
| 02.03.2021 | Fr. Dorborkoe, John Kudjo | GHA/ROM |
| 02.03.2021 | Fr. Kodom, Patrick Kofi | ECP/GHA |
| 02.03.2021 | Fr. Szumilak, Maciej | HUN/POL |
| 09.03.2021 | Fr. Vedanayagam, Stanislaus | INE/INH |
| 12.03.2021 | Fr. Sousa, Dinailton Mendes de | NEB/BRN |
| 12.03.2021 | Fr. Makonzo Mondo, Georges | SVK/GER |
| 26.03.2021 | Fr. Tran, Long Ngoc John Baptist | BRS/VIE |

