



Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

SVD Lay Partners

Newsletter - from Around the World

Issue 23, December 2023



Goch – The Birthplace of St. Arnold Janssen

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Editorial

Let Your Light Shine: A Journey of Synodality This Christmas

Into the darkness of that first Christmas night on a Judean hillside, God's angelic light shone. The angels proclaimed to the shepherds the Good News, that Christ the Saviour is born. The sky was alive with cascading beams of brilliance as the wise men followed a bright star from the East. They believed it heralded the birth of an extraordinary king. The Creator of the world had stepped into history as a tiny baby.

At the first Christmas, we see a dramatic example of synodality: the shepherds and wise men travelling together, independently, and willing to be directed by the angel or the star. They see, listen, focus, and find Jesus. They are not disinterested, indifferent, or inattentive. They finally recount the narrative of their meeting with the Lord and share their joys and hopes with others.

And for Joseph, the unsung hero of the Christmas narrative, life was no longer the same. A guy of integrity, striving to do the right thing while standing by the girl he loves. And, of course, life would never be the same for Mary, a poor peasant girl selected by God to bear the Messiah.

The Nativity story also illustrates inclusivity and hospitality, as Joseph and Mary found themselves in a stable in Bethlehem, and they welcomed shepherds and wise men to witness the birth of Jesus. This inclusiveness aligns with the idea of welcoming different voices and perspectives, which is an element of synodality. Both Joseph and Mary listened to God's guidance, and their actions reflected what they believed was God's will for them.

Christmas is an opportune time, to practice active listening, understanding, and empathizing with others' experiences. Engaging in meaningful conversations and truly hearing the thoughts and feelings of people, strengthens bonds and fosters unity. Unity in diversity is a cornerstone of synodality, reflecting the inclusive love Christ preached. synodality is our way of being and living.

This Christmas, as we illuminate the world with the light of Christ, let us also embrace the principles of synodality. The message of "Let your light shine" aligns seamlessly with the essence of synodality, encouraging us to collectively radiate the love, kindness, and unity exemplified by Christ during this joyous season.

A blessed Christmas and a hope-filled 2024.



Susan Noronha
Editor-in-chief

Goch

The Birthplace of St. Arnold Janssen

Goch, a small town on the Lower Rhine near the Dutch border, is the birthplace of St. Arnold Janssen. This is where he grew up with his 10 siblings and where his upbringing laid the

foundations for his later work. The house where he was born and the parish church where he was baptised have been preserved.



His parents home



The room where he was born.

Some impressions of the house.



A wardrobe, the kitchen and the secretaire he was working on.



In addition to the best-known photo of Arnold Janssen, there are also photos of him at all ages in Goch.



1858
21 years old



1861
24 years old



1865
28 years old



1886
49 years old



1890
53 years old



1896
59 years old



1903
66 years old



1907
70 years old



The Chapel in the attic.



Some of St Arnold Janssen's personal belongings, such as his rosary, wallet and razor.



St. Maria Madgalena - the church where St. Arnold Janssen was baptized.



Votive candle at the bust of St. Arnold Janssen. Next to it in a display case a bone reliquary of the saint with a certificate from the postulator of the order, Fr Giancarlo Giradis SVD



Postulator = The person who guides a cause for beatification or canonization through the judicial processes required by the Roman Catholic Church.



AFRAM ZONE



South Africa (BOT) – SVD Lay Partners Malamulele

Social Work and Group Meetings



Meeting of SVD Lay Partners, Malamulele

Although some of our members are unable to attend all of our meetings owing to job obligations and travel distance, they are kept up-to-date on the meeting's topics via WhatsApp messaging. We created a members group to keep them updated on events.

Distribution of School uniforms for poor children

On 8th September, St. Benedict's Parish celebrated SVD Foundation Day. The lay partners assisted the Parish office in identifying the poor and needy and purchasing uniforms for the children using funds contributed. These uniforms were later distributed to the deserving children.

Visiting the sick and building a home for the poor

Some of our members, especially Catherine Mbhokota, were able to pay visits to the sick and elderly. Furthermore, another

member constructed a room for the needy who were sleeping in a hut with a leaking thatch roof when it rained.

Diocesan Catechesis Workshop

To renew the Catholic faith, several members participated in the Diocesan Catechesis Course, which is particularly beneficial for our youth.

Fundraising

We are currently in the process of developing fundraising plans with the aim of providing financial assistance to those in need.

Thandi Mazibuk



Ghana (GHA) – Friends of SVD, Tamale

Friends of SVD in Healing the Wounded World



The preparation for the 19th General Chapter of the SVD allowed the Friends of SVD, Tamale to live, experience, and participate in the reflections prepared for this event.

With the spirit of our Founder, we began the reflections with the enthronement of the Word, because the Divine Word is the source of our call as members of the Arnoldus family. During our reflections on how we can contribute to healing the wounded world, we shared our personal experiences as family members, community members, and citizens. We discussed the challenges we faced in these areas of our lives and how we rely on our faith in God to support, encourage, and motivate others. Our faith in God is the source of our strength, resilience, and perseverance in this wounded world. Additionally, we answered various questions during our reflections.

Innovative ways to reach out to lay partners

- Making efforts to reach out through consistent visitations and telling them about our spirituality, charism, and mission.
- Fostering unity among ourselves as brothers and sisters of the Arnoldus family.
- Living the core values of the group and motivating other people in our neighborhood, workplace, and other areas.

Opportunities for deepening encounters and mutual listening

- Organising retreats for members and dedicating some specific days of the month for Bible sharing.

- Frequently organising trips to visit SVD parishes, communities, and institutions.
- Forming networks among members.

SVD and lay partners collaborate to bring healing to the wounded world

- Praying the Word of God and trusting in Him through faith.
- Organising prayer and fasting for the members of the Arnoldus family.
- Almsgiving and extending care and support to the sick and the bereaved.

Derrick Dorvzie



Kenya (KEN) – Friends of SVD

Past and Future Activities



Spirituality

Our lay partner groups gathered together, in a very special way in October to pray the Rosary and Bible sharing.

Visitation

We took the initiative to welcome newly appointed priests to our respective Parishes and introduced ourselves to them. In the Eldoret District, the Friends of SVD from St. Barnabas Kimumu and Holy Spirit Langas, together with Fr. Francisco Gonzalez SVD, went to the new SVD Parish of St. Joseph Chepkanga and celebrated the Holy Mass together. After the opening of the Kimumu Parish, Friends of SVD visited the family of their late member, Samson, after the memorial service. On a different occasion, the Friends of SVD, Holy Spirit Langas, visited another new SVD Parish of St. Paul Kabechei.

Ordination

On 15th July 2023, some Friends of SVD from Divine Word Parish, Kayole, Nairobi District travelled to Ghana to witness the priestly ordination of Deacon Joshua Monterim. They wore traditional African attire to the event. On 9th September, our SVD missionaries invited us to attend the Priestly Ordination Mass of Deacons Wycliffe Ogega and Bernard Obuya. The Mass



was presided over by Most Rev. Dominic Kimengich, Bishop of Eldoret, at St. Barnabas Kimumu Parish. Later, on 16th September, we joined both the deacons for their Thanksgiving Mass in their hometown of Kisii, Kenya.

Other activities

We assist in several ways in our parishes. For example, the Friends of SVD of St. Mary Immaculate Mihango Parish helped identify those who were not communicants during the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass. Another group visited vulnerable members of the community, while all members distributed Mission Sunday envelopes.

Upcoming activities

- Advent Reflection at the District level
- Commissioning of new members who are in the Formation
- Lay Partners Workshop in Rome in 2024

May the joy of Christmas fill the hearts of all. Amen.

Grace Akinyi



Zambia (ZAM) – SVD Lay Partners

Activities and Recollection



Lay partners' workshop

The definition “We the members of the SVD are an intercultural, religious, missionary congregation who strive to share in the daily dreams and struggles of our people”, was so well articulated by the various speakers at a weekend Workshop, held in Lusaka, wherein members from Kabwe joined the Lusaka group. It is gratifying to note that we the lay partners are members of this international family.

In Zambia, the SVD priests and brothers are from nine nations. Indeed, a family that prays together stays together.

Archbishop's visit

The lay partners joined the parishioners in preparing for the Archbishop's visit to our parish. It had been a while since the Archbishop visited in person, hence there was heightened excitement and various activities were to be in place.

Farewell to our Parish Priest

Fr. Lawrence Likulano, who served as the Parish Priest and played a key role in establishing the SVD Lay Partners group in Lusaka, has been transferred to Livingstone Parish after serving our Parish for seven years. In addition to the main



farewell party organized by the Parish, the lay partners also organized a farewell party where they presented gifts to Fr. Lawrence. This occasion was a poignant reminder of the passing of time.

Day of Recollection

On 30th September 2023, we held a day of Recollection. The theme was “Encounter with the Lord.” The Mission Superior, Fr. Martin Kawana, SVD facilitated the day. During the day of Recollection, we were reminded that it is a moment of grace and requires our undivided attention. It is a time to detach ourselves from other activities and focus solely on the encounter with God, which should lead to transformation. As Mother Theresa once said, “Give yourself to God and let Him fully use you”. The day concluded with the recital of the Rosary, with all present taking turns.

Mildred Sodala



Mozambique (MOZ) – Leigos Associados À Congregação Do Verbo Divino (LACVERDI)

First Assembly



LACVERDI in Mozambique held its first assembly in Maputo after five years of its foundation. Forty members coming from the cities of Maputo and Beira participated. The assembly began on 6th September with the Holy Mass presided over by Fr. Joseph Sahayaraj and concelebrants, and ended on 9th September 2023. Paula Novela, the President of the Association, Bro. Moacir, Mission Secretary, and Fr. Fabian Kalaluka, Spiritual Director gave their messages to the members. Illuminating with the theme, “You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world” (Mt 5:13–16) and the missionary spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen, the participants deepened their faith and reflected on their missionary spirit

- Evangelization and catechism
- Animation for the spiritual growth
- Communitarian interventional actions: Spirit of fraternity, freedom, solidarity, etc.
- Education and formation in various social spheres, JPIC, etc.
- Orientation programs raising awareness, use of social media, etc.
- Making projects for LACVERDI towards sustainability and missionary commitment.

During the assembly, the following points were discussed:

- Mission of the laity in the Church and Society in light of the theme.
- Education and integral formation of human life from the perspective of *Laudato Si*.
- Importance of ethics in Evangelization in Mozambique and the world.
- Finance: the challenge of the Association's self-sustainability.

LACVERDI will work together with the Divine Word Missionaries in its implementation of the action plan. This collaboration with the same missionary spirit will make it easier to apply the congregation's charism among the Mozambican people.

The assembly concluded on 8th September, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and foundation day of the Society of the Divine Word, with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Fabian Kalaluka, the Regional Superior.

Paula Novela

Participants made proposals for the development of various pastoral and social initiatives to increase the motivation of missionary efforts with concrete actions. They would debate and reflect deeply on these points and make plans that will aim at the possibilities of implementing the following action plans:





ASPAC ZONE



Papua New Guinea (PNG) – SVD Friends PNG

Work and Celebration



Laudato Si: Care for our common home

The SVD Friends PNG, the lay partners of St. Martin De Pores Parish, Par, and St. Marin De Pores Primary School Students, Enga Province, celebrated the “World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation” on 1st September 2023. They cleaned and collected trash around the school to make the environment clean.

We are grateful to Fr. Masianus Bei and pray for God’s abundant blessings on him and his ministry.

Dony Lakan
Clement Kunandi Victor

Fr. Masianus Bei celebrates 25 years of priesthood

On 22nd October 2023, the SVD Friends PNG and parishioners of St. Peter Chanel Catholic Church, Port Moresby, celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Fr. Masianus Bei’s priesthood and missionary life to the Province of Papua New Guinea (PNG) of the Society of the Divine Word. Fr. Masianus Bei, who hails from Indonesia, served as a Parish Priest of St. Peter Chanel’s Parish for ten years. Fr. Masianus was always supportive of SVD Friends PNG during his tenure as Parish Priest. He continues to support us even today as a Prefect at Divine Word College, Catholic Theological Institute, Bomana.



Indonesia (IDE) – Soverdia Nagekeo

Our Mission



Joys and Challenges in Mission

On 16th October, members of Soverdia IDE invited two new priests and a Madagascar Missionary Fr. Alex Dhae (Regional SVD Madagascar) to share his experience at Mass. The Mass was presided over by the newly ordained Fr. Ino and SVD confreres.

Story of Prophet Jonah and Our Mission

During his sermon, Fr. Alex spoke about the importance of learning from the story of Prophet Jonah. The story teaches us that we are all called by God to serve in this world, but it is not an easy task. With challenges and obstacles, we must remain steadfast and trust in God to guide us. Fr. Alex shared the difficulties he faced in Madagascar including being subjected to acts of violence and robbery. He asked Soverdia members to pray for SVD missionaries and mission activities across the world, particularly in tough locations like Africa. He also encouraged Soverdia members to remain together in prayer and devotion to confront the world's diverse challenges. The Mass was attended by sixty Soverdia members including children's groups. Before the final blessing, there was a special blessing from the two new priests for the members of Soverdia.

We shared about the work that Soverdia is carrying out in the Nagekeo region. This was followed by a group photograph, dinner, and a group dance.

Moving Forward

We are resolved to carry out the Soverdia activities that have been planned, and we will always receive and assist foreign missionaries through our prayer, work, or mission funds. We express our gratitude to Fr. Alex Dhae for sharing his mission experiences with us and for the assurance that he provided us at Soverdia Nagekeo. Like Jonah, we are frequently hesitant and reject the responsibilities that God has assigned to us. However, God continues to encourage and assist us in numerous ways so that we can get through these trying times.

Elfrin Hurek



Indonesia (IDJ) – Soverdia

Months Full of Activities and Establishing a New Group



Vademecum and Defuncti books

Soverdia IDJ has issued and distributed the *Vademecum* Book to IDJ Soverdia members. The prayers in the book will be used at various Soverdia meetings and Holy Eucharist. A *Defuncti* book has also been published, which contains the names of Soverdia members who have died with the dates of their deaths. They will be prayed at Holy Mass and during the 'Remembrance of Souls of all Faithful' in November.

First SVD lay partner gathering in Indo-Leste Subzone

The Indo-Leste Subzone SVD Lay Partner Meeting was organized for the first time from 11 to 13 August 2023 at Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara. Mission Secretaries and Soverdia representatives from the Provinces of IDJ, IDE, IDR, IDT, and TLS attended this meeting. As one of the recommendations from the first ASPAC SVD Lay Partner Meeting in the Philippines in 2018, this gathering became a concrete activity. The Indo-Leste Subzone meeting produced and agreed on several important recommendations, including the requirement that every Soverdia group have a Statute, uniformity in the management structure, and identity symbols such as a membership card, Soverdia pin, letterhead, stamp with the Soverdia logo. The next gathering will be held in 2026 in Bali.



Meet and Greet – SVD missionaries

Meeting and sharing experiences and stories with SVD missionaries who are on holiday in their homeland is a very interesting activity and can inspire, strengthen, and encourage us to work diligently and faithfully in carrying out our mission as lay missionaries. We met and shared stories with several SVD missionaries who returned from vacation to Indonesia.

Virtual Mission Rosary

Every Monday in October 2023, we once again held the Missionary Rosary Prayer. This Rosary prayer was held virtually so that members of Soverdia from all subzones of Indo-Leste could take part. According to their schedules, the prayer officers involved Soverdia from five Provinces: IDJ, IDE, IDR, IDT, and TLS.

New SVD Lay Partner Group in Jakarta

As an SVD anniversary present in 2023, Soverdia provided a beautiful gift once again: the launch of a new Soverdia, namely, Soverdia Matraman in Jakarta, with seventeen members. As a result, the total number of Soverdia groups in all Provinces is currently 22, with 682 members.

Paulina Suharsi



Indonesia (IDR) – Persaudaraan Misioner Sang Sabda (PMSS)

Lay Partner Meeting and Ordination Jubilee



Meeting of Lay Partner Group of Indo-Leste Sub-zone

Strengthening one another is one of the keys to making our mission alive and fruitful. It is important to share, recharge ourselves, and begin new ways of promoting the lay partner groups and fundraising. The meeting was held in Kupang from 11 to 13 August 2023. The event was attended by Fr. Sigit Pawanta Hermanus, Fr. Eko Yuliantoro Antonius, five Mission Secretaries, and eleven SVD lay partners. The meeting began with a Recollection and Mass presided over by Fr. Lobo Yanuarius, who emphasized the importance of lay groups for the Society of The Divine Word.

The main objective of the recent meeting was to share struggles and discuss ways to assist the Mission Secretary in their threefold task of mission animation, fundraising, and care for missionaries. Recommendations were made during the meeting, including distributing mission envelopes, selling calendars, sending Christmas cards to benefactors, and offering Mass intentions. It was suggested that the confreres be continuously reminded that caring for missionaries, fundraising, and mission animation are not just the responsibilities of the Mission Secretary, but of every member of the Society of the Divine Word.



Silver Jubilee celebrations of Fr. Vitalis

Expressing gratitude to God for His goodness and love is the essence of Thanksgiving. Recently, PMSS celebrated Fr. Vitalis Hiburdin's 25 years of priesthood, who has been an integral part of our lay members' group. The event was attended by Fr. Provincial, PMSS members, and a few friends. During her speech, Mrs. Dudet emphasized that as a priest, Fr. Vitalis continues being a good shepherd, "The shepherd smells of the lamb". Fr. Provincial mentioned that as a mission secretary, Fr. Vitalis works hard to accomplish the threefold task of the mission. The celebration continued with a simple party after the Mass with the PMSS members and benefactors.

Fr. Vitalis Hiburdin, SVD



India (ING) – Apostles of the Divine Word (ADW)

Working for the Needy



Manipur refugees in Tripura

Apostles of the Divine Word (ADW), the SVD lay partners of ING (India Guwahati Region) reached out to the few Manipur victim families who were settled in Kathalcherra Good Shepherd Parish which is situated in Longthrai Valley Subdivision, Tripura. Nine families took refuge in these places after the recent violence in Manipur. In May 2023, ethnic violence erupted in India's north-eastern state of Manipur between two tribal communities. Hundreds of people have been killed in the violence, many more wounded, and thousands displaced.

the Manipur brutality. During their visit, they met with a few leaders from the village, distributed dry rations, and provided financial assistance to those in need.

Evangelization

Subhash Debbarma and two ADW members regularly conduct Bible Conventions, Praise and Worship, and promote peaceful coexistence in two villages in St. Paul's Catholic Parish, Kumarghat, Tripura.

Anjana Bongcher

Reaching out

On 6th June, five members of the ADW team and others from Ambassa Parish visited affected families with dry ration and some cash. They spent time with them and distributed the share equally to nine families. A few members of ADW visited the place on 28th June and provided financial assistance and groceries. On 9th July, members collectively decided to gather funds to help the victims in Manipur through the ING Region. The members quickly responded and collected a total of Indian Rupees 30,000.00, which was then transferred to the SVD Regional account.



On 19th July, a team of five ADW members from the Khumlung Parish went to Kathalcherra village to meet with the victims of



India (INM) – Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Bandra

Second Anniversary Mass and celebration



On 15th October 2023 marked the occasion of the second anniversary of the DDW Bandra, INM Province. All the members of DDW Bandra joined in the evening at St. Theresa's Church council room for the same. The council room was decorated like a Chapel and a beautiful Altar was prepared to celebrate the Eucharist.

Fr. Tomy Thomas, the INM Provincial Superior was the principal celebrant, and Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurathu, Mission Secretary INM who is also the Spiritual Director of the group, concelebrated the Eucharist. The liturgy was well prepared and all sang beautifully during the Mass. During the scripture-filled homily, the Provincial appreciated the efforts of the DDW Bandra and encouraged them to give their best for the Mission.

After the Holy Mass, all the members of the Parish team joined us for the dinner. Prior to the dinner, all the members of the parish shared their mission testimonies. This inspired all the members. The annual report was presented by Munira Millwala with the past activities and our future plans, especially the day the members will be officially recognised on the 15th of January 2024.

Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurathu, SVD



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

Celebrating SVD Mission Month



Sharing experiences and stories

Lay participation in the mission of the Church is a calling rooted in baptism. October 2023, SVD Mission Month, provided an opportunity to highlight the global impact of the mission and to encourage support and involvement from the Sacred Heart Church Parish community. For five weekends, DDW members and SVD missionaries shared their experiences and stories with the parishioners of Sacred Heart Church in Andheri, Mumbai. DDW members ran a cafeteria, with the proceeds going to the Tala Mission and the Feed the Hungry project. The support by the Parish Priest, Fr. John Mascarenhas, his team, and the parishioners during SVD Mission Month is truly admirable.

Collaboration

During the first weekend of October, Fr. Gregory Pinto and Fr. Tony Menezes celebrated the Eucharist and talked about the mission of the DDW group. They particularly focused on the Feed the Hungry project and urged parishioners to support it.

Awareness

The second weekend was dedicated to raising awareness about the proposed St. Arnold's Degree College building on the

SVD campus. Fr. Raja Reddy and Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurathu addressed the parishioners and encouraged them to get involved in supporting the college building project.

Mission

The third and fourth weekends were dedicated to promoting Tala Mission. Janseva Society, Tala works in Kathkari Tribe hamlets and Dhargar villages. They operate in education for children, women empowerment, youth enrichment, and livelihood programs, making use of government subsidies. Parishioners of Sacred Heart Church have actively helped Tala Mission for over ten years. Fr. Nickson Gabru, and Fr. Lucas Parkhe, as well as three social workers from the Tala mission, enlightened the parishioners on their work in the tribal areas.

The final weekend was all about youth, encouraging and obtaining active participation from the parish youngsters.

Susan Noronha



India (INM) – Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Pune

Third Anniversary Celebrations



On 8th October 2023, DDW Pune celebrated its third anniversary. In preparation for this day, we had a Recollection on 20th August at Divine Word Seminary, Pune preached by Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurathu, Mission Secretary of INM Province. He beautifully explained the role of a missionary by comparing it with the calling of Moses. He mentioned how all the objections and doubts raised by Moses were cleared by God by giving him assurances, signs, and even helpers through Aaron. He highlighted that whenever we are chosen to do God's work, we are never alone and that God is always with us. There was a good interaction among the members during the recollection.

On 8th October, DDW members assembled in the Chapel of the Divine Word Seminary for the Eucharistic celebration. Fr. Tomy Thomas, INM Provincial Superior celebrated the Eucharist with seven SVD priests. Fr. Tomy in his homily highlighted the importance of bearing good fruits and asked the members to use their talents for the glory of God. SVD seminarians sang melodiously during the Eucharistic celebrations.

After Holy Communion thirteen DDW members took their commitment in the presence of Fr. Tomy Thomas, Provincial Superior priests, seminarians, benefactors, and our well-wishers. After the Eucharistic celebrations, the members gathered in the refectory where the seminarians congratulated the members with a rose.



Leena Xavier, President of DDW Pune read the annual report, and a PowerPoint presentation was made by the secretary, Godfrey Fernandes which was appreciated by all. A sumptuous lunch was served to all gathered on the occasion. Our members left with cherished memories. May the heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people.

Godfrey Fernandes
Leena Xavier



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

Feeding Program and Different Meetings



LSSAJ feeding program

The LSSAJ Dasmariñas Chapter is leading a weekly feeding program for poor and undernourished children in the parish of Hesus Nazareno, Barangay Luzviminda II, Dasmariñas City, an SVD parish with Fr. Joselito Salvador as parish priest. This program has been ongoing for the past three months, since its launch by the LSSAJ and the parish pastoral council in August 2023. Emma Bacor, LSSAJ BOD member, supervises this program. After the feeding session, the children participate in Bible sharing and value formation programs.

Leaders Forum meet Fr. Stanislaus Lazar

Leaders of the SVD lay partners from the PHC Province - LSSAJ, Divine Word College of Calapan 4CD, SVD-PHN Mission Partners, Hearts of Jesus & Mary (HJM) Prayer Community, DWIMS, and The Healing Eucharist Ministry gathered together on 25 August 2023 in a meeting with Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, SVD, together with Fr. Pio Estepa, Mission Secretary. Fr. Lazar shared his insights on the SVD mission charism in light of the 19th General Chapter.

ASPAC Mission Secretaries meeting

From 25 September to 2 October 2023, the ASPAC Mission Secretaries held a meeting at the SVD *Laudato Si* Farm



Ecospirituality Center together with Fr. Stanislaus Lazar. During the meeting, four lay partner leaders, Tyrone Cimafranca, Cris Lim, Mike and GeeO Paderon, and Rizalina Cereno presented their ongoing projects and activities and shared their experiences. The focus of the discussion was “Fostering SVD-Laity Mission Partnerships”, strengthening the bonds that unite SVD in its mission in the Asia-Pacific area.

Human Rights of Older Persons

Daisy Leones participated in an International Workshop on 29 to 30 August 2023, organized by the Commission of Human Rights of the Philippines (CHR) and the National Human Rights Commission of Korea. The workshop aimed to promote and protect the human rights of older persons by advocating for a legally binding instrument or convention to strengthen the international framework. The workshop was in pursuit of its advocacy for social justice. Addressing these issues was deliberated for appropriate action plans to be mandated through a convention.

Daisy Leones



The Philippines (PHN) – SVD-PHN Mission Partners

General Visitation and Various Activities



SVD General Visitation 2023

At the concluding Mass of the SVD-PHN Assembly on the occasion of the SVD General Visitation on 22 August 2023, SVD General Visitor Fr. Anselmo Ribeiro acknowledged the presence of SVD-PHN mission coordinators Mike and GeeO Paderon, calling them “companions in our mission”. His words were meant for all Mission Partners in the Northern Province, an affirmation of what the SVD and lay partnership is all about.

We thank Fr. Ansel, for his inspiring and empowering questions and for listening to us. We thank the SVD PHN Leadership, particularly Fr. Romy Fajardo, Provincial Superior for opening the doors and for making another history in the life of SVD-PHN Mission Partners. To this we say, “You have filled our hearts with joy.” (Ps 4:7) The Partnership grows, the mission continues!

The following are the impressions of some of the participants:

We had a potluck breakfast to welcome Fr. Anselmo. We greeted him with a song and flowers and gave him an SVD Friends shirt as a token of our gratitude.

Melinda Kho, SVD Friends Abra

Fr. Anselmo Ribeiro is very approachable. I prepared a garland for him when he arrived. We sang a welcome song. He enjoyed

dinner with the Parish Pastoral Council and others in our Parish.

Ging Amorin, Parroquia de San Pedro Mártir, Pamplona, Cagayan

We were impressed by the many places Fr. Anselmo visited in the northern part of Luzon. After the Mass, we said "Muchas Gracias" showing our appreciation during our brief encounter with Fr. Anselmo.

Johnny Tuason, Comunidad Católica Agnus Die, Baguio City

Opening our homes for Mama Mary

Throughout October, SVD lay mission partners visit a family every night for what we call the Block Rosary. Families graciously opened the doors of their homes and hearts for the Blessed Mother, to pray the rosary together. Our devotion to the Blessed Mother has inspired our lay mission partners to serve our families with genuine care. Youth Mission Partners of St. Joseph Parish, Claveria, Cagayan gathered for the Holy Rosary on 31 October 2023.

Mike and GeeO Paderon



Philippines (PHS) – Lay Mission Partners of the Divine Word (LaMP-DW)

LaMP Bohol Rejoices with the SVD Commemorations



Visit of SVD Generalate Mission Secretary

On 15 August 2023, Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, the Generalate Mission Secretary, visited Bohol to meet the Lay Mission Partners of the Divine Word (LaMP). The group had a dinner meeting with him at Shang Palace Restaurant in Tagbilaran City. It commenced with a brief introduction followed by an engaging speech by Fr. Lazar on the purpose of his visit and the prominence of the lay mission partners. The dialogue allowed the LaMPs to strengthen their relationships and increase their enthusiasm. Remarkably, the event opened doors for potential collaborations with the SVD mission in other parts of the world. Personal faith-sharing experiences highlighted the encounter. Later, the group attended the traditional fiesta celebration in honor of St. Isidore the Farmer in Bohol. Fr. Eduardo Rocha, SVD, and Fr. Lukas Adjawona also joined the event.

orientation at the grotto of Sts. Arnold and Joseph on the Holy Name University (HNU) campus. We recited the Glorious Mysteries of the Holy Rosary at the vehicles assigned to us and later participated in the Eucharistic Celebration at St. Michael Parish Church. The pilgrimage continued uphill to Ilijan, Jagna, praying the Joyful Mysteries at Birhensa Barangay Shrine. This pilgrimage fostered a strong sense of community and fellowship among participants, enhancing the experience for all involved by sharing meals, stories, and prayers.

On 8th September, the LaMP joined the 147th SVD Foundation Day on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of HNU. A nine-day novena prayer was prayed via Zoom from 30 August - 7 September. Bishop Alberto Uy, officiated the Mass concelebrated by Bishop Emeritus Leonardo Medroso, Bishop Arturo Bastes, SVDs, and HNU alumni priests followed by the honoring of SVD Jubilarians.

LaMP Marian devotion

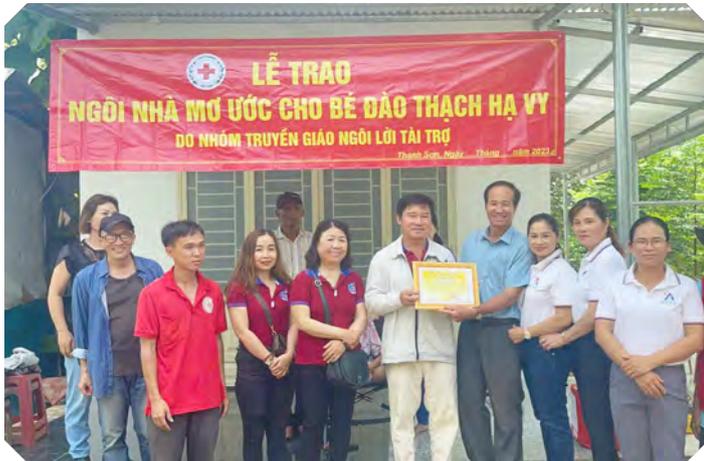
Nanelyn Wate

On 22 October, the LaMP organized a Marian Pilgrimage to the eastern part of Bohol. The spiritual journey began with a brief



Vietnam (VIE) – SVD Lay Mission Partners

Introduction of a New Group



Beginning

On 24 June 2017, the Vietnam SVD Lay Mission Partner group was formed with 40 members. After a year, the group grew to 200 members and presently has over 370 members. The Vietnam Provincial Administration approved the group in 2019. The Spiritual Director is Fr. JB Nguyen Kim Huong, and the group leader is Maria Nguyen Nhu Lan.

Some of the outstanding activities of Vietnam SVD Mission Lay Partners

Monthly retreat and sharing:

Every first Monday of the month, the group comes together at SVD Kim Lam Community for Spiritual Recollection, Bible Studies, and Eucharistic Celebration, also sharing and discussing their next mission agenda.

Small charity every weekend, big charity once or twice a month: The members distribute charity goods to those in need, in Duc Trong and Di Linh Districts, Gia Lai Province, and other remote areas. The group is committed to keeping the environment clean. Every Saturday, members provide aid to the poor, sick, and lonely affected by severe weather, also with the help of their global benefactors.



Group bonding

The group also organizes pilgrimages and common activities to strengthen relationships among the members.

Advantages and Rewards:

- The number of SVD Mission Lay Partners is increasing day by day.
- The Spirit of solidarity and sharing of collaborators is very strong.
- Dedicated companionship and support from Vietnam Province and SVD fathers.
- There is time and places to organize meetings.

Challenges

Most of our lay partners are busy with family matters. Many are women and older people, therefore communication and travel are limited. They are not good at using information technology and social media since they only speak the local language.

The members aim to collaborate with and support the SVD in missionary activities for the betterment of society, with the intention of spreading knowledge of God to humanity.

Fr. Joseph Nguyen, SVD
and SVDMissionTV





EUROPA ZONE



Portugal (POR) – Diálogos - leigos SVD

African Missionary Dinner in Solidarity!



The Diálogos - leigos SVD organized the XVI African Dinner on 28th October as part of the missionary month celebrations. The event took place at the Divine Word Seminary refectory in Guimarães and welcomed over 330 guests. The dinner has become a trademark of the group, with fellowship and sharing being its core values. The tradition began in 2006 when the group decided to organize a social dinner for families and friends to share missionary experiences and raise funds for missionary projects.

The menu was the famous *cachupa*, a typical dish from Cape Verde, made with few ingredients and a lot of love to get the perfect flavour! The room was perfectly decorated to create a missionary atmosphere, illustrating the project supported each year, so that each guest present could feel solidarity with the cause. This year, the focus was on building benches for the new parish church in the mission of Monapo, located in northern Mozambique. The challenge to build these benches was launched by the "Missionary Hands" of the province of the Divine Word Missionaries of Portugal.

Dinners are always a time for socializing and entertainment. One of the highlights of these gatherings is the sharing of



rhythms and dances from different cultures, which is made possible by the presence of various musical groups. It's also an opportunity to discuss missionary activities and encourage others to participate in the projects that are available.

The annual African dinner has been a great success every year, thanks to the unity and mutual support of all involved. Despite our exhaustion, we are grateful to everyone who contributed and participated in this unforgettable celebration. Together, we're stronger!

Daive Duarte



Germany (GER) – SVD-Partner

General Chapter and more



The third meeting of SVD-Partner took place from 29 September to 3 October 2023 in Steyl. It was marked by preparation for the General Chapter, many conversations and time for personal reflection.

Preparation for the General Chapter 2024

SVD-Partner took a lot of time at their meeting to prepare for the General Chapter. They discussed the first part of the community reflection and will discuss the other two parts online in November and again at a meeting in Steyl in February 2024.

The community of the Mission House St. Michael invited SVD-Partner to join them for the day of reflection in preparation for the General Chapter on 25th November. As SVD-Partner were asked to participate in the holding of the day, they used the meeting for a first exchange of ideas with Fr Stanislaus Kofi, SVD. He is preparing this day of reflection for the community.

Conversation with the New Rector of Mission House St. Michael

Bro. Reiner Theißen, who has known the SVD-Partner since their founding phase in 2015, took time for the group one



afternoon.. It was a lively conversation in which information and ideas were exchanged.

Fundraising for SVD Projects

Alexandra Winand, staff member of the “Steyler Mission“ in Sankt Augustin, informed about her work in fundraising for SVD projects. The promotion of the SVD's young generation is particularly close to her heart. Winand and SVD-Partner want to remain in close exchange. A first cooperation will already take place in December. The „Steyler Mission“ is publishing an online Advent calendar, in which SVD-Partner will design three days.

Day of Reflection on the Theme of “Heimat“ (home)

The meeting ended with a day of reflection prepared by Petra Linchet, SVDP. After an impulse text on the theme of “Heimat“, there was enough space and time to let the text sink in and to exchange ideas. The thoughts then flowed into the concluding celebration of the Word of God.

Maria Wego



Slovakia (SVK) – Misijná Rodina SVD

Jubilee Year and Other Activities



This year, Misijná Rodina (Missionary Family) participated in many activities. Some of them are mentioned below:

In 2023, the Society of the Divine Word celebrated 100 years of its presence in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. The Jubilee Year began with the celebration of the Feast of St. Arnold Janssen (15th January) in Bratislava. The lay partners participated in the preparation of the celebration, either by helping with catering or by accompanying the liturgy with singing.

Time for silence

In March, during Lent, Fr. Johny Ambattu led the Spiritual Renewal for lay partners with the theme "On Silence". We could listen to how important it is to spend time with God in silence and solitude. The Renewal took place in the house of Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit in Ivanka pri Nitre. A variety of assignments, outings, and activities were also planned for children during the summer holidays.

Inviting new members

The Misijná Rodina met in September to extend an invitation to new members at the St. Arnold Janssen Church in Bratislava. A brief presentation was made about the work of the SVD lay partners. A member's testimonial regarding what it means to be a part of the SVD Misijná Rodina was also heard. Of course, there was a musical accompaniment with praise songs and a prayer from Fr. Thomas Tulung.

Meeting the Superior General

In October, the Jubilee Year ended with celebrations in Kalvária, Nitra. The Holy Mass was celebrated by the Superior General, Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden, together with other confreres. In the afternoon, lay partners from around Slovakia met with Fr. Budi Kleden. He gave a presentation regarding the SVD and the upcoming 19th General Chapter as part of the program. We might also learn about the lay partners' vision for Society. There was time for questions and discussions as well.

Veronika Šubjaková





PANAM ZONE



Paraguay (PAR) – Laicos Verbitas

Bible Contest



As part of the San Roque Gonzales Parish's activities on the Biblical Apostolate, a Bible Contest was organized by the members of the Laicos Verbitas and the parish team. The competition took place on 23rd August 2023 for children who were preparing to receive their First Communion. The participation and enthusiasm shown by the children were impressive. This could not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the catechists from the different communities who encouraged the children to participate and the parents who supported and mentored their children.

The children's responses to the questions were exceptional and far exceeded expectations. The contest results were not as significant as the enormous progress the children made in their knowledge of the Bible. It is our hope that the Word of God will continue to illuminate the lives of these children and their families.

We would like to extend our gratitude to our Parish Priests, Fr. Jose Pereira and Fr. Stany Lobo, for their constant support and guidance.

Froilan Armoa González



Argentina (ARE) – Misioneros Socios Laicos Amigos del Verbo

First Anniversary



On 30th July the lay missionaries of the Parish of St. Albert the Great in Puerto Rico gathered for their second community reflection, which was centered around the theme "Your Light Must Shine Before Others". It was a beautiful day, and the prayer was dramatized by the group El Dabar, along with our spiritual leader, Fr. Agustin Kitajima. During the event, we received a Formation from Fr. Klinikowski, which was focused on the 125 years of SVD presence in Misiones and Chaco. Each group reflected on the theme and presented their conclusions, making it a very insightful and fulfilling experience for all.

experiences, and an unforgettable Expo where we got to learn more about the cultures of our priests.

As per God's revelation, the ultimate goal of our life and mission as light is to bear witness to God. The Father, through his son Jesus, gathers us from different places and communicates to us our identity of being "light." He invites us to model our life and mission after the life and mission of Jesus, who is the great light to the nations.

Aurora Galarza

The Lay Partners from across the Province came together to pay tribute to the Priests and Brothers of the ARE Province on the occasion of the 148th anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word and the 125th anniversary of SVD presence in the Red Land. The celebration began with a Holy Mass of thanksgiving, followed by a dinner show featuring artists who filled the moment with joy.

In October, we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the canonization of our Saints. Additionally, the province held the first International Meeting of the PANAM subzone and an Intercultural Expo, with groups, Alma Verbita from Chile, Somos Familia-Somos Verbitas from Paraguay, Amigos del Verbo de Misiones and Chaco. We were accompanied by Fr. Héctor Maldonado, Provincial Superior, Fr. Dedi Bonaventura, Mission Secretary, along with parish priests, vicars, and SVD Brothers. The two-day event was filled with knowledge, shared



Brazil (BRA) – Amigos do Verbo na Amazônia (AVA)

Various Activities



Recognition and election

Amigos do Verbo na Amazônia (AVA) was officially established in 2023, after a long period of organization and structuring of the regional coordination. The election for the regional coordination was held, and the coordinators were chosen in their respective parishes and the advisors in the districts.

In September, the regional coordination of the AVA met with other members at the SVD assembly in Emaús for further integration. The statutes of the AVA were presented to the members in the form of a comprehensive reading, and the admission and commitment of the Amigos do Verbo na Amazônia (AVA) were also discussed.

We will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the SVD worldwide, with 130 years in Brazil and 45 years in the Amazon region. We have recognized the significance of proudly wearing the SVD shirt and embodying its identity through our missionary work.

Challenges

The AVA still faces financial difficulties that make it difficult to travel to and participate in missionary activities. The importance of working with parishes and dioceses was

reflected on, as well as the difficulty with the local language that many priests and religious face, which needs to be given the necessary support. Geographical distance is a challenge for carrying out activities together. The rapport between priests and laity is fundamental to good work.

Prayer booklet and social actions

The parish is divided into four districts: Irmã Dorothy, Santo Arnaldo Janssen, São José Freinademetz, and *Distrito de Oiapoque*. In 2024, the parish plans to create a booklet that will focus on the SVD identity and the four characteristic dimensions, along with SVD songs and prayers. This initiative aims to involve all the members of the parish. Each district has committed to carrying out a social action project, such as the "Sopa Santo Arnaldo Janssen" project that is already working in Santarém to provide food for people living on the streets. The other districts will distribute food parcels among other actions to help the needy. Additionally, a lay group from the Amazon Region is organizing a raffle to raise funds for their activities.

May the Triune God continue to bless us!

Maria França



PANAMA (CAM) – Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino (MLVD)

Formation Training Program and Celebrations



Formation Training Program

We received a formation training program from Fr. Luis Antonio Vergara on 27th August 2023. In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 10:1-12, Jesus appoints seventy-two people and sends them out ahead of him, two by two, to every town and place that he intends to visit. He encourages them by saying, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." As followers of Jesus Christ, we must extend our hands to those who are most vulnerable and marginalized by poverty.

Celebrating With the Community of *las Malvinas*

On 9th September, we celebrated the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of the Divine Word, with the community of *las Malvinas* at the Parish of Virgen de la Medalla Milagrosa.

St. Jerome's Family Feast

On 17th September, we celebrated St. Jerome's family feast with the theme "Community Rooted in the Word for a Synodal Church."



Praying the Rosary and Celebration of MLVD Mission

On October 7th, men led the Holy Rosary for the second time. On 15th October, we celebrated the MLVD Mission in advance with a Holy Mass presided over by Fr. Bau. The theme of the Holy Mass was "The Being and Doing of the Missionary", emphasizing the importance of feeling like part of the SVD family.

We pray for the success of the SVD lay partners workshop next year in Nemi. May the workshop be of great benefit to all the participants.

Rubiela Ramírez de Rodríguez
Rogelio Rodriguez-Pizza



CHILE (CHI) – Alma Verbita

New Challenges in Our Mission



New Challenge, New Mission

With great joy, we want to share with you that this year we have started a new challenge and missionary commitment. Our work will be located in a rural area called Curacaví, where the home *Mis Años Dorados* (My Golden Years) is located. This home takes care of the elderly, homeless, and people with physical disabilities.

During our visits, we have had the opportunity to interact with the residents of the home, accompany them, listen to their life stories, and provide material support for some of their needs. We aim to create moments of prayer and joy and make them feel that God remembers them. Our commitment to this missionary service will last for three years. We are grateful to Patricia Cornejo, in charge of the home, for allowing us to carry out this service.

Visit to the Divine Word School of Chircureo

On 5th October 2023, to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the canonization of our Saints, St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz, we visited the Divine Word School of Chircureo where a Holy Mass was celebrated by Fr. Roberto Diaz who introduced our missionary work. He invited other members of the community to join us and create a lay community that is committed to the spirituality and charism of the SVD, known as



a "Chicureo Soul". We had a warm, inclusive, and engaging reception. This type of outreach should continue in and beyond Santiago.

We express our gratitude to Fr. Roberto Dian and Marcela Borlando, the pastoral coordinator of the school, as well as Fr. Erasmus Winga, who arranged transportation for our visit. It is an opportunity for lay people to take up the challenges in Chile, a country where religious vocations are few. More importantly, we require dedicated people to serve the Church and its mission.

We have participated in virtual meetings organized by PANAM, where we share our work, concerns, and projects with the community. Fr. Nevil Da Silva provides constant support and guidance during the meetings.

Elena Ortiz



~ Last but not Least ~

Informations

February 2024

Preparing the Second International SVD Lay Partners Workshop in Nemi



The Second International Lay Partners Workshop will take place in Nemi, Rome from 18 February - 2 March 2024. We have received nominations from various countries. As per the list, we have nearly 50 members for this Workshop from all the Continents. We understand that getting a Schengen Visa is not easy these days, there are a lot of regulations. Thus, when we start the Workshop, we are not sure how many would confirm their participation. We hope that everyone who has applied will be able to participate in this international meeting.

The Workshop is not just listening to the lectures, but more of learning from one another; it is an experience; meeting various groups and interacting with other members broaden the

knowledge of each group's goals, achievements, challenges, and future plans. Here, they will meet various people and cultures and see how each group has grown and understood the SVD charism and spirituality. In this process, the richness of missionary activities will overwhelm the members that they are copartners in the mission and they are living the missionary discipleship. This can also challenge some who struggle to realize the mission that is entrusted to them.

We will have some input sessions on various topics, and along with that, each lay partner group will present their activities to the whole group. This will open the eyes of everyone, to the marvelous things that the lay partners are involved in. Certainly, along with the discussions, sharing, and learning, there will be an opportunity to visit some important places in Rome and also to visit the town of Francis Assisi which is situated in a beautiful area.

The participants will have an opportunity to discuss the logo for the lay partners, any proposal of structure to the lay groups, proposals for the 19th SVD General Chapter, any initiative at the global level, and so forth. The logistics are being worked out; the participants are preparing themselves for active participation in this Workshop. We wish them all the best in this important exercise.

Fr. Stanislaus T. Lazar, SVD
Generalate Mission Secretary, Rome

~ SVD Lay Partners Abroad ~

Germany (GER)

A Visit in Greece – Two Sisters, Five Projects

In September, SVD-Partner Maria Wego and her husband Panagiotis Efthimiadis visited the Holy Spirit Sisters (SSpS) in Athens. Here is her report.

In Plaka, the old town of Athens, below the world-famous Acropolis, shops, hotels and restaurants line up in a seamless ribbon. Tourists stroll through the streets from morning until late at night. If you walk for half an hour, you will experience a different Athens: here people live who are barely making ends meet, many migrants who are trying to build a new existence in a better life and homeless using drugs.

Here two SSpS-sisters work for the people. Sr. Milagros and Sr. Preethi are active in five projects for refugees and migrants.



They work closely with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), in whose building they also live.

With a lot of heart and great calmness, they take care of a day centre for women with children, a clothing store, a food distribution, language courses and homework supervision for migrant children. In the day centre, the help for the women ranges from psychological and legal counselling to informal language courses and the possibility to do laundry.



2,000 people are registered at the clothing store to receive free clothing and hygiene items. Among them are also many



refugees who live in camps outside Athens and can only come downtown twice a week with a collective bus. "We are not allowed to go to them in the camps," Sr. Preethi explains. "All NGOs are forbidden to do that." Whether the Missionary Sisters will stay in Athens is therefore an open question. After all, they actually came to Athens for the refugees. Despite this open question, both are tirelessly working for refugees and migrants and share with them the hope of a good and safe life in Europe.

Maria Wego

~ Formation / Further Studies ~

JPIC

An Unique Opportunity: UN E-learning Course on Faith, Environment and Climate Change



The JPIC Commission USG/UISG* invited to participate in the e-learning course "Faith, Environment and Climate Change". The course was run by the Faith for Earth initiative of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP). More than 100 members of various Catholic religious orders worldwide took part in the English-language course. There were five groups: two in Africa and one each in Asia/Oceania and Europe/Middle East. Maria Wego from SVD-Partner Germany was able to attend this course. Here is her report:

When the invitation to this course was extended in the JPIC-USG/UISG newsletter, I was immediately excited. Not only because I had the opportunity to learn more about the subject, but also because the focus was on the importance of religions. Another reason to sign up was that the course promised to be of a very high quality.

The eight-week self-study e-learning course started in September. Each module included facts about the topic, information about the religions' perspectives and example initiatives. Everything was presented in a very appealing way: text alternated with videos, graphics and interactive fields. In between there was the question "Check your understanding" and at the end of the module a quiz - it was kindly not called an exam, although the questions were sometimes challenging.

Which group one belonged to was decided by one's current place of residence. Therefore, the members of my group "Europe/Middle East" came from Africa, Australia, Asia, Europe and Latin America. We were guided through the programme by Georgia Gleoudi from the International Dialogue Centre - KAICIID. Many thanks to her for her wonderful work!

To conclude: It was worth every minute I spent on this course. Not only did I learn a lot of new things, but I also got to know very committed people. Above all, they are the ones who motivate me to do more for God's creation in the future.

Maria Wego

JPIC = Justice, Peace and Integrity of the Creation;
USG = Union of Superior Generals (male orders)
UISG = International Union Superior General (female orders)

[For more information](#)

Modules of the Course:

- Module 1 – Faith for Earth: A Time for Action
- Module 2 – Faith and Climate Change
- Module 3 – Faith and Water
- Module 4 – Faith and Ecosystem Restoration
- Module 5 – Faith and Financing for Sustainable Development
- Module 6 – Faith and Environmental Governance
- Module 7 – Faith and Environmental Security
- Module 8 – Faith and Sustainable Lifestyles

[Laudato Sí](#)

[Laudate Deum](#)

~ Awards / Anniversaries ~

Lay Missionary in a Wounded World

Jean Paul Nico Luketo Musete



Congratulations!

Jean Paul Nico Luketo Musete received an award for his fifteen years of dedicated service to the United Nations in support of its goals and mandated through UNICEF. As we know, Nico is an SVD lay partner, Fraternite SVD, from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We, the SVD family congratulate Nico for his dedicated service to mankind through UNICEF.

Here is his statement:

"In light of the theme of the 19th SVD General Chapter, "Let your light shine before others" (Mt 5, 16): Faithful and creative disciples in a wounded world, as we consider our call to live our lay and missionary vocation, I am honored to receive this award from the UN Secretary-General in recognition of my fifteen years of global service.

Recognizing my profession as a mission involving interacting with kids, parents, and educators, I have completed, on average, over four hundred missions in the past fifteen years. I've traveled thousands of kilometers, met thousands of people (children, teachers, parents, political and administrative authorities, religious leaders, etc.), and worked with a lot of people. I was particularly in the villages, in the very poor areas, very often difficult to access. I saw the suffering faces of these ignored people, left to their sad fate.

This is exactly the world that is wounded by injustice and deprivation of all kinds. Children and teachers who, despite wanting to go to school, can't afford the little essentials: a notebook, a pencil, a pen and a school building. This is my working environment, and it is in this context that I am called to be a faithful and creative disciple. How can I bring a smile, a glimmer of hope to the faces of the children I meet? How can I share their living conditions and keep the courage?

I dedicate all of the inspiration I receive from the award to the SVD since, throughout my fifteen years of work with UNICEF, I spent fourteen of those years in the Fraternite SVD. It brings me great joy to realize that my job, a gift from God, represents a mission to heal the wounded world.

I have been able to continue in this apostolate because of prayer and the support of my brothers in the SVD, my wife Elysée, and my four kids. May the theme of our 19th General Chapter become a source of inspiration to us so that we can be more faithful and creative disciples in our workplaces and our communities torn apart by injustice and violations of rights. May our little lights shine and bring hope to others".

Susan Noronha
Editor-in-chief

🌐 Information from the SVD 🌐

Germany

Fire in Sankt Augustin

On the evening of 15th November, a fire broke out in the attic of the missionary seminary in Sankt Augustin. Five fratres who noticed the fire in their common room were slightly injured by smoke gas. They tried to extinguish the fire themselves, but were unsuccessful and alerted the fire brigade. All other community members were able to leave the building unharmed. Because of a house meeting, they were quickly informed and evacuated.

The fire-fighting work in the wing of the historic building proved difficult because the source of the fire was in the attic on the side of the closed inner courtyard, which was not accessible to fire engines and rescue vehicles. The wing directly adjacent to the monastery church was affected. The church was not damaged by the fire thanks to a firewall. The material damage

is extensive and it will take months to repair the damage caused by the fire and extinguishing water.



India

Online Mission Rosary in India Sub-zone for the Third Year

"Never will anyone who prays his Rosary every day be led astray. This is a statement that I would gladly sign with my blood" (St. Louis De Montfort). Praying the Rosary allows us to encounter Mary and enter the mysteries of Jesus Christ. The purpose of the Catholic Rosary is simple; to teach people about the lives of Jesus and Mary through prayer and contemplation.

In 2021 and 2022, the SVD lay mission partners of the India subzone participated in the Global Mission Rosary. This year too they conducted online Rosary praying for Peace in the world, especially peace in Manipur, India. Jayesh George (INM) provided the required technical support for the Zoom meeting. All four Provinces and one Region took part in the online Rosary with the following themes:

- 7th October led by INM on "Mysteries of mission"
- 14th October led by INC on "Epiphany"
- 21st October led by INH on "Calling of twelve disciples for mission"
- 28th October led by ING on "Washing of the feet"
- 4th November led by INE on "Sending of the disciples to the world"

The Mission Secretaries of respective PRMs in collaboration with the lay partner groups prepared the Rosary program and conducted it successfully. It was a time of prayer, being with each other to experience the SVD family spirit and to express our solidarity with the worldwide mission, together praying for peace in the world.

We appreciate the presence of Bishops, SVD Provincials, Regional Superior, and confreres who joined us to pray the Rosary with our lay partners. We are grateful to the SVD lay mission partners of the India Sub-zone for their active participation in the Rosary. Participants have shown their willingness to continue this practice every year in the month of October.

Fr. Luvis Ronald Pereira, SVD
Mission Secretary, India Subzone

Ghana

First AFRAM Brother's Assembly



The first assembly of the SVD Brothers in Africa and Madagascar (AFRAM) was held at the Divine Word Catholic Conference Centre in Nsawam, Ghana from 1 to 13 August 2023. The conference was themed "The Brother Vocation in AFRAM: Prospects & Challenges" and was attended by approximately thirty SVD Brothers and two lay partners from Ghana, Martin Kumedzro and Helen Dzikunu.

In their address to the conference, the Friends of SVD looked at the challenges facing the Brother vocation in a fast-changing world. Notable among them are the declining number of Brothers joining the vocation, the need for fraternity within the SVD community, combining profession or trade with their formation and mission assignments, and the drying out of traditional sources of funding. They also had discussions on how to collaborate with the Brothers to promote vocation to the congregation.

The lay partners advised the Brothers that a new kind of integration with the laity is necessary, which requires different steps: collaboration, participation, and belonging. They asked the Brothers to reflect carefully on the theme of the 19th General Chapter of the SVD to be held in 2024: "Your Light Must Shine Before Others" (Mt 5:16): Faithful and Creative Disciples in a Wounded World". Our world is in dire need of love and compassion, and the SVD Brothers are better placed to lead on this journey.

The delegates to the conference used the opportunity to visit SVD institutions and facilities such as the Orthopaedic Training Centre, the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Centre, the Institute of Continuing Formation, and the home for retired priests.

Martin Kumedzro



List of Lay Partners' Videos

Published by SVDMissionTV on YouTube

Since February 2022 SVD lay partners all over the world present themselves and their work in small videoclips published by SVDMissionTV on YouTube. Since issue no. 20

you find the complete list of all existing videos here. At the moment there are no new videos..

Click on the globe to start the video.



More in production



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.



Samson Ndung'u Njoroge

† 03.09.2022

SVD Lay Partner, KEN



Josephine Idao

† 04.11.2023

SVD Lay Partner, PHN



Fr. Ernst Waser SVD

† 07.09.2023

Valued friend of the Swiss lay partners.

Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts.

We will miss you!

Rest in Peace



Prayer

Peace to the people of this earth.
Peace to those who are afraid.
Peace to those who experience war.
Peace to those who are sick.

Salaam to the people of this earth.
Salaam to those who are hungry, for bread and good words.
Salaam to those who have no one.
Salaam to those who are tortured.

Shalom to the people of this earth.
Shalom to those who hide behind walls.
Shalom to those who sell weapons and to those who use them.
Shalom to those who are threatened.

Paz to the people of this earth.
Paz to those who are broken.
Paz to those who separate.
Paz to those who have no home.

La paz sea contigo. Salaam. Shalom. Peace be with you.
With you. With you. With you.
A rainbow over your heart. And peace to your heart.
Pass it on. Go on. Go on.
La paz sea contigo. Salaam. Shalom. Peace be with you.

Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year

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Sophie

Matilda

Isabel

Daisy

Jawras

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