



Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

SVD Lay Partners

Newsletter - from Around the World

Issue 8, December 2018

Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino, Mexico



For private circulation only

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Editorial

Love Story....

It is December. Soon it is going to be Christmas. Christmas is about a love story of a simple boy Joseph, and a young girl Mary, from an obscure village of Nazareth. All of us love good love stories. Christmas is a genuine love story - the story of God's resolute love for us. Joseph and Mary decided to stick together through fears and uncertainties, over tiresome mountain journeys, rude innkeepers and smelly stables. God chose to reveal his greatest act of love in these real life circumstances.

Love makes the world go round! Life is pleasant when people treat each other lovingly. Anecdotal evidence does give us plenty of reason to believe in the power of love. Whether it is from family, friends, or that special someone, we are all on a quest for love though we may not be actively looking for it all the time.

God put the plan for our redemption into motion in an ordinary manger with Jesus' birth to insignificant people. Anything that promotes this understanding is love in action. A willingness to share in ordinary human life usually found in kitchens and dining rooms, amidst the brooms and mops, in the tears and smiles, the joys and the pain, in good health and illness, is what promotes love.

Somewhere there is a child in need of clothing, an elder who needs a helping hand and a loved one who wants your gift of time.

A silent wish sails the seven seas
 The winds of change whisper in the trees
 And the walls of doubt crumble tossed and torn
 This comes to pass, when a child is born!

(Lyrics from Christmas Carol "When a Child is Born")

Merry Christmas!

Susan Noronha
 (Editor-in-chief)



Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino, México

Presentation of one of the eldest groups

There is not always a special topic like that of the General Chapter in the last edition. However, there should be a central topic in each issue. What could be more obvious than to

focus on the work and history of lay groups? The series begins with the Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino in Mexico.

Who we are ...

Origin

As a clear and definite response to the mandate of Christ to share the Gospel, a small group of lay people gathered together with Fr. Manuel Mayvett SVD, then Mission Secretary of the Province of Mexico, on Sunday February 21, 1982 in Templo Expiatorio of Guadalajara, Jalisco. Thus was born the Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino. We are dynamic working people committed to the Gospel, ready to be nourished by it and to communicate and collaborate with the Church in her universal task of Mission.

Our Missionary project: Conscientization, Animation, Missionary Promotion and Cooperation.

► In Sonora, the Parish of Tubutama, of the Diocese of Nogales, and in 12 communities of Camotlan, of the Parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Manzanillo, Colima

We visit distant communities to **BE MISSION and NOT to DO MISSION**, primarily to share life and respect the environment. We encourage reading of the Bible, pre-sacramental talks, formation of choirs, liturgy, youth groups, etc. according to the need of every place. We have Missionary Medical-Dental Team who dedicate and offer their gratuitous health service, giving consultations and medicines during the Holy week and Summer Mission.



What do we do?

The primary field of mission is the family, those close to us with whom we live daily, the second is the indigenous communities in our country, and third, the foreign mission.

Where do we go?

Our Missions during Holy Week and Summer:

- In Indigenous Communities of the State of Hidalgo of the Diocese of Hujeutla de Reyes and the Parish of Santiago Apostol de Anaya.
- In Chiapas, in Ch'oles communities of the Parish of San Fernando de Guadalupe in Salto de Agua and of San Jose in Playas de Catatzaja, in Oaxaca in the Sierra de Juarez in the Parishes of San Juan Yae and Santa Cruz Yagavila, where we started in 1983.

Formation:

MAVD commit with its Mission in diverse localities of our country –

- To Form, evangelize and deepen faith
- To Promote Mission in local communities and parishes
- To Pray for the Mission of the universal Church
- To Write to the Mexican missionaries who work in foreign lands
- To Participate at least in one Mission per year, either during Holy Week or in Summer

We have accomplished a history within the Missionary family of St. Arnold Janssen, a family that loves the Triune God, embracing the world and its many faces, to form One Heart in His Name.

Gianini Sahagún Becerra

Celebration of the 34th National Meeting of MAVD

The *Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino* (MAVD) convened all members, including new, to live the celebration of their 34th annual celebration of ENCuentro Nacional MAVD, which was held from September 14 - 16, 2018 in CASA DE ORACION NAZARETH, located in the City of Guadalajara, Jalisco.

Once a year, we have the opportunity to celebrate the National Encounter wherein members from other SVD lay groups located in different states of the Mexican Republic



come together to be witnesses to the Grace of God. This year, six lay partners from Panama accompanied us to share with us their mission.

The program was structured with themes of Formation, Spirituality, Culture, Celebration and much more. Fr. Ignacio Migoya SVD imparted to us Divine Word Spirituality and Sister Emmie Vas SSsP, spoke on the origins of the Society, of the life and work of our founding generation and of the implications contained in our Life and Mission. Fr. Gustavo Villavicencio, our Divine Word Adviser, celebrated the Holy Eucharist, filling us with spiritual life and making us reflect on the importance of prayer in our lives.

With the goal of knowing and understanding the interculturality and activities from the five continents - music, dance, culture, gastronomy and the life and work of the Society were organized. We participated in-group dynamics, which helped us to develop abilities of skills that strengthen our knowledge of formation, teamwork, communication etc.



Election of the National Coordination team for 2018-2020:

- › National Coordinator: José Manuel Contreras
- › Secretary: Rebeca Herrera Pérez
- › Treasurer: Jhonatan Romero Rivera

As members of Arnoldus Family, we are grateful for the presence of Fr. John Benas, Provincial Superior of México-Cuba; Fr. Jose Antonio Gomez, Mission Secretary; SSsP Sisters Hermana Gabi, Hermana Marcela, Fr. Miguel Lopez and seminarians.



Currently we are around 230 SVD Lay Missionaries (MAVD) working in México to spread the mission of Christ and the Church. We thank God for the 36 years of MAVD in México and firmly believe that the heart of Jesus lives in the hearts of all humanity.

Gianini Sahagún Becerra





AFRAM ZONE



Mozambique (MOZ)

Leigos Associados À Congregação Do Verbo Divino (LACVERDI) – Official Recognition of the SVD Lay Partners by the Congregation

On September 8, 2018, a special Eucharistic celebration was presided over by Father Johnson Furtado, the Regional Superior and concelebrated by confreres of the Southern District to celebrate the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foundation of the Congregation of the Divine Word Missionaries in Steyl. At the same occasion, the Regional Superior officially recognized the Lay Partners by the Congregation. In attendance were SSPS Sisters, lay partners and invited guests.



The celebrant emphasized that the Nativity of Mary is all about the promised Joy of the coming of our Saviour in the world, in which God chose Mary to be the Mother of our Saviour. The birth of Mary would be the first sign of God's salvation of humanity, from her came the saviour who brought peace. Mary was the new Eve who with her humility and obedience life was redeemed. In her obedience, she became an example of all mothers and vocation life.

He stressed the importance of September 8th in the history of the Congregation and pointed out more vividly the cordial collaboration that Saint Arnold Janssen had with the laity, who generously involved themselves in many ways in the project of establishing a missionary congregation.

Right after his homily, followed the official recognition ceremony of the Lay Partners to the Society of the Divine Word, Mozambique Region. They began with the prayer of the Litany of Saint Arnold Janssen and thereafter a prayer of commitment. The Regional Superior blessed them and offered each one of them a prayer book (with SVD prayers), the Statutes of the group and a rosary. They adopted the acronym LACVERDI (*Leigos Associados à Congregação do Verbo*



Divino). It was an important moment and of great emotion for the 18 Lay Partners with the Congregation as they committed themselves to collaborate with the SVDs in making Jesus known and asked Saint Arnold Janssen to intercede for them as they carry out this noble but challenging task in this changing world. May the Heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people.

Paula Aurélio Novela

Ghana (GHA)

Friends of SVD – Recent Activities

A Visit to The Friends of SVD, St. Augustine's Parish (Asesewa)



Three Lay Partners and the Mission Secretary of the Ghana-Liberia Province, Fr. Stephen Dogodzi SVD visited the *Friends of SVD* of St. Augustine's Parish, Asesewa on 16th September, 2018.

The objective of the visit was to discuss the report of the first International SVD Lay Partners Workshop held in Nemi, Rome. The discussions centered on the formation of Lay missionaries and insights on the four Characteristic Dimensions of the SVDs as an identity for Lay Partners. The *Friends of SVD* of the Parish also made known activities they have planned in the coming months/years to support their lay group and the SVDs.

Orientation for New Priests and Mission Cross Ceremony

SVD Lay Partners were invited for this year's Orientation for the newly ordained priests in the Province from 3rd to 5th October. This was to strengthen the collaboration between the Lay Partners and the SVDs. It ended with the Mission Cross ceremony for the new priests. The *Friends of SVD* presented gifts to the priests.

Mission Week Celebration: 15th-21st October

The mission week was celebrated in Ghana with different activities from the various SVD Lay Partner groups. The activities included Talks, Formation and Fund Raising to support SVD missions. The talk on the "SVD Lay Partners and Characteristic Dimensions", was delivered by Madam Helen Dzikunu, Lay Partners Coordinator, at the following parishes;

St. Charles Lwanga (Accra Archdiocese), St. Mary's, St. Francis Xavier and St. Joseph Freinademetz (Donkorkrom Vicariate). The Mission Secretary and Madam Helen during their visit to the Donkorkrom Vicariate encouraged the Lay Partners to invite others to join the group or form new ones.

The fund raising to support SVD missions was carried out in the following Parishes; *Christ the King* (Accra) St. *Augustine* (Asesewa) and St. *Francis Xavier* (Donkorkrom).

Mission Market

This year's mission market of the *Friends of SVD* of Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Church, New Aplaku in the Archdiocese of Accra was launched on Sunday October 7, 2018 and continued throughout



the month of October. Sacramentals, beverages and other items were sold to parishioners. Money realised from this year's mission market is to support retired priests and brothers at the SVD Retirement Home at McCarthy Hill in Accra. It also included series of talks to reflect on the message of Pope Francis for Mission Sunday.

Matilda Anim-Fofie

Angola (ANG)

Leigos Missionarios do Verbo Divino (LMVD) - Formation session

Lay people after a permanent formation session led by Rev. Fr. Aníbal SVD at the missionary school of Santa Madalena.

The aim of the formation was to discuss and reflect on the challenges of putting the Incarnate Word at the center of our faith and our families in order to become living witnesses of God's love in the society.

José Miguel Mateus



Kenya (KEN)

Friends of SVD – Witness to the Priestly Ordination in Accra, Ghana

Friends of SVD, Kenya-Tanzania Province sent their four representatives to witness the Priestly Ordination of Fr. Stephen Osei Asante in Accra-Ghana. He was a seminarian in Kenya, also did his Formation in Kenya. Martha Alal, Mary Kamenje, Jane Wagithi and Margaret Tirop represented the SVD Lay Partners from Kenya who witnessed the Priestly Ordination that took place on August 25, 2018 in the Archdiocese of Accra, at the Holy Spirit Cathedral premises. In total, there



were 18 Ordinations - 10 Diocesans, 7 SVDs and 1 Spiritan. It was also the 125th anniversary of the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra where SVDs have been working for the last 80 years. We prayed the No-

vena of St. Arnold Janssen every day for the success of the Ordination.

On 2nd September, we participated in the homecoming Mass of Fr. Stephen Asante, where he was the Main Celebrant. We *Friends of SVD* participated in the Prayer of the Faithful, thanksgiving songs, and presentation of gifts to our new Priest.

In 2013, Fr. Paschal Chaste and Fr. Stephen Osei Asante founded the *Friends of SVD* in the Divine Word Parish, Kayole, Kenya when Madam Magdaline Akomo Aluma was elected as the 1st President of this SVD lay group. With the help of our Parish Priest, Fr. Sammy, we have promoted SVD Lay Associates in all SVD Parishes in Kenya-Tanzania Province.

On October 13, 2018, we participated in a Seminar at the Divine Word Parish, Kayole, conducted by Fr. Emmanuel from Togo. The theme was "Effective and Defective Faith". God wants effective faith from us, where He is the source. May the name of God Almighty be praised forever and may the Holy Triune God live in the hearts of all His people in Kenya and in the whole world. Amen.



Magdaline Akomo Aluma

South Africa (BOT)

SVD Lay Association - Activities Overview

At the Sacred Heart Cathedral Polokwane, we celebrated the Feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne. On Sunday 29 July 2018, some of us joined the *Sodality of St. Anne*. In South Africa today, *St. Anne's Sodality* is a strong support group for its members and a powerful resource for their parishes. Our aim is to "serve the family, serve the church and serve the community". We were there to support them.

Saturday 09th August 2018 was a day of our recollection. It was a holiday in South Africa because on that day, the Country celebrated "Women Day". We had time and opportunity to reflect & meditate on our Spiritual journey on "Why are we becoming members of the Sodality".

On 13 September 2018, we came together with the Sisters of the Cathedral to pray the Holy Rosary.

On 29 September 2018, I participated in the National celebration of the Feast of St. Vincent De Paul Society at Midrand *Holy Trinity Church*. Most Reverend Archbishop William Slattery, Archbishop of Pretoria is with us in the picture.

We also celebrated October as Cancer Month. We prepared gifts bags for the Children suffering from Cancer. We also participated in the SA Run 4 Cancer Ultra Marathon, Polokwane creating Cancer Awareness organised by the city of Polokwane.

Edwina Mbite





ASPAC ZONE



India (INM)

The Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW) - The birth of the Muvalia & Jhalod Virtual Reality (VR) Project

The Muvalia and Jhalod Virtual Reality (VR) Education program is an international collaboration involving Dominic Thomas and Sandhya Dominic (SVD Lay Partners - DDW, INM - Mumbai), Mrs. Marie Graham and her student team at The Mount Vernon Upper School, Atlanta, USA and New York University (NYU) team lead by Mrs. Sondra Phifer.

The opportunity came about when the members of DDW along with Fr. Gregory Arockiam, SVD (Spiritual Director) visited the missions in India Central Province (INC) in 2017. Dominic Thomas was a part of this mission trip. During their interactions, the SVD School Management at Muvalia and Jhalod missions expressed their desire to have computer lab in their schools to address the need of computer education



as a part of their curriculum. After studying the project report, Dominic along with his business partner, Mr. Martin Tannenbaum and friends decided to sponsor 30 high-end computers

with computer-lab infrastructure – air-conditioning, lab interiors, workstations, chairs, internal cabling, and printers to both the schools.

Based on the initiative of computer-lab project, it was clear that a greater challenge and opportunity was in the horizon; the teachers of the school were finding it difficult to provide a consistent, interesting and interactive education to the students especially in the lower and middle schools. The school

was finding it difficult to employ experienced and skilled teachers. This challenge initiated the birth of Muvalia and Jhalod Virtual Reality (VR) Education program.

The Virtual Reality (VR) Education program is an initiative to address the needs of educating poor tribal children by using innovative educational medium to ensure interactive and consentient teaching techniques at St. Arnold Schools based in the tribal villages of Muvalia and Jhalod, Gujarat, India. Dominic believes that this global collaboration is necessary to show the students that they are part of something bigger and this international project will help the teams involved to experience meaningful conversations about different lands, people, and cultures.

Grounded in Christian values this project focuses to prepare students to be college ready, globally competitive, and engaged citizen leaders. Yes, to *Design a Better World!*



Susan Noronha

The Philippines (PHC)

The Lay Society of St. Arnold Janssen – Recent Activities

1. LSSAJ Directors meeting with Fr. Raymun Festin SVD, General Councilor, Fr. Glenn Gomez SVD, PHC Mission Secretary and Fr. Resty Lumanlan SVD, Spiritual Adviser. Some points:

- Fr. Glenn reiterated General Chapter Statement that SVD Lay Partners are family of SVD.
- Enzo Leones highlighted social justice actions following Catholic Social Teaching.
- Chapters building and activities at St. Jude Catholic School with Fr. Emil Lim SVD, St. Arnold Janssen Shrine Cainta with Fr. Willie Escalante SVD and Jesus Nazareno with Fr. Popo Perey SVD.
- LSSAJ members sponsor feeding the homeless at St. Arnold Janssen Kalinga every First Sunday.
- FTL Sessions at Dasmarinas Cavite (Chapter Pres Emma Flores, VP Cora Leveriza).
- Individual Apostolates of Members aligned with LSSAJ Vi-

sion Mission in Government (NEDA Secretary Ernie Pernia), Business (Past Chairman Elmer Sarmiento, Andy Tapay), Environment (Jun Palafox), Academe (Romy Quinones, Daisy Leones), Community Organizations(Ed Dela Torre, Charlie Avila), NGOs (Mayette Tamondong, Roy Dizon), Parishes, Youth, Indigenous People, Depressed areas, etc.

- Directorship of Tyrone Cimafranca and Joseph Pernia in SVD Colleges.
- Sammy Yap's and Gil Reoma's Church Project and State Collaboration for Drug Rehab.

2. Fr. Provincial Jerome Marquez SVD-Talk on "Alternative Learning System", a pioneering Mission he established a decade ago, now with more than 100 schools, giving second chance education to 6000 students. LSSAJ Members committed to offer expertise (Legal by Tyrone Cimafranca),

(Continues on page 9)



Skills (Agriculture by Romy Quinones, Livelihood by Timmie Bernaldez and Julio Tonquin, Construction by Engr Cris Lim), Employment by Elmer Sarmiento, Spiritual Values For-

mation and Pastoral Guidance by Daisy Leones.

3. Forum of St. Arnold Janssen Family In Response to Signs of the Times jointly organized by Fr. Flavie Villanueva SVD - JPIC, SSps, SSpsAP and LSSAJ. Facilitator – Ed Dela Torre. A memorable experience of feeling part of the Arnold Janssen Family, – on how should religious respond to the challenges of the current Philippine situation.

4. Speaker on “Liturgical Bible Study” for August is Fr. Arlo Yap SVD.

5. Fr. Wifredo Sanial SVD, July speaker on “St. Arnold Janssen Spirituality in an Asian/Filipino Context”, for our Lay Devotion and Mission originating from Jesus’s Sacred Heart.

Fabian Pagaduan



The Philippines (PHN)

SVD Friends – Social Media and the SVD Lay Partner

Either way, whether we recognize it or not, social media has redefined our lives especially as a communication tool within the circle of our influence and the world around us. Here are some remarkable social media statistics –

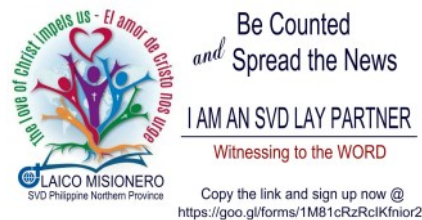
- 1) population of social media natives have reached 4.2 billion or 3 out of 4 people engage in social media,
- 2) netizens have 7 social media accounts,
- 3) time spent on social media is at least 116 minutes per day on the average, and
- 4) Facebook messenger and Whatsapp manage 60 billion messages a day. There is no doubt social media has become the most powerful communication tool in human history.

As workers in Christ’s vineyard, social media is the new frontline of evangelization. The web can become a very powerful tool in proclaiming the Good News. As digital missionaries, we

Laico Misionero simply aims to make the SVD – PHN Lay Partners presence felt in the digital world while establishing connection with individuals and groups. The questionnaire serves as an initial tool to create a database directed to individuals and groups who are SVD partners in mission. They are - *SVD Friends*, Lay collaborators including workers and students of SVD schools, Benefactors and those who help to generate funds, SVD Schools Alumni and former SVD Youth Ministry volunteers, and Lay missionaries.

The initiative is a work in progress and will need the help of experts. The benefits it holds and the challenges that may arise remains to be seen. One thing is clear. If we want to advance in our work of evangelization at this age, we have to be present among the billions of digital natives waiting to hear from us.

Mary Geraldine "GeeO" Paderon



can always capitalize on its efficiency to reach out to as many and as far as we can in a short time.

It is in this context that the SVD Lay Partners of Philippine Northern Province launched Laico Misionero on Facebook and the SVD Lay Partners Questionnaire using Google Forms.



Hong Kong – Macau District (SIN)

St. Joseph Freinademetz's Family – St. Joseph Freinademetz Musical Staged in Hong Kong



SVD Hong Kong and Macau District organized and performed a Catholic Musical in Cantonese Chinese called “St. Joseph Freinademetz – The First Saint to Ever Serve in Hong

Kong” at the Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 and Wednesday, June 27, 2018. Over 900 people attended the two shows, with over 180 participants featured in a narrative accompanied by dancing, singing, and multimedia displays illustrating the Saint’s love for China and its rich history. Vicar General Reverend Dominic Chan, Vicar General Reverend Peter Choy and Chancellor Reverend Lawrence Lee of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong were the Guests of Honor. The Serra Club Hong Kong was the event’s sponsor, and the Austrian Consulate General for Hong Kong was the Promotion Partner.

Father Joseph Tan Lei-Tao SVD is the producer of the musical and the founder of *St. Joseph Freinademetz’s Family*, a newly and locally established SVD Lay Partners Group. All the players in the musical are the members of SVD Lay mission-

ary group. He told a local press about the aim of the musical that, through the musical, he wanted to show that missionary work was not just about spreading the Gospel in a particular place. The

locals too helped in the spiritual growth of missionaries, initially exemplified by St. Joseph, to bring the message of salvation to as many as possible in China. He learned from the Chinese people and even expressed his desire to become a Chinese himself.

We hope that more people will get to know the special Saint of the SVD who devoted his life to China, a country where Christianity is spreading rapidly. You can view the musical film with Traditional Chinese language and with English subtitles on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/WQnnBJRfJpE>

Joseph Leitaio Tan, SVD

Indonesia (IDJ)

Soverdia (Janssen Hidroponic) – Sacrifice is an amazing source...meet Agnes Sri Indarti

Ibu Sri (and her late husband Pak John Nobar, who passed away a couple of years ago) is a SVD Lay Partner (Soverdia) in Bali. Pak John Nobar was a very active social worker and



helped in selling SVD Java Province (Bali) Bulletin at St. Fransiskus Xaverius Church, Kuta Bali. He always paid for all the books and sold them in the Parish where he was also a deacon. He volunteered to help priests coming to Bali, especially with the airport pick and drop service. Occasionally he sent Gospel Books, published once in three months by the Mission Secretary, SVD Java Province, to Papua, the largest and easternmost province of Indonesia.

Now Sri (Agnes Sri Indarti), John Nobar’s wife, continues this mission started by her husband. Though she lives in Denpasar, which is her own Parish, she endures helping the SVDs by selling the three monthly Gospel Readings. Although these expenses, including freight, took up a bigger amount of her salary, she continues sending the Gospel Books to Papua. She feels the Priests in Papua can prepare better homilies by reading the Gospel books.

Sri was a Soverdia (Lay partner) at St. Fransiskus Xaverius Church, Kuta. Currently, she finds it difficult to travel to Kuta since public transportation is not convenient in Denpasar Bali and she is not comfortable to ride a motor cycle. She also helps Janssen Hidroponik (Group of SVD Lay Partners who promote/sell healthy, fresh & pesticide free vegetables), in selling vegetables at St. Fransiskus Xaverius Church and at Soverdi School in Tuban Kuta, Bali.

Sacrifice is an amazing source. It develops within us a deep love for each other and for Christ’s mission; Ibu Sri is doing this by her own. You may meet her every Sunday at St. Fransiskus Xaverius Church, Kuta Bali.



Muliady Wang

EUROPA ZONE

Spain (ESP)

Laicos Verbo Divino – Mary Magdalene, Jesus' commitment to women

If Mary Magdalene were to return to the world today, what would she say? Would we accept our missionary discipleship with the same promptness and love that she showed her beloved Master? Who was Mary Magdalene really?

These and many other questions we tried to answer in the XI Missionary Meeting that we celebrated in Dueñas (Palencia-Spain) between October 12-14, 2018, organized by SVD, SSpS and LVD (*Laicos Verbo Divino*). There were about 120 people who came from many parts of Spain.



With the motto "And the Word became flesh ... and has the face of a woman" the meeting revolved around how Jesus thinks differently - breaks with systems - entrusting

to a woman the mission of announcing the Good News of the Resurrection: to Mary Magdalene.

We began our meeting by making a historical, geographical and social approach to her as a person and her encounter with Jesus. Later, we discussed in groups, our own spiritual journey of encounter with Jesus.

Hungary (HUN)

Hungary Lay Group - World Mission Sunday 2018

The 17th World Mission Sunday was celebrated in Hungary in the gardens of the Divine Word Missionaries' mission house on October 6, 2018. The *fiesta* was special in several ways:

The ceremony was honoured by Msgr. Michael A. Blume SVD, Papal Nuncio to Hungary.

During the Holy Mass 3 young SVD brothers – Ngamba Mungwala Albert and Mawasala Mbela Fabien from Congo and Hernandez Elmer from The Philippines were ordained deacons by Bishop László Német SVD. They will be ordained priests in their home countries next year.

Provincial Superior, Fr. Gergely Burbela SVD and Fr. Benven Sebastian Madassery SVD, Director of PMS Hungary welcomed and greeted the guests.

The guests arrived not only from Hungary but also from neighbouring countries as well as from Congo and the Philippines to attend the celebration. Youth and children from the SVD parish *Köröm* (center for gypsy ministry, JPIC) surprised the audience with a lovely performance.

Fr. Janssen Madanu SVD presented his missionary project for the promotion of tribal women in India - specifically in Rourkela - where Sr. Sumita Kujur gives classes to women and girls, sewing courses, organizes meetings where they are taught on their basic human rights. Our commitment to this project is not only economic, but we also try to raise awareness and denounce the inequality and poverty that usually afflict women.

We enjoyed an exhibition of typical dances from South India and also the Eucharist that had "Indian flavor" with the ritual of flowers, incense, light and traditional music.



We were able to "know and recognize ourselves" in the face of the Master who calls us by our name. Because He knows our moments of darkness, His Grace illuminates our path of seeing-believing-announcing, to glimpse all the occasions of encounter that allows us to discover in the other, be it a man or a woman, the face of Jesus, the Risen Lord.

Laura Díez Bilbao

SVD Lay Partners had also an important role this time as they were part of the Mission Sunday Celebrations. They took care of the many hundred guests. *Wild Boar Goulash* was served as lunch. Pastries, cookies and drinks brought by prayer group members all over the country were offered to the guests.

The day was perfect and blissful, we will keep the memories in mind for a long-long time.

Katalin Koenig



Germany (GER)

SVD-Partner – Short annual report 2018

2018 has been an eventful year. Here is a short report about our activities and meetings.

Early in 2018 the *Novene für Menschen in Krieg und Not* (Novena for People in War and Misery) was published. It was inspired by a novena prayed in Steyl during the Second World War. Up to now the novena is only available in German but translation in other languages is being considered.

In spring a group of SVD-Partner went to visit the elder SVD in the retirement home in St. Wendel. They listened to their stories and enjoyed to learn from their wealth of experience. One thing is for sure: visits to St. Wendel are also on the programme for the future.

In summer SVD-Partner went to Berlin to meet the novices.



Both groups shared their experiences as SVD and talked about how lay and consecrated people can work together in the future. Further the group discussed future activities from SVD and SVD-Partner with

Fr. Xavier Alangaram SVD, Mission Secretary in Germany.

Also in summer SVD-Partner represented the work of the SVD on *Katholikentag* (German Catholic Convention) in Münster. The SVD partners helped with the preparations in the previous weeks. They were part of the SVD-team in the large tent (80 m²) every day of the convention. Many enriching experiences were made in conversation with the people.

In summer SVD-Partner had been busy in different places and at various occasions - and some even during their holidays:

- › Sophie Wego took part in the General Chapter as a representative of the European zone.
- › Birgit Scharpei and Michael Pöner went to Ghana and met many SVD's and Matilda Anim-Fofie, SVDLP from Accra whom Michael met during the International Workshop in Nemi in 2017.
- › Lourdes and Rudi Scholz visited the region hit by the earthquake in Mexico in 2017 and looked where further help is necessary.
- › Maria Wego used her stay in Hungary and Austria to learn more about the work of the SVD in these countries.

In autumn SVD-Partner had been in Steyl and met with *Lebensgemeinschaft mit den Steyler Missionsschwwestern*, the lay partner group of the Mission Sisters in Germany. The focus of the evening was on getting to know each other and on understanding each others constitutions.



From autumn onwards SVD-Partner invited everybody in the world to join the Prayer Bridge on World Day of the Poor on 18 November. More about the Prayer Bridge will be reported later.

Maria Wego



PANAM ZONE



Paraguay (PAR)

Laicos Verbitas – Biblical contest

The Parish of *San Roque González de Santa Cruz*, Asunción, Paraguay successfully conducted Biblical contest for the fifth consecutive year organized by the Biblical Apostolate involving ten communities, RCC movements, Neocatechumenal, Catechesis and Verbitas Youth. This was possible with the help and support of Biblical dimension advisor, Fr. Maximiliano Kolbe and Fr. Joaquín Li SVD, the Parish Priest. Thanks to all the participants and organizers who made this event a grand success.

Froilán Armoa González



Panama (CAM)

Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino - Visiting the MAVD in Mexico and World Youth Day 2019

Visiting the MAVD in Mexico



Six SVD lay partners from Panama – Margarita De Alvarado, Julian De Gracia, Brother Benito, Felix Sanjur, Rubiela and Rogelio Rodriguez participated in the XXXIV National Meeting

2018 of the *Misioneros Auxiliares Del Verbo Divino* (MAVD), Mexico at Guadalajara from 14 to 16 September 2018. We shared the Word and meditated the Word in groups at the National meeting.

After the meeting in Guadalajara, we were invited for a radio program run by a young seminarian, Caesar Maldonado from Mexico. We spoke about our Lay Partner group and the activities we carry out in Central American Region (CAM), Panama.

After the workshop, Rubiela, Brother Felix, Brother Bonifacio (Mexican Lay Partner) and I visited a community in Actopan, Mexico. We stayed there for a couple of days and visited two communities in Santiago. One of the community is in Encino, surrounded by mountains and with very little rainfall. People here are very poor. Together, we shared our testimony of Christian faith and life. We could feel the Mercy of God with

these people as we saw happiness on their faces. We shared a fellowship delicious meal with them at the end of the mission.

Missionaries of the Divine Word of CAM gives you a cordial welcome to Panama for WYD 2019.

It is truly an honor to receive Pope Francis in Panama. We are preparing to welcome Pope Francis for the World Youth Day (la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud – JMJ), to be held from 22-27 January 2019 in Panama.

For almost six months, we have been recycling tin cans to meet some of the expenses of this big event. We are volunteers for the JMJ and since some of the parishes in which we work in Panama are located in the capital city, we wish to offer accommodation for the pilgrims. The inspiration for generating funds from the recycling of the tin cans came from one of talks at the SVD Lay Partners Workshop in Nemi during October 2017. After the World Youth Day program, we wish to continue with the tin cans recycling project and send the money to SVD seminaries in Nicaragua.



Rogelio Rodriguez

Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino – Past and Future Activities

Anniversary of Foundation of the Society of the Divine Word

With joy, we joined the missionaries around the world to celebrate the 143rd Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Divine Word on 8th September, 2018.

Future Activities

- For the month of November, we will undertake mission to Dolega, Province of Chiriqui having 42 communities.
- Workshop of Inculturation for the new Divine Word Missionaries to take place from November 27-30 in Casa Central del Verbo Divino.
- To organize different delegations for the World Youth Day 2019

Ana Luisa Vásquez C.



~ Last but not the Least ~

In the Spirit of the 18th General Chapter

Renewal Prayer

Oh, Holy Triune God,
You have called us to be rooted in the Word,
And committed to your mission.
We are followers of the Divine Word,
Source of holiness and renewal;
Our name is our mission.

The love of Christ impels us to loving service;
Encounter and dialogue revitalize our vocation,
Accompany us in sharing our life with passion.

Lord Jesus,
Your voice challenges us to choose life over death,
And sets our hearts on fire to embrace our mission,
We are your transforming missionary disciples,
Send us out into the world as artisans of communion.

Life-giving Spirit, by your creative power
Transform us in the image of Jesus,
Help us to make His mission our mission,
Putting the last first.

Mary, Mother of the Divine Word,
Form us to discern and care for life.
Inspire us along with our mission partners,
To be authentic witnesses to the joy of the Gospel.

Saints Arnold and Joseph,
Blessed Maria Helena and Josepha,
And all our martyrs, open our hearts to all peoples,
So that in embracing their cultures,
Their joys and sorrows,
We may work zealously to realize the Kingdom of God.
Amen.



Personal Experience

Open doors and open hearts – SVD-Partner travels to Nazareth and Pannonia

Názáret Missziósház, to be exact. As always when you stop at Divine Word Missionaries you are right at home and are cared for. For me one thing was luxury during this city tour: After a long and exciting day walking through the vivid Hungarian capital I could



retreat for prayer to the peace and quiet of the Chapel of St. Arnold Retreat House. I got an impression of the work of the SVD in Hungary in conversations at breakfast and especially at an

evening meeting with the community: work for gypsies, work in the prison chaplaincy, cooperation with Cursillo groups and parish chaplaincy are only some of the fields in which the SVD works for the people. In addition there are 27 SVD prayer groups in the country from which a lay partner group may develop.

Pannonia or *Burgenland* is close to Vienna (Austria) and here the way leads to the Mission House, St. Gabriel in Mödling. My husband and I found – as expected with SVD – open doors and above all open hearts. Father Franz Helm took

several hours for us, led us through Church, Mission House and the new hotel *Gabrium* as well as over the extensive area. Unfortunately, there is no good news from the Caritas refugee home, as the political situation in Austria has not changed. Thus the work for these particularly vulnerable people continues to be difficult.

Of the three Churches of the Mission House, the Holy Spirit Church is not the first to be mentioned because of its size but because of the mosaics made by the SVD-Brother Bernhard. There is also a Crypt and a Chapel for the elderly. Here they come together for the daytime Liturgy and for the daily Mass. As from Budapest there are more things to tell. Finally just one more thing: There are no lay partners in Austria yet but my impression is that they would be warmly welcomed.

It was a normal holiday and it wasn't!

Maria Wego



SVD Missionhouses

Názáret Missziósház, Budapest (Hungary) and St. Gabriel, Mödlingen (Austria)



Chapel in the guest house in Budapest



Missionhouse Názáret and training centre in Budapest

Názáret Missziósház founded in 1924.



Church of the Missionhouse St. Gabriel



Casa de la Misión San Gabriel en Mödlingen

St. Gabriel founded in 1889.



Impulse

Christmas

Pass it on quietly;
 tell everyone who is afraid,
 say quietly to them:
 Do not be afraid,
 have no more fear,
 God is there.
 He came into our world,
 simple, poor, human.
 Look for Him,
 get on your way!
 Do not look for Him above the stars,
 not in palaces,
 not behind shop windows.
 Look for Him where you are poor,
 where you are sad and scared.
 There He has hidden,
 there you will find Him,
 like a glow of light in the dark undergrowth,
 like a comforting hand,
 like a voice that says quietly:
 Do not be afraid.

Merry Christmas
and
a Happy New Year

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

Imprint

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Submission deadline for the next issue: March 1, 2019