



# SVD LAY PARTNERS

AUGUST 2017  
Issue 4

NEWSLETTER OF SVD LAY PARTNERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Private circulation for Divine Word Missionary Lay Partners

To keep authenticity we receive news items only from the authorized contact person.

## Jesus the Master Teacher



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## *Editorial...*

*“Through the Church, Jesus continues his mission as the Good Samaritan, caring for the bleeding wounds of humanity, and as Good Shepherd, constantly seeking out those who wander along winding paths that lead nowhere”, says Pope Francis in his message for the World Mission Sunday 2017.*

World Mission Sunday is marked this year on 22nd October, 2017. This Day invites us to reflect anew on our *mission as SVD Lay Partners*. Although our world is faced with crisis everywhere, we still have hope in Jesus Christ, our Master Teacher. He calls us to go beyond ourselves to share the blessings we have received. These are not a private privilege, but a gift to be shared. We must pray and spread the light of Christ around the world and open our minds and hearts to the boundless horizons of missionary activity.

We would love to hear from you! Please share with our fellow SVD Lay Partners, the good works the Lord has begun in you for the sake of the Gospel. Tell us how you are proclaiming the Good News in your part of the world. Let us know how St. Arnold is inspiring you to actively participate in the Church’s mission of Evangelization and how you continue to bring the Divine Word to life in your ministry and service to the people of God. Help us to collect information for our Newsletter by encouraging one another to send in pictures and stories of your missionary events and activities.

**- Editors**

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*For all who return to another year of  
academic studies or begin catechetical  
ministry, may the Divine Word of the  
Master Teacher inspire each of you!*

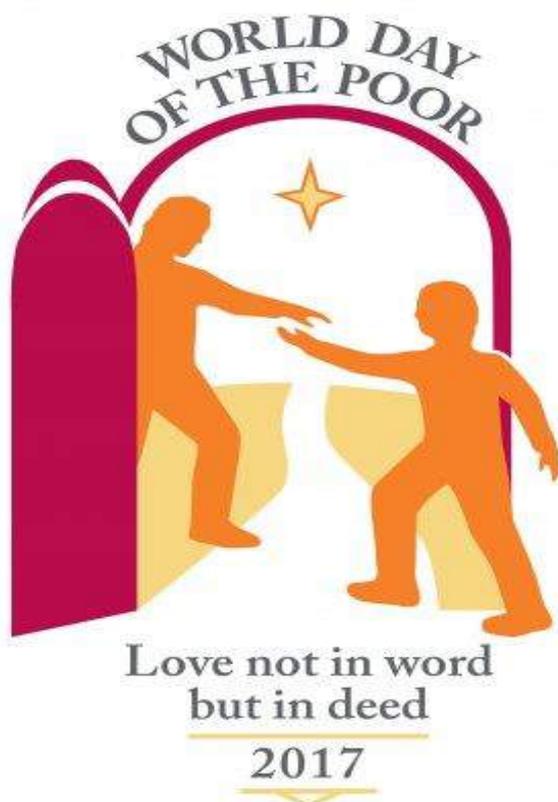


## MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

“Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn 3:18). These words of the Apostle John voice an imperative that no Christian may disregard. The seriousness with which the “beloved disciple” hands down Jesus’ command to our own day is made even clearer by the contrast between the *empty words* so frequently on our lips and the *concrete deeds* against which we are called to measure ourselves. Love has no alibi. Whenever we set out to love as Jesus loved, we have to take the Lord as our example; especially when it comes to loving the poor. The Son of God’s way of loving is well-known, and John spells it out clearly. It stands on two pillars: God loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:10.19), and he loved us by giving completely of himself, even to laying down his life (cf. 1 Jn 3:16).

Such love cannot go unanswered. Even though offered unconditionally, asking nothing in return, it so sets hearts on fire that all who experience it are led to love back, despite their limitations and sins. Yet this can only happen if we welcome God’s grace, his merciful charity, as fully as possible into our hearts, so that our will and even our emotions are drawn to love both God and neighbour. In this way, the mercy that wells up – as it were – from the heart of the Trinity can shape our lives and bring forth compassion and works of mercy for the benefit of our brothers and sisters in need.

**As SVD Lay Partners, we would like to publish the various events and activities planned for the World Day for the poor and include them in the next edition of our Newsletter.**



### *Greetings from SVD-Partners, Germany!*

Pope Francis proclaimed the World Day of the Poor at the end of the Holy Year of Mercy in 2016. Now his message for the first World Day was published. In July, one member of SVD-Partner corresponded with Fr. Valentine Dung Dung SVD (India) about this World Day and the idea of a Prayer Bridge was born. But why should there be pillars only in India and Germany? Let’s start together and build a Prayer Bridge connecting people around the world on the 19th of November! Where ever you pray - be sure there are many people praying with you. If you want to join us, send an email to SVD-Partner and in the subject line, please write “Prayer Bridge“. The email address is - [kontakt@svd-partner.eu](mailto:kontakt@svd-partner.eu); and the deadline is November 18, 2017. Please, do not forget to mention name of the country, plan and the group. You will find the list of all places on the website.

**Don’t forget to tell your friends to join us!**

# Steyler Family in Germany

Submitted by Bernd Hunstig- Speaker of the "Steyler Freunde und Partner"

Sceptics thought, "He would have turned in his grave" but Saint Arnold Janssen did not agree. He was very delighted when he saw what had happened in the chapel of St. Michael in Steyl.



High above from heaven he could see that in addition to the 3 candles next to his sarcophagus a fourth candle was put up. This candle stands for the thousands of the "Steyler



Friends and Partners" all over the world. Right from the very beginning Arnold Janssen included laypersons in the foundation of his missionary work.

beginning Arnold Janssen included laypersons



Even today the laity are still living out their missionary vocation in their families, jobs and in their parishes. Together with all the members of the "Arnold Janssen communities" they make up the "Steyler Family". They all share the same foundation: baptism & mission. Steyl Missionary Work has always been based on many feet, which is why the sarcophagus got a fourth foot. We have always been conscious of our common mission and now this has been made visible.

During the service the two symbols were blessed by the two councilors from Rome, Sr.Miriam Altenhofen, SSpS & Bro.Guy Mazola, SVD. At the end of a beautiful day they were served with cool drinks and snacks.



*More than 150 members of the worldwide Steyler Family took part in a procession that took them to the sisters of SSpS and SSpSAP, where they prayed and sang hymns at the graves of their founders.*

# Janssen Family in Indonesia

*Submitted by Paskalis Widastra.*

Although, we are no longer in Soverdia Bali, Indonesia, we are still supporting the SVD mission by helping in the Janssen Hydroponic Vegetable Farm located in Pancasari Bedugul Bali, Indonesia. Most recently, the Janssen Hydroponic Farm was invited by the local district government in Northern Bali, specifically the Buleleng Regency, for an exhibition at the Twin Lake Bali Festival held July 6-7, 2017.



A local newspaper published an article on the exhibit, which gave the Janssen Hydroponic Farm positive media exposure. The Janssen Hydroponic team members educated local farmers and visitors on the hydroponic system; they also shared their knowledge with others who attended the festival by providing free education for people who wanted to learn more regarding hydroponic farming. Currently, the Janssen Hydroponic Farm

vegetables have been distributed to Bulgary Resort and Hotel, Sushi Tei Japanese Restaurant, Tiara Dewata Supermarket and also at the parking area of Franciscus Xaverius Kuta Bali Church on Sundays. We are still trying to expand the market to other users. One can also order directly from our Instagram account at: janssenhidroponicpancasari.

This is just one way we, as members of the Janssen Family in Bali, are helping with the SVD mission to save the Earth and educate others on environment friendly farming and a means to provide healthy, green food at an economic price for the local people. We welcome other brothers and sisters who want to learn about hydroponic farming to the Janssen Hydroponic Farm in Bali. Please contact Fr.Paskalis Widastra for more detailed information.



Br. Arfan explains the hydroponic farming systems to Festival visitors.



Br. Agavitus Wayan with the vegetables displayed at the booth during the Festival.

## Friends of SVD Ghana

*Submitted by Helen Dzikunu, National Coordinator*

The second quarter of 2017 saw the inauguration of two new groups, bringing the total number of groups in the Country to 7. They are Friends of SVD, St. Augustine Parish (Asesewa) which was inaugurated in May 2017 and the Friends of SVD in Saints Peter and Paul Parish (Aplaku) which was inaugurated in June 2017, all are in the southern part of Ghana. The Mission Secretary and the Parish Priests continue to support the groups in their various activities at the Parish level.

Their objectives are;

- ◆ Assist the Priests to visit the sick and aged periodically.
- ◆ Participate in SVD spirituality
- ◆ Network with other Friends of SVD in Ghana to support the SVD Society in Ghana in cash and kind.
- ◆ Pay visit to SVD missionaries.
- ◆ Support SVD seminarians in their formation.



### **SAINTS PETER AND PAUL PARISH - NEW APLAKU, ACCRA**

#### *Inaugurates Friends of SVD*

The Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, New Aplaku of the Archdiocese of Accra (Ghana) on 25th June, 2017 inaugurated the FRIENDS OF THE DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES (Friends of SVD), a forum of lay faithful who share in St. Arnold Janssen's SVD spirituality. At the Inauguration, Fr. George Clement Angmor, SVD, Provincial Superior of Ghana-Liberia Province and Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, SVD, Mission Secretary were present.

Fr. Stephen Dogodzi in his homily urged Christians to do away with fear, but rather be courageous at all times as scripture teaches. Sixty lay faithful professed their membership vows in the Friends of SVD (FSVD) and presented lighted candles to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Provincial Superior presented the FSVD Certificate to the Parish which was received by the Parish Pastoral Council Chairman, Mr. Acolatse who handed it over to the President of the New Aplaku FSVD, Mrs. Naa Kwarley Oteng-Boadu. Membership certificates were presented to the newly initiated members too.

The President, in her inaugural address said that the Friends of SVD, New Aplaku have willingly accepted to live the Trinitarian spirituality and will do their best to dedicate time to pray, share, read and study the Holy Scriptures. She assured that the group will support young confreres or seminarians in their formation and also participate at their profession of vows and priestly ordinations.

The President, Mrs. Naa Kwarley Oteng-Boadu with the assistance of some executives on behalf of the group presented a Citation of Honour to Frt. Samuel Aboo for his instrumental role in the formation of FSVD, New Aplaku while he was with the parish for his pastoral year experience.

The Inauguration ceremony was preceded with a day of Recollection led by Fr. Dogodzi and Fr. Ignatius Ayivor, SVD. They gave an exposition on the SVD Spirituality and the life of St. Arnold Janssen and urged members to live the SVD spirituality. Fr. Dogodzi encouraged the participants to be agents of positive change and transform the world with their actions. Fr. Ayivor also encouraged the members to be united and be friends with each other.



***The Spiritual Directors of Friends of SVD, New Aplaku are Fr. Vincent Owusu, SVD, Parish Priest; Fr. Ayivor and Fr. Peter Kabutey, SVD; all of them are from Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, New Aplaku, Accra.***

***We congratulate all the Friends of SVD in Ghana, as they continue to celebrate the formal inauguration of a new group of members. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus unite us all in our common Mission to proclaim His Divine Word to all nations!***

***Blessings upon all your efforts to evangelize and follow the SVD Missionary example of Saints Arnold and Joseph.***



***Through the intercession of our Founder, St. Arnold Janssen, may the SVD family continue to grow as others join in the mission of bringing the Divine Word to life in their words and actions for the good of all God's people!***

## *Divine Word Soul - "Alma Verbita" (CHI) – Chile*

*Submitted by Elena Ortiz*

Dear readers,

We started an autumn, perhaps a little unusual; with very low temperatures that have been felt and with abundant rainfall, which have greatly affected this zone of our country, mainly the northern zone of Chile. Together with the climate, our lives too, are affected by these climate changes. Our overall motivation, energy levels and health are diminished as we daily face two adverse situations. It is in these instances we must generate hope, be positive and able to see as well as enjoy the rainbows that form in the middle of the storm.



As lay people, we are conscious of the importance of being prepared and trained to carry out the mission, Christ has delegated to us. Our community, the Divine Word Soul (*Alma Verbita*) has taken this to responsibility to heart and since the month of April, the entire community has participated in a Theology Workshop.



During the community meetings set for this year, we will dedicate time and space to complete our training. We hope the seed of this preparation allows us to give a better response to the current realistic times of our Church.

We are very grateful to Mr. Cristián Villablanca, for his generous and most willing acceptance of our invitation to deliver a speech for this workshop.

### **SVD Lay Partners International Workshop**

Let us remember to pray for all those who are involved in the planning and organizing the Society of the Divine Word intensive program for SVD Lay Partners, as well as the 35 participants who will gather in Nemi, Rome from October 14 - 28, 2017. May the Holy Spirit guide their proceedings for the good of the Kingdom of God!



## Auxillary Missionaries of the Divine Word ( MAVD ) – Mexico

Submitted by CD Gianini Sahagún Becerra



The Auxiliary Missionaries of the Divine Word were sent to various mission camps to share the experience of being witnesses of faith. The various indigenous regions of Mexico in Hidalgo, Chiapas, Oaxaca and Sinaloa, provided us the chance to speak and learn new customs within the diverse cultures we served. Before our departure, we celebrated a Missioning Mass with the SVD priests who went with us on these mission trips.

We led various prayer circles for Bible Study and *Leticio Divina* on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, focused on the Biblical theme of "The Decent of the Holy

Spirit", taken from Acts 2:1-14. Together, we celebrated all the Liturgical services of Holy Week.

We prepared various talks and activities for the children, teens and adults with different didactic materials, which emphasized the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so as to help participants slowly to discover themselves.

We also counted on the professional missionary doctors, nurses, dentists and prosthetic dental technicians who traveled with us and provided free medical and health services.



## SVD Friends –Manila, Philippines

**Submitted by Bro. Scotty Estrera**

SVD Friends was established as an association of friends of SVD to assist in the religious formation of lay people who are close to the SVD priests, in the spirit of St. Arnold Janssen. Brainchild of Fr. Cornelio Alpuerto SVD in 1991, he recruited all the relatives and friends of SVD priests from all over the Philippines. Some were based in different countries abroad. The SVD Friends sent newsletters quarterly, filled with news and articles meant to foster their relationship with God and the Divine Word Missionaries. As an SVD Friend, they committed to nominate an SVD priest for whom they will support in prayers and otherwise. They were classified as the praying community of the SVD Friends, with about 650-700 members.

In 1992, Fr. Alpuerto SVD, appointed Fr. Virgilio B. Bartolome SVD to succeed him in the SVD Friends Secretariat as Director. He continued the relationship with the praying community and established the SVD Friends Cluster at Catholic Trade Compound, Manila. He also promoted the establishment of clusters in the different SVD areas and locales like St. Therese Parish in Dagupan, Pangasinan, Christ the King Seminary compound in Quezon City, and also in the SVD area of Abra. The clusters were organized under the rector of the SVD locale and were encouraged to hold weekly meetings of bible sharing and rosary cenacles. At the Catholic Trade Compound, Manila, there are now 3 groups meeting regularly, the Bible sharing groups, a weekly Tuesday night group meeting at 8 pm; and a weekly Friday morning group meeting at 9am; and the Rosary cenacle group meeting on Wednesdays twice a month. They have outreach activities to the Christ the King Villa Cristo Rey, Home for the Elderly Priests, the Ospicio de San Jose, Home for the Elderly and at the Lourdes Home for the Handicapped. Every year during Monday up to Tuesday of Holy Week, Lenten Season, a traditional "Pabasa" (a religious exercise of singing the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ) is held for at least 24 hours at the Catholic Trade Office by the SVD Friends.



SVD Friends Manila and CKMS QC celebrating the Anniversary of St. Arnold Janssen.



Spiritual Formation  
Weekly Bible Study Groups

SVD Friends was an active participant in promoting the Sainthood of St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz and published "stampitas" for that mission. They joined and promoted the St. Arnold Janssen Spirituality Seminars.

In order to sustain the ministry of the SVD Friends, Fr. Bart SVD established the Blessed Arnold Janssen Foundation as the Chairman and President. The foundation was registered as a legal entity in 1994.

In 1996, the radio program "Kaibigan" was aired over DWSS AM Radio as a Gospel preaching talk show. The program was transferred to DWBL AM Radio in 2006. The "Kaibigan" continued at DWAD AM Radio until 2013, when it began airing at Radio Maria DZRM99.7 FM Tarlac <http://radiomaria.ph/listen>. Simultaneously, it is also aired over Aksyon Radio Pangasinan DWCM 1161 KHz.

## Vietnam: Lay People Convention in Nha Trang



Nearly 260 people came to the Provincial house for the gathering of Lay Collaborators and supporters on May 5-6, 2017 at Nha Trang. They are mostly benefactors, acquaintances, those assisting the confreres, helpers in mission, catechists and so forth. This gathering was organized by the versatile Mission Secretary, Fr. Nguyen, Hiep Hoang Ignatius, he has personal contact with most of these lay persons and travels widely to keep contact with them. This is the third meeting of such nature, the previous gatherings had small a number of participants, but the number is now growing. The province is trying to instil in them the elements of SVD lay spirituality, introducing to them some social projects and mobilizing them to be connected with our Society and its charism. This is just the beginning, given the socio-political situation as well as Church situation, the initiative of gathering them together itself is a big achievement.

Fr. Lazar Stanislaus, General Mission Secretary presented the situation of SVD Lay Partners and gave the examples of other Lay Partner groups working in various provinces. They got to know the international aspect of our Society. Some of the leaders of the groups shared their activities and initiatives in their local places. Holy Eucharist and prayers added a more spiritual aspect to this gathering. The confreres introduced to the lay people the new upcoming building projects in the campus. The second day was a picnic and it was more for relaxing and keeping the group together. One can see the sense of spirituality and their willingness to reach out to one another. The smiles and sharing spoke a lot on how they enjoyed this gathering. Much appreciation is to be given to the confreres and the postulants; they did a wonderful job of planning and organizing this gathering with all the details. It was a wonderful experience!

***“The only language understood by people everywhere is the language of love.”***

***- Joseph Freinademetz***

Lay Missionaries of the Divine Word (MLVD) USW – USA

Submitted by **Sandra Garcia**



Members of St. Kateri Tekawitha Parish in Banning, California shared their talents to help create decorations used in the Patronal Feast day celebration held on June 16th. Below is a picture on the day of the celebration with some of the created decorations used. Another group of volunteers also helped Seminarians with the



preparations of the Ordination of Fr. Thierry Balonda and joined in the celebration held in Chicago.



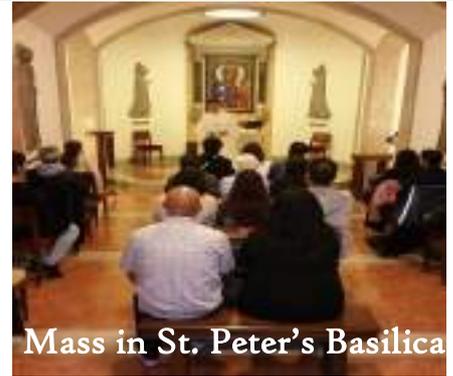
Fr. José Luis Corral, SVD Provincial Superior of Southern Argentina directed the annual MLVD retreat the weekend before US Independence Day. Through various activities and times of prayer, Fr. Jose Luis helped everyone focus on their unity in Christ who binds us together in love and the spirit of reconciliation. It was an opportunity to grow closer together

with one another, strengthen one's commitment to the Mission and rejuvenate the spirit through prayer. During the Mass, they lifted a paper heart in ritual, asking God to recreate a new heart in each of them. As St. Arnold prayed: **May the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all!**



## An MLVD Pilgrimage Retreat In Rome, Italy. *Submitted by Sandra Garcia*

Members of the Lay Missionaries of the Divine Word from Queen of Angels Parish in Riverside, CA were honored with the privilege to experience a Pilgrimage Retreat of a lifetime facilitated by Fr. Miguel Ruiz in Rome, Italy. Together they spent 10 days visiting various sacred spaces of the eternal city and recalled in prayer the sacrifices of faith offered by many of the early Christian martyrs and Saints who boldly witnessed their faith.



Mass in St. Peter's Basilica

In his daily homilies, Fr. Miguel focused on the lives of Sts. Peter, Francis of Assisi, Maria Goretti and Saint Paul. Fr. Miguel also pointed out how the world challenges faithful discipleship with the lure of power, wealth and pleasure and yet, the Saints who walked the places we visited were witnesses to the contrary. Saint Paul who himself was a Roman Citizen, rejects the lure of prestige and power; St. Francis whose life demonstrates true wealth is found in Christ, St. Peter who leads the Church with total trust in Christ and St. Maria Goretti who dies for the sake of purity; these are true role models for the faithful Christian Catholic. It was a time to strengthen our conviction to evangelize as we live our faith and witness Christ in our daily living.



It was also an opportunity to learn more about the Society of the Divine Word, as they welcomed us into their home and hosted us in the Generalate. We are grateful for their gracious hospitality and forever indebted to Fr. Miguel for being our retreat Director. Of course, the Wednesday morning general audience with Pope Francis was bonus blessing of the pilgrimage!

The following are words expressed from those who participated in the April and June retreats.

*"It was a blessing to have been in those holy places. I never imagined the sacrifice of the martyrs who gave their life for our faith, in order to defend and evangelize; what Jesus has given us is meant to last forever."*

*"It has helped us reaffirm our faith in what has happened throughout history. To visit the places where there is visible evidence of the lives of our ancestors in faith, has helped us as Christians to better understand our commitment to the Church as baptized and confirmed Catholics. It was also an extraordinary experience to be able to be precisely in the places where our pillars of faith were once present, where they endured persecution and sufferings to follow our Lord Jesus Christ. If it were not for their faith and perseverance, we would not be here knowing more of our faith and our mission in the world. We will never tire of thanking God!"*



*"I could have never imagined being able to live this pilgrimage opportunity to stand on the same ground our two great pillars in faith Saints Peter and Paul, also tread. To be in the very prison in which they were placed and where St. Paul wrote his letters proclaiming the Good News and to pray in places of such significance for our faith has been a blessing of a lifetime, for which I am ever grateful to all who made it possible."*

*"It was a time to grow in conviction as a missionary disciple of Christ and to recommit to the on-going daily responsibility of evangelizing the Good News of Jesus, without counting the cost."*

## Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW) – Mumbai, India

Submitted by Susan Noronha Chettiar



### *Expressing our gratitude...*

Expressing their love and gratitude, members thanked Fr. Paul Vattathara, SVD, outgoing Provincial Superior of INM, for his guidance and assistance towards the progress of DDW, for his simple and humble nature and for his constant encouragement! It was during his leadership tenure, DDW was recognized as the Lay Associate Group of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), India Mumbai Province.

### *Pastoral Visits by the Disciples of the Divine Word...*

**Cloistered Carmel Monastery.** The Carmelite sisters spoke to us on their simple life of poverty, chastity and obedience, humility, silence, and solitude - a life of union with God through prayer and sacrifice for the needs of the Church and the world. They gave us a message that we should pray constantly.

**Home for the Aged.** The community of the Little Sisters of the Poor is committed to the care and well being of the elderly inmates of the home, which goes beyond any consideration of caste, class or religion. The elders were so happy to meet us. Some of our members made donations to the Home.

**Shanti Ghar.** A Centre fights for the rights of battered women specially those in distress and suffer domestic violence. It is run by the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. Our members volunteered to help the sisters.



*Happy 80th Birthday dear Martha Serrao and Napoleon Fernandes.*

*Happy 40th Wedding Anniversary dear Joaquim and Henrietta Monserrate.*

*Thank you for your presence and support to the Disciples of the Divine Word and for the joy you have brought to so many people. May God continue to bless you more and more with each passing year.*