



Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

SVD Lay Partners

Newsletter - from Around the World

Issue 9, April 2019

World Youth Day, Panama



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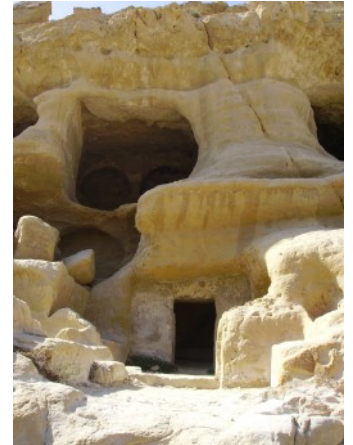
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Editorial

Passing over...

Easter is approaching and the flowers in my little garden are in full bloom. With an abundance of fruits and flowers, my memories go back to my childhood where the season of Easter was more about fruits and flowers. As a child, Holy Week was nothing but going to Church three days in a row and singing my favourite hymns loudly! Over the years, I have known what Easter is about and I have experienced the remarkable personal significance it has for my own life.

The gospel of Matthew records that on Easter Sunday "an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it." (Mt 28:2) The stone was rolled away not to let Jesus out, but to let us in, to experience the fullness of life. This Easter let's look forward to many stones being rolled away from our life that we may pass-over to a new life of grace and giving.



The notion of "passing over" is an approach to our missionary vocation too. It attempts to bring together the spiritual journey of the Christian Passover and the personal, cultural, and even geographic "passing over" that is so central to our SVD identity and experience. We leave the familiar to seek the presence of God on the boundaries of our faith. SVD lay mission partners in varied and creative ways have journeyed across social, psychological and geographical boundaries to both receive and give of the fullness of life. In making ourselves one with others, we pass-over to participate in the salvation which Jesus announced.

When I use my meagre talents to help build a house for a family in a faraway tribal community, or help to educate a poor child, or bring a smile on suffering person's face, I experience God's love just a little bit more. Because it's the small things that can make a big difference in someone's life.

Easter reminds me to renew my hope and faith by putting priorities in order and living my life on principles that really matter.

Have a blessed Holy Week and Happy Easter!

Susan Noronha
(Editor-in-chief)

World Youth Day (WYD) in Panama

Participation and experiences of SVD Lay Partners at the event



The XXXIV World Youth took place from January 22nd to 27th 2019 in Panama City, Panama. The theme for the 15th international celebration was taken from Mary's affirmation of God's will "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Lk 1:38).

Members of Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino, the SVD Lay Partners in Panama were involved in preparation activities and as helpers team during the event.

César, a member of ALBA, (an NGO in Madrid), has contributed as a volunteer for different projects and associations with ALBA. To enrich his personal and spiritual growth, he signed as an international volunteer at the World Youth Day in Panama.

They share with us their experiences.

César: Working as a volunteer

Pope Francis encourages young people at WYD Panama 2019

Young people coming from more than 140 countries of the world, gathered together in Panama from January 22 - 27, 2019 to celebrate the World Youth Day with Pope Francis. Devotion to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, was made fundamental and as part of the catechesis we received from the ministers of the Church. The religious who were present at the celebration, directed the meetings that were held in different parishes and centres of the city.

As an International Volunteer

As many of those who assisted, we had the opportunity to carry out actions of international volunteerism. In my case, I could serve by helping and guiding the Spanish speaking pilgrims, and also in the collection of plastic bottles for later recycling, in the Park Omar Campo John Paul II, thereby putting into practice the learning in the encyclical "Laudato Si". (Praise be my Lord, May 24, 2015)

The spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen was also presented in the Vocation Fair, where the SVD brothers of the Central



"Mary is the influencer of Christ", the Holy Father said in one of his homilies. He spoke on the importance of this simple woman, as a mother, bringing up Jesus. She did not doubt to say: "Here I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done on me according to your Word". Pope Francis invites us to follow the example of Jesus and Mary in our day to day life, being like servants ready to listen and imitate them.



America Province (CAM) welcomed young persons who wished to know about the mission work of SVD congregation. The WYD 2019 has been, without doubt, a multi ethnic and pluricultural feast, which I am sure, certainly pleased St. Arnold Janssen.

César Paradas Montesinos



Alba ONGD, Madrid

ALBA, (an NGO in Madrid, which takes its name from the SVD parish, Virgin del Alba in Alcorcón) was founded and is managed by lay personnel and receives the support of the Congregation. It was created to work in de-

veloping cooperation with our SVD missions and to serve immigrants providing free legal services at its headquarters. (<http://www.asociacionalba.org>)

Experiences of Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino

The 15th International World Youth Day was celebrated from January 22 – 27, 2019 in Panama City, Panama. The theme for this year's celebration was taken from Mary's affirmation of God's will "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Lk 1:38)."

As a way of preparing for the WYD, members of both SVD parishes, *San Jerónimo* and *Medalla Milagrosa*, visited families in their areas to encourage them to host pilgrims. They also encouraged the youth through adoration, prayer sessions and spiritual retreats. There were economic events to generate money to cover the expenses of the WYD activities and to support financially young people in their desire to experience this great event.

Both the SVD parishes were centers for catechism from January 23 – 25. The bishops, who were present at the centers, inspired the pilgrims coming from different countries, to per-



severe their love for Christ, to be instrumental in reaching out to others and to follow the Church's teachings.

In our parishes, we facilitated and assisted the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and the pilgrims coming from Paraguay, Ghana, Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador and many other places. We also guided and helped them to visit some tourist places in Panama.

We, the Divine Word Missionaries, had a stand at the Vocational Fair. We animated and encouraged the pilgrims to consider and to pursue their vocation towards priesthood, consecrated life or marriage. We also spoke to them about the life and commitment of lay missionaries.

Pope Francis, in his message to the youth said, "Peter and the Church walk with you; and we want to tell you not to be afraid, to go forward with the same fresh energy and restlessness that helps make us happier and more available, better witnesses to the Gospel, to go forward". With the presence of Pope Francis in our land, we experienced the rebirth of the Church in Panama through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

World Youth Day is the celebration of faith, unity and hope of the young people. Our commitment is to make room for young people in the Church, so that they can have the opportunity to develop their gifts and talents in the love of Christ.



May Virgin Mary, our mother, who is a witness of absolute openness to God, intercede for us.

[Rogelio Rodriguez](#)









AFRAM ZONE



Democratic Republic of Congo (CNG)

Fraternité SVD - Renaming and Participation at AFRAM Zonal Assembly

Name changes

The name of the SVD Lay Partners, Kinshasa, is officially changed to *Fraternité SVD* by Father Provincial and his council team on our proposal to change the name of mission partner group in Congo. The members of the *Fraternité SVD* in Congo flourish in apostolic circles, especially in the works and entities of the SVDs in Congo's three districts; Bandundu, Kinshasa and Ngondi.

AFRAM Zonal Assembly

I was invited to participate in the AFRAM Zonal Assembly in Kinshasa, between February 20 – 26, 2019. The theme was; “Renewal as religious missionaries in the African context in the light of and as follow-up of General Chapter”. During one of this talks Father Superior General said, “We are called to collaborate with one another to transform the world. We are not the owners of our charism. This is a gift given by God. A sign of renewal and transformation is that we develop the capacity to share our SVD charism with others.”



The Assembly began with the Enthronement of the Word, and continued through the daily spiritual/liturgical activities. We also participated in the Final Vows and Diaconate Ordination of three Congolese SVDs.

My sharing of SVD Lay Partners in Congo was based on their principal activities, (i) Spiritual (ii) Being Christian and a missionary ambassador (iii) Pastoral (iv) Social and charitable

activities and (v) Promoting human life. I also spoke on the challenges we are facing as Lay Partners.

At the end of this Assembly, it was resolved that each Province/Region/Mission will animate and assist the SVD Lay partners to develop their local statutes based on the guidelines provided by the *AFRAM Executive Committee* (Execom) and the *Mission Animation Zonal Area Coordinator* (ZAC). It was recommended that (i) Mission Secretaries should explore the feasibility and modality of organizing a meeting of the SVD lay mission partners in the zone at their May 2019 meeting in Togo, (ii) *AFRAM Executive Committee* and the *Mission Animation Zonal Area Coordinator* will formulate a vision and a set of general guidelines for the SVD Lay Partners.



It was an important opportunity to learn and to share my own experience with the SVDs.

Musete Jean Paul Nico Luketo



Angola (ANG)

Associação de Leigos Missionários do Verbo Divino - Missionary vigil

On October 20, 2018 we successfully held the Missionary Vigil with the Arnold Janssen Movement and the parish community of *Santa Madalena*. We prayed for the missionaries, especially for the SVDs for their 50 years of presence in Angola. We had the presentation of the symbols of the mission, the prayer of the third missionary, the way of the Cross, documentary on the life and work of St. Arnold Janssen and the SVD presence in Angola. We concluded the Night Vigil with Adoration followed by Holy Eucharist, presided over by Fr. Fernando Zoza, SVD.

Anniversary Celebration

On October 28, 2018, we celebrated the sixth anniversary of the association with a Eucharistic Celebration followed by a recreation with variety of programs.

Expansion of Lay Partners group

In the context of the expansion of the *Associação de Leigos Missionários do Verbo Divino* in the parishes and missions under the jurisdiction of the SVD missionaries, we carried out five visits of missionary animation with the support of the spiritual director, Fr. Denis Pereira, SVD at *Paróquias do Cristo*, *Verbo Divino* and *Santa Madalena*.

Cardinal Filoni in Angola

On November 17, 2018, we had the privilege of meeting with the envoy of Pope Francis in the Parish of *St. John the Baptist* (Diocese of Caxito). Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, was in Angola for the closing of the *Conferência Episcopal de Angola e São Tomé (C.E.A.S.T.)*. The cardinal in his communication said, "become authentic and zealous 'missionary disciples', more and more in love with Jesus and his evangelizing mission and to give life to a Church where the joy of the Gospel resounds".

José Miguel Mateus



Ghana (GHA)

Friends of SVD - Visit to SVD Residence, McCarthy Hill Accra

Lay Partners from the *Peter and Paul* Catholic Church, New Aplaku in Accra visited the retired Priests and Brothers at the SVD Residence, McCarthy Hill on December 15, 2018. Lay



Partners from other parishes joined them. They presented a television set, food items, dustbins, toiletries, towels among others. They undertook a clean-up exercise in and around the residence. Bro. Peter Edze, SVD thanked the group and assured them of their prayers.

St. Arnold Janssen Feast Day Celebration

This year's feast day celebration of St. Arnold Janssen at *Peter and Paul* Catholic Church was observed with a triduum and a Holy Mass. Lay Partners joined other members of the congregation for the triduum. On the first day of the triduum, Fr. Vincent Owus, SVD gave a talk on "Who is St. Arnold Janssen? His works and legacies". The second day's talk was on the spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen, delivered by the mission secretary for Ghana Province, Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, SVD. The talk on the last day was given by Vincent Amuzu, a seminarian, on "The missionary formation of the SVD in our time

according to the vision of St. Arnold Janssen – Sponsorship for the formandi". We participated in the celebration of High Mass on the feast day, January 15, 2019.

Inauguration of Friends of SVD - Christ the King Parish (Cantonments-Accra)

On January 29, 2019, the feast of St. Joseph Freinademetz, the *Friends of SVD*, *Christ the King* Parish, Archdiocese of Accra was inaugurated to the glory of God! The inauguration was preceded by a triduum to St. Joseph Freinademetz. The Superior of the Accra District and the main Celebrant at the Mass, Fr. Rex Vegbe, SVD, commended the *Friends of SVD* for their readiness to support the SVDs in their missionary work. Concelebrating with him were the Mission Secretary of the Ghana Province, Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, SVD and Fr. Andrew Campbell, SVD, the parish priest of *Christ the King* Parish. A talk on "St Joseph Freinademetz, first SVD missionary to China" was delivered by Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, SVD during the Mass.



Martin Kumedzo

Zambia (ZAM)

SVD Lay Associates - Commitment

On December 16, 2018, seventeen members of SVD Lay Associates were commissioned. Before their commissioning, the members committed themselves to the SVD Spirituality, there has been a lot of progress. They were introduced to the history of the Congregation, the Founder, the SVD Family, and SVD Spirituality and Charism. They were shown how St. Arnold Janssen collaborated with the laity in the establishment of the Congregation.



The SVD Lay Associates are expected to work hand in hand in promoting vocations and to help the parish whenever there is a need. The members are also expected to attend SVD gatherings. The SVD Lay Associates in Linda parish, Lusaka, Zambia was launched on April 29, 2017, by the parish priest, Fr. Lawrence Likulano, SVD. The group started with only a few members, but as time went on, people started to show interest in coming to know more about the group. Moreover, different SVD priests have been invited to give talks about their experiences in different missions. Through these sharing, the group is motivated and inspired to live a practical life and to help the needy in their respective communities.

Fr. Lawrence Likulano, SVD
Vice Superior - Zambia Mission

(Arnoldus Nota Jan-Feb 2019)



ASPAC ZONE



India (INM)

Disciples of the Divine Word - Different Activities

World Day of the Poor - Prayer Bridge

To associate with the brilliant initiative by SVD-Partner, Germany, we celebrated the World Day of the Poor at our meeting on Sunday, November 18, 2018. During the Mass, with solidarity worldwide, we recited the prayer with a lit candle. The Prayer Bridge is an opportunity to be in union in prayer with the rest of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Participation in the Province Assembly

In December 2018 and January 2019, three of our members participated in the two Province Assemblies held at Ishvani Kendra, Pune and Atma-Darshan, Mumbai. The theme was *Renewed by the Word into the Mission*. The Provincial administration gave our members an opportunity to speak about our collaborative role with the SVDs.

An experience of a lifetime



In the month of February 2019, three of our members, Lorna D'Souza, Maryanne D'Mello and Leena Xavier travelled to Tripura (ING), approximately 3500 km from Mumbai, and visited the SVD schools, parishes and mis-

sions. Fr. Ivan D'Silva, SVD, the District Superior of Agar-tala welcomed them with a well-planned program for them. They conducted workshops for students, teachers, parish council members and villagers. They also gave value education to the students. The session not only helped the children but also was a refresher to the teachers. Maryanne says, "We interacted with the parish women leaders who have formed a sort of a Women's Cell. Very simple women, and yet in spite of their limited literacy, they were so powerful holding some portfolio or the other. We hope they were enriched." Our members were impressed to see the tribal children, though studying in poor condition, yet doing their best. May God bless our SVD priests, SSpS sisters and lay people who are working selflessly in these humble villages.



Susan Noronha

Australia (AUS)

SVD Lay Partners - What's happening "Down Under"?

On September 8, 2017, the birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary and SVD Foundation Day, the first group of SVD Lay Partners for the Australia Province was established. It initially had ten members. This group has since grown to seventeen. Members come from diverse backgrounds, Australians, Indians, Indonesians, Filipinos, Italians, bringing with us a vast range of cultural and intercultural qualities, resulting in effective cross-cultural relations. Most of us have had years of association with the SVD and we unanimously believe that it is the warmth, welcoming friendship and humility of the SVD priests and brothers that draw us to be a part of the SVD community.



During the early stages, we spent time getting to know our founder St. Arnold Janssen, his spirituality and missionary spirit. According to our Spiritual Director, Fr. Dom Flores, SVD, St. Arnold Janssen, who founded the Society of Divine Word, was

unable to launch his vision of Lay Missionaries before his death. In this time and age, it is the "need of the hour". Fr Dom Flores, SVD emphasized that through the years, lay people had a strong presence in the missionary works of the Society "behind the scene".

We meet every second Saturday of the month. Our gathering begins with Mass, followed by fellowship around the breakfast table, which is an ideal setting for forging camaraderie and deepening friendships. The monthly meetings have been marvelous opportunities for reflection, sharing and prayer. It is our hope to formulate our Vision and Mission in the coming months and we rely on God to light our path.



On December 8, 2018, the Feast of the Solemnity of Immaculate Conception, we had our first official gathering. We joined the SVD community in the Eucharistic Celebration followed by dinner and fellowship. It was an immensely enjoyable event as we listened to their vocation stories, learned from their mission experiences, drew inspiration from their wonderful insights, laughed over delightful jokes and shared a meal that was prepared by the SVD Lay Partners. Through collaboration and active participation in the SVD mission, may we be a living Gospel and give light to the world.

Helen Festejo

The Philippines (PHN)

SVD Friends - Worthwhile Indeed!

The two recent mission encounters in January, a month when we celebrate the feast of St. Arnold Janssen, was a beautiful reminder about where to build our treasure. On January 06, 2019, our husband-wife team facilitated a parish recollection in preparation of *St. Arnold Janssen Catholic Mission's* patronal feast day in the mountains on Adams, Ilocos Norte. On January 19, the Paderon family animated a family formation program as part of the yearlong series of formation for the youth, dubbed "The Role of the Family in the Christian Formation of the Youth" at *St. Joseph Catholic Mission*, Sabangan, Mountain Province. Our three sons, we fondly call - Big Heart Marc, Happy Heart Matthew and Beloved John, were not physically present but they made sure they recorded their talk and shared a video.



Amidst the busyness of our day-to-day grind, how we as lay people make time for encounters like these? Despite the limitations of our capacities and resources, where do we draw the boldness and generosity to give ourselves? The example of St. Arnold Janssen challenges us. Quoting Cardinal Rossi during his beatification in 1975, "He did ordinary things in an

extraordinary manner." St. Arnold Janssen was drawn by Christ's love. And so are we. We can only thank God for the invitation to take part in His mission. He extends this privilege to each one no matter how unworthy and small we are.

Inspired by the little girl's words, one of the youngest participants during the family formation program at *St. Joseph Catholic*, when asked why she was here, "I will make my parents happy." She knew love. For her, "Worthwhile indeed is the life of the one who gives his all." (*St. Arnold Janssen*).



Words to live by from St. Arnold Janssen - "As for the rest, be of good courage, even when things do not seem to be going well. If only we do our part, then God will come to our aid and He knows how to draw good out of the bad." (*Letter of St. Arnold Janssen to the Brothers at La Serena Chile, 13 August 1904*)

Mike and Mary Geraldine "GeeO" Paderon

The Philippines (PHC)

The Lay Society of St. Arnold Janssen (LSSAJ) - Past and future activities

Kalinga Center

LSSAJ - SVD Collaboration at St. Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center, founded by Fr. Flavie Villanueva, SVD, sponsors every first Sunday food and showers for the poor and homeless. We also mission immerse by serving, coaching and listening to them. A good number of them have risen up from their situation of getting jobs, becoming Kalinga volunteers, giving up drug addiction and



praying to God again. Faith transforms their lives, and ours too.

LSSAJ Reaches Mindanao Area

LSSAJ established its Second Chapter in General Santos City, the southernmost city of the Philippines located in the Province of South Cotabato. A *Faith Transforming Life Session (FTL)* was held on December 27, 2018 with 26 participants, mostly community leaders of Barangay Fatima, a small community located about 45 minutes from the city proper.

Welcoming Year 2019

LSSAJ welcomed the year 2019 with the inspiration that a stronger collaboration with the SVD be accomplished. We opened the year distributing rice and goods to the abandoned children taken care of by the two sisters.

In the general assembly meeting held on January 12, 2019, the following proposed projects for the first half of the year were conceived. *Kalinisan para sa Kinabukasan* (Cleanliness for our Future) Symposium (KPK), LSSAJ seminar entitled *Agropolis* (City farming) scheduled on April 2, 2019 and Fund-raising Concert for the SVD in June 2019.

LSSAJ came out with full support to our government's Environmental Protection and Waste Management campaign. We invited about 42 *barangays* (Villages) and schools to this symposium. The symposium was held at St. Arnold Janssen Hall of the Divine Word Mission Seminary, Quezon City, Philippines and was well attended by 90 participants. It began with an opening address by Fr. Carlos Lariosa, SVD, Rector of Academia. LSSAJ helps to ensure that actions be taken to protect our environment and to help monitor implementation of government laws and ordinances to this cause.



Convention of SVD Lay Partners in ASPAC

LSSAJ officers met two SVD Mission Secretaries to lay the groundworks for a historic first ever Convention of SVD Lay Partners in Asia-Pacific (ASPAC) to be held in Tagaytay in December 2019.

Fabian Pagaduan, Crisanto Lim, Daisy Leones, Dante Magdangal

EUROPA ZONE

Switzerland (ECP)

Freundeskreis der Schweizer Steyler Missionare - Participation at the Province Assembly

Meeting of the Europe Central Province (ECP) in Vienna, January 6 – 8, 2019

Sixty participants from France, Switzerland, Austria and Croatia gathered at St. Gabriel, Vienna to strengthen the bonds within the newly formed Province, ECP.

We shared the Word of God in small groups and celebrated the Holy Eucharist. We exchanged our experiences. We asked, "working in different parishes, how can we arrange our community life and preserve the SVD-identity"? My question was, "what can SVD-Lay Partners add to this"?

In the ECP, most of the SVD priests are engaged in parishes. There are other pastoral areas, more specifically relating to the SVD-objectives. How do we cater for them? In our communities, different generations live together, how do we respect and support each other?

As guests, Sr. Hemma Jaschke, SSpS, Fr. Michael Kreuzer, SVD, Ruth Steiner and Susanne Pell spoke about their work. While Monika Slouk reported on her press relations, I had the opportunity to present the Swiss SVD-Freundeskreis.

(Continues on page 12)

The meeting ended by celebrating 50th birthday of our Provincial, Stephan Dähler. It gave us the occasion to celebrate, to sing, to chat, and to eat together with the staff of the house.

Celebrating the Feast of St. Arnold Janssen



On January 13, 2019, eighty members of the *Freundeskreis* met at the Marienburg to celebrate the feast of St. Arnold Janssen. Meeting began with a Mass in the Marienburg Church. Fr. Matthias Helms, SVD, Superior of the SVD community in Steinhausen and a veteran Ghana missionary was the main celebrant and preacher. Five other confreres joined him, including the ECP Provincial, Fr. Stephan Dähler, SVD.

After Mass and an apéritif, the members met at the parish hall for lunch. The president of the *Freundeskreis*, Felix Bischofberger, presented a brief report about the activities in

2018, including support for several mission projects and a trip to the birthplace of St. Joseph Freinademetz in South Tyrol. He announced that the next meeting will be held at the SVD mission house, Steinhausen. Fr. Matthias Helms, SVD made a short presentation on the Swiss SVD mission procure. Fr. Stephan Dähler, SVD briefed the group on the future of the Marienburg.

Philipp Hautle

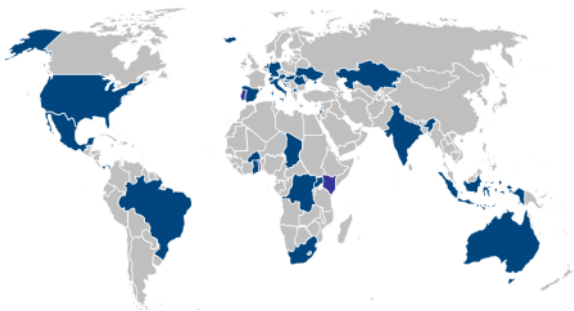


Germany (GER)

SVD-Partner - From A for Aachen to Z for Zamora

Prayer Bridge to the World Day of the Poor Spanned the World on 18 November 2018

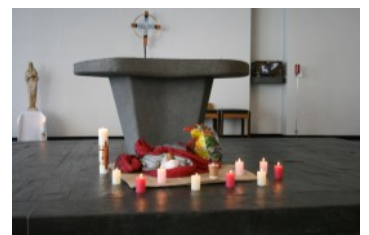
For the second time SVD-Partner, Germany invited to the *Prayer Bridge on World Day of the Poor*. Next to many parishes, single persons, families and dioceses the Arnoldus family participated in the Prayer Bridge: SVD, SSPS and SSPSAP as well as several lay groups from Africa, America, Asia and Europe.



Many e-mails were written, contacts were made and thoughts were exchanged. Pittily due to lack of space not everything can be told here. Therefore a selection:

- A very special pillar stood in Bidibidi in Uganda, the second largest refugee camp in the world. Fr. Francis Nadviledathu, SVD participated with his parishioners who had fled from Southern Sudan.
- Caritas Ukraine again invited the poor for a divine service and agape to the Church of *St. Alexander* in Kiev.

- The northernmost point of the *Prayer Bridge* was Reykjavik (Iceland). Thorkell Örn Ólason, secretary to the bishop, translated the prayer for the *World Day of the Poor* into Icelandic. (What an honour!)
- The parish of *St. Joseph* in Seppa began the prayer in October and prayed gradually in all outposts of the parish.
- The Federal Center for Catholic Youth Work in Germany combined the divine service with the financial support of an initiative for homeless.
- With the world map of the *Prayer Bridge*, ribbons for each continent and a small bridge, the Spanish SVD lay partners impressively showed the world-spanning *Prayer Bridge* during the divine service.



Well, desk work took many hours but the positive response showed how important prayer is to many people. It is certain that SVD-Partner will invite to the *Prayer Bridge* in 2019 again, so save the date: Sunday, 17 November 2019!

Maria Wego

Spain (ESP)

Laicos Verbo Divino (LVD) - A Small Pillar of a Big Bridge

On November 18, 2018, on the World Day of the Poor, Pope Francis called all believers around the world to pray and reflect on the poor. We, *Laicos Verbo Divino* (LVD), joined this initiative at the SVD House in Zamora, to be one of the pillars of this big bridge, from where our prayers flowed throughout the day. Our prayers were in global communion for the cause of the most vulnerable.



We had a small celebration, accompanied by the strength of the prayers of many who did the same in different parts of the planet. We set up a small Altar with the map

where the communities that were praying at that moment were located. We created a symbolic bridge of cardboard, across which we tied ribbons of the missionary colours, representing the five continents.

We entered this beautiful ambience of celebration with a video of the Pope calling us to combat with those who violate

the personal dignity of the poor. Expressing some of the causes of poverty: banishment due to wars, natural catastrophes, poverty, hunger, illness, death in solitude, crime and injustice and lack of education, we made a prayer with a lit candle, as an offering on top of the bridge. Later, we prayed for all people, past and present, writing their names on posts, and later sticking these notes on a mural.

We sang hymns and read the Word of God. We also shared our personal reflections. We concluded our celebration with a final prayer. Later, we shared a fair traded chocolate.

The Word of God poses before us a challenge; to be bridges of body and soul, where others pass, stop, rest, take refuge and refresh their strength. Jesus awaits us in each one of these faces.



Laura Díez Bilbao

Portugal (POR)

SVD Lay Partners - Christmas Project

The challenge was thrown. Perplexity... Questions... until hands and hearts welcomed the project.

The atrium of the Basilica of St. Peter of the Toural in Guimarães was embellished by the thematic nativity scene made by the lay missionaries of Society of the Divine Word (*Amigos do Verbo Divino* and group *Diálogos*) with the support of the local SVD community. The project's theme,



"Christmas in Works", was the way the family of Saint Arnold Janssen responded to the challenges. This project was launched by Fr. Silvino, Chaplain of the Basilica of Toural, during the

Christmas season and in the Extraordinary Year of the Mission.

All started with the journey of advent. Throughout Advent, symbols were placed along with reflective texts that helped in the preparation of the event, thus creating a spiritual and missionary journey towards the Nativity itself.

"Christmas in Deeds! Christmas in Solidarity! Missionary Christmas! Christmas in the Peripheries! A project that I keep

in my heart. In the midst of the brightness and the busyness of the shopping. Since the time this project was presented to us by the Divine Word community of Guimarães, *Amigos do Verbo Divino* and *Diálogos*, I immediately accepted to collaborate. It was a great challenge! During the first encounter with Fr. Silvino, he told us that he wanted a Missionary crib, meant for solidarity. A 'provocative' crib which would touch us, no matter the size which we wanted, but without tempering with the St Peter's Basilica! Various meetings followed, till we found 'our' crib. Looking at the crib... I remember the Holy Family. The first refugees...the first Missionaries. Looking...I see my fragility. But not indifference!" (Teresa Novais)



The light of Bethlehem which came to the Basilica was passed on to *Escola em Missões*, Argentina. The gifts raised in the project will be used to equip a school in Argentina with electricity. Commendable artistic and spiritual work done by those who give their life to the mission.

Fr. Antonio Leite, SVD
Provincial Superior - Portugal



PANAM ZONE



USA (USW)

Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino (MLVD) - Retreat

The *Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino* in Riverside, California had an amazing retreat with over 80 participants who were very thankful for the weekend retreat that helped them have a personal encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ. Taking time to participate in a retreat experience is such a challenge for our culture that is always so busy, nonetheless, it is time very well spent. Most participants share how throughout the retreat, in its activities, skits, faith sharing moments, meditations and overall prayers they are able to experience the love of our merciful and tender God. It is something that we easily lose track of in our over scheduled lives.



That is why we too as a movement make time every year to go on retreat as a team in order to renew ourselves and our commitment to the proclamation of the Word of God. We are very grateful to Father Provincial Fernando

Reis, SVD of Argentina (ARE) who so generously led our retreat and helped us to continue to grow and strengthen our faith. May our One and Triune God continue to bless us as we try to imitate our Lord Jesus in our efforts to serve others. "I do not regard being a missionary as a sacrifice offered to God, but as a grace that God gives me." (St. Joseph Freinademetz)

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Mariana Flores

CHILE (CHI)

ALMA Verbita - Christmas Celebration and Lay Synod

Christmas Celebration

On December 22, our community lived an anticipated Christmas. We went to the town of Monte to celebrate Christmas with the elderly serving the *Comedor Fraterno Santa Teresita de Los Andes*. It was a wonderful encounter. Bethlehem's manger was there; in the midst of poverty and few opportunities, abandonment and sadness, there was a light of joy, happiness and hope. The joy of the Good News, the birth of Jesus, brought smiles on the faces of the old and marginalized, abandoned by their families and society.

The celebration began with a welcome and everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the entire missionary community. The guests felt happy, loved and cared for. After lunch, we shared a Christmas message and gave gifts to each of the guests.

Lay Synod of Chile

Our *ALMA Verbita* community had representation and participation for the National Lay Synod, self-convoked and self-managed at the Shrine of Father Hurtado, in Santiago, on January 5 and 6, 2019. Two representatives from our community together with 350 lay people, met to discern and reflect on current state of the Catholic Church in Chile. Under the same challenge, we have decided to begin a process of dialogue and participation that will work together for the Church we dream of, a Church of communities that are at the

service of building the Kingdom of God in our country. Not only lay people came to this meeting, but also priests and religious who believe and have the vision to rebuild our Church.

El Monte Dining Room

In this New Year, our main concern is focused on the *El Monte* dining room, our efforts to keep it functioning, since it is vital for the survival of many people.

On the other hand, we want to grow and not only in number, but in our training, to continue learning, studying, preparing ourselves for new challenges. If you want to be part of a lay missionary community, we invite you to meet us (domokochi@hotmail.com).

Elena Ortiz



Paraguay (PAR)

Laicos Verbitas - Congress and Celebration

Fifth Congress of Laicos Verbitas

On 2nd, 3rd and 4th of November 2018, the Fifth Congress of Laicos Verbitas took place in my Parish, *San Roque Gonzales de Santa Cruz*.



We were 45 participants, where important topics were discussed and developed. To name a few; History of the Society of the Divine Word in Paraguay, Spirituality of our founder St. Arnold

Janssen, and also other topics of interest. This was organized by the office of the SVD Mission Secretary, Fr. Alfredo Auron who was accompanied by Fr. Santiago Puthankudy SVD, the Provincial Superior of Paraguay.

Celebration at Santuario de Itacúa

The day of the *Verbita* family was celebrated on December 28, 2018. Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Isidoro Cabral, SVD and concelebrated by Father Provincial Santiago Puthankudy, SVD in the *Santuario de la Virgen de Itacúa* (*Santuario de Itacúa*). Priests, Religious and Divine Word Missionaries - Paraguay Province, took part in the celebration. We also commemorated the anniversaries of the priesthood of Fr. Martin Bishu, SVD, Fr. Isidoro Cabral, SVD, Fr. Vicente, SVD and Fr. Corneliu Bolis, SVD. We initiated a common prayer for the New Year and for the Mission anticipating fruitful outcomes.



Froilán Armora González

~ Last but not the Least ~

Announcement

Second International Workshop for SVD Lay Partners in Nemi, Rome

Objectives of the Workshop

- To be committed to collaborate and to promote the missionary activities with the Society of the Divine Word.
- To know the roots, the spirituality, the mission and the congregation more closely and to be aware of the worldwide SVD family and the worldwide SVD lay partners.
- To get to know the lay participants and their groups more personally and to promote more exchanges for the future.
- To help the local groups to prepare a Formation Manual

Place and Duration of the Workshop

Centro Ad Gentes, Nemi (Rome), from 05 to 20 September 2020

(Arrival on 5 September - Saturday and departure on 20 September - Sunday)

Number of Participants

Only 30 participants – Open to SVD lay partners groups (recognized SVD Lay Associations will be given first preference)

Languages

English and Spanish

Application Deadline

29 February 2020

Please contact your local Mission Secretary for more details or the confrere who is in charge of your lay partners group for your participation.



Letter of the Vice-Superior General

Easter Greetings

Dear friends,

“We believe that as we are called to a missionary vocation, our lay partners are also called to their own specific vocation in the Arnoldus Family”. With these words our last General Chapter acknowledged that your missionary vocation is an integral part of the SVD charism.

All members of the Arnoldus Family are called to collaborate, through different ways but on an equal footing, to respond to our common baptismal vocation. The Chapter recognizes that the lay partners share the SVD charism: “As Arnoldus Family members SVD, SSpS, SSpSAP and Lay Partners are all called to collaborate with one another to transform the world. We are not the owners of our charism. This is a gift given by God”. Therefore, through your own specific contribution the Arnoldus Family is enriched and can better promote the work of evangelization.

I would like to thank you for your enthusiasm for mission, your friendship and collaboration. Many good things are happening in mission and also in your lives as members of the Arnoldus Family. We appreciate your search for ongoing formation, your commitment to prayer, attention to the poor, and willingness to reach out to others.

Pope Francis reminds us that it is not possible to persevere in a fervent evangelization unless we are convinced from

personal experience that it is not the same thing to have known Jesus as not to have known him. A true missionary, who never ceases to be a disciple, knows that Jesus walks with him and works with him. If we are convinced, enthusiastic, and in love, certainly will convince others to follow Jesus (cf. EG 266).

As we are approaching Easter, let us again realize that the call to mission was, from the beginning, connected with the proclamation that the Lord has risen: “Go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead and now he is going ahead of you to Galilee; that is where you will see him’” (Mt 28: 7). In the work of evangelization, Jesus is with us and goes ahead us.

May the Risen Lord guide all of us in living our missionary vocation as members of the Arnoldus Family.



Fr. José Antunes da Silva, SVD
Vice-Superior General

SVD Houses

Collegio del Verbo Divino, Rome (Italy)

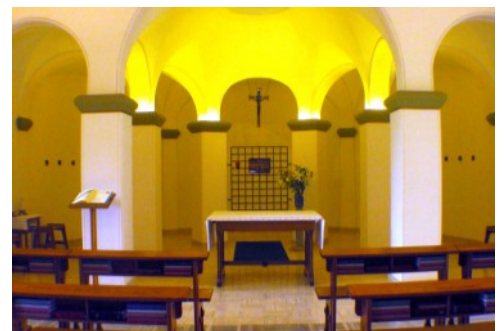


Church of the Collegio

The Collegio del Verbo Divino was founded in 1928.



Collegio del Verbo Divino



Chapel



Altar in the church



Statue in the garden

Tips for Exciting Texts

The reader is in the center; because you write for him

"I can't write articles!" Don't worry: Writing articles is not magic but first and foremost a question of craftsmanship and attitude towards the reader.

The reader is in the center; because you write for him. Your text is a service, an offer to the reader. He can accept it ... or reject it if he is not interested! Your reader ultimately decides on content and form! Because: what your "reader" doesn't read, you don't need to write at all.

If you consider the following rules when writing nothing can actually go wrong!

1. Six important points - the good news

Answer the following six important questions in messages and reports. The order depends on their importance. The most important points (for the reader) come first!

Who?	When?	What?
Where?	How?	Why?

2. Structure of the article

- First summarize the entire message in one or a few sentences.
- Then present further details.
- Then write further information.
- Write articles only in temporal order if they cannot be understood otherwise.

3. The Language

- Choose simple and appropriate words.
- Avoid foreign words if possible.
- Use everyday language (not colloquial or gutter language), e.g.: write Mass instead of Eucharistic celebration.
- Use as many verbs as possible.
- Write statements that contain opinions in direct or indirect speech.

4. Sentence Length

Several short sentences are easier for the reader to understand. Long sentences reduce comprehensibility considerably! This reduces the motivation to continue reading. (These are 22 words in 3 sentences!)

Avoid sentences with more than 15 words!

5. Passive means to suffer!

Use the passive only if it really concerns "suffering". Otherwise formulate actively! Active! And in the present! ... or in perfection!

6. Length of the Articles

Many short messages and contributions are better than few long ones.

The readers have just like you little time! Therefore consider the 3 points: short, clear, concrete.

7. Postman bites Dog

Choose the special and extraordinary for the headline to attract attention!

Present content instead of formality. Search in your article for the curious, the provocative, the comical, the contrary or the unexpected.

8. Forget Your Good Education!

Your teacher's essay is not in demand here!

Go like a bull at a gate!

Excite new greed!

The most important always first!

9. Abbreviation

Do not use abbreviations! Write out the words.

10. Names are News

Name many names! These people definitely read the article ... and their friends, acquaintances.

Check the correct spelling of the name - always! If necessary inquire.

11. Facts - Facts - Facts

Write only what you understand yourself. Otherwise the reader will not understand.

12. Do Others Understand the Texts?

Have your contributions proofread by someone in terms of content and style. Correct ambiguities. Eliminate stylistic mistakes.

We wish you much pleasure and success in writing!!!

© Peter Weidemann

<https://www.pfarbrieftservice.de/die-leser-im-blick> 2018-10-22

(Permission for translation and distribution to SVDLP by Johannes Simon, pfarbrieftservice.de on 31.10.2018)



Impulse

Easter

Χριστός ανέστη!
Αληθώς ανέστη!

Christ is risen!
He is truly risen!

This is how Orthodox Christians greet each other at Easter.

No "Happy Easter" like us, but they proclaim and confirm the wonderful and hardly believable message.

In this greeting the feelings of Emmaus' disciples resonate for me:

Didn't our hearts burn when he spoke to us?

May our hearts also burn and our mouths overflow with the joyful message of Easter.

Sophie Wego

Happy Easter!

Susan *Matilda*
Laura *Fabian*
Sophie *Gianini*

Imprint

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