



Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

# SVD Lay Partners

Newsletter - from Around the World

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XVIII SVD General Chapter 2018, Nemi, Rome



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## Editorial

### “Our Name is our Mission”

*“A very warm welcome to Centro Ad Gentes of Nemi. We hope your stay with us will be pleasant, enriching and meaningful! Enjoy the peace, beauty and warmth of this place.”* – read the first two lines of the information booklet at the Nemi Centre that welcomed the Capitulars of the Divine Word Missionaries XVIII General Chapter 2018.

“Finding Nemo” a 2003 Walt Disney animation movie appeals to the viewer as a visually awed undersea explorer. To find Nemo is to find the underwater treasure, an adventure both fun and fulfilling. Nemo finds himself at home with the exotic turtles, jellyfish, sharks, lobsters and other curious crustaceans.

In Nemi too, there was an adventure that was both fun and fulfilling. Opening with the Liturgical inauguration of the XVIII General Chapter on Sunday, June 17, 2018, it was a month-long journey of prayers and recollections, deliberations and decisions, Bible and Life Sharing, outings and socials, elections and of course the meeting with Pope Francis! It was an adventure of finding treasure in the most essential source of inspiration - the Word. Throughout the Chapter, the Word was read, heard and prayed in different languages signifying the rich interculturality of the SVDs. There was a discovery of many hidden treasures; treasures inside the Society, treasures inside the General Chapter and treasures inside every Capitular.

It is very significant to note that the Statement of the General Chapter mentions a few times Arnoldus Family indicating SVD, SSpS, SSpSAP and Lay Partners; which means in the official document, SVD Lay Partners are recognized as Arnoldus family members.

For the first time, there was a representation of four SVD Lay Partners from four zones to participate throughout the whole Chapter: Patrice Rono from AFRAM, Susan Noronha from ASPAC, Sophie Wego from EUROPA and Len Uhal from PANAM. The Lay Partners were not only invited to make a presentation on the collaboration with the SVDs but also to take part in the agenda of the Chapter in the fullest way possible, with the exception of the voting. From attending all the Chapter sessions, to the outings, pilgrimages and watching the World Cup Football, we were received by the confreres as members of the Arnoldus family.

*“Happiness is meeting an old friend after a long time”* and *“Happiness is also when you make unexpected new friends”*. Towards the end of the Chapter, there was happiness and a feeling of belonging in our collaboration and sharing with the spirituality and mission of the SVDs. The Chapter was always indicating this caption “Our Name is our Mission”.

Thank you once again Fr. Heinz Kulüke and your leadership team for not only inviting the Lay Partners to the Divine Word Missionaries XVIII General Chapter 2018 but also allowing us to be an integral part of this beautiful, inspiring and enriching journey. We look forward to journey on from Nemi along with Fr. Budi Kleden and the new leadership team and with the Province/Region/Mission Superiors and confreres.

Susan Noronha (editor-in-chief)



## Elections at the XIII SVD General Chapter

### Introducing the new elected General Council

Every six years at the General Chapter the General Counsel is elected. It consists of seven members, the Superior General, the Vice Superior General and five councillors. One of the five councillors is a brother by convention and one also elected as General Admonitor. Should the need arise, the General Admonitor's task is to speak in the name of the Society and remind the superior of his duty.

At the past General Chapter, Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden was elected as Superior General and Fr. José Antunes da Silva as Vice Superior General. The five councillors are Fr. Xavier Thirukudumbam, also elected as General Admonitor, Br. Guy Mazola Mido, Fr. Jude Raymund Festin, Fr. Eryk Koppa and Fr. Anselmo Ricardo Ribeiro.



**Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden** was born in 1965 at Waibalum-Larantuka, Flores, Indonesia.

He joined the SVD in 1985 at Ledalero, where he completed his novitiate and philosophical studies. Then he came to St. Gabriel, Austria, where he finished his theological studies and was ordained priest in 1993.

From 1993 to 1996 he worked in Switzerland and from 1996 to 2000 he did his doctoral studies in Freiburg, Germany. After that in 2001 he returned to Ledalero as a professor of theology. There he worked till 2012, when he became a General Councillor.



**Br. Guy Mazola Mido** was born in 1962 at Bagata, Democratic Republic of Congo.

He joined the SVD in 1981. After his first vows in 1984 he went to the Philippines working as assistant formator in the novitiate and SVD Friends' Office. There he stayed till 1998. Then he went back to the Democratic Republic of Congo. There he was the

member of the Provincial Council from 2003 to 2008, Chairperson of the Formation Board from 2003 to 2010, in the Brothers' Formator from 2005 to 2012, Area Coordinator for Formation for AFRAM from 2007 to 2012 and in 2012 was elected as a General Councillor.



**Fr. Jude Raymund Festin** was born in 1966 in Odiongan, Philippines.

He joined the SVD in 1984 and was ordained priest in 1993. From 1994 to 2001 he worked as missionary in Angola. Then from 2001 to 2006 he studied Philosophy. After finishing his studies he worked till 2002 as Associate Pastor and Professor in Angola. In

2012, he went back to the Philippines and worked in the Philippine Central Province as Assistant Formator and also as Professor. From 2014 to 2016, he was Rector of Christ the King Seminary in Manila and in 2017 he became Provincial Superior of Philippine Central Province



**Fr. José Antunes da Silva** was born in 1957 at Sarzedas, Castelo Branco, Portugal.

He joined the SVD in 1975 and was ordained priest in 1984. From 1986 to 1989 he worked as missionary in Ghana. He completed his Religious Studies from 1990 to 1992 in Washington D.C. Then he went back to Portugal, to Guimarães. There he was involved in

campus ministry and accompanying lay missionaries and as SVD magazine director. From 2007 to 2012 he was Portugal Superior Provincial, and in 2012 became a General Councillor.



**Fr. Eryk Jan Koppa** was born in 1966 in Strzelce Opolskie in Poland.

He joined the SVD in 1985 and was ordained priest in 1992. After his ordination, he went to Mexico and worked there from 1992 to 1996 in pastoral ministry. In 1996 he went back to Poland where he pursued in licentiate studies in Moral Theology till

1998. After his studies he was Prefect in the seminary of Pieniezno. He worked as Formator and was a member of the Province Council. From 2007 to 2013 he was the Provincial Secretary and in 2013 he was elected as Provincial Superior



**Fr. Xavier Thirukudumbam** was born in 1958 at Sithurvadi, Tamil Nadu, India.

He joined the SVD in 1980 and was ordained priest in 1987. From 1987 to 1989 he worked in a parish, from 1989 to 1991 as Formator and Professor in Bhopal. After studying his masters in Philosophy in 1993, he worked from 1994 to 1996 as Dean in Bhopal. From

1996 to 2000 he did his doctoral studies at the Catholic University of America, Washington D.C.. From 2000 to 2002 he worked again as Dean in Bhopal, from 2002 to 2008 as Rector and Professor. From 2008 to 2014 he was the National Formation Secretary and Provincial Counsellor. In 2014 he was elected Provincial Superior.



**Fr. Anselmo Ricardo Ribeiro** was born in 1974 at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

He joined the SVD in 1998 and was ordained priest in 2005. From 2005 to 2008 he worked as Parish Minister in Brazil. After that he studied from 2008 to 2010 Social Communication/Journalism and was Provincial Councillor. From 2011 to 2016 he was Provincial

Superior. In 2017 he studied Team Management and Leadership and worked in St. Michael's Retreat House.

We wish them all the best and God's blessing for their work in the next six years.





The assumption of Office by the new Superior General and his Council is set for September 30, 2018.

May the darkness of sin and night of unbelief  
vanish before the light of the Word and the Spirit if grace  
and may the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all. — St. Arnold Janssen

Thanks for their work and God's blessing for the future to the former Superior General and his Council.





## Chapter Impressions of Lay Partners

### Enriching and inspiring ...

For a start I want to thank God for having enabled me travel to Rome for the General Chapter in Nemi. I sincerely thank the management and staff of Nemi led by Fr. Gino for the warm reception they accorded us.

The organisation of the Chapter topics was enriching. Allow me to mention the facilitation team of Sr. Miriam and Fr. Norton which took us through the daily programmes. This team coordinated the programmes by managing time very well. The secretaries Frs. John and Stany were always ready in providing minutes whenever required. Language interpreter was also clear. The liturgy team of Frs. Nicolas Sengson and Joseph Trong handled the Liturgy well. All the presenters of different topics enriched me as a lay person on issues I didn't know.

Visit to the Vatican for an audience with the Holy Father was the climax of the General Chapter according to me.

In summary I want to say that the Chapter was well organised especially the way the elections were organised and

conducted. As a lay person, this part has given me an important ingredient on how to conduct elections in small Christian communities and parishes.

Also of importance that impressed me was the Bible sharing in basic groups. In general, the Chapter was a success and I wish the same approach should be followed by inviting lay participants.

Thanks and may God bless the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) so that it may strengthen the spiritual growth of all Catholic Communities.



Patrice Rono  
AFRAM ZONE – Kenya

### Feeling happy and proud ...

On 16 June, 2018, I entered Centro Ad Gentes, Nemi, with a bag of mixed feelings. There were so many people that Nemi Centre was bursting at the seams. I was lost. On the first day of the Chapter, I was actually trying to find a place in the plenum near someone I knew, and Sophie was my blessing!

As I write this note today, my experience of the Chapter is very different from my first experience. From the solemn proclamation of the XVIII General Chapter by Superior General Fr. Heinz Kulüke to a month-long journey of prayers, sharing, deliberations, discussions, elections and the meeting with our Pope Francis, I feel happy and proud to be a part of this beautiful and lasting experience.

Interculturality, community spirit, missionary zeal and open to new ideas and challenges was seen and felt not only in the aula but also in the basic groups, corridors, dining hall, socials and outings. Basic and Life Sharing groups not only facilitated prayer and discernment but also sprouted new friendships.

Fr. Heinz with his cheerful smile made me feel comfortable throughout the Chapter. I genuinely felt welcomed by all the capitulars and I am sure this is the feeling of all four of us. During our presentation and discussions, there was a sense of belonging growing within me as I was answering the questions. "OUR NAME IS OUR MISSION" – is what grabbed my attention when I was reading the Working Document. This name is challenging us today to do our mission. *The Love of Christ Impels Us: To be Rooted in the Word and Committed to His Mission.*



Susan Noronha  
ASPAC ZONE – India (INM)



## Being one family ...

Invited to the General chapter of the SVD was an honour and the participation at the whole chapter an enriching experience.

The work in the chapter was characterized by a balanced relationship between objective work and spiritual offers. The spirituality of the Divine Word, which is the essence of the Divine Word Missionaries, could be experienced during Bible Sharing, which took place three times a week. It was there that I experienced such a deep and personal study of the Bible for the first time. An experience that brought me even closer to the SVD. I was also deeply impressed by the daily interaction with each other. All questions, however critical, were dealt with objectively and fairly.

The appreciation shown for our work has been expressed several times. This could be felt in the conversations and in the words of thanks of Fr Heinz Kulüke and became quite

obvious at the Pope's audience, where we lay representatives had our seats in the front row next to the General Council and the General Coordinators.

Officially we lay representatives were invited as observers, but in fact we were participants without nomination and voting rights. We were part of the large community, exchanged ideas and met at eye level. It was a fraternal togetherness - we belong to the Arnoldus family.



Sophie Wego  
EUROPA ZONE – Germany

## A renewed sense of mission and spirituality ...

Since I returned to the States from the SVD General Chapter in Nemi a couple of weeks ago, many people have asked me about my experience. What was it like? What was the best part? What was it like meeting Pope Francis?

My “takeaways” from the Chapter include a renewed sense of mission and spirituality. Yes, shaking Pope Francis’ hand (twice!) was a highlight, but the atmosphere of prayer and a commitment to mission was ever present. A common goal for everyone was to elect new leadership that will propel us into a renewed experience of St. Arnold’s spirituality so that we are deeply committed to mission and the service to God’s people, particularly the poor and marginalized.

Participation in small faith sharing/life sharing groups was very inspiring and allowed me to experience a renewed sense of God’s presence in an intercultural setting. My participation in attending Mass, eating meals and even watching World Cup Football with confreres from around the world rekindled a strong sense of belonging and community. I felt

very welcomed and included in every aspect of the Chapter. Fr. Heinz Kulüke and many others went out of their way to make sure we knew we were welcomed, that our presence was appreciated and that our contributions to the process were valued. I feel blessed and grateful to have attended.

Moving forward, I am confident the SVD will continue to have very active lay partners around the world who will continue to collaborate with the Society in growing in faith, embodying St. Arnold’s spirituality and responding to his mission to preach the Word and serve those in need.



Len Uhal  
PANAM ZONE – USA (USC)



## Personal Impressions on Lay Partners Representation

### Co-responsible in the mission...

The XVIII SVD General Chapter was held at Ad Gentes Centre, Nemi, Rome from 17 June to 14 July 2018. The Chapter dwelt on the theme: *"The Love of Christ Impels Us (2 Cor 5:14): Rooted in the Word, Committed to His Mission"*. The General Chapter is always an occasion to take cognizance of the Society's state in its totality and in the various units, to celebrate the Society's union with one another, to seek common deliberations for current problems and all the more to inspire zeal for our religious missionary life and activity.

Among the 132 participants of the General Chapter, there were 118 voting capitulars and 14 non-voting observers (8 SVDs, 2 SSpS and 4 Lay Partners). One of the distinctive aspects of this chapter was the participation of SSpS and SVD Lay Partners. Their participation and involvement throughout the Chapter gave a sense of our partnership in mission and how we can further strengthen our collaboration and charism with the SVD Lay Partners.

At the beginning of our XVIII General Chapter, we asked ourselves: "What do we ask of God as individuals, as communities, and as a congregation, for ourselves and for all those we are journeying with in our missions in 84 countries around the globe?" The Chapter has shown the need for continuous renewal and transformation. In any discernment and renewal process we might need to keep in mind that our spirituality and prayer life need to be always challenged by the world and life that is outside our walls and frontiers. This is a call to grow ever closer to the Triune God and at the same time closer to the people and the world. During the Chapter, we also passed some resolutions and recommendations that are helpful to help our missionary activities.

This Chapter was unique. We had 12 Basic Groups and we met every day in the morning for Bible Sharing or Life Sharing. This prayerful atmosphere helped each member to seek the will of God for the Society. Other than the common plenum sessions, we also had many discussions in these basic groups which were pertaining to the Chapter. Thus, everyone had a chance to express his/her opinion on the related matters. The Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and the Eucharistic celebrations in groups and in common were very creative and inspiring. The atmosphere during the Chapter was very good to interact freely and was helpful for discussion and deliberations.

The four SVD Lay Partners participated in all the programs. Although they were invited to stay for the full four weeks, due to the family constraints, two of them left after three weeks and the rest two stayed till the end. This was a great sacrifice from all of them to stay from the family and participate in the Chapter in all the activities. The Chapter members appreciated their presence, interaction and contribution for the Chapter; this was truly an example of sharing the spirit, the charism of the Society and being co-responsible in mission.



Fr. Stanislaus Lazar  
Generalate Mission Secretary – Rome

### Encounter of Lay Partners ...

It was my first General Chapter attended, but I know that in terms of the participation of the Lay Partners, none of the past ones is comparable to this one! Seeing Susan Noronha (India), Patrice Rono (Kenya), Len Uhal (USA), and Sophie Wego (Germany) participate fully together with us (save voting rights) provided the opportunity for familiarization as well as making a better familial connection with this branch of our Arnoldus family tree that only of recent times have we been better appreciating their high potential in our collaboration to fulfil our Lord's mission in every part of our PRMs around the world.

Their full participation in the Chapter proceedings, Liturgy, Bible and Life Sharing, recreation, pilgrimages, as well as personal friendships cultivated, left me with no doubt at all, say that it was really important and good that they were present. They formed a good representation for all our other lay partners elsewhere in our PRMs. Not only did they vividly share well with us with passion, their activities from their var-

ious places, but also, they did their best to challenge us in how well, as confreres we really collaborate with them, with all the different kinds of challenges such as overlooking them, not appreciating or doing enough to collaborate together. Perhaps, even in those discussions which some of us may have felt it was embarrassing for them also to hear, they explained well that, if we consider all of us as a family, then, like in every family, no relative would shy away from some of the "not-so welcome" realities that are sometimes sure to occur as in any human family. Kudos to you all our Lay Partners!



Fr. George C. Angmor  
Provincial Superior – Ghana

"Waking up in the morning I would ask the Lord for patience; and when going to bed in the evening I would pray to him for forgiveness for not having been patient" - Fr Heinz Kulüke, (My personal experience of leadership— XVIII General Chapter)



## Partners in mission and life, Companions in joy and sorrow ...

It was not the first time that the so-called SVD Lay Partners participated in a General Chapter of the Society of the Divine Word. The first time that this happened was six years ago at the SVD XVII General Chapter of 2012. At this time, five lay partners came to represent the four zones of the SVD, two men from ASPAC (Philippines) and EUROPA (Germany), a woman from AFRAM (Ghana), and a couple from PANAM (Mexico). But, at this time, the lay partners attended only the last week of the four-week long general chapter.

The difference this time was that the lay partners attended the entire four weeks of the general chapter, even if two of them had to leave a few days before the official closing of the chapter. This time, four lay partners came from the four zones, two women from ASPAC (India) and EUROPA (Germany) and two men from PANAM (USA) and AFRAM (Kenya). They fully participated, like all other chapter observers, in all the sessions and activities of the chapter – the daily Bible or Life Sharing in basic groups, the discussions and deliberations in the basic groups and in the plenum, the papal audience and pilgrimages, the socials and cultural nights.



Basic Group No. 5 – Gelato at Castel Gandolfo

It is in the nature of general chapters that the entire life and mission of the congregation is examined and evaluated – strengths and weaknesses, achievements and failures, blessings and sins, triumphs and abuses. The limited participation of the lay partners at the 17th General Chapter was meant, I believe, to shield them from seeing the dark side of the congregation. And so they came only to that part of the chapter when the congregation's mission was discussed and not to the other part when the congregation's life was spoken about. And they got to see only the lights and not the shadows.

This time around, the lay partners were present also during those sessions when the failures and sins, shortcomings and weaknesses of the congregation were discussed. So they got to hear about departures from the congregation, exclaust-

tions, leaves, cases of fathering a child, cases of child abuse, and other cases of unfaithfulness to the vows and failures in mission. At a certain point, I asked one of them if she was scandalized after hearing the "sins of the congregation." And she said, NO – because these things happen in families, and being a family is not limited to rejoicing at our achievements but also includes supporting one another in our failures.

Part of the chapter was the sharing by the lay partners regarding SVD-Lay collaboration in mission. It was heartening to hear from them about how much good they are doing in mission on behalf of so many people, how much help and collaboration they provide the SVD, and how much assistance

and support they receive from the SVD. It was inspiring to see how, in some cases, the lay partners show even more commitment and dedication to mission than some SVDs. All this was heard in formal reports in the Chapter hall and the basic groups. But over and above this, in informal conversations and sharing of stories in the long corridors and small corners of the *Centro Ad Gentes* and in the "pizzerias" and "gelaterias" of Nemi, it was comforting to hear from

them that we are all one family and that in the family it is all right to recognize and accept our vulnerability and fragility.

For after all, in mission, God does not require genius or greatness, but only humility and honesty. Only then can we be "vessels of clay" in His hands. Thank you, Lay Partners, for your valuable presence at the 18th General Chapter.



Fr. Antonio M. Pernia  
(Superior General, 2000-2012) – The Philippines

## An admirable gesture...

Considering the fact that the love of Christ impels us to proclaim His love to the world, the XVIII SVD General Chapter was a historic event because for the first time in the 142 years' of its existence, our Society opened its doors to four Lay Partners from four zones to come and be part of the whole General Chapter proceedings. According to me, through this admirable gesture, the SVD Society embraced in a decisive way the laity all over the world, as our collaborators and partners in the mission.

The four Lay Partners, Sophie, Len, Patrice and Susan celebrated with us this historical event by staying away from their families almost for a month and thus becoming part of a larger Arnoldus family. As our family members they listened to our joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties, success and failures with open mind. I was impressed by their enthusiasm,

love for the Founder and the Society, commitment to the mission and their eagerness to work for the Lord and His people. Their presence and their testimonies filled me with hope when I realized that we are not the owners of a charisma that the Spirit gives to the Church and there are many who are willing to embrace the challenging task of proclaiming the Gospel in today's globalized world.



Fr. Richard Mathias  
Provincial Superior – India (INM)



## Significant progress ...

One of the new elements in the 2018 SVD General Chapter was the presence of four SVD Lay Partners as observers from the beginning to the end. This was a significant progress when compared to the previous Chapter. I was struck by Sophie's attachment to Steyl, the mother house of St. Arnold's missionary family, by Len's activities of promoting religious missionary vocation, and by Patrice's sharing of his life and his understanding of the Bible.

Above all, I have become more aware of the parents' role in the missionary character building of children. This was clearly seen by Susan's experiences. Her interest in becoming missionary has grown since her childhood. She used to see her mother's dedication as a teacher not only educating children in her village but also reaching out to the poor families and her father's care for the poor, especially the lepers. These experiences have motivated her to do likewise, serving the poor.

Listening to the sharing of these SVD Lay Partners has made me convinced that there is hope for Arnold Janssen's missionary spirituality to continue, despite the decline in the number of religious missionary vocations.

Finally, their presence and the presence of the SSpS sisters in the Chapter has strengthened my sense of belonging to St. Arnold's missionary family in its full meaning. We all indeed are brothers and sisters of the same family.



Fr. Lukas Jua  
Provincial Superior – Indonesia (IDE)

## Positive vibration ...

Writing on the collaboration with the laity, our Founder Arnold Janssen said, "Look upon the trust and cooperativeness of the faithful as a great, unearned gift which is being given to you and try to earn their trust through your great friendliness and personal sacrifice" (*To Becher and Löcken, Steyl, 1 February 1890 / 55.102-105*). Continuing in the same spirit of the Founder, the General Council decided to invite the SVD Lay Partners to the XVIII General Chapter as full time observers. We may be one of the few Congregations to invite the Lay Partners for the full length of the Chapter. It indicates the importance the Society gives to the contribution of the laity in our mission.

The four lay invitees, both men and women from four different continents, brought to the Chapter their experience, expertise and cultural richness. There was a mutual positive vibration between the SVDs and the Lay Partners in the Chapter hall and outside. One could see them going with confreres to the Nemi town for a pizza or gelato!

Since there was a mutual trust, we could also talk in their presence our lights and shadows without any reservation. They were comfortable with the human face of our Society.

The most important part now is where our Lay Partners go from here. How can these four representatives of the Lay Partners pass on to other Lay Partners the content and the spirit of the Chapter? Like the provincials, regionals and mission superiors were commissioned to be the persons responsible of the spiritual animation of confreres, the Lay participants are expected to be the animators of their groups and the other groups where they can reach out.

I hope this process will begin in collaboration with the local and the Generalate Mission Secretaries.



Fr. Gregory Pinto  
General Councilor – Rome



SVD Lay Partners with the Superior General Fr. Heinz Kulüke



Presentation and Sharing from the Lay Partners

## Adressing the Lay Partners

### Thank you and farewell...



The Society of the Divine Word is honored by your collaboration and dedication as our companions on our mission journeys. Thank you for sharing about your work and your group. You have opened our eyes as Divine Word Missionaries to a great blessing, having Lay Partners that we can work with side by side.

Please extend our gratitude to the lay group you are involved with and let them know how blessed we are as a congregation to have them as brothers, sisters, collaborators, friends. As you go back we hope that you inculcate in each of them the special thrust of the Chapter, which is a spiritual renewal. In the work that you do as a lay group may the love of Christ continue to impel you and may you remain rooted in His Word and committed to His Mission. In the Divine Word.

Dear Lay Partners,

We would like to thank you for your participation in our Chapter. Your willingness to come and actively participate in the Chapter impressed us all considering the fact that you also have left behind your family, work, and activities for a good number of days.

Fr. Heinz Kulüke  
and the Capitulars







Chapter Opening, June 17, 2018



Chapter Closing, July 14, 2018



Papal Audience, June 22, 2018



Liturgical celebration—Election of Superior General, July 18, 2018



Liturgical celebration—Election of Vice Superior General, July 20, 2018





## AFRAM ZONE



### GHANA

#### Friends of SVD – Awareness and Sensitization ...

##### Awareness and Sensitization on SVD Lay Partners

The Mission Secretary of the SVD of the Ghana-Liberia Province, Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, SVD and a Lay Partner of the SVD visited the Saint Paul Parish at Mpraeso on April 29, 2018 to sensitize and create awareness on the existence of SVD Lay Partners. They explained to parishioners, the need for the Laity to be actively involved in the Evangelization mission of the Church and the Society of the Divine Word's readiness to partner with the laity in living the Arnoldus spirituality and working together to proclaim the message of the Gospel.

A reflection was given by Fr. Ignatius Ayivor SVD on commitment to the Arnoldus spirituality and ideals of the SVD.

A thanksgiving service was held on Sunday, June, 24, 2018 with Fr. Stephen Dogodzi SVD, as the main celebrant. Six new members were initiated and presented with membership certificate. In her address the president of the Ss. Peter and Paul Friends of SVD, Mrs Naa Kwarley Oteng-Boadu gave an account of some of the successes the group has attained and looking forward to more fruitful years ahead.

##### Mission trip

The Friends of SVD in their quest to promote the formation of Lay Missionaries as a component of their identity as SVD Lay partners has chosen to carry out Mission trips, during which they will interact with communities and share the Divine Word. One of such trips was made to the St John Vianney Parish and its outstation on

May 31, 2018. The Friends also used the visit to encourage the formation of SVD lay partner group in these communities.

##### First Anniversary Celebration of the Friends of SVD, Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, New Aplaku, Accra

To the glory of God, the SVD Lay Associates of Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Church is one year old. To mark the occasion, a recollection was organized for the members at the Parish.



##### Profession of First Vows

17 seminarians from Ghana, Benin, Kenya, Togo, Madagascar and Mozambique professed their first vows on July 07, 2018 at the SVD Novitiate in Nkwatia-Ghana. The Friends of SVD were present at the Mass to support and to pray with them on their spiritual journey in the Religious life. The Friends presented each of the 17 newly professed with a crucifix as a sign

that with Christ, they can overcome all challenges. An undisclosed cash donation was made to support the activities of the Novitiate; this was received by Fr. John Alphonse Asiedu SVD, Novice Master during the Mass.

Martin Kumedzo



## Madagascar

### Amis de la SVD – Association

On 10<sup>th</sup> June 2018, during the Sunday Eucharistic celebration, Amis de la SVD were officially installed at Divine Word Parish Antananarivo. During the Holy Mass, 34 lay members of the said parish took an oath to offer their services to the parish and other mission activities by closely following the spirituality of SVD. In his homily, Fr. Pius Rego, SVD, the parish priest, congratulated the lay SVD members and insisted on following the missionary spirituality of St Arnold Janssen. Amis de la SVD organised the liturgy well by singing melodiously and dancing gracefully.



After the Mass, they organised a get-together and other entertainment programmes. They also invited other members of the parish and thus shared the meals. Fr. Sebastian Quadros, SVD, the Mission Secretary who was also present for the program-

me, briefly explained to them their roles and asked them to make the Bible as their daily companion by reading the Word of God daily. He also announced about the forthcoming first SVD Lay Partners Congress in Madagascar, which will take place from 18 to 22 October 2018 at Centre Catechetique et Biblique Mananjary.



Fr. Sebastian wished the Amis de la SVD all the success in this new endeavour.

Fr. Sebastian Quadros  
Mission Secretary

## Kenya

### Friends of SVD – Priestly Ordination

On May 25, 2018, Deacon Alex Omondi Owino was ordained priest at St. Vincent de Paul Langata in Nairobi, Kenya. The main celebrant was, Bishop from Kakamega County. Provin-



cial Superior of Kenya-Tanzania Province Fr. Tony Amissah SVD was also present. Friends of SVD participated in the Bible procession, First and Second Reading of the Word of God. After the Mass, they organised a get-together and other entertainment programmes. They also invited other members of the parish and thus shared the meals.

On May 26, 2018, the newly ordained priest served his first Mass at St. Joachim and Ann parish in Soweto Nairobi. It was a blessing to us all. On July 04, 2018, he celebrated the thanksgiving Mass at his rural home in Siaya County. In this Mass, Friends of SVD participated in the Bible procession and offertory.

On August 05, 2018, we participated in the profession of perpetual vows of our brother Bakilatob Wamborti Francis from Ghana and Karo Deohomba Honore from Togo. There were also other 8 candidates who renewed their vows on the same date. The main celebrant was our Provincial Superior for Kenya-Tanzania Province, Fr. Tony Amissa SVD. Members of SVD Friends took part in the first and second Readings of the Word.

We thank God and pray for growth by the power of the Holy Spirit and the unity of the Word of God.

Martha Dorcas



## DR Congo

### Amis de la SVD – Working together with the SVD

On October 15, 2017 at the opening of the SVD Lay Partners Workshop in Nemi, Rome, the Superior General in his homily addressed the Lay Partners saying, “You are important to us. Without you, our work as missionaries all over the world would not be possible”. The SVDs vision in following the Divine Word together with the Lay Partner says - “His Life is our Life and His Mission is our Mission”.

Amis de la SVD in Congo live this vision by commitment and active participation in the mission of the proclamation of the Word to the people of the Congo. They are experiencing, in their own way, the poverty of the heart that works together with the good governance of the community. As lay collaborators they are helpers in the mission of evangelization. They pledge themselves to accompany and support the SVDs in the formation and in caring for the young people. This commitment also comes in a special way of celebrating the important events of the SVD congregation, like the celebration of priestly ordinations or religious vows of members of the congregation.

On Sunday, July 22, 2018, Anthony Doku, Akpey Laweh, Andre Katunga, Paul Ntambwe, Charles Mwanobe, Vitalis

Naameh, Paul Bwateng and Florent Diwa professed their first vows. This ceremony was presided by the Vice-Provincial, Fr. William Mbumba, at St Paul Parish in Bandundu City. The Holy Eucharist was concelebrated Fr. Franeck and Fr.Vino.

The participation of Amis de la SVD was very remarkable.

Musete Jean Paul Nico Luketo



## Angola

### Leigos Missionários do Verbo Divino – Annual Report

#### Past Activities

- A detailed report was provided to the members of the group of our participation in the first international workshop for lay missionaries of SVD held on October 14-29, 2017 in Nemi, Rome.
- Participation in the Provincial Chapter held on February 25, 2018 in Ramiros.
- Visit to the communities of the Divine Word Parish and communities of Mother of Angola and sharing the experiences of both the mission of Kacula-Malanje and of Lay Partners Workshop in Rome with the members of Laity Association.
- Advent and Lent Retreats in the community of Our Lady of Angola and the SVD Missionary School in the Parish of Santa Madalena.
- At the celebration of the birth anniversary of Saint Arnold Janssen, we celebrated the first anniversary of the commitment of the Lay Partners in Angola with the support of Fr. Dominikus, Parish Priest of Santa Madalena Parish.
- Visit to the SVD seminaries with the aim of encouraging and supporting the vocation of the seminarians.

#### Some Priorities for Year 2018

- To engage efforts with the congregation to approve the Status of the Lay Association.
- To promote training and capacity building sessions for lay people and leaders of community movements and groups.
- Stabilizing and encouraging lay groups in community centers and expanding association with other parishes or missions under the SVD missionaries.
- Working with the Spiritual Director in setting up a permanent team of trainers and organizing ongoing training towards development of sustainable fundraising actions to support the Association's general activities and mission work.

José Miguel Mateus







## ASPAC ZONE



### Indonesia (IDJ)

#### Soverdia (Jansen Hidroponic) – Welcoming the Superior General elect - Fr. Budi Kleden SVD

On July 30, 2018 at Soverdi house in Denpasar Bali, the Janssen Hidroponic Team had the opportunity to meet our Superior General elect, Fr. Budi Kleden and welcoming him to Bali.



The evening began with a prayer, sharing from Fr. Budi, questions and answers and fellowship meal. Also present were Fr. Jude Raymund Festin, General Councilor elect, Fr. Yoseph Jagadawan, Provincial Superior, Java Province, IDJ Provincial Council members and some confreres.

On August 13, 2018 we visited SVD Graha Wacana Family Retreat Center at Ledug East Java. We also visited SSps at Claket.

On August 14, 2018, we attended Temporary Vows of 37 Seminarians at Surya Wacana Chapel.

Janssen Hidroponic helps SVD IDJ apostolate to manage Hidroponic Production in the Java Province.

Muliady Wang

### India (INM)

#### Disciples of the Divine Word – Love and Hugs at Asha Jyothi (INH) – HIV/Aids Centre

Two teams of the Disciples of the Divine Word members visited Asha Jyothi, Hyderabad (INH) in the month of July and August, 2018. I am sharing their week-long experiences of living with the children affected by HIV/Aids.

“We had a memorable week spending our time with the children. What they need is love, hugs and touch. Most of them are abandoned by their own and here in Asha Jyothi they have a family who looks after their needs. All the children go to school. They have taught us a lesson, a lesson of love.”- Hazel Mendonca

“The children were jumping and clinging to us saying loudly “Welcome Mummy”. The word mummy brought tears to my eyes as I have never been called mummy before. Hugging the children and holding them close to me gave me a special warm feeling which I will not forget.” - Julie Sams

“This was my second mission trip. Fr. Michael and Fr. Felix take care of these children by giving them their undivided love added along with the daily dose of their medicines. The children are a bunch of live wires and looking at them nobody would guess that they are victims of HIV/Aids.”- Lydia Fernandes

“It was a great joy to be with the children once again. We organised games, drawing and fancy dress competition for the children. We encouraged them with prizes, gifts and chocolates. We also celebrated India’s Independence day (August 15th) with them giving them the message of freedom.” - Leena Xavier



The members also had an opportunity to visit one unit of Jeevodaya Social Centre (SVD) where handicapped adults and children are looked after. They took part in the health camp organised by Asha Jyothi. We thank God for giving us the opportunity to serve the poor, sick and needy through our SVD priests.

Susan Noronha

## The Philippines (PHC)

### The Lay Society of St. Arnold Janssen – SVD-LSSAJ Collaborations

#### A. Ad Intra

1. Finalization of Formation modules of Eight Sessions for members. Big part of contents were derived from the sessions at Nemi Lay Partners Workshop. These are now ready for printing. As per the suggestions of Fr. Lazar SVD, General Mission Secretary, these will be accompanied by overview synopses and guide for speakers.

2. Every month we held Learning Sessions for the members. In June, Prof. Leopoldo Dejillas, Doctor of Economics spoke on "Social Market Economy and Catholic Social Teachings". In August, Fr. Wilfredo Sanial SVD Professor in Divine Word Seminary Tagaytay gave a talk titled "St. Arnold Janssen Spirituality in an Asian/Filipino Context". For August, Fr. Arlo Yap SVD, Biblical Apostolate Coordinator, will give a session on "Liturgical Bible Study".

3. Before our monthly meetings, we have Bible Sharing on reflections and actions of each one's life. Sessions are facilitated by our Spiritual Adviser, Fr. Resty Lumanlan SVD.

#### B. Ad Extra

1. LSSAJ sponsors and serves as volunteers to St. Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center (founded by Fr. Flavie Villanueva SVD) feeding, giving values to the homeless and poor. LSSAJ members celebrate their birthdays with them.

2. Our LSSAJ Chapter in Dasmarinas Cavite (with Fr. Popo Perey SVD, Parish Priest) conducts monthly feeding sessions for poor children, called "Hapag ni Tatay Arnold" or "Table of Fr. Arnold".



3. Mission teams went to St. Jude Catholic School (Fr. Emil Lim SVD, School Director) and St. Arnold Janssen Shrine Cainta (Fr. Wilfred Escalante SVD Parish Priest) to introduce LSSAJ and promote Arnold Janssen Spirituality, and eventually form units to continue formation of Lay Persons.

4. On August 25, a Forum is organized by SVD Phil Central Province JPIC, SSs JPIC and LSSAJ entitled "St. Arnold Janssen Family in response to Signs of Times". Participants are the former Department of Education Secretary who is President of DeLa Salle University and a Sister Lawyer Constitutional, and members of SVD, SSs and LSSAJ.

Fabian Pagaduan

## The Philippines (PHN)

### SVD Friends – Workshop for SVD Lay Partners

As a continuing response to strengthen and organize the SVD Lay Partners in the Philippine Northern Province and in view of their ongoing formation, the faculty and staff of the Academy of St. Joseph of far north Claveria, Cagayan gathered for a one-day Workshop for SVD Lay Partners at the Fr. Reinhold Joerger, SVD Youth and Formation Center in San Fernando, La Union on May 19, 2018. Academy of St. Joseph is an SVD-owned school.



The workshop was facilitated by couple Mike and GeeO Paderon who in October 2017 attended the 1st SVD Lay Partners Workshop in Nemi, Rome. It was an opportunity for them to share what happened during the two-week long Spirituality Course for Lay Partners.

portunity for them to share what happened during the two-week long Spirituality Course for Lay Partners.

The Workshop included group dynamics and talks on the role of the Laity in the Church, reflections on the Arnoldus Spirituality and a glimpse of the four Characteristic Dimensions of the SVDs.

Towards the end of the workshop, it became clear that this was only the beginning of several meetings for our lay partners.

Mary Geraldine "GeeO" Paderon





## EUROPE ZONE

### Germany

#### SVD-Partner – Prayer Bridge on World Day of the Poor

Sometimes things start small and they grow unexpectedly. This was the case with Prayer Bridge on the first World Day of the Poor in 2017. At the very beginning there were only two sentences: "Perhaps we can arrange a "prayer bridge" between India and Germany? (e-mail of SVD-Partner on 30th June 2017) and "This is a good suggestion to arrange a prayer bridge between India and Germany." (e-mail of Fr. Valentine Dung Dung SVD on 1st July 2017). But why should the bridge only connect India and Germany? So everybody was invited to join the bridge. People living in more than 100 different places all over the world answered - and they did it very differently. Here are some examples:



**Germany** - In Garrel people met for prayer at the village's pond in the evening. They enlightened the darkness with candles floating on the pond.

**India** - The youngest parish was the Divine Word parish in Seppa. It was erected only a few months before World Day of the Poor but people decided to join even before the parish's erection.

**Indonesia** - Prayer can overcome prison walls and lets people become a part of a world wide community although they are locked up.

**Ireland** - Traditionally the Holy Mass send on TV that Sunday is in memory of last years traffic victims. Nevertheless the Irish did not forget the poor and held a special prayer after the prayer of the faithful.

### Switzerland

#### Steyler Missionare – Pilgrimage to Oies

Oies, the place of birth of St. Joseph Freinademetz – where is it? At the very end of the Gadertal in South Tyrol. A valley of the Ladins, the eldest raetoroman people of the Alps. Our bus brought us – 26 SVD Friends of Switzerland – to the former Bishoptown Brixen at the foot of the Brennerpass. We got to know a little bit more of the beauties, especially the very old cathedral, built at the end of the 10th century.



On the edge of this city, the Parish Church of St. Joseph with its tower like a needle invited us to encounter the Saint in a special way. His biography was told to us sensitively by a local historian: St. Joseph –

a servant of the Word of God, having left his home to become a Chinese among the Chinese. We visited a small village, Abtei Badia, surrounded by majestic mountains where Joseph was baptized. After he joined the SVDs, Fr. Arnold Jans-

**Ukraine** - Caritas Ukraine celebrated Holy Mass not even for but with the poor in Kiev. The diocese of Charkiw facing war since years prayed in all parishes. Bishop Stanislav said later: „It was an impressive event and a strong connection between all our churches and parishes. It was very beautiful!“



**Mexico** - In Mexico City a family joined the Prayer Bridge who was and still is helping the victims of the earthquake in September 2017. They live "ora et labora".

The Second World Day of the Poor is on Sunday 18th November 2018. Again SVD-Partner Germany invite everybody – single person, family, group, parish, monastery – to come together in prayer and build a Prayer Bridge around the world. Subscribe on our website [www.svd-partner.eu](http://www.svd-partner.eu).

Maria Wego

sen sent him to China and he never came back. In the house Freinademetz - in Oies – half an hour walk from the Parish Church – Fr. Franz Senfter SVD, former missionary in Argentina welcomed us. Really, we belong to a the worldwide SVD-family.



In our Mass with Fr. Provincial, Stephan Dähler and Fr. Marcel Frei we felt the radiant power of our St. Joseph. We entrusted him all our issues, especially the missionary work of the SVD and the coming General Chapter. Strengthened with a delicious South Tyrolian meal we returned. St. Joseph's trust and endeavour, his dedication to God's Word and to the Chinese people empowered us for our mission in this world today.

Philipp Hautle



## PANAM ZONE



### Chile

#### Alma Verbita – Living the Gospel Today

At the end of the first week of July, when the weather conditions have intensified with the cold and rain, typical of harsh winter, our community wanted to be present and reach out to our brothers in need.

On Friday, July 06, 2018, our community carried out a night mission at the central post in Santiago, where many of our brothers on the street sleep in the surroundings of the post office. The night was very cold and it had rained a lot. The streets were still wet and humid.



We found our brothers sheltered inside their “homes” made with cardboard and nylon sections, suffering the harshness of the weather and waiting for a helping hand to provide them with some food to withstand the cold of the night.

We also wanted to share with those people who together with a family member waited long hours for emergency care at the Central Post.

Listening to their sorrows and worries, being able to accompany and give a little encouragement and hope, together with a warm coffee was our goal.

Today, more than ever, we feel and know that we must be a living Church, present and close to the most needy and suffering in our country.

We were comforted to realize that, just like us many more turn their gaze to Christ - suffering, poor, wounded, vulnerable and in a street situation, to hold His hand and give Him their love and attention.

Elena Ortiz

### USA

#### Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino – MLVD Retreat with Parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes, LA

We had an amazing retreat experience with the Parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes that is located in East Los Angeles, CA. There were 62 participants who shared this time of grace and renewal. The retreat was a great accomplishment for the MLVD (Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino) members of this community being the first retreat that they prepared and led on their own with the assistance and guidance of our members of the community in Riverside, CA. It was a wonderful



blessing to be accompanied by Fr. Emilio Reyes throughout the entire weekend. Fr. Reyes was so readily available to assist with preaching, hearing confessions, celebrating Mass and leading Prayer services.

The Initiation retreat is the opportunity for us the laity to proclaim the Word of God to our fellow laity that have distanced themselves from the church, some participate in preparation to do their sacraments of Initiation and others simply want to deepen their relationship with God. It is through this proclamation that many have come to the realization of the immense and unconditional love that God has for each one of us and have come out of the retreat feeling more connected to their faith and more united to Christ our Savior. This is a

great response to a growing problem in our culture where we find more and more “Catholics” that are baptized in the Church but do not come to a full knowledge of their faith.

This is how our MLVD movement is contributing to the evangelizing mission of the Church and following the spirituality of St. Arnold “To proclaim the Good News is the first and greatest act of love of neighbor.”

Mariana Flores





## Paraguay

### Laicos Verbitas – Children's Day

On Sunday, August 5, 2018 the dimension of "Animación Misionera" (SVD) celebrated Children's Day with all the children belonging to the Parish San Roque González de Santa in the city of Encarnación, Itapúa.

This event began with the Holy Mass, at the end of which they went to the Sports Centre of the San Roque González School of Santa Cruz.

The members of the Dimension of "Animación Misionera" organized the celebration for all the children of the First and Second Year of First Communion, altar servers, choirs, can- teens belonging to the 10 communities of the Parish, as well as the children and young people of the Missionary Childhood and Adolescence. It is estimated that more

than 350 children participated who were accompanied by their catechists, parents and siblings. They were received by the clowns, members of the dimension of "Animación Misionera" and Young SVDs who accompanied the entire event.

All participants had fun dancing, singing and playing. They also enjoyed a delicious breakfast and brought their surprises and gifts.

Thanks to Father Joaquin Li and the good-hearted people who collaborated and said yes to this community participation. The event was a success.

Froilan Armora González



## Panama

### Socios Laicos de SVD – Spirituality and Mission

The various Lay groups of the SVD meet during the month to share the *Lectio Divina*. On Thursdays, Mass is held at the Divine Word central house, in the different communities. Spiritual support is given to those suffering from the physical loss of a family member, visits to the sick and support to their families, social work is carried out in building or repairing facilities in the communities, as well as active work in the different pastoral groups in the Parishes and Chapels. During the course of the year, missions have been carried out in the Chapels of Saint John Paul II, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jesus of Mercy, the Malvinas Community and the parish of Saint Francis of Assisi in Dolega.



### Formation of new Lay Missionaries

With great joy, on Saturday July 7, 2018, Br. Pedro Azuaga - Secretary General of the CAM Region Mission, Mr. Julián De Gracia - General Coordinator, Mrs. Irma Garcés - Coordinator of the Cabima Group, Mr. Edilberto Santos - Subordinator and Ana Luisa Vásquez - Secretary, addressed David, capital of the Province of Chiriquí, with the purpose of forming a new group of Lay Missionaries in Panama, who will be in charge of the mission in this vast region.



### Upcoming Events

To work harder for World Youth Day 2019, by raising awareness among the different communities so that more pilgrims are welcomed into their homes.

Ana Luisa Vásquez Castro



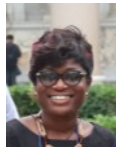
## Information

### The new editorial team

The newsletter is now two years old. During this time many experiences with the editorial work could be gained. It turned out that an extension of the editorial staff is necessary. The editorial office was enlarged to six members. When selecting the new team, care was taken to ensure that all SVD zones were represented in it. Meet now the new team:



Susan Noronha – India  
(editor-in-chief)



Matilda Anim-Fofi – Ghana



Laura Inés Díez Bilbao – Spain



Fabian Pagaduan – The Philippines



Gianini Sahagun Becerra – Mexico



Sophie Wego – Germany

## Prayer

### World Day of the Poor



Let my ears hear the cries of the poor,  
let my feet carry me to them,  
let my eyes recognize their unsaid need,  
let my heart feel their sorrows,  
let my tongue speak the right words,  
let my hands do whatever it takes for them.  
Let me recognize you in my sisters and brothers.  
That's what I'm asking you, my God!  
Amen.

## Imprint

### Editorial Team

Susan Noronha (India) [editor-in-chief]

Matilda Anim-Fofie (Ghana)

Laura Inés Díez Bilbao (Spain)

Fabian Pagaduan (Philippines)

Gianini Sahagun Becerra (Mexico)

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