



Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

# SVD Lay Partners

Newsletter – from Around the World

Issue 24, April 2024

Second International SVD Lay Partners Workshop



## Inside this Issue

### Editorial

#### SPECIAL TOPIC

Second International SVD Lay Partners Workshop 3

#### GROUP REPORTS FROM ...

##### AFRAM ZONE

. Kenya (KEN) – Friends of SVD 6  
 . Chad (TCD) – Amis de la SVD 7  
 . Ghana (GHA) – Friends of SVD 8  
 . South Africa (BOT) – SVD Lay Partners Malamuleli 8

##### ASPAC ZONE

. The Philippines (PHC) – The Lay Society of St. Arnold Janssen (LSSAJ) 9  
 . The Philippines (PHN) – SVD-PHN Mission Partners 10  
 . Indonesia (IDE) – Soverdia Nagekeo 11  
 . Indonesia (IDR) – Persaudaraan Misioner Sang Sabda (PMSS) 12  
 . Papua New Guinea (PNG) – SVD Friends PNG 13  
 . India (INH) – SVD Fraternity 14  
 . India (INM) – Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW) Andheri, Mumbai 15  
 . India (INM) – Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Bandra 16

##### EUROPA ZONE

. Germany (GER) – SVD-Partner 17

##### PANAM ZONE

. Chile (CHI) – Alma Verbita 18  
 . Panama (CAM) – Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino (MLVD) 19  
 . Argentina (ARE) – Misioneros Socios Laicos Amigos del Verbo 20  
 . United States (USS) – SVD Lay Associates 21  
 . Brazil (BRA) – Amigos do Verbo na Amazônia (AVA) 22  
 . Ecuador (ECU) – Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino (MILVED) 23

#### LAST BUT NOT LEAST

##### Information from the SVD

. Logo 150 Years SVD 24

##### Notes

. Introduction of a New Column 24

##### Spirituality

. Via Lucis – The Way of Light 25

List of Lay Partners' Videos 27

In Memoriam 28

Prayer 29

Imprint 29

## Editorial

### Upper Room

“They were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1)

It was a human situation. Within its walls, amidst the flickering glow of oil lamps, a diverse group of individuals assembled around a common purpose. Their backgrounds varied, their talents diverse, yet they shared an unyielding commitment to a cause greater than themselves. At its core, the Upper Room narrative encapsulates elements of betrayal, loyalty, doubt, faith, pain, solidarity, and togetherness. However, amidst the turmoil and uncertainty, their gathering symbolizes the bonds of fellowship and togetherness. Despite their differences, they found strength in their shared commitment to Jesus and his teachings.

Togetherness can lead to great achievements. The events that took place in the Upper Room serve as an example of what can happen when we come together with an open mind and heart, guided by the Holy Spirit. In the Upper Room, a spark ignited a fire that would blaze across the world, fueling a mission that transcended time and space.

In a world that is wounded by hatred, division, and lies, the unity of the Upper Room still has the same impact today. The fire that was ignited in the Upper Room continues to burn bright to this day. It has fueled the missionary efforts of countless men and women throughout history, driving them to take the message of Jesus Christ to the farthest corners of the globe. In a time marked by social upheaval and political polarization, it challenges us to transcend the barriers that divide us and embrace the richness of our diversity.

The SVDs have made a concerted effort to embrace inclusivity, collaboration, and networking at various levels. Moreover, in recent years, there has been a special focus on recognizing the role of SVD lay partners as integral members of the Arnoldus Family. The Second International Workshop for SVD Lay Partners in Nemi, Rome, which concluded in early March 2024, deepened this commitment. May we be inspired to fan the flames of mission in our pursuit of justice and righteousness, and may we never waver in our commitment that was ignited in the Upper Room so long ago.

Susan Noronha  
 Editor-in-chief



Spiritus vivificans vivifica filios tuos (Lat.) = revitalising spirit enliven your children

All issues of the newsletter can be found on this website:  
<https://www.svd-partner.eu/svdlp-slsvd-1>



## Second International SVD Lay Partners Workshop

18<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 in Nemi

The second lay partner workshop was held in Nemi at the end of February 2024 after the workshop planned for 2020 had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that more than six years had passed between the first (14<sup>th</sup> to

29<sup>th</sup> October 2017) and the second workshop. Members of SVD lay partner groups from all zones (AFRAM, ASPAC, EUROPA and PANAM) met both times

Participants of this year workshop share their impressions.



We always worked in heterogeneous groups of six/seven people sharing topics such as faith, activity in our territory, formation, and the challenges of our environment. Still, above all, we had experience with the motto: May the Holy Triune God Live in our Hearts and in the Hearts of all People, the multicolored beauty of the Universal Church.

Fr. Budi Kleden celebrated the inaugural Mass and gave a talk and Fr. Jose Antunes da Silva celebrated the concluding Mass and gave us "Mission Cross". I had the honor of being part of this Workshop.

Isabella Gargiulo  
Italy

It was a great workshop and very informative. I enjoyed every bit of the sessions, everything was planned perfectly, conducted excellently and in a very straightforward and advanced way, with good speakers who communicated clearly, explicitly, and with concrete examples. Besides, I was also pleased with the excellent pace and use of time.

Grace Akiny  
Kenya

All participants at the Workshop presented the working of their groups in a 15-minute Presentation. Each group is unique and based on the socio-economic, geo-political, and religious fabric of their region, and are at various stages of formation and growth. The presentations showcased the love for the missions and the spread of God's Word through the promotion of vocations, Bible-sharing, recollections, and retreats. They are involved in activities ranging from care of creation, uplifting the poor through soup kitchens, feeding the hungry, providing local assistance in natural calamities, and assisting the SVDs in their social outreach programs. Some of the challenges faced include declining membership and involvement of youth and the need for more support and mentoring by a Spiritual Animator.

Anne Luis  
India





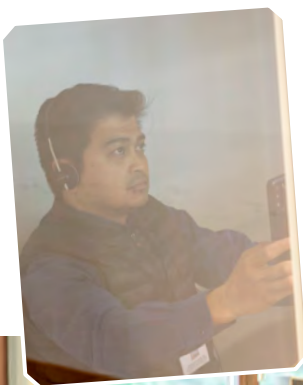


I travelled to the Workshop of SVD Lay Partners in Nemi like St. Peter – when he stepped on the water to go to Jesus. I did not know what would happen in two weeks, but I believed that it would be something good, guided by the Holy Spirit. Arriving and getting to know the participants from all over the world, and then experiencing together the working methods of the Holy Spirit, I was filled with endless joy and gratitude that the kingdom of God is truly among us! Strengthened in the new World Community and filled with the SVD spirit, I can continue our common mission with which Jesus has entrusted all of us. Thank you!

András Szlávik  
Hungary

I cherish, value, and appreciate the attention received during my stay both at the Ad Gentes Center and at the Generalate and during the visits made in Rome on the occasion of the Workshop for SVD Lay Partners; I was very well received, I felt safe, cared for and reaffirmed my sense of belonging and affection towards this great SVD family. My gratitude for such a rewarding and fruitful experience.

Blanca Gomez da Silva  
Argentina



The Second International SVD Lay Partners Workshop from 18<sup>th</sup> February to 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024, Nemi, was a joyful experience filled with multiple inputs, sharing, discussions, outings, and so forth. In addition to the moderators, speakers, and translators, we were 38 lay partners from 21 countries, and we all lived together for 14 days in close contact, sharing the prayer, daily Mass, all the activities and meals. The workshop's purpose was carefully planned and conducted by Fr. Stanislaus Lazar SVD and Br. Carlos J. Ferrada Montero SVD, with the support of the translators Fr. Reynaldo R. Roman Diaz SVD and Fr. V. Marlon Bobier SVD; there were multiple tasks and challenges.

One of the challenges was to bring together lay people from different countries, in their state of life with family and jobs, who shared sincere faith in the Triune God and the Catholic Church, sincere love and interest for the Society of the Divine Word and had the sincere desire to commit more.

But serious and fruitful commitment needs time, work, and formation, so another important objective was to provide basic information on some key issues: the spirituality of the SVD Founding Generation, four characteristic dimensions, prophetic dialogue, interculturality, fundraising, and so forth.

The Second SVD Lay Partners Workshop in Nemi was a wonderful experience because of the participants. Among the 38 persons, 13 were men and 25 were women coming from four zones: AFRAM – 5, ASPAC – 12, EUROPA – 7, PANAM – 14. Although the program was very packed, starting from 8.30 AM and going up to nearly 10.00 PM, they showed a lot of enthusiasm, interest and fervor in listening to various topics as well as discussing and sharing with one another Arnoldus Spirituality and Charism and their implications in their own groups. I was happy to see the passion for mission, eagerness to expand their horizon and keenness to do something worthwhile in the future. I was happy to listen to all the groups who shared with excitement about their activities, some of the members were wonder struck saying “wow” and delighted to know that many missionary activities are being carried out throughout the world by the SVD lay partners. During the Workshop, they also worked out an Action Plan which will be shared later to all the members. From my part, I would like to thank all the lay partners who came to Nemi and the mission secretaries who sent them.

Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, SVD  
Generalate Mission Secretary, Rome

The Action Plan will be the subject of the next issue.









## AFRAM ZONE



### Kenya (KEN) – Friends of SVD

#### The Significance of Partnering Concerning Life Situations

In these recent few months, we have had joyous and challenging moments in our Arnoldus family.

Akinyi and Peter Mahiga represented the Friends of SVD, Kenya.

#### Celebration

Fr. Jerome Olianga SVD, the former Mission Secretary, and Fr. Marcin Cingel SVD, the current Mission Secretary, were invited to a celebration on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2024, to mark the handover. Together, we shared the joy of the day.

#### Pain and Grief

On 26<sup>th</sup> December 2023, the SVDs lost Fr. Thomas Leyden. We attended the Requiem Mass, and burial and bought some flowers. He was laid to rest on 3<sup>rd</sup> January at Katani SVD cemetery in Nairobi.

#### Provincial Assembly

Fr. William Owire SVD, the Provincial Superior extended an invitation to us to attend the Provincial Assembly, which was from 16 – 19 January 2024. Imelda Wapopa from Nairobi and Grace Mushi from Arusha, Tanzania, represented their groups and spoke on behalf of their groups.

On 31<sup>st</sup> December, we lost a dear member, John Kihanya Kiarie, who belonged to the Holy Spirit Langas in Eldoret. He was laid to rest on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. To support his family during this difficult time, we collected some money and later visited them to offer our condolences and celebrate Mass.

They will forever remain in our memory. It is evident that in life, everyone needs the support of others.

Grace Akinyi

#### Provincial Meeting

On 21<sup>st</sup> January, the Provincial Superior visited St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Olasiti in Arusha, Tanzania to celebrate the feast of St. Arnold Janssen. He took time to meet with the lay partners there.

#### Fundraising

On 4<sup>th</sup> February, both districts participated in a fundraiser to renovate St. Paul Kabechei Eldoret, a newly built SVD parish. They were fortunate to meet with the Bishop.

#### Workshop in Nemi

We are happy about our participation in the Second International Lay Partners Workshop in Nemi, Rome. Grace



## Chad (TCD) – Amis de la SVD

### Establishment of a New Group at Sts Peter and Paul Parish



#### The Beginning

The Chad SVD Friends group was formed and approved by the Mission Superior in 2014. The group elected its leader, Bernard Ngaba, and Fr. Jean Métiani Aloula has been its Spiritual Director since then. During the Mission General Assembly held from 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024, Bernard Ngaba, the group leader, and Fr. Jean Métiani Aloula provided reasons why the group is no longer active. After considering these reasons, the Assembly decided that each parish and the formation house should create their own SVD Friends Group. The groups should come together to form the Chad SVD Friends.

#### Amis de la SVD of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish

Amis de la SVD, Sts. Peter and Paul's parish held their first meeting on Saturday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2024. Twenty people attended the meeting. During this meeting, Fr. Thierry B. Koula, the TCD Mission Superior who is also the Mission Secretary and Pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, welcomed the new members and explained the goal of the group.

#### Activities

As members of the Arnoldus Family, SVD friends are invited to collaborate and support the Divine Word Missionaries in their missionary activities and to effectively work for the *Missio Dei*. They will receive workshops and training on the spirituality, charism, and mission of the SVDs. The group decided to hold



its second meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> February to elect their leadership team.

#### Leadership Team

The group had thirty members at its second meeting and was privileged to have Frs. Joseph B. Kallanchira, Coordinator of Biblical Apostolate, and Jean M. Aloula, Spiritual Director of TCD Mission SVD Friends. The new leadership was elected with five members: Bernard Ngaba (Leader), Gaston Dillah (Secretary), Adeline Remadji Treasurer), Albert Koumde and Belle-Rose Françoise Ali (Councilors).

#### Future Activities

##### Short term:

- Complete the Second Guide for the 19<sup>th</sup> General Chapter by 10<sup>th</sup> March
- Distribute meal kits to inmates of the State Prison by 20<sup>th</sup> March
- Recollection on 23<sup>rd</sup> March
- Membership card and t-shirt for the group

##### Long term:

- Work on the Vision-Mission Statement
- Elaborate the Statutes
- Plan specific activities for the Society's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Fr. Thierry B. Koula, SVD





## Ghana (GHA) – Friends of SVD

### Prayers and Social Work

Friends of SVD from the St Arnold Janssen Brotherhood house are known as the Tesano Community in the Archdiocese of Accra.



### Prayer, Adoration, and Holy Mass every Friday

Every Friday, the SVD lay partners from the Tesano Community have our morning devotion and end with our SVD lay partners' Prayers. We also celebrate the Eucharist with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and conclude with our general meeting.

### Visit to the sick and old

On the 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2023, which were Fridays, the group visited all their sick and aged fathers and mothers and gave them Christmas presents.

As our missionary responsibility, we visited dormant Catholics / Christians to share the Gospel message with them.

Daniel Lamptey

## South Africa (BOT) – SVD Lay Partners Malamulele

### Work and Prayers

#### Caring for Creation – Palm Tree Planting Initiative

We participated in a tree planting initiative in which palm tree seedlings were distributed for planting to Malamulele's St. Benedict Parish's fourteen outstations, by the theme "Caring for Creation". Each community will care for these palm trees.

#### Fundraising

One SVD lay partner donated money for buying Bible Diaries, which were sold at a profit to help the SVD Lay partners' activities.

#### Feast Days Celebration

The Feasts of our founding fathers, St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz were celebrated on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 respectively. The Holy Mass was attended by SVD lay partners. Refreshments were served after the Mass. The saints' faith-filled journeys were shared to help deepen everyone's faith.

#### Projects

In December, members donated food and supplies such as beads, wool, and other materials to the Pfluxanani Disability Centre to create objects for sale and benefit their center.

#### Motivation

We strive to attend all meetings as scheduled, but due to work related commitments, achieving 100% attendance can be challenging. Nevertheless, we ensure that all members stay informed about the happenings in the SVDLP community by sharing Minutes of Meetings on our WhatsApp group.

Thandi Mazibuko







ASPAC ZONE



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

Planting Teak Trees



Divine Word Prayer Sanctuary

In response to the call from Pope Francis’ Laudato Si and in collaboration with the Society of the Divine Word – Philippines Central Province (SVDPHC), transplanted the seedlings of teak trees, at the pilgrimage site now being developed by the SVDPHC called “Divine Word Prayer Sanctuary”. This site is located at Sitio Dalawang Kawayan, Barangay Tandang Kulyo, Tanay, Rizal, the Philippines

Teak saplings – an Initiative

The project was initiated by former LSSAJ Board Director Romy Quinoñes, of CKMS Class 1965-67 who propagated the teak seeds. Propagating the seedlings was a family affair as Brother Romy was assisted by his grandchildren, who took turns caring for the seedlings until they grew and were ready for transplantation.

Led by LSSAJ President Cris Lim, together with fellow Director and current Treasurer Julio Tonquin, more than twenty-five saplings were transplanted on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024. The area is



now being developed as a prayer sanctuary/ pilgrimage site of St. Arnold Janssen.

We hope that these seedlings will grow into mature teak trees and provide greenery and vegetation to the area.

Daisy Leones





## The Philippines (PHN) – SVD-PHN Mission Partners

### Provincial Chapter and Group Activities



#### Delegates at SVD PHN Provincial Chapter

Seven SVD lay mission partners were invited as delegates to the 2024 SVD-PHN Provincial Chapter from 5 – 8 February 2024. The inclusion of mission partners in the Chapter is a concrete response and a manifestation of commitment to this partnership from SVD Northern Philippines with Provincial Superior Fr. Romeo Fajardo at the helm.

As non-voting delegates, the lay partners enjoyed all the rights and privileges of the Chapter. Add to that, SVD-PHN Mission Partners Coordinators Michael and Mary Geraldine Paderon and SVD Friends Abra President Gene Barbero were given thirty minutes each to report before the plenum following the report of Mission Secretary Fr. Emil Pati. The Chapter proceedings had significant Recommendations and Resolutions to strengthen the partnership affirming the 2018 Chapter Resolution, “the formal promotion, affirmation, and formation of SVD lay mission partners”. The Partnership grows, the Mission continues.

#### Rambak Misyon

Rambak Misyon (Celebrate Mission) was first conceived in 2021 when a Musical Concert for a Cause was staged on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021. Following that were Rambak Misyon Abra and



Rambak Misyon Kayan-Sabangan-Sadsadan, primarily as our way of expressing our gratitude and giving back to the Mission.

#### A Christmas Get-together for a Cause

A Christmas get-together for a cause was being planned, but doubts arose due to the busy time of the year. Nevertheless, the cause was deemed more important than the fears and doubts. The event aimed to honor retired SVD missionaries living at the SVD Retirement House in San Fernando, La Union. St. Arnold Janssen’s formula and attitude, “It is not me, but the Lord,” was to be followed.

On 29<sup>th</sup> December, we had an inspiring and empowering celebration. It was a moment of togetherness with our SVD retirees and mission partners. We were blessed with the generosity of our benefactors and friends, raising a remarkable donation for SVD-PHN’s mission fund and our retired SVDs. We met Fr. Nick Vergara at the Retirement House where he was undergoing dialysis. He passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024. Rest in peace!

Mike and GeeO Paderon



-With SVD Ubbog Community and SVD Friends Abra



## Indonesia (IDE) – Soverdia Nagekeo

### Save Our Mother Earth



#### Save our Mother Earth – No Plastic

Picking up plastic waste in public places is how members of Soverdia Nagekeo District together with the Trash Hero Nagekeo group educate the public not to throw plastic waste in all places. The members invite people to reduce the use of single-use plastic.

#### Taking the Word Before the Action

This program is organized every first Friday of the month, after the Holy Eucharist. It has been three years since the programme was launched. Unfortunately, many people are not yet aware of cleanliness, so not much has changed. However, this does not dampen the spirit of the enthusiastic members of Soverdia Nagekeo to save the Mother Earth.

#### Collaboration

And this time, not only members of Soverdia Nagekeo District and Trash Hero Nagekeo, but also employees from CV Ozora Printing took part in educating people against the use of plastic. Apart from picking up litter together, they also contributed six sign boards that were installed at six points.



Discover our Save the Mother Earth campaign events of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024, captured in these photos, witnessing our unforgettable experiences, and join us on a journey you'll never forget.

Elfrin Hurek





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

### Provincial Chapter, World Sick Day and JPIC



#### SVD Ruteng Province Chapter

The SVD Ruteng Province Chapter, which took place in Ruteng from 19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024, featured participation from the SVD lay partner groups. There were two representatives from the Labuan Bajo group and the Sumba group who deliberated on the importance of Soverdia (SVD lay partner) members. Positive notes on supporting the activities of the SVD lay partner groups were received by the large numbers. A resolution urging parish priests to work with the mission secretary to organise Soverdia groups in their parishes was noted. When questioned about their emotions during the Chapter, both of them said, "We feel appreciated," and "We feel at home". Members of Soverdia are prepared to assist SVD in healing the wounds in both SVD members and the people they serve. Each group will participate in shared Eucharistic Celebrations and prayers, demonstrating Soverdia's support.

#### World Sick Day

Soverdia of SVD Ruteng Province took part in a variety of events on 11<sup>th</sup> February, World Sick Day, to demonstrate our support and unity with those who are sick.

- Hospital or Nursing Home Visits:  
We visit hospitals/nursing homes and spend time with patients and the elderly, bringing them encouragement and hope.



- Celebrating Holy Mass and praying together:  
We preside and assist prayer groups to pray for the good health and recovery of those who are sick.
- Fundraising:  
We help pay for medical care for those in need.

#### Soverdia and JPIC

Soverdia of SVD Ruteng Province has a strong commitment to service and support for the sick. Through the KPKC/JPIC SVD Ruteng, they promote and fight for justice, build a culture of peaceful living, and preserve the integrity of creation. Through this work of service, Soverdia SVD Ruteng Province realized the distinctive values of the Society of the Divine Word and carried out the ad extra mission of SVD globally.

Fr. Vitalis Hiburdin, SVD





## Papua New Guinea (PNG) – SVD Friends PNG

### Rights of Persons with Disabilities



#### Rights of Persons with Disabilities

In recognition of disability rights to people, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024, the SVD lay partners of Par parish had a program to pray for the vulnerable disabled, whose sickness and disease are part of their impairments. This program was in reflection for the World Day of the Poor in November 2023.

#### Arrival and Grouping

The day began with people with disabilities and their guardians arriving with their food and firewood for two days of prayer and togetherness. Margrethe Magol, president of the SVD lay partners, was instrumental in coordinating the groups and ensuring that the day was meaningful, enlightening, and strengthening for everyone to enjoy and celebrate. The day began with the grouping of specialized disability into categories. The lay partners were also grouped into categories based on the number of specialized groupings.

#### Spiritual Talk, Sports, and Fellowship Meal

Fr. Vincent Wasaring, JPIC coordinator and SVD lay partners' mentor gave a spiritual talk and affirmed human dignity and

human rights to protect the lives of the people with disabilities. Following the spiritual talk, the groups were instructed to proceed to the field for some sporting activities and games were played. The sports day was full of laughter, joy, and strength, especially witnessing how these people with disabilities were proud and felt that their dignity as human beings was recognized and lived on. Following the sports, there was a lunch to conclude the day.

#### Holy Mass and Empowering Moment

The two-day event for people with disabilities ended with a Holy Mass led by Fr. Bao The Nguyen. During the Mass, tokens of appreciation and gifts were presented to each person, which was an emotional and empowering moment for all. Many were touched by the impact that each disabled person has on their Christian faith.

Fr. Vincent Wasaring, SVD





## India (INH) – SVD Fraternity

### Sharing the Christmas Joy with the Underprivileged



#### Traditional Festive Spirit

SVD Fraternity intends to share the joy of Christmas with those living on the fringe of society, through a small gesture of providing them with new clothes in true festive spirit. Thus, on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2023 around twenty of us assembled at the Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help Church, Vikravandi Town, Villupuram, Tamil Nadu for the Holy Mass celebrated for SVD missionaries and SVD Fraternity.

#### Christmas with the poor widows and widowers

After the Mass, the Parish Priest joined the two Celebrants, and the Calendar 2024 of SVD Fraternity was released. Around thirty widows and widowers from RC Melakkondai Village, a substation of the Parish were given sarees, shirts, cakes, and snacks.

#### Lay Missionaries of the Divine Word

The Parish Priest, Fr. Martin Antony observed: “I am pleasantly surprised to notice that most of you are in your sixties but have travelled quite some distance to be with these people in solidarity. Moreover, your families allow you to pursue these



activities besides encouraging you and standing by you, thus proclaiming the Word of God as lay missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word. It augurs well for Mother Church to see laymen working with zeal for the poorest of the poor.”

#### Helping the Orphan Students, Old and Poor

We assembled on the premises of a small Church at Panayapuram where some forty Catholics had come together. Dhanraj, our local member who had helped us identify the beneficiaries, gave a brief introduction. We called upon the elders to release the SVD Fraternity calendars which they did with unbridled enthusiasm! We distributed new dresses, sarees, cakes, and snacks to the orphan students, old widows, and poor.

#### A Memorable and Different Christmas

Dhanraj was appreciated for his meticulous planning of the programme and John Williams, member and Tahsildar of the District, for his logistic support and participation in the sharing event.

Dominic Roche





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

### Provincial Chapter, Renewal of the Commitment and Other Activities



#### Celebrating Christmas

Christmas celebrations provide the perfect opportunity to express gratitude for the many blessings that God has bestowed upon us. After the Holy Mass, we had a get-together with dancing and games, followed by a fellowship meal. Christmas is also a chance to acknowledge and appreciate the dedication of our elderly, sick, and homebound members. Some of us visited them, creating a positive and appreciative atmosphere.

#### Renewing our Commitment

The DDW is continuing its journey of growth and formation in SVD life and spirituality. During the celebration of our founder's feast day on 15<sup>th</sup> January, the members renewed their commitment as SVD lay partners in the presence of INM Provincial, Fr. Tomy Thomas.

#### Smiling Faces with Mission Experiences

On 12<sup>th</sup> February, fifteen members visited Tala Mission, an SVD mission located in the tribal area of Raigad District. Upon arriving at the tribal villages, the villagers welcomed us with smiling faces and a cultural celebration. We motivated the children with spot prizes and gifts for their educational



pursuits. We were pleased to see the positive change since our previous visits, thanks to the efforts of the SVD missionaries. The younger generation had developed a sense of hope and desire for improvement and asked questions about the future and the need for guidance.

#### Surprise Guest from Hungary for Feed the Hungry

Fr. Lourdu Raju Chavvakula, Mission Secretary of the Hungary Province, not only participated with us in our Saturday Feed the Hungry initiative, but he also helped us serve those who were hungry. Afterward, while we were at the table, he talked about the lay partners in his Province and how they assist the SVDs with their mission. We shared new ideas.

#### Provincial Chapter

The VIII INM Provincial Chapter invited two lay partners, Leena Xavier from DDW Pune, and Andrew D'Souza from DDW Andheri Mumbai, to participate in the Chapter and express themselves.

Susan Noronha





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

### Commissioning of SVD Lay Mission Partners



On the Feast Day of our Founder, St. Arnold Janssen, the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 became a historic milestone for fourteen individuals who were officially commissioned as SVD Lay Mission Partners, DDW, Bandra. The DDW Bandra is the 3<sup>rd</sup> official lay mission partner group in INM.

The profound moment of reading our commitment collectively, unfolded in the presence of Bishop Barthol Barretto, the Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Bombay, Fr. Tomy Thomas, the Provincial Superior of INM, our Spiritual Director Fr. Jolly Mudakkampuram and forty priests who concelebrated the Eucharistic. The church was filled with witnesses, well-wishers, and special invitees, amplifying the emotional significance of the occasion. Each of us stood, holding beautiful candles symbolizing our commitment to be the light that shines in the world. Fr. Tomy presented us with a "badge of honour"!



Following the commissioning of the newest lay mission partners, thirty-five members of DDW Andheri chose to renew their commitment.

Fr. Jolly eloquently conveyed the essence of being a lay mission partner – to live the spirituality of Arnold Janssen and actively participate in the life of the SVD and its missionary work.

The Mass was a spiritually enriching experience. The evening concluded with joyous festivities, games, and a delectable dinner to celebrate the Feast and honour the newly commissioned and existing lay mission partners in Mumbai.

Special thanks to Fr. Henry D'Souza and the entire parish team of St. Theresa's parish for graciously hosting this memorable evening in the beautifully decorated St. Arnold's School quadrangle.

Yvonne Dsouza

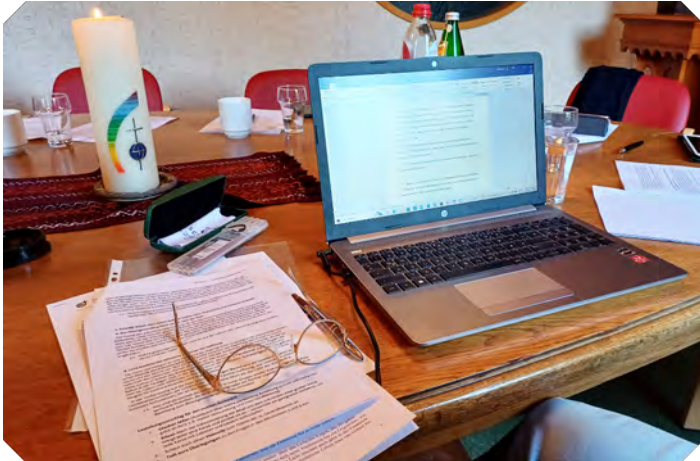




## EUROPA ZONE

### Germany (GER) – SVD-Partner

#### Prayer and more



In the last months, SVD-Partner Germany mainly was busy bringing people together in prayer and in preparing the SVD General Chapter.

#### Prayer

- **World Day of the Poor**  
In November SVD-Partner invited to pray together on World Day of the Poor. People around the world were connected by a bridge built out of prayer. War does not hinder us from joining in prayer. People in Ukraine were a part of the Prayer Bridge like they were on the first World Day of the Poor in 2017.  
As usual prayer and texts were written but for the first time the texts were presented via a digital calendar.
- **Rosary**  
During the pandemic, a small group started to pray the Rosary via Zoom. First SVD-Partner supported the group by providing Zoom meetings. Meanwhile, the weekly Rosary Prayer is an initiative of SVD-Partner.
- **Prayer Against Human Trafficking**  
Last year SVD-Partner was a part of the International Prayer against Human Trafficking coordinated by Talitha Kum, a network of catholic female orders against human trafficking and exploitation.

#### Arnoldus Day

Living in different parts of Germany SVD-Partner celebrated Arnoldus Day at different places. Some went to Steyl and St. Wendel to celebrate with SVD communities. For the first time, there was a celebration of Arnoldus Day in Düsseldorf, too.



#### General Chapter

During two meetings in Steyl and two online meetings, SVD-Partner worked through the paper for the General Chapter. Discussing all points intensively the answers were written down and sent to the Provincial in time.

#### Jubilee 1875-2025

Invited by the German SVD Province one member of SVD-Partner is part of the committee preparing the SVD jubilee program. SVD-Partner will participate in the program in different ways: by supporting SVD celebrations and making their offers.

#### Provincial Chapter

The Provincial Chapter of the German Province took place in Steyl from 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The SVD-Partner were invited and Michael Pöner represented the group.

Maria Wego







## PANAM ZONE



### Chile (CHI) – Alma Verbita

#### Different Activities



#### Beginning 2024 with New Challenges

On 4th January, we had a meeting with Fr. Lamberto Lalung, who is our Mission Secretary. During the meeting, Fr. Lalung assured us that he would help our community with national-level projection.

We are committed to working together, and to accomplish this, we plan to schedule visits to the capital and to regions where the SVD is present. During these visits, we will be organizing parish days and focusing on spirituality, charism, the lives of our saints, and engaging in prophetic dialogue. This project has been a great challenge since our inception, and we are excited to see it come to fruition. Let's move forward and achieve even more.

#### A Christmas with meaning

The Christmas celebration was shared at the Los Años Dorados home, where in addition to gifts and carols, our advisor, Fr. Gino Jiménez, blessed the new dining room and a visitors' room. This home is inhabited by elderly people affected by various illnesses and who can no longer live with their families.



#### Nemi Workshop

Our ALMA Verbita community is participating in the Second SVD Lay Partners Workshop at Nemi. The workshop has two lay partners appointed by the Province, namely María Paz Garcés, a teacher from the Germania School in Puerto Varas, and Lidia Alfaro, a pastoral agent from the Holy Spirit Parish in Santiago who is also a member of our missionary community. We are eagerly waiting for their return so that they can share their experiences with us.

#### Formation in the PANAM Subzone.

In our meetings with the leaders of the PANAM Subzone, accompanied by Fr. Nevil Da Silva, we have agreed that this year we will have formation in the Subzones taking the theme of the General Chapter "Your light must shine". In this way, we are in tune with the laity worldwide.

At the end of March, we will have the Second Formation Meeting, which will be led by Fr. José Miguel Alvarado, Chile.

Elena Ortiz





## Panama (CAM) – Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino (MLVD)

### Christmas and Season of Lent



#### Celebrating Christmas

Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino (MLVD) is committed to being present at all times to bring Baby Jesus to life in our hearts. We organised and participated in various community activities in our region from 15 to 23 December 2023.

#### Inauguration of St. Joseph Freinademetz Formation House

On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024, the Feast of St. Joseph Freinademetz, Mons. Edgardo Cedeño led the inauguration and blessing of the St. Joseph Freinademetz Formation House in Panama. He was accompanied by Fr. Matthew Yeng, the Regional Superior of CAM, and Fr. Mikael Malik Kabelen, the Vice Regional and Vocation Formator. The event was attended by the Divine Word Missionaries in Panama City, members of MLVD, and the general public.

#### Season of Lent

As we enter the season of Lent, we continue to feel the Lord's presence through the Stations of the Cross in several areas of the community.



#### Prayers for Nemi Workshop

We, the members of the SVD Lay Partners of Panama, together with our priests here, prayed for the success of the Second SVD Lay Partners Workshop in Nemi, Rome. May our Lord God, and the Blessed Virgin Mary always protect and guide the organizers and participants.

Rubiela Ramírez de Rodríguez  
Rogelio Rodriguez-Pizza





## Argentina (ARE) – Misioneros Socios Laicos Amigos del Verbo

### Love – Our Language



#### Meeting of Lay Partners of the ARE Province, Chaco District

In November, as part of the celebrations of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SVD mission in the Misiones, Chaco, a day of fellowship was held with the *Misioneros Socios Laicos Amigos del Verbo*. Fr. Gerardo Ferreira, Fr. Juan Rodríguez, and Brother Raúl Acosta from the Resistencia Community of the Divine Word Parish, Fr. Praful Kispotta and Fr. Pablo Bina from *San Miguel Arcángel*, Pampa del Indio Parish, with *Laicos del Verbo* from Presidencia Roca and Pampa del Indio participated in the celebration.

The atmosphere was one of fellowship and joy, typical of those who have God in their hearts. Arnold Janssen's family of God in the hot lands of the Chaco renews its commitment to work in the mission of bringing the Word of God to all who need to know it. "May the heart of Jesus live in our hearts and in the hearts of all people!

#### Thanksgiving Mass for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ARE Province

Amid an impressive natural setting, at the Wayside Shrine of Our Mother Mary, Holy Mass was celebrated in thanksgiving for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ARE Misiones, Chaco Province, a history that was marked by the arrival of Fr. Frederick Vogt when he disembarked at the port of Posadas on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December. Thank you, Triune God, for all the SVD priests and



brothers, and may St. Arnold Janssen continue to accompany their steps in spreading the Gospel, bringing the light of forgiveness, love, charity, and hope.

#### Celebration of our Founders' Day

In January we celebrate the feast of St Arnold Janssen, our Father and Founder, and the feast of St Joseph Freinademetz, the first missionary to bring the light to China. May the charism and love of our founders for the Society of the Divine Word enable us to continue to be effective partners in the work of the Kingdom.

Aurora Galarza





## United States (USS) – SVD Lay Associates

### Church Ministry and the Role of SVD Lay Partners



#### Church Ministry

Greetings from SVD Lay Associates at Holy Ghost Catholic Church Southern Province in Opelousas, Louisiana.

#### Ground Beautification Day

Fr. Justin Arockiasamy, is appointed as our new Pastor, and Fr. E. Manie Manuel as Associate Pastor, who is also our new Spiritual Director. We have been quite active in our ministry, particularly within our parish and community, as well as reaching out to our neighbours beyond state lines. Along with our parish priests, we organized Corpus Christi Processions, as well as our church's "Ground Beautification Day," which encouraged the church community to come out and share their gifts, resources, and talents to beautify our church grounds. Many of our parishioners shared the work. It was a great day for having fun and strengthening our church community relationships. This project helped all participants in developing a sense of belonging and pride in our church.

#### Role of SVD Lay Associates

Fr. Justin invited us for a meeting with the SVDs to discuss our role as SVD Lay Associates. We hosted a wonderful meal for



them to express our gratitude for all they do and the significant sacrifices they have made.

Every three months, we hold a Day of Prayer and Spiritual Reflection, followed by a business meeting, a yearly Triduum Prayer Service for Saint Arnold Janssen, Retreats, Bible studies, and Adoration Days. We have a Youth Conference to teach our youth about their Catholic faith.

To fulfil the Four Dimensions of SVD Prophetic Dialogue, we reach out to faith-seekers and help them understand our faith. We help the poor and marginalised by feeding the hungry, clothing the needy, and donating money to needy causes. We also embrace people of different cultures and try to understand the diversity of people given by God.

We attended the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of "St. Augustine's Seminary" of the Society of the Divine Word in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.

We now have eighty-six active members. We will continue to attract new members by inviting and telling them about our identity as SVD Lay Associates.

Christenia Ventress





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

### Various Activities



#### Celebration of the Feasts of Our Founders

The members of *Amigos do Verbo na Amazônia* celebrated the founding saints of their congregation, Saint Arnold Janssen and Saint Joseph Freinademetz, on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January this year. The celebrations were held after the planning of their activities for the year 2024.

#### Hot Soup to the Homeless

The distribution of soup to the riverside dwellers and the homeless continues on the city's waterfront taken over by the parishes of São Raimundo Nonato, Santo Antônio do Laguinho São Mateus, Nossa Senhora do Rosário and the Arapiuns region, belonging to the District of the City of Santarém-PA.

#### Spiritual Retreat

This February, during Carnival week, the AVA group from Rosario Parish held a spiritual retreat at the Congregation's



farm, led by Bro. Blasius Kindo, SVD Missionary, who reflected on the theme "Friendship Born by Faith".

#### Bazaar of Joy

For March we have planned a festive bazaar called the Bazaar of Joy, intending to raise money to purchase food baskets that will be distributed at Easter to the neediest families. This is another action that the group has been carrying out since last year.

#### Other Activities

The group from Rurópolis, Sr. Dorothy's district, holds Masses in honor of the Congregation's patron saints, supports the youth retreat, and celebrates the San Francisco community every month.

Oneide Costa

## An Inspiration Story

### Community Initiative: Serving Hot Soup to River Dwellers

Our initiative, which involves distributing hot soup, has been ongoing since 2023. It was conceived and designed by Fr. Michael Do who serves the Arapiuns River Region, which is home to about fifty-four communities.

A group of laypeople collaborated with him to make this dream a reality. The initial aim was to provide a portion of basic and healthy food to river dwellers who visit the city every weekend to collect their pensions and handle other issues. Most of them do not have a permanent place to live in the city or the resources to sustain themselves since they survive working in the fields. Some people live on the boat while staying in town.



Fr. Michael was able to get the funds to start the project, so we bought the necessary kitchen equipment. We were also given the place to produce the soup, which is in the central house of the Divine Word in Santarém. This effort is coordinated by the District Saint Arnold Janssen (Santarém).

As for resources, we rely on the support of the communities in the Arapiuns Region themselves, who donate some vegetables and cash. There are also donations from the parishes that make up the district, as well as from people who own businesses.



The local Caritas organisation is always helping us with donations of pasta and protein for the soup.

This activity is always carried out on the first and last Sunday of each month by volunteers from the groups. Today, the work is expanding and attracting the attention of other social classes, such as people living on the streets.

Below are links to short videos of this initiative produced by Fr. Leonardus Gade, Regional Superior, on his YouTube channel.

[Link Video 1](#)

[Link Video 4](#)

[Link Video 2](#)

[Link Video 5](#)

[Link Video 3](#)

[Link Video 6](#)

Pedro Rodrigues de Sousa



## Ecuador (ECU) – Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino (MILVED)

### Third National Assembly and Working with Migrants

#### Third National Assembly

The *Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino* (MILVED) from Ecuador Province held their Third National Assembly from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 with the theme “Lay SVD Disciples and Missionaries in a Wounded World”, in the District of El Oro, hosted by the parish of Maria Madre de la Iglesia de Huaquillas. They welcomed us with much love, to make us feel at home.

#### Prayer, Missionary Experience, and Cultural Evening

During the Assembly we participated in the Eucharist, accompanied by moments of prayer and meditation, formative spaces, missionary experiences, and a cultural evening where all the Districts presented themselves. To form and strengthen us in our missionary journey, we are always accompanied by our Mission Secretary, Fr. Navil Da Silva.

Each district had the opportunity to present the activities they carry out in the parishes, always promoting the teachings of Jesus: The Gospel of love without ignoring the challenges that arise, a product of the missionary journey. Fr. Navil motivated us to persevere in the mission that God has entrusted to us.

#### National Coordinators

For the first time, inspired by the Holy Spirit, we held elections for the National Coordination. The following were elected:

Coordinator: Joselin Pin

Vice Coordinator: Julissa Motoche

Secretary: Alcira Mejía

Treasurer: Kevin

Vocals: Mirna Cheme and Vilma Proaño

#### Serving Migrant Families

We would like to share our wonderful experience serving migrant families at the Arnold Project's community dining room. We prepared food and went out to meet families who were living on the streets. It was incredibly rewarding to share with them and feel like we were making a difference in a world that can often be a difficult place. We felt grateful to be an instrument of God in a wounded world.

We left the Assembly with great spiritual nourishment and a wonderful experience, concluding with the Eucharist in thanksgiving for all that we had encountered.

Fr. Navil Da Silva, SVD  
Mission Secretary





~ Last but not Least ~

## Information from the SVD



Logo for the sesquicentennial of the Foundation of the Society of the Divine Word.

Theme: Witness to the Light: From Everywhere for Everyone

In the following manner, each group can organize meaningful celebrations.

- Celebrations ad intra and ad extra, in the spirit of grateful remembrance, renewal of our commitments and witness to the light
- Organizing meaningful celebrations that will have some impact on the Local Church.
- Spiritual programs and pilgrimages
- Retreats on Arnold Janssen Spirituality
- Common programs Mission Partners in the province or in the country
- Publishing video testimonies of the Lay Partner.
- Organizing social and ecological programs in the parishes, centers, etc. to mark the occasion.
- Organizing sports and cultural programs.

Let this celebration be of gratitude, personal and communal reflection, and future orientation for the mission.

## ❖ Column ❖



Dear friends!

My name is Josephina Philomena Irene Clemens. But no one calls me Misses Clemens. Everybody calls me Jo. Please, do so, too.

I am keen on nature. That's the reason why I was asked to start a column in the International

SVD Lay Partner Newsletter. It is an honour!

In December I joined the SVDLP webinar dealing with Laudate Deum. I am still very much impressed by what the SVDLP groups are doing to live a life in harmony with all living beings in God's creation: raising awareness, starting recycling campaigns, and ecological farming. Great!

It is necessary that we learn more: learn more about the consequences of our way of life for other people and all creatures and learn more about scientific discoveries. There are many activities and workshops but we can't join them all. So let's talk and learn from each other!

Hope to hear from you!  
Jo



Maria Wego, SVD Partner Germany, posts JPIC topics on Instagram with the hand puppet Jo as the „author“.

Follow her on @svdpjpic



## ❖ Spirituality ❖

### Via Lucis – The Way of Light

The Way of Light – or Via Lucis in Latin – is a form of devotion that can be seen as a follow-up of the Way of the Cross. Like the Way of the Cross, it includes 14 stations taken from the Gospel texts. Just as the Way of the Cross during Lent traces Jesus' Passion, the Way of Light looks during Easter time at the disciples' journey with the Risen Christ from Easter morning to Pentecost. The Way of Light encourages us to shape everyday life from the Easter message and to live our faith.

The Way of Light was created in 1988 by the Salesians of Don Bosco in Italy. It quickly spread throughout the religious community. It was officially recognised as a modern form of devotion by the Church on 17 December 2001.

The images shown here were made by a Brazilian artist and can be seen in the SVD Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi.

Maria Wego



1<sup>st</sup> station  
Jesus is raised from the dead



2<sup>nd</sup> station  
The finding of the empty tomb



3<sup>rd</sup> station  
Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus



4<sup>th</sup> station  
Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus



5<sup>th</sup> station  
Jesus is known in the breaking of bread



6<sup>th</sup> station  
Jesus appears to the disciples in Jerusalem



7<sup>th</sup> station

Jesus gives the disciples his peace and the power to forgive sins

8<sup>th</sup> station

Jesus strengthens the faith of Thomas

9<sup>th</sup> station

Jesus appears by the Sea of Tiberias

10<sup>th</sup> station

Jesus forgives Peter and commands him to feed his sheep

11<sup>th</sup> station

Jesus commissions the disciples upon the mountain

12<sup>th</sup> station

The Ascension of Jesus

13<sup>th</sup> station

Mary and the disciples wait in prayer

14<sup>th</sup> station

The Holy Spirit descends at Pentecost



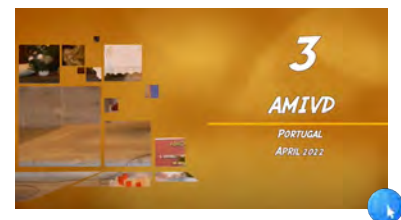
## List of Lay Partners' Videos

### 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.



John Kihanya Kiarie  
† 31.12.2023  
SVD Lay Partner, KEN

Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts.

We will miss you!

Rest in Peace





## Prayer

The secret of your blessing  
is revealed to us anew, hidden God,  
when we hear a good word  
and when the wind caresses us,  
unexpectedly and gently.

The effectiveness of your blessing  
knows no bounds, good God.  
It goes beyond the confines of our imagination  
and the labelling of our prejudices,  
liberating and strong.

The reach of your blessing  
is immeasurable, loving God.  
It encompasses the whole wide cosmos  
and descends into the depths of this world,  
transforming and faithful.

Let us trust in your blessing, faithful God.  
For he who trusts rises to life.

Fr. Franz Helm, SVD



Looking forward to new heavens and a new earth

(The artist of the Via Lucis pictures in Nemi added a 15<sup>th</sup> station.)

## Imprint

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