



Reflect the Birth of Christ

EDITORIAL

Blessed Christmas and Joyful New Year to you and to your loved ones. Our Advent preparations are nearly complete, and our Lord has now invited us all to join Him in the glorious celebration of His marvelous birth.

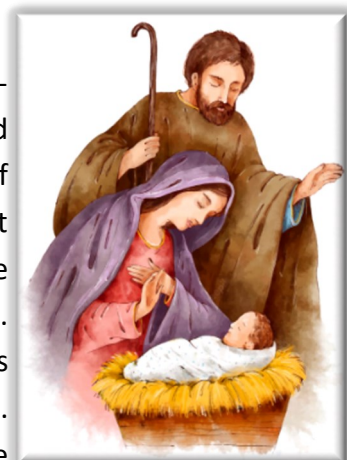
"And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." (Luke 2:19) What a beautiful line to ponder on this Christmas day. Mother Mary was the one person who would have understood the mystery of the birth of her Son, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, far more deeply than anyone else.

It was to her that the Archangel Gabriel appeared, announcing her pregnancy and His birth. It was Mary who carried her Son, the Son of God, in her Immaculate womb for nine months. It was to her that Elizabeth, her cousin, cried out, *"Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb"* (Luke 1:42). It was Mother Mary who was the Immaculate Conception, the one who

was preserved from all sin throughout her life. And it was Mary who gave birth to this wonderful Child, carried Him in her arms and nursed Him at her breast. Our Blessed Mother, more than any other, understood the incredible event that had taken place in her life.

"Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." (Luke 2:19) This tells us that even Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of God, needed time to ponder, reflect and savor this most Holy mystery. She never doubted, but her faith continually deepened, and her heart pondered the unfathomable and incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation.

As we reflect today with our Blessed Mother, place yourself into the scene of that first Christmas. Let us sense the smell of the stable. Watch as the shepherds come forth in adoration. Enter the mystery more fully, realising that the more you learn about the



Quarter Hour Prayer

- L. God, eternal truth,
A. We believe in You.
- L. God, our strength and salvation,
A. We hope in You.
- L. God, infinite goodness,
A. We love You with all our heart.
- L. You have sent the Word as Savior of the world,
A. Make us all one in Him.
- L. Fill us with the Spirit of Your Son,
A. That we may glorify Your name. Amen.

May the darkness of sin and night of unbelief vanish before the light of the word and the spirit of grace, and may the heart of JESUS live in the hearts of all people. Amen

Editorial Team

Jayesh George

Rosalia D'Souza

Susan Noronha

Fr. Gregory Pinto, SVD

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Christmas mystery, the more you realise how little you actually know and understand. This will lead to a deeper understanding of what we celebrate on this day.

Lord, I gaze at the wonder of your glorious birth. I Thank You, dear Lord for Your birth into the world.

- Editorial Team

Manifestation of God

Lorna and I were conducting the Annual Weekend Widows' Retreat at Atma Darshan where 48 widows from Mumbai attended. On the last day, 9th October morning around 11 am, since my presence was not required at the session, I came to the reception and saw a young man, Bhupesh (name changed to protect identity), hovering around hesitatingly, to meet someone from the House. When I approached him, he told me, being a non-Christian, he was hesitant to enter as it was a Christian Institution but made bold to come for want of some information. Later, I learnt that he was a new-comer to Mumbai on a transfer of his job and was renting a place nearby. Over a cup of tea, he told me all about himself and his desire to be of service to mankind.

He was told by a friend to visit Atma Darshan to know more and what they do for humanity. He was particularly interested in the Meditation program and our Feed the Hungry project. Shortly, I introduced him to Fr. Gregory Pinto who attended to him and later accompanied him to Fr. Ittoop at Dhyani Kutir to know more about the Meditation program.

During my interaction with Bhupesh, I could see the joy writ large on his face. He kept telling me how comfortable he felt in my company and experienced the warmth and service of Christians. He was impressed by the work we do. I invited him to join us the following Saturday for our 'Feed the Hungry' program to which he readily agreed.

Bhupesh came on the following Saturday and was introduced to all the volunteers of the Project. I was happy to see his eagerness and enthusiasm to accompany us on our trip. Later on, at lunch, he shared his joy and fulfillment of feeding the hungry people and thanked the group for making him a part of this project. That evening he called me to say how

happy he was at the welcome, the warmth, and the love he got from all the members. It was the best day of my life.

I believe the Spirit led me to meet him at Atma Darshan

and that I was able to radiate Christ through me with all my humility and limitations. Jesus manifests to us in our daily life through different people and situations. Thank you, Lord, for letting us feel your presence.

- Maryanne Dmello



23rd Anniversary of the Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Mumbai

The Disciples of the Divine Word began in 1999 as a small group of lay volunteers who helped spread the programs conducted by Atma-Darshan. Fr. Gregory Pinto, the then director of Atma-Darshan, initiated this group and together with Fr. Edward D'Mello was instrumental in naming it, Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW). In October 2014, DDW was recognized as a Lay Associate Group of the Society of the Divine Word, India Mumbai Province (INM). Today we celebrate our 23rd Anniversary as SVD lay partners. And Fr. Gregory Pinto has come back to DDW as our Spiritual Director.



Today, we are distributing around 1000 packets of home-cooked high-protein lunches to poor people at traffic signals, roadsides, under flyovers, in the slums, and outside Cooper Hospital, one of the major government hospitals in Mumbai. Along with the food, we also distribute water, bananas, biscuits, toiletries, and so on. We travel in two vehicles, one goes to the Western suburbs and the other to the Eastern suburbs along the Western Express Highway.

May the love of Christ continue to impel us to be rooted in the Word and committed to His mission. And may the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people.

DDW Bible Reading Group

Bible - Stay connected.

Stay updated. Stay blessed

Daily connect with Bible to be updated and be a blessing.....

The Bible Reading Online group of DDW is one of the beautiful initiatives that can happen to a group like ours who are called lay partners of Divine Word Missionaries. Thanks to Jayesh and team who thought about it and took the initiative to form and lead this group.

The Online reading group was started on 21st Sep 2022 on the feast day of St. Mathew. This day being a Wednesday it came along with the



blessings and intercession of our dear Mother Mary.

Every morning Jayesh puts up the chapter on the group that has to be read for the day. We started with the first Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

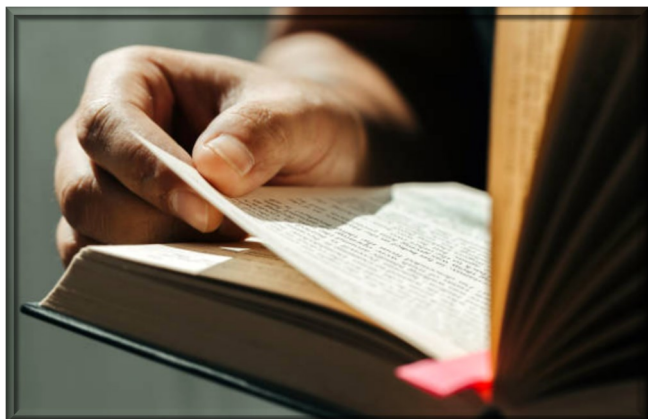
We read the chapter loudly by ourselves in our own convenient time and place and put up on the group the verse or verses that speak to us or touch us. By now there are 16 DDW members who have joined this group.

We feel motivated and enriched from one another by the verses that are put up on the group by the members. The Spirit speaks to each of us in unique ways through His Word. With this the Word

of God comes alive in our lives.

Our lives are transformed and we are drawn more closer to Jesus with the reading and meditating on the Word of God everyday. It is a wonderful feeling to get motivated by your own to read the Word of God. Hope many more members will join this group and benefit from it.

Each chapter or word of the Bible has a beautiful and enriching message. The Holy Spirit



leads and guides us everyday through His Word and helps us to build our lives on His Word. I am really happy and blessed to be a member of this group and benefit from it. I thank all the members of this group for sharing their experience/message of the Word every day.

- Juliana D'Costa

I was lethargic when it came to reading the Word of God. I took consolation from the fact that I attended Mass daily paying heed to the readings and applying it to my life. But the silent guilt always gnawed me. With this new forum on the Word of God initiated by Jayesh for the DDW members, has given me a new insight not only to reading the Word of GOD, understanding it, applying it to my own life but also helps me understand more deeply the sharing of others in the group. Thank you Jayesh for this initiative. God bless you.

- Maryanne

DDW – New office-bearers team 2022-25

Members of the Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW) Mumbai elected new office-bearers for 2022-2025 at the meeting on Sunday, 1st May 2022 at Atma Darshan. Fr. Gregory Pinto, Spiritual Director of the DDW, conducted the elections through ballots.

Installation of the new team was done during the Eucharistic Celebration by INM Mission Secretary, Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurath. Congratulations to the new team of office-bearers of DDW.



From left to right: Jayesh George (Vice President), Anupama Subodhanan (Secretary), Fr. Gregory Pinto SVD (Spiritual Director), Andrew D'Souza (Treasurer), and Susan Noronha (President, re-elected).

- Susan Noronha

**THERE'S ENOUGH ON THIS
PLANET FOR EVERYONE'S
NEEDS BUT NOT FOR
EVERYONE'S GREED.**

– MAHATMA GANDHI

A day with the Vice General

People who are humble have inner peace. They are rooted and comfortable with who they are and others around them. The Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Mumbai had an opportunity to meet our Vice General, Fr. José Antunes Da Silva on Saturday, 19th November 2022. We were delighted to welcome him to our Feed the Hungry program in the morning. He came to see us at Atma Darshan and was happy to meet the members who were preparing to leave for the food distribution. We arrive at Atma Darshan around 10.30 a.m. to bring in the food, pack it, clean and fill the recycled water bottles, load it onto the two vehicles, and then leave to distribute it. Before the food-loaded vehicles moved out, the Vice General prayed for a

Cooper Hospital, one of the largest Government Hospitals in Mumbai.

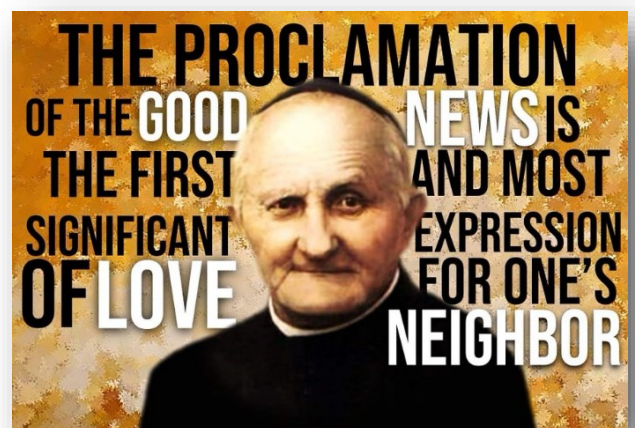
Our formal meeting with Fr. José Antunes started at 4 p.m. in the Atma Darshan dining hall with tea, snacks, and small talk. With aarti and chandan tika, Shantha Thomas and Sandhya Domi-



nic welcomed him to the meeting hall (Indian traditional welcome). Jayesh George led the group into prayer by invoking the Holy Spirit. Following a brief introduction by Fr. Gregory Pinto, SVD, Spiritual Director, Susan Noronha read out the Report on DDW which was later presented to Fr. José Antunes. During his interaction with the members, the Vice General applauded them, mainly for their dedication to prayer and outreach to the needy, particularly the poor and homeless. Members were eager to tell him about their experiences as SVD lay partners. Following Andrew D'Souza's vote of thanks, the meeting concluded with a beautiful group photograph



few minutes concluding with Quarter Hour Prayer. He joined us later for the food distribution outside



DDW Members speak Feed the Hungry project

'Feed the Hungry Project' which was started in September 2019 on a small scale with distribution of around 150 – 200 packets of food has completed three years on 8 September 2022, with a magnanimous size of 900-1000 packets of lunch being distributed every Saturday, thanks to the benevolence of our donors, our DDW members and benefactors. It is beautiful to see that what was sown as a seed, has sprouted into a small plant. By the grace of God, many of us are fortunate enough to have food always on the table for us and not to worry where our next meal will come from, but the same will not hold good for many others from the lower strata of society. On a personal level, today, when I look back upon the journey when I started with Feed the Hungry Project, I realize that service to others brings meaning and fulfillment to our lives in a way that wealth, power, possessions and self-centered pursuits can never match. Though my part in it is small,



yet I have started looking forward to the distribution on Saturdays. Last but not the least, a message to all our donors and benefactors, let us not forget as Jesus said, *"For if you give, you will get! Your gift will return to you in full and overflowing measure, pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, and running over. Whatever measure you use*



to give -- large or small -- will be used to measure what is given back to you" (Luke 6:38).

- Rosalia D'Souza

SVD Lay Partners' Animation Seminar in India Guwahati Region (JNG)

Lay leaders from 10 SVD Parishes across the Northeast States of India – Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh attended the SVD Lay Partners Animation Seminar at the SVD House, Guwahati, Assam on 24th and 25th March 2022. Around 40 lay leaders along with their Parish Priests participated in this two-day seminar organized by ING. Regional Superior, Fr. Maxim Rodrigues, and Mission Secretary, Fr. Clement Quadras were actively involved in the seminar along with other SVD fathers. I am deeply grateful for inviting me to this seminar and allowing me to share my experience as SVD lay partner.

On the 25th March, the Solemnity of the Annunciation and the Titular feast of the Society, Archbishop John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati presided over the Eucharist encouraging us to be the faithful followers of the Word. Later, Frs. Cyprian Pinto, Valentine Dung Dung, Jose K, Ivan D'Silva, and others spoke on the first SVD presence in the North-

east and their early experiences and challenges in the missions. Fr. Francis Fernandes gave the group insight on our Founder and the Founding Generation.

I was overwhelmed by the active participation of the lay leaders during the seminar. There was an eagerness in the participants to know one another and their involvement in the missions. The two-day sessions were filled with group discussions and sharing, acting out bible passages, group activities, etc. Frs. Francis and Clement animated the participants, leading them in singing and teaching them gospel action songs. I liked many, but the best one was... David ne Goliath ko ghuma ghuma ke maara! It left me in splits!

One of the things I learned at this seminar was that my active involvement with the participants was more important than my professional PowerPoint presentation. They were simple straightforward people. I quickly became one of them. Many of the lay leaders were inspired to share their personal experiences with the SVD fathers, especially those who were among the first to begin the challenging missions in Lumshnong, Seppa, Roing, Kamranga, and many more.



ING is interwoven with mighty rivers and mysterious mountains. Diverse ethnocultural groups inhabit the Region. My visit to the missions made me realise that our pioneer missionaries have laid a strong foundation on which the activities in ING stand today. Through an empowerment process of education, dialogue, and networking with Government/NGOs, the SVDs are trying to educate the tribal children. They are first-generation learners. The schools not only provide knowledge but build bridges across tribes, creating platforms to live in harmony. Furthermore, the indigenous peoples are playing a crucial role in evangelizing the region.

- Susan Noronha



DDW meeting with Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, Generalate Mission Secretary

On 10th June 2022, Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW) and St. Theresa's SVD lay group along with Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurath, INM Mission Secretary met Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, Generalate Mission Secretary at Atma Darshan.

Fr. Stan also talked about the upcoming General Chapter theme "Your Light Must Shine Before Others" (Mt.5:16) - 'Faithful and Creative Disciples in a Wounded World'. A guide for communal reflection is designed by the Generalate that will be



Among other discussions, Fr. Stan spoke on the SVD lay groups worldwide. He provided examples of how different countries interpret the context of forming lay partner groups. The SVD charism and mission are centered around the Divine Word. He was appreciative of all the efforts the lay groups had undertaken during COVID all over the world. He made a special mention to Susan for her role as the Chief Editor of the International SVD Lay Partners Newsletter and her efforts to coordinate with different lay groups around the world.

shared with SVD lay partner groups. The questions requiring group participation and feedback will be forwarded to the Generalate and to the Provincial.

Fr. Jolly thanked both the groups and emphasized that more interactions together would be helpful in the formation of the new groups. The meeting ended with some tea and snacks.

Fr. Stan participated in our Feed the Hungry initiative the following Saturday as well.



God knows our strength and never makes the cross so heavy that we cannot carry it.

cannot carry it

An Uninterrupted Drive of Reaching Out (*The DDW-Atma-Darshan Feed the Hungry Project*)

It was at the height of the second Covid wave with its accompanying lockdown (May 2021), that the Feed the Hungry core group decided to re-start their project. From that day onwards (Saturday, May 15), whether it was rain or shine; 25th Dec or 1st Jan (both were Saturdays); any ordinary Saturday or Holy Saturday, it has been an uninterrupted



drive of reaching out with more and more. It was those initial days in May 2021 that provided the impetus. As the members ventured out, they realized that people who before were not coming forward to take food were now wanting it. Auto drivers and ordinary people walking by, used to join the line to take the food. The times were bad. The second lockdown was taking its toll, especially on daily wage-earners. Seeing this hunger on the streets, motivated the members all the more, to go big with their food distribution.

Today 2 vehicles go out with food every Saturday. Each food packet consists of vegetable pulao, boiled egg, pickle, banana, a bottle of water and an added packet of biscuits for children. Approximately close to 1000 food packets are distributed every Saturday. Some of the food is supplied by the members. Four families who have meagre sources of income, have been identified by the core group. These families take orders on behalf of those who might want to donate food. Thus, these families too are helped in the process. It's encouraging to note

that money has been flowing in for this project. Many of those who come to Atma-Darshan make it a point to donate some amount to this project. The DDW members and their contacts are a strong support to this venture by way of raising funds and creating awareness of reaching out to the needy.

Pray-Reach Out-Connect is the guiding motto of the Feed the Hungry project. The motivation runs deep in the members as seen in their commitment to keep everything aside on Saturdays, and congregate at Atma-Darshan to bring in the food; to pack it; to fill the water bottles; to load it on the 2 vehicles and then go out to distribute it. The rhythm seen among the younger and not-so-younger members is fascinating. If it's the younger members who go out distributing food, then it's the seniors who come on early to pack the food and keep everything ready for distribution. Before the food-loaded vehicles move out, a few minutes are spent praying for the members and for those who'll be getting the food. The point of distribution is not merely about giving food, but also about relationships. In the



limited timeframe, the members also interact with the people getting to know them and their situation.

- Fr. Tony Menezes, SVD

Diwali Camp with Migrant Students

On 28th October 2022, the Urban Community Development Centre (UCDC) in collaboration with Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW) organized a Diwali Camp at the quadrangle of St. Theresa's School, Bandra. There were 145 migrant children from 1 st

new hobbies, and boost their self-confidence.

To begin, students were divided into groups. Each group was asked to choose a group name and a leader. Students carried flags as they marched past the hall with their flags. The entire event was colored by a Rangoli competition, dances, and a variety of games. Lunch and tea were served to the



standard to college-going students.

The camp's goals were to foster friendships and social skills, instill the principles of responsibility and teamwork in the participants, help them discover

children. The Diwali camp was a success, and the children left with smiles on their faces.



"Missionaries are ambassadors of divine love. They are to reveal the great deeds of God and establish the kingdom of divine love."

St. Arnold Janssen

19th General Chapter: Theme and Guide for Communal Reflection

In response to the letter from the Generalate, the theme and guide for communal reflection for the SVD lay partners were discussed at our meetings. As part of the preparation for the 19th General Chapter, the guide was shared among members and discussed together, discerning and listening to the promptings of the Spirit. Fr. Gregory Pinto SVD and Fr. Tony Menezes SVD joined us in the discussions. The Report was sent to the INM Mission Secretary for forwarding to the Generalate.

Mission in pictures.....



Collaboration with the SVDs

In collaboration with Sacred Heart Parish, Divine Word Missionaries were invited to the parish in October to share their missionary experiences and to raise awareness of the SVD presence in India. Listening to the life stories of our confreres working in remote missions, it is evident that this is the Lord's work! God allows us to persevere and see His work completed even when we face difficult challenges. There was an exhibition and sale of paintings on Christian stories created by Fr. Petrus Baraik SVD. The pictures themselves communicated to people. Many of the canvases were biblical narratives in the form of paintings. We thank the SVD fathers for coming to our parish and spending Mission Month with us. We are grateful.



Feed the Hungry Program—If anyone would like to contribute for this cause, please connect ATMA DARSHAN at +91 22 28363120 / +91 9769694422



FEED THE HUNGRY – SERVING FOOD, LOVE AND KINDNESS

DDW members have been serving meals to the homeless, poor people every Saturday since 2019. It is a protein-rich home-cooked meal consisting of rice with cooked vegetables, boiled egg, banana, water, etc. Often, we distribute toiletries, sweets, wafers, and cookies. Actually, we're not just feeding them food, we're feeding them love and kindness, committed to Jesus' mission.