



Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

SVD Lay Partners

Newsletter - from Around the World

Issue 19, August 2022

A Visit to Steyl (Part 3)



Inside this Issue

Editorial

SPECIAL TOPIC

A Visit to Steyl (Part 3) 3

GROUP REPORTS FROM ...

AFRAM ZONE

- . South Africa (BOT): SVD Lay Partners Malamulele – Ongoing Formation – Webinar on Synodality and Bible Symposium 7
- . South Africa (BOT): SVD Lay Association – A Visual Display of the Bible at Mater Dei Pastoral Centre, Mokopane 8
- . Angola (ANG): ALMV – The Role of Lay Partners and the SVD Mission in the Light of the 18th General Chapter 9
- . Kenya (KEN): Friends of SVD – AFRAM Zonal Assembly and Various Activities Filled with Joyful as well as Sad Moments 10
- . Zambia (ZAM): Zambia Mission Lay Partners – Monthly Group Meeting and Presentation on SVD Lay Partners 11
- . Zambia (ZAM): Friends of the Novitiate – First Meeting of the Group – An Initiative from Fr. George Clement Angmor, SVD 12

ASPAC ZONE

- . Australia (AUS): SVD Lay Partners – Response to the Floods in Australia 13
- . Indonesia (IDJ): Soverdia – Various Activities: Fundraising, Visiting Prisoners and Seniors, and Spiritual Formation 14
- . Indonesia (IDR): PMSS – Working According to the 18th General Chapter Document 15
- . Indonesia (IDT): PSK – A Visit to the Blind Community 16
- . India (ING): SVD Lay Partners Animation Seminar in Assam 17
- . India (INM): DDW, Mumbai – Election of the Office-bearers and Two Important and Impressive Meetings 18
- . The Philippines (PHC): LSSAJ – Politics and the Commitment to the Marginalized 19
- . The Philippines (PHN): SVD-PHN Mission Partners – Preparation for 2024/25 and Continuing in Medical and Dental Mission in Abra 20

EUROPA ZONE

- . Russia (URL): Lay Mission Partners of the SVD – Our Mother - Celebrating the Anniversary of the Apparitions in Fatima 21
- . Spain (ESP): Alba – Photographic Exhibition of Bolivian Street Children in Alcorcón and Leganés 22
- . Germany (GER): SVD-Partner – Meeting in Sankt Augustin SVD-Partner at Katholikentag in Stuttgart 2022 23 24

PANAM ZONE

- . Mexico (MEX): MAVD – 40th Anniversary Celebration! 25
- . Chile (CHI): Alma Verbita – Welcome to Our New Spiritual Director and Celebrating the Indigenous New Year 26
- . Panama (CAM): MLVD – An Experience with Fr. Marek Vaňuš 27

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

- . Generalate Visitation CAM – Experience with SVD Lay Partners' Group in CAM 27
- . Unknown Saints: India – Devasahayam 28
- . Reader's Letters: A Word of Compliment! 29
- . Save the Date! – VI World Day of the Poor 29
- In Memoriam 30
- Impulse 31
- Imprint 31

Editorial

Listening ...

As I reflect on themes of Synodality and of the 19th SVD General Chapter 2024, my favorite passage in the Bible comes to my mind. It is an incredible story to listen to and ponder anytime. The Emmaus Story!

Let's walk this story again. Two disappointed disciples are walking back home to Emmaus from Jerusalem. They are disillusioned because their hope was crucified and buried in a tomb. They are now planning to move on with their lives trying to make sense of the sad events of the last few days. A stranger joins them in their journey; he simply asks a question and then listens. They talk to him expressing their hopes and expectations of a man called Jesus who was later crucified. Jesus then enters into a conversation with them, eventually leading them to extend a dinner invitation to him.

Being able to voice our concerns, and being heard, has a huge impact on how we relate to one another. Any meaningful relationship is built on the simple sincere process of talking and listening. The global synodal process is all the richer because we are listening to each other; and then all together listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It is in these spaces of talking and listening that the creative transformative spirit in us is birthed.

As missionary disciples, we are called to have a transforming encounter with Jesus, experiencing his love. In a changing and evolving world, all of us are invited to be creative and responsive to contextual needs.

In preparation for the 19th General Chapter, the Guide for Communal Reflection says, "We are in the world increasingly marked by woundedness and fragmentation due to violence, religious fundamentalism, violation of human rights, etc.". Do we actually listen to the voice of the underprivileged and oppressed? Can we listen to indigenous peoples, the tribal people, and the cultures that have lost their voice? Are we going to grow as God's people by being more alert, accepting, and fair?

There is a joy in listening and walking together. But, this joy can achieve its perfection through the process of listening to the people who are at the periphery, who are marginalized, and who are pushed by us.

Jesus knew what the two disciples were discussing. But he still wanted to listen to them. He wanted to know what is happening with them, from their perspective.

As we listen to each other, and then together to the Holy Spirit, I am sure we will be able to understand the needs of our times.

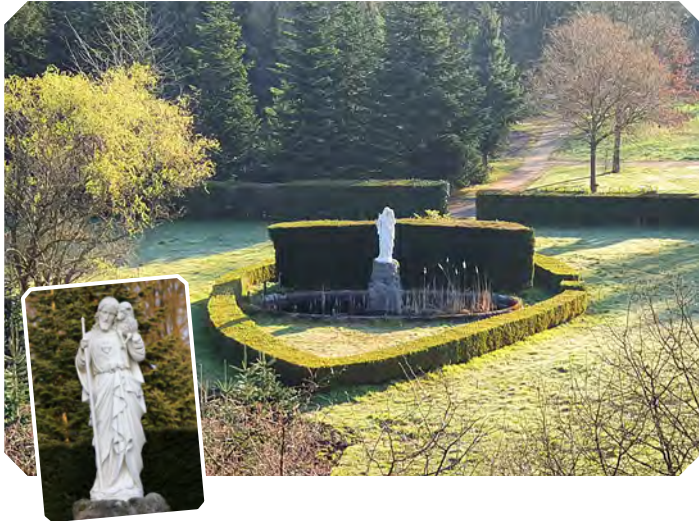
Susan Noronha
Editor-in-chief

A Visit to Steyl

Part 3 : The Parks

To see everything in Steyl at your leisure, you need more than just a short day visit. It is no coincidence that the entire ensemble of the three mother houses of the Arnoldus religious

family is called "Monastery Village Steyl". Therefore, we also take our time on our imaginary visit. In this issue we visit the parks with the grottos and the cemetery of the SVD.



At the same time when St. Michael's was founded and built, the parks were also laid out. They were created between 1875 and 1900.

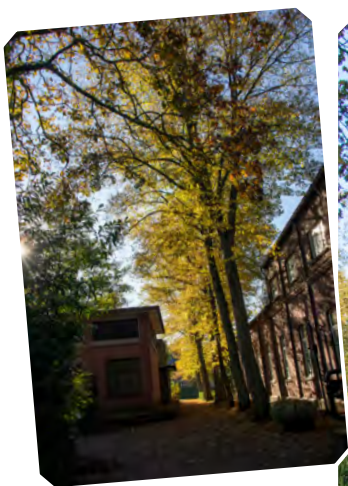
To the left of the entrance path to the small park is the figure of Christ, the Good Shepherd, in a small orchard meadow. Figures and biblical representations can be found everywhere in the parks. In the small park, next to the "Good Shepherd", there is a representation of St. Anne with Mary as a child (see cover picture), Calvary, and the figure of St. Aloysius.



Steyl.

The Marian grotto is particularly well decorated with a small Marian altar. The walls are decorated with mosaics made of pieces of coal, bricks, pebbles, and glass. The Marian altar is





In the large park, the path leads past the well house, which protects the spring from which the drinking water for the houses still comes, and the former Kes-sel House to the Hill of the Sacred Heart. The top of the hill is the highest point in the park and there is a statue of Christ, a copy of the Sacred Heart statue from Montmartre in Paris.



The path continues to the Lourdes Grotto, built in 1922 by soldiers who had recovered in Steyl from wounds received in the First World War.

Further into the park, hidden above the path, is a small bower where Arnold Janssen liked to stay to enjoy the peace and quiet of the park.





Also in the large park is the SVD cemetery. It is bordered by a wall with a Stations of the Cross. From the entrance gate, a straight path leads to an elevated chapel, the original burial place of Arnold Janssen. He was buried there until his beatification in 1975.

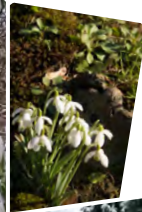
To the right and left of the chapel are the graves of some SVD bishops and in a semicircle in front of the chapel, those of the General Superiors.



The back wall of the chapel is decorated with a mosaic of the Risen Christ. The mosaic stones come from all the countries where the Arnoldus family is active.



The parks are places of rest and recreation and beautiful in all seasons.



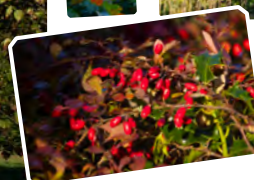
In winter with snow and the first flowers of the year, the snowdrops.



In spring with the splendour of flowers and trees. In summer with the green, shady canopies of the trees.



In autumn with the colourful leaves and bright berries.





AFRAM ZONE



South Africa (BOT): SVD Lay Partners Malamulele

Ongoing Formation – Webinar on Synodality and Bible Symposium

Synodality and SVD Lay Partners

In March 2022, Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, Generalate Mission Secretary organized a Webinar for SVD lay partners on “Synodality and SVD Lay Partners”. The main speaker was Mr. Royston Braganza from Mumbai, India. Lay partners, Maria Wego from Germany and Thandi Mazibuko from South Africa, made presentations on their lay partner groups and activities carried by them.

The topic was more about reviving our Catholic Church in these trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how we can engage ourselves more spiritually with our communities.

SVD Lay Partners Peace Prayer translation

In April, we managed to translate the SVDLP Peace Prayer into Xitsonga (local language). Members who participated in the translation are, Nozenzo Vala, Gladys Malepfana, and Thandi Mazibuko. We are grateful for this opportunity.



Bible Symposium

In May 2022, we have been fortunate to have hosted the big event for Bible Graduates Alumni Reunion at Mater Dei Pastoral Centre, Mokopane in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The event was around the Bible storyline. The purpose was to celebrate the graduates for the past 10 years since the inception of this Spiritual empowering Course. Fr. Sunny and Sandra Lorenzo worked very hard to see the success of the event.

We also celebrated Pentecost at St. Benedict Parish – Malamulele.

May the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people. Amen.

Thandi Mazibuko



South Africa (BOT): SVD Lay Association

A Visual Display of The Bible at Mater Dei Pastoral Centre, Mokopane



On 14th May 2022, the Mater Dei Pastoral Centre, Diocese of Polokwane organized a Reunion of Bible Graduates from 2010-2021. Many SVD lay partners in Polokwane Diocese are Alumni of the Mater Dei Bible Course. Divine Word Missionaries came to Polokwane Diocese in 2007. In 2008, Fr. Sunny John the Director of the Centre, introduced Bible Study Course for the laity, faithfully carrying out the charism and the vision of our Founder, St. Arnold Janssen. SVDs were new to the people in our Diocese but by attending this Bible Course on weekends, we came to know more about the Divine Word Missionaries and their charism. Fr. Sunny, Mission Secretary of Botswana Province from 2009 to 2019, introduced SVD lay partners in our Diocese. All Diocesan activities take place at Mater Dei and we are also given opportunities to help the Centre in whatever way we can. Mater Dei is our second home.

SVD lay partners took an active role in organizing the Bible Graduates Reunion event. The occasion was fourfold - Reunion of the graduates, Bible symposium, Bible exhibition, and launch of the souvenir called "The Mirror". The exhibition of the Bible story was one of the highlights of this reunion. The whole Bible was shown through art and other visuals and editorial for all to enjoy. All thanks to the artistry of Sandra Lorenzo, a Bible student of Mater Dei who worked tirelessly in creating a visual display of the whole Bible. It was truly a unique Bible exhibition, never seen or heard about anywhere in this part of Africa. What makes us so happy and proud is that Sandra is an SVD lay partner, assisting Fr. Sunny at the Pastoral Centre in the administration and also taking Bible classes.

Part of the exhibition was about the ministry and charism of SVDs in the World. This was prepared by the SVD Vocation Promoter for South Africa, Fr. Mobin Joseph together with the SVD lay partners from Polokwane and Malamulele in Tzaneen Diocese. Our Bishop Jeremiah Masela and Botswana Provincial Superior Fr. Gabriel Afagbegee were some of the guests present during this event. Bishop encouraged Fr. Sunny to look at the possibility of having Bible Exhibitions in the parishes, especially benefitting youth and children. SVD lay partners in South Africa are with Fr. Sunny in this endeavour.

Edwina Mbite



Angola (ANG): Associação de Leigos Missionários do Verbo Divino

The Role of Lay Partners and the SVD Mission in the Light of the 18th General Chapter



The first meeting of SVD lay partners with their Provincial Superior was held on 7th May 2022, in the auditorium of the Missionary School of Christ the King parish. This meeting was organized by Fr. Denis Pereira and the lay partners with a theme: “The Love of Christ impels us (2 Cor 5:14): Rooted in the Word, Committed to his Mission”. In light of the 18th General Chapter, the role of lay partners in the SVD Mission was discussed. It was moderated by Fr. João Ladeira. The meeting was attended by forty-three participants from different parishes and the lay partners from Christ the King, Divine Word, and St. Magdalene parishes.

The facilitator, Fr. Daniel Malamba, the Provincial Superior, explained that the role of the laity is not to be the helper of priests or to raise funds for missions. Lay partners are called to be active members and missionaries in the communities, to work for the good of the society, to know how to communicate, to read the Bible, to animate and respect the environment, to fight for the good of all people through justice, peace and integrity of creation. Fr. Malamba also insisted that “the success of the mission lies in dialogue and acceptance of the condition of the laity”. The Provincial promised the groups that there would be greater support for the SVD lay partners and that their statutes would soon be approved.

On 8th May, the SVD lay partner group from St. Magdalene parish celebrated their 10th anniversary with the sharing of some of their experiences of mission, their determination, the



initiatives undertaken, and the challenges they have overcome over the years. The celebration was graced by Frs. Malamba, Ladeira, and Pereira.

On 29th May, the group visited some bedridden elderly sick people with some basic needy items to them as a sign of fraternal love and care for them.

José Miguel Mateus



Kenya (KEN): Friends of SVD

AFRAM Zonal Assembly and Various Activities Filled with Joyful as well as Sad Moments



Zonal Assembly

12th AFRAM Zonal Assembly 2022 was held in Kenya from 27th February – 5th March 2022. SVD lay partners - Grace from Nairobi and Mary from Eldoret - represented the Assembly. Our group's report was read by Grace Akinyi, the National President.

Graceful moments

On 6th March, Fr. Budi Kleden, Superior General, visited us during our Formation Class, and, on 8th March Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, General Mission Secretary met with the whole group in our parish of Mihango. We are very grateful to them.

Spiritual activities

On 9th March, we had Lenten Recollection which was facilitated by Deacon Moise. On the 19th of March, we participated in the Holy Mass followed by the Emmaus walk from Soweto to Mihango. About 300 people joined the walk, including Friends of SVD.

Pre-philosophy house

We visited the Formation house of the SVDs on 23rd March at the Soweto parish where the SVDs begin their formation and interacted with them.



Saddest moment

Despite all these beautiful experiences, on 1st May we lost our member Virginia Mueni of Soweto parish. She was one of the most active members of our group. May she rest in peace.

Commissioning

On the 12th and 26th of June, we received new members into Friends of SVD in parishes of Langas and Soweto respectively. Besides, in other parishes too new members are waiting to be commissioned.

Charitable act

We are always on the frontier mission to render support to the vulnerable and to share the love of Christ. This time our Friends of Diwopa reached out to children's home in their area and donated some needy items. Kimumu Friends visited the sick on another occasion.

Arnoldus Family

Fr. Tony, Provincial Superior organized an educative workshop facilitated by the SVD priests and also made sure we participated. We are grateful. Indeed, the love of Christ impels us!

Finally, Kenya Friends are ready to send their representatives to Congo in October for the AFRAM SVD Lay Partners Workshop. May the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people, Amen

Grace Akinyi



Zambia (ZAM): Zambia Mission Lay Partners

Monthly Group Meeting and Presentation on SVD Lay Partners



On Sunday, 1st May 2022, the SVD lay partners at the Holy Family Parish in Lusaka visited and held their monthly meeting at the home of children living with intellectual disabilities. The children are taken care of by live-in helpers who share their life with them. The house was founded by a group of four Catholic women in 2019 after observing the significant number of neglected children, especially those living with intellectual disabilities.

The lay partners were given a guided tour of the house before the meeting began and were given a brief outline of the activities that take place there. We made introductions and saw how happy the residents were. The kids love having visitors, they informed us.

It is our hope that we will continue visiting this home which is not too far from the church.

Awareness of SVD lay partners

On 12th June, the lay partners travelled to a parish 15 kilometres away from the main church to give the parishioners a quick presentation on the SVD lay partners. The following topics were presented:

1. The history of SVD lay partners worldwide
2. Who the SVDs are



3. Our Founder and Spirituality of the SVD Congregation
4. SVD lay partners and their activities at the main church

The parishioners welcomed us warmly. We hope they will form a new SVD lay partner group there with the help of the Parish Priest and the members of the lay partners.

Mildred Sodala



Zambia (ZAM): Friends of the Novitiate

First Meeting of the Group – An Initiative from Fr. George Clement Angmor, Novice Master, Zambia



In the observation of the Zambia Mission since his arrival almost a year ago, Fr. George Clement Angmor, the Novice Master began taking several initiatives both in the novitiate community and the mission at large. The recent of these is the organization of the Friends of the Novitiate (FoN) which would be inaugurated into the SVD lay partners (SVDLP) in Kabwe, Zambia. This is the first in the diocese and second in the Zambia mission, following the premier group in the Holy Family Parish of Linda, Lusaka, established by Fr. Lawrence Likulano, Parish Priest, and also, the Mission Secretary.

The first meeting took place on Saturday, 21st May 2022, at the Divine Word Novitiate at Dallas, a suburb of Kabwe. Twelve people attended the program. Fr. Appiah Samuel started with a presentation on “Who are the Divine Word Missionaries?” followed by Nyabwari Ombuna Cosmas, on “Who are the SVD Lay Partners?” and “What is the novitiate?” by Matiwaza Hanani. Some video clips from SVD lay partners around the world were shown to give members a better idea of what SVD lay partners are doing and where they might start.

Fr. George announced that the group would be inaugurated on 17th July, the day of the profession of first vows of the novices. He also informed members about the upcoming meeting of the AFRAM SVD lay partners in Congo and encouraged them to attend. He introduced the websites of the SVD, SSpS, SSpSAP, and the Lay Partners, to know more about the Arnoldus Family.

In addition, Fr. George also read the message from the SVD Generalate Mission Secretary, Fr. Stanislaus Lazar. He reminded them of the fact that like every baptized person, we are called to be missionary disciples, and by becoming SVD lay partners, they are being called to collaborate with the SVD as partners in mission, learning, and sharing in the Arnoldus Spirituality, promising that they would be enriched by becoming part of the Arnoldus Family, much as we are also enriched.

Out of those present for this first meeting, four were nominated as interim executives. They are from different parishes:
Chairperson – Chileshe Ndalia, Holy Rosary, Mukobeko
Secretary – Mike Munyama, St. Monica, Lukanga
Financial Secretary – Julian Kwara Kambole, St. Charles Lwanga, Chindwin
Publicity Officer – Mwansa Nyirongo, St. Charles Lwanga, Chindwin.

Members gave positive feedback, particularly Mike Munyama, Pascalina Chanda, and Julian Kwara Kambole, who said the program was inspiring and very informative, and that it inspired them to join the group and help others learn more about SVD lay partners. It was a worthwhile initiative to pursue. The program concluded with Vespers and a communal supper, as well as some entertainment.

Augustine Dery





ASPAC ZONE



Australia (AUS): SVD Lay Partners

Response to the Floods in Australia



After the devastating floods in the Northern Rivers in far North, New South Wales, the Divine Word Missionaries' lay apostolate decided they would like to supply the much-needed Manchester* to the people who lost their homes in Lismore. Michael Hill offered to take the goods with him when he travelled by train to the Lismore area. On 3 May 2022, he travelled by train for 11 hours to Casino Railway Station where

he was picked up by his son and drove to Lillian Rock where Mark and Helen Hill live on a small two-acre property.

He says, "While staying at Lillian Rock, we visited Lismore to observe the devastation of the City by the floods, and we only saw three people in the whole of Lismore City. It was abandoned. While in Lismore we were told they do not need any more Manchester*, they only need money to buy food and pay bills. We, therefore, decided to leave the goods at the Welfare Centre in Nimbin where there are over 150 homeless people who could make better use of the goods we had".

This was just one of the areas of need that the SVD lay apostolate has recently been involved in.

The SVD lay partners also helped Fr. Viet Hoang Nguyen, the Mission Secretary to prepare donation envelopes for Ukraine.

Mervyn Rodrigues



* Manchester = household linen – Australian / South African



Indonesia (IDJ): Soverdia

Various Activities: Fundraising, Visiting Prisoners and Seniors, and Spiritual Formation.



An education fund for SVD candidates

Apart from being concerned about the work of the SVD Mission through the "Coin for Mission" movement, Soverdia cares for funding for the education expenses of SVD candidates. In May of last year, Soverdia Bali-Lombok hosted a Mass and a special collection to benefit the education fund to welcome the brothers from the SVD Novitiate. Likewise, Soverdia Tenggarong, East Kalimantan, carried out fundraising activities for the education of SVD candidates.

Strengthening the management of Soverdia

In an effort to improve and develop services, it is necessary to form strong and solid management. In line with this, Soverdia West Kalimantan District and Soverdia Jakarta District have confirmed their new committee. Likewise, Soverdia, Surabaya-Malang District, has confirmed their Spiritual Director for three SVD lay partner groups in parishes that are not served by SVD.

Holy Week celebrations at the prison and with the elderly and needy

The Good Friday Worship service, which the inmates at the Kerobokan Bali Prison have missed for the past two years due



to the pandemic, is now again being arranged by Bali-Lombok. In addition, in collaboration with the Denpasar SVD Community, it organized Holy Week Services for the elderly at the Soverdia Denpasar Chapel, and held a simple Easter celebration for them. Soverdia Jeruju West Kalimantan celebrated Easter by sharing their love in the form of distributing food packages for those in need.

Virtual spiritual activities

In order to further develop the brotherhood among the SVD lay partner groups within the Province, virtual spiritual activities are still held once a month in Java Province. The virtual activities included Holy Mass and Lenten Recollection via Zoom and YouTube by Soverdia Bali-Lombok District, Easter Service, and Recollection via YouTube by Soverdia Jakarta District, Rosary in May via Zoom from IDJ, IDE, IDR, and, IDT, and Pentecost Novena in June via YouTube by Soverdia Surabaya-Malang District in collaboration with SVD Batu Novitiate, Malang.

Paulina Suharsi



Indonesia (IDR): Persaudaraan Misioner Sang Sabda

Working According to the 18th General Chapter Document



Implementing the 18th General Chapter document

In implementing the 18th General Chapter document, Co-responsibility with SVD Lay Partners in Promoting the Missionary vocation, the SVD lay partners of SVD Ruteng Province together with the Mission Secretary visited a few SVD parishes at Rekas, Redong, and Golo Dukal Parishes. SVD lay partners were introduced and activities like mission animation and fundraising were carried out in the parishes.

Visit to SVD parishes – awareness and fundraising



Rekas Parish was the third mission station of SVD established in 1924 and established as a Parish in 1926. The first parish priest was the late Fr. Frans Eickmann, SVD. On the 12th and 13th of February, we visited the parish and held mission

animation programs for the parishioners. We distributed mission envelopes to receive donations for SVD worldwide mission. After the Mass, we met with some parishioners and introduced them to SVD lay partners. A week later, we visited Redong parish and in March we went to St. Nikolaus Golo

Dukal parish. We carried out similar mission activities in all the parishes. People were very generous. Some showed interest to join the SVD lay partner group. After our visits, we realized that people are praying for the SVDs and have a generous heart to contribute to the SVD missions, even though some of them are very poor.

On the 26th and 27th of March, we visited Elar parish. This visit was very challenging because of the very bad road conditions. On our way, we stopped at Mombok parish where two of our confreres work. At Elar parish, we took part in the Mass and spoke to the parishioners about our missionary activities. Here too many showed interest in joining the lay partner group. Parish priest, Fr. Lorens Kuil, promised to establish the SVD lay partner group and support it.

Despite being extremely exhausting, we discovered that missionaries must be ready to face challenges. Poor road conditions should not discourage us from carrying out our mission. Therefore, they must have in themselves the spirit of total self-giving no matter what the situation is.

Fr. Vitalis Hiburdin, SVD
Mission Secretary



Indonesia (IDT): Paguyuban Soverdia Kupang

A Visit to the Blind Community



The SVD lay partners from Kupang, IDT Province, visited the blind community on 15th June 2022 and provided some of their basic daily requirements with groceries. The blind community was established in 1999. Adeo Datus Libing, Chairman of the blind community was very happy to welcome us. He was grateful for the concern and care from the members of Paguyuban Soverdia Kupang towards their community. He expressed that the last two years were a dark time for them because of COVID-19. The pandemic prevented many of them from doing their jobs as massage therapists and handicraft vendors due to COVID-19 protocols. "We are so happy today. We are not alone anymore. There are people who care about us. We have friends who walk together with us," said Adeo Datus Libing.

Fr. Agustinus Hironimus Daesoro, Mission Secretary of IDT Province accompanied us during this visit. He thanked the community for their time and interaction with one another. He asserted that despite their difficulties, we find delight in reaching out to them and learning from them how to live a joyful life.

The Chairman of Paguyuban Soverdia Kupang, Isidorus Lilijawa expressed that the SVD lay partners should be committed to serving the vulnerable people in society, like the poor, the blind, and the downtrodden who need our help.

We were delighted by the music played by members of the blind community throughout the group activities. Some of them sang songs for us and entertained us.

We are extremely grateful that God gave us this chance to spend time with these amazing people, listen to them, sing with them, and have a nice time with them. Thank you, Lord, for this graceful moment.

Isidorus Lilijawa



India (ING)

SVD Lay Partners Animation Seminar in Assam



Lay leaders from ten SVD parishes across the Northeast States of India – Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh attended the SVD Lay Partners Animation Seminar at the SVD House Guwahati, Assam, on March 24-25, 2022. Around 40 leaders and their parish priests participated in this two-day seminar organized by ING. It was an enriching experience program led by Sr. Anchal, CHF and Sr. Siny Jose, CHF on the first day and Susan Noronha, an active SVD Lay Partner from Mumbai, on the second day.

Regional Superior, Fr. Maxim Rodrigues and Mission Secretary, Fr. Clement Quadras, were actively involved in the seminar. The two-day sessions were filled with many activities; sharing, group activities, etc. There was much eagerness in the lay leaders to know one another and their involvement in the missions.

On the Solemnity of the Annunciation, being the Titular feast of the Society, Archbishop John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati, presided over the Eucharist, encouraging the participants to be faithful followers of the Word. Fr. Francis Fernandes, AJS coordinator, spoke about our Founder, St. Arnold Janssen, St. Joseph Freinademetz, and founding generations.



ING is interwoven with mighty rivers and mysterious mountains. Diverse ethnocultural groups inhabit the Region. Through an empowerment process of education, dialogue, and networking with Government/NGOs, the SVDs are trying to educate the tribal children. They are first-generation learners. The schools not only provide knowledge but build bridges across tribes, creating platforms to live in harmony. Furthermore, the indigenous peoples are playing a crucial role in evangelizing the region.

The pioneering missionaries of the ING, Fr. Cyprian Pinto, Fr. Ivan D'Silva, Fr. Valentine Dung Dung, and Fr. Jose K, shared the SVD presence and their first experiences and challenges in ING. Susan explained how laypeople could support and get involved with the SVDs in their missions. The animation program ended with a happy note saying all will give their best and collaborate with the SVDs in carrying out the mission of Christ.

Fr. Clement Quadras, SVD
Mission Secretary

Susan Noronha



India (INM): Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Mumbai

Election of the Office-bearers and Two Important and Impressive Meetings



A visit to the SVD Formation House

At the invitation of Fr. Salate Nathan, Rector of the seminary, DDW members paid a one-day visit to the SVD Shishyalaya in Vasai for an animation program for the seminarians. Five members spent time with the nine enthusiastic young men on Sunday, 13th March 2022. By using examples from our own lives, we encouraged the seminarians on the value of living a life of prayer and gratitude to God, as well as the need for getting ready to be committed to the vocation. The interactive session included Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. John Lugun followed by a fellowship meal.

Office-bearers for 2022-25

Members elected new office-bearers for 2022-25 at the meeting on Sunday, 1st May at Atma Darshan. Fr. Gregory Pinto, Spiritual Director conducted the elections through ballots. Installation of the new team was done during the Eucharistic Celebration by INM Mission Secretary, Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurath. Congratulations to the new team. Susan Noronha (President, re-elected), Jayesh George (Vice President), Anupama Subodhanan (Secretary), Andrew D'Souza (Treasurer), Fr. Gregory Pinto (Spiritual Director).

Meeting with Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, Generalate Mission Secretary

On 10th June DDW and St. Theresa's lay group along with Fr. Jolly met Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, Generalate Mission Secretary. Among other discussions, Fr. Stan spoke on the SVD lay groups worldwide. He provided examples of how different countries interpret the context of forming lay partner groups. The SVD charism and mission are centered around the Divine Word. He was appreciative of all the efforts the lay groups had undertaken during COVID-19 all over the world.

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

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

Susan Noronha



The Philippines (PHC): The Lay Society of St. Arnold Janssen (LSSAJ)

Politics and the Commitment to the Marginalized



The year 2022 may be considered the most controversial national election in the Philippines. Ferdinand “Bongbong” Romualdez Marcos and Sara Duterte Carpio won the presidency and vice presidency, becoming the first presidential vice-presidential ticket candidates to be elected by a majority since the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1986, and the first presidential ticket to win together since 2004.

There were various viewpoints on the elections, including “this election was good versus evil campaign”, “the election was marked with a systemic disinformation, fake news, lies.”, “This is a seeming triumph of untruth and injustice”, and also, “Motivated by my love for the Creator, for the people, and for the land, I’m committed and prompted to continue advocating and practicing the two paradoxical twins energizing peace and reconciliation: truth-and-love, justice-and-mercy” (LS).

But the poll watchdog, church-based Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) already dismissed insinuations of fraud and vouched for the accuracy of election results through its manual audit. No less than the Supreme Court made its final decision, concurring with COMELEC (Commission on Elections) on the result of the election.

LSSAJ too recommended a course of action. Summing up the seven-page statement: Join PPCRV as a volunteer and be an influencer thereby being a critical, thoughtful, hardworking, and helpful person; Know Your Candidate; cleanse your mind



of all vestiges of a herd mentality for you are not cattle but thinking persons of dignity; we should not be caught off-guard but be ready to be critical participants; pray incessantly and be the spiritual warriors during the coming election.

Strengthening Peasants Organizations' Rights

Inspired by Pope Francis’s challenge of “encountering Jesus in the periphery”, Charlie Avila, Chairman of LSSAJ, and Mayette Tamondong, Corporate Secretary, travelled the rugged muddy swamps, to meet the peasants’ group and the officers of the City Government's Cooperative on 7th July in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan to evaluate the project called “Strengthening peasants organizations’ rights to Land and Enterprises Attained for Development”. This is just the initial meeting. More to come in the next few months as LSSAJ continues on its mission to work with God’s people.

Daisy Leones



The Philippines (PHN): SVD-PHN Mission Partners

Preparation for 2024/25 and Continuing in Medical and Dental Mission in Abra



Gears-Up for 2024 & 2025

Dubbed “Usapang Misyon 2024 & 2025”, the SVD-PhN Mission Partners have started preparations for the SVD 19th General Chapter in 2024 and the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the SVD in 2025. On 9th February at 8 pm via Zoom, our group started reflecting and sharing the First of 6 parts of the “Guide of Communal Reflection for SVD Lay Partners” prepared and provided by the SVD Generalate. The six parts of the guide are as follows – A Wounded World, Your Light Must Shine Before Others, Faithful and Creative Disciples, Innovative Ways, Collaboration with the SVDs, and 150 Years of the Society. Every part of the document comes with a short reflection and guide questions.

Following 9th February, some Wednesdays of our Zoom Meetings were dedicated to reflecting together on the document. Aside from the Zoom Meetings, personal reflections and group discussions among our lay partners in their own settings and context have been encouraged. The fruits of the reflections are being collated and we hope to be finished by August 2022. This will be shared with our lay partners for their appreciation before we submit our final document to the Province this September.

It is also our intention that by coming together for reflections, we are creating more awareness and excitement among our ranks of the forthcoming SVD Sesquicentennial Anniversary in 2025. We take pride that right from the very beginning, the SVD lay partners have already been partners of the SVD with St. Arnold Janssen.

SVD Friends of Abra

Meanwhile, the SVD Friends ABRA has intensified its Medical and Dental Mission. This time, roads led to Bao-yan, Boliney, Abra on 29 May in coordination with Fr. Joseph Pascual of Christ the King Parish and Poblacion Licuan, Baay-Licuan in coordination with Fr. Gary Bugtong, our Lady of Lourdes Parish and the local government on 25-26 June 2022. The continuing project of our SVD Friends of Abra is made possible in partnership with the Freinademetz Apostleship of Prayer of SVD Ubbog, Abra, and the SVD-North JPIC Coordinator Fr. Cirilo Ortega.

Mike and GeeO Paderon



EUROPA ZONE

Russia (URL): Lay Mission Partners of the Society of the Divine Word**Our Mother - Celebrating the Anniversary of the Apparitions in Fatima**

In an ordinary Moscow backyard in the evening, passersby look around surprised. Young people in beautiful clothes dance with colorful bouquets of flowers to Vietnamese music. What holiday is this?

This is how our Vietnamese friends, lay partners of the parish of Society of the Divine Word in Moscow celebrated the anniversary of the Marian apparitions in Fatima. Lay partners decorated the church and the statue of the Virgin Mary, made different worship dances, and organized attractive gifts during the Holy Mass. All this seemed to bring us to a far, but already close Vietnam, and helped us to understand better the importance of the apparitions in Fatima. No wonder the lay partners spent hours discussing the concept of the celebration, rehearsing dances and songs, and the result exceeded all expectations.

We asked our friends from Vietnam why they pay so much attention to everything connected with the Blessed Mary. And the answer was simple – they just love Mary like their own Mother. Their reverence is not just a liturgical gesture. Behind this hides a great love for Mary and the Lord.

By the way, this is not the first event organized by our Vietnamese lay partners. A few months ago, they brought two statues to Moscow – the Virgin Mary of Fatima and St. Joseph, and organized a big celebration on the occasion of this event. We are very grateful to our Vietnamese friends and are glad that together with them we can glorify the Lord through “Mother Fatima” in our parish.

Julia Belova



Spain (ESP): Alba ONGD, Madrid

Photographic Exhibition of Bolivian Street Children in Alcorcón and Leganés.



With the strong purpose of publicizing the activities carried out from Spain in favour of the *Centro Integral de Niños y Niñas de la Calle* (CINCA), El Alto, La Paz-Bolivia, Alba ONGD Association has decided to show its traveling photographic exhibition in Alcorcón and Leganés. This exhibition is an invitation for the general public to come and enjoy the exhibition, free of charge.

It consists of two different exhibitions, one composed of 24 photographs taken by ALBA staff during their visits to the Bolivian capital, where the project has been developed since 1992. This will be exhibited from 6 to 19 June 2022 on the premises of the Divine Word Parish in Leganés. The second one is of 12 digital photographs, taken with the photographic images sent by the staff working at the Center. The exhibition can be visited on the same date, in the Parish of the Virgin of the Dawn of Alba in Alcorcón.

Together, the Alba ONGD and the Divine Word Missionaries have been able to gain both public and private support for this project over the years in Spain, thus providing the necessary financial resources. They continue to provide housing, food, health, education, and family care that all these children of the Bolivian Aymara ethnic group receive. These children are at serious risk of social exclusion and are part of CINCA's beneficiary community.

César Paradas Montesinos



A lo largo de nuestra historia hemos trabajado de la mano con diversas instituciones, tanto en España como en Bolivia, y producto de estas sinergias ha sido posible contar con subvenciones de índole pública y privada, permitiéndonos continuar ejecutando este importante proyecto.

Queremos agradecer a todos quienes han contribuido en la ejecución y consecución de nuestro trabajo por los niños y niñas de El Alto, La Paz-Bolivia, y de forma especial por las aportaciones económicas que han destinado para nuestros fines, entidades como la *Diputación de Palencia*, *Ayuntamiento de Valladolid*, *Ayuntamiento de Dueñas*, *Ayuntamiento de Olaberri*, y a los amigos de *Truyol Digital*, que siempre nos ayudan con la impresión de nuestras publicaciones.

Si deseas dar un donativo dispones de los siguientes números de cuenta: **Banco Santander:** ES33 0075 0226 25 0600418363, y **Caixa Bank:** ES58 2100 6345 1113 0039 3156. No olvides poner en el concepto: **Proyecto CINCA**. Si deseas un justificante del donativo, solicítalo a través del 916426047, o por el e-mail: proyectoimmigrantes@asociacionalba.org



Germany (GER): SVD-Partner

Meeting in Sankt Augustin



Multifaceted meeting

For the second time this year, SVD-Partner met for a joint weekend. This time they went to Sankt Augustin from 13 to 15 May.

General Chapter 2024

In preparation for the General Chapter 2024, lay communities worldwide are invited to contribute their ideas and suggestions. Together with Provincial Fr. Martin Üffing, SVD-Partner got into the topic, exchanged initial thoughts, and agreed on the next steps. The paper should be ready in autumn 2022. So there is enough time to reflect on the individual points and summarise them.

Church in a shopping centre

In Sankt Augustin, the Protestant and Catholic churches have a room in the city's shopping centre. There they are regularly available for people to talk to. SVD-Partner took the opportunity to get to know the project better. Marcus Tannebaum from the board of *Lebensraum Kirche* reported on the experiences and showed the room in a side corridor of the centre. In addition, shop space was available for a few weeks, where an exhibition on world religions was on display at the time of the visit. "Being present as a church in a shopping centre is exciting and appealing, but you also need courage and patience," Sophie Wego summarised her impression.

"We invite you to dinner!"

Nowhere is it easier to get into a conversation than over a meal. SVD-Partner therefore gratefully and gladly accepted the invitation of SVD Fratres to dine with them on Saturday evening. During the culinary trip around the world, they literally chatted and discussed God and the world. Everyone is looking forward to next time.

Plans for the second half of the year

As last year, the International Prayer Bridge for the World Day of the Poor will again be supplemented by an invitation to go on pilgrimage in everyday life. In addition, there will be an action for the ecumenical "Season of Creation" in September. (see <https://seasonofcreation.org/>).

Maria Wego



Talks At The Pot And The Weaving Frame – SVD-Partner at *Katholikentag* in Stuttgart 2022



Katholikentag - German Catholic Convention is a major event since 1848 and organized by the Organisations of the German Catholic Lay Movement (*Zentralkomitee der Deutschen Katholiken*). For five days, tens of thousands come together to pray, discuss and celebrate. *Katholikentag* is a place to meet, face political and social challenges of the time, and look for ways to shape the world out of the Christian faith. For many years, SVD are present with a large tent at the *Katholikentag*.

At the cooking pot

A cooking pot and many spoons aroused curiosity and brought people into conversation with each other. However, there was no cooking there, but people were invited to write a question on a postcard, put it in the pot and then draw a postcard themselves. SVD-Partner actively supported this initiative of *Missionare auf Zeit (MaZ)** and had many interesting conversations about God and the world.

At the weaving frame

Many conversations were also held at the weaving frame. Everyone was invited to weave a carpet together and attach a greeting or a wish. With this carpet, everyone could see that when everyone makes a small contribution, something very big can be created. The carpet is now



in the chapel of SVD in Sankt Augustin. During the service, all the wishes are included in the prayers.

What else there was in the SVD tent

Coffee and music - that was what brought people together above all. Many visitors gladly accepted the invitation to take a break with a free cup of coffee. And when the Music Apostles played, the tent quickly filled up. On these occasions, many people were able to learn more about SVD and its worldwide engagement.

Conclusion: Definitely come to the next *Katholikentag* in Erfurt in 2024!

Maria Wego

*MaZ = Young people engage in a missionary experience in Latin America, Africa, Asia, or Europe for at least one year.





PANAM ZONE



México (MEX): Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino (MAVD)

40th Anniversary Celebration!



On 21st February 2022, the 40th anniversary of the MAVD was celebrated at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament in the city of Guadalajara. Fr. Martín Islas and Fr. Carlos Salcedo presided over the Eucharistic Celebration along with the MAVD members from the Region A. It was a very emotional celebration between nostalgia and happiness for the last 40 years. It was discovering the Word made flesh among us from the experience of the mission. We are the ones who have accepted the Lord's call and have decided to be a part of this journey, the work of God's love.

This initiative was the result of the efforts of the then Mission Secretary, Fr. Manuel Myvett who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to contribute to the service of the Kingdom of Christ and His Church on 21st February, 1982. In the city of Guadalajara, at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, he founded the missionary movement that today is called *Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino* and in 1987 it was accepted as a member of the SVD Province by the then Superior General Fr. Henry Heekeren, SVD.

Today, MAVD is an important part of the SVD congregation, a universal and dynamic movement. It is a family in a community

of different cultures having lay people who have accepted the call to the mission of Christ. Despite the setbacks that may exist, we want to keep moving forward, making history, and continue in this mission for the good of the Church.

Xóchitl Hernández Hernández



Chile (CHI): Alma Verbita

Welcome to Our New Spiritual Director and Celebrating the Indigenous New Year



Welcome, Fr. Gino Jiménez Huésped

We wish to share with you that on 30 June 2022, our missionary community had its first meeting with the person who will accompany us from now on in this beautiful missionary journey. It is our Spiritual Advisor Fr. Gino Jiménez Huésped. We are deeply grateful for the kindness, availability, and missionary commitment of Fr. Gino, who accepted to accompany us on our journey as a community. His presence and missionary experience will be a great contribution to us.

Together we will face the great challenges we face today and ways of doing mission in these times, pandemic included. With Fr. Gino we continue on this Synodal journey because our Church and Congregation are the responsibility of all: laity and consecrated.

We are grateful to our Provincial, Fr. Yuventus Kota for making it possible for one of his confreres to accompany us and to Fr. Gino for accepting this new task.

We Tripantu - Indigenous New Year

This year, I was invited to participate in We *Tripantu*, the indigenous New Year, by a *lamngen* (sister) of Alma Verbita who participates in her Mapuche organization of Lelfunche. We *tripantu*, also called *Wiñol Tripantu*, means in *Mapudungun*



(Mapuche language), “new year” or “return of the sun”. On this day our Mapuche people celebrate a religious ceremony in which they pray and give thanks for the new year. It is celebrated together with family and friends at the *rehue* (ceremonial Altar), sharing meals, *mate**, hugs, conversations, and greetings.

The Chilean Government has declared 21st June as a holiday, to give an enhancement to this ceremony, which begins on the winter solstice, the day when the sun is farthest from the earth, where the day is the shortest and the night is the longest. The indigenous communities gather on this day and begin the celebration with the sunrise to make *llepun* (prayer) and renew the *nehuen* (strength), *kimun* (knowledge), and *mongen* (health). In this celebration the Mapuche are invited by *ngenechen* (God) and by the *Nuke Mapu* (mother earth), praying to the four corners of the earth, thanking for the year that is gone, and asking for the new year that is beginning.

Alma Verbita warmly greets our Mapuche brothers and sisters and wishes them a very Happy New Year.

Elena Ortiz

Mate* - Mate or maté[a] (/ˈmæteɪ/) is a traditional South American caffeine-rich infused drink. It is made by soaking dried leaves of the Yerba mate *Ilex paraguariensis*, in hot water.



Panama (CAM): Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino (MLVD)

An Experience with Fr. Marek Vaňuš, Generalate Bible Coordinator



It was a privilege for us to have spent time with Fr. Marek Vaňuš once again here in Panama. Being a part of the Arnoldus family no matter where we are, we are a family. Fr. Marek's simplicity and kindness brought us much closer to experiencing God's presence through him. My husband Rogelio had the opportunity to take him around to visit different churches in Casco Antiguo, Causway, and also some tourist places in Panama City.

Fr. Marek was fascinated with the tour. Calm and serene, he transmitted peace; the same was experienced the day we met him at the main house when we experienced him becoming



one with us. It was the most wonderful experience. May Almighty God and Mary Most Holy bless him and grant him always Holy wisdom.

The love of Triune God and the Blessed Virgin continues to assist us as we pursue our missionary commitment as SVD lay partners.

Rubiela Ramírez de Rodríguez

~ Last but not Least ~

Generalate Visitation CAM

Experience with SVD Lay Partners' Group in CAM

During the general visitation to the Central American Region (CAM) from 19 March to 10 April 2022, I had an opportunity to meet the SVD lay partners' group in Alcalde Diaz, in the suburbs of Panama City. There are two SVD parishes with almost 40 years of history that gave origin to the formation of the SVD lay partners. Some twenty persons participated in the meeting, enriched by a cultural presentation from their side, but I was told, there are more of them belonging to the group. The recent pandemic had influenced their meetings and involvement.

From what they shared, I learned that presently they are the only organized group of SVD lay partners in CAM. Up to some years ago, there was also an active group in Upala, Costa Rica, but, unfortunately, due to the transfer of SVDs from that place, and does not continue anymore. Members of the group in Alcalde Diaz organize mission outreach programs in other parts of Panama. I was told, for example, that they were more times for a couple of days in Chiriquí Grande on the Atlantic coast when SVDs were in charge of the parish. And as I was concluding the visitation of CAM, two very active members of

the group, Rogelio and his wife Ruby, were preparing themselves to spend the approaching Easter week on the islands of Otoque that SVD started to attend quite recently and where the pastoral work was neglected in the past years.

SVD lay partners' group in CAM has taken so far nice initiatives in support of the mission in the Region. However, it faces the challenge to recompact itself after the restrictions linked to the pandemic of COVID-19 and, mainly, to assist the creation of other groups in the eastern part of Panama (like in David), but also in Costa Rica and, possibly, in Nicaragua – the countries that belong to CAM.

Fr. Marek Vaňuš, SVD
Generalate Bible Coordinator

Unkown Saints: India

Devasahayam - The First Indian Layman Declared a Saint by Pope Francis



Pope Francis canonized Blessed Devasahayam during a Canonisation Mass in St Peter's Basilica on 15th May 2022. Devasahayam, who embraced Christianity in the 18th century, became the first Indian layman to be declared a saint by Pope.

"To many of us who have received the faith from our forebears, Devasahayam's testimony reminds us that the Gospel is a treasure to be discovered and to which devote a lifetime [...] The canonization is an encouragement to us to emulate Devasahayam." said Archbishop Felix Machado of Vasai Diocese, Secretary-

General of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI).

Christian name 'Lazarus', which translates 'God is my help.' When Devasahayam was struggling with sadness over difficulties in his family, the officer first introduced him to the Old Testament story of Job and, over time, to Christianity as a whole. Though conversion was illegal, Devasahayam soon knew he wanted to give himself to Christ. The naval officer introduced him to a Jesuit priest, who prepared him for baptism.

However, Devasahayam's conversion did not go well with the heads of his native religion. His refusal to worship the Hindu gods of the palace and renouncing the traditional Hindu religious festivals greatly angered the officers. They could not tolerate his preaching on the equality of all peoples, the overcoming of castes, and friendship with the untouchables of the lower classes, which is forbidden for a person of high caste. False charges of treason and espionage were brought against him. He was imprisoned and subjected to harsh persecution. A Catholic for only seven years, he was shot dead in the Aralvaimozhy forest on 14th January 1752. Devasahayam was only 39 years old. His remains were placed near the Altar from what is now the diocesan cathedral, St. Xavier's Church, Kottar, Nagercoil, India.

Who is Devasahayam?

On 23rd April 1712, Devasahayam Pillai was born as Neelakandan Pillai to a Hindu Nair family in Nattalam, Kanyakumari district, India. His father was Vasudevan Namputhiri, a Brahmin, and his mother Devaki Amma of the Nair caste. Devasahayam married Bhargaviammal belonging to his own caste.

Devasahayam began his career as an official in the palace of King Marthanda Varma, King of Travancore. He was inspired by Captain Eustachius De Lannoy, a Dutch naval officer who brought him to the Catholic religion in 1745. He took the

Susan Noronha

Sources:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2021-11/india-catholic-church-canonization-devasahayam-may-22-2022.html>

<https://blesseddevasahayampillai.blogspot.com/p/introduction.html>



Reader's Letters

A Word of Compliment!

Dear Editor Susan and the editorial team,

I have been enjoying regularly reading your SVDLP Newsletter and I thought I should now let you know of this sentiment of mine about it and your work!

It keeps me abreast, knowing what you, our Lay Partners are doing and collaborating with us SVDs in the different locations around the globe in a no-meagre way! The issues covered are always filled with a lot of pieces of lively news, information, and inspirational stories. Not to mention the nice pictures too! These surely inspire, not only your own members but all of us as well: the SVDs and the wider Arnoldus family!

I would therefore like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you, Ms. Susan Noronha, and your entire team of editors and contributors regularly producing this newsletter. I find your last issue (April 2022) particularly very interesting, for example, your interview of Ms. Zdenka Rybova of the Czech Republic, and, thrilled to also know of the coming up of the SVDLP in Ukraine with Olena Noha, etc. Kudos!! I have used the newsletters as good resource material for our SVDLP classes here in the Divine Word Novitiate of Kabwe, Zambia.

This particular issue also got me remarking what has been observed many times and also came up and reiterated at the

last General Chapter four years ago – namely, that, the Lay Partner groups develop, are sustained, and grow, most especially, in those communities, places, parishes or institutions, where our confreres also show particular interest and support for the group, through their time and attention with them in diverse ways.

Not only remarking this, I am happy to inform you that by our own little efforts at our novitiate, this weekend of 21st May, under the aegis of the SVDLP, we are having our first meeting of a group of men and women, in the formation of the Friends of the SVD Novitiate, who hopefully, would also be the crux of the SVDLP here in Kabwe, the regional capital of the Central Province of Zambia! Wish us well in this new venture and in our common collaboration to foster the mission of the Risen Christ! God bless us all!

Fr. George Clement Angmor, SVD.

Fr. George Clement Angmor, is the former Provincial of the Ghana Province, and is currently the Novice Master at the Divine Word Novitiate, Kabwe, Zambia Mission

Dear Fr. George,

We were delighted to receive your 'Word of Compliment' note and to read your complimentary remarks about our Newsletter. Thank you for letting us know how much you enjoy reading the SVDLP Newsletter. We are glad that you are using

the copies as resource material for the SVD lay partners classes in Zambia. We are grateful. Thank again for your kind words!

Editorial team, SVDLP Newsletter

Save the Date!

VI World Day of the Poor – “For your sake Christ became poor” – International Prayer Bridge

On Sunday 13 November 2022 Church celebrates the sixth World Day of the Poor. Again SVD-Partner Germany invites everybody – single person, family, group, parish, monastery – to come together in prayer and build a Prayer Bridge around the world.

If you want to be a part of it send an e-mail to kontakt@svd-partner.eu.

Please, do not forget your name, organisation/parish, place, or country.

[The message of Pope Francis: Sixth World Day of the Poor](#)



In Memoriam

For God so loved the world,
that he gave his one
and only Son,
that whoever believes in him
should not perish,
but have eternal life.



Remigius Nyoman Surkaso

† 18.05.2022

SVD Lay Partner IDJ



Regina Caely Symon

† 28.03.2022

SVD Lay Partner IDJ



Virginia Mueni

† 01.05.2022

SVD Lay Partner KEN

Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts.

We will miss you!

Rest in Peace



Prayer

Show us Jesus
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
You have given the world true light,
Jesus, your son - God's son.

You gave yourself completely to God's call
to the call of God and became the source
of the goodness that flows from Him.

Show us Jesus.
Lead us to him.
Teach us to know him
and love him,

so that we ourselves may become true lovers
and become a fountain of living water
in the midst of a thirsty world.

Amen.

Unknown author



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