



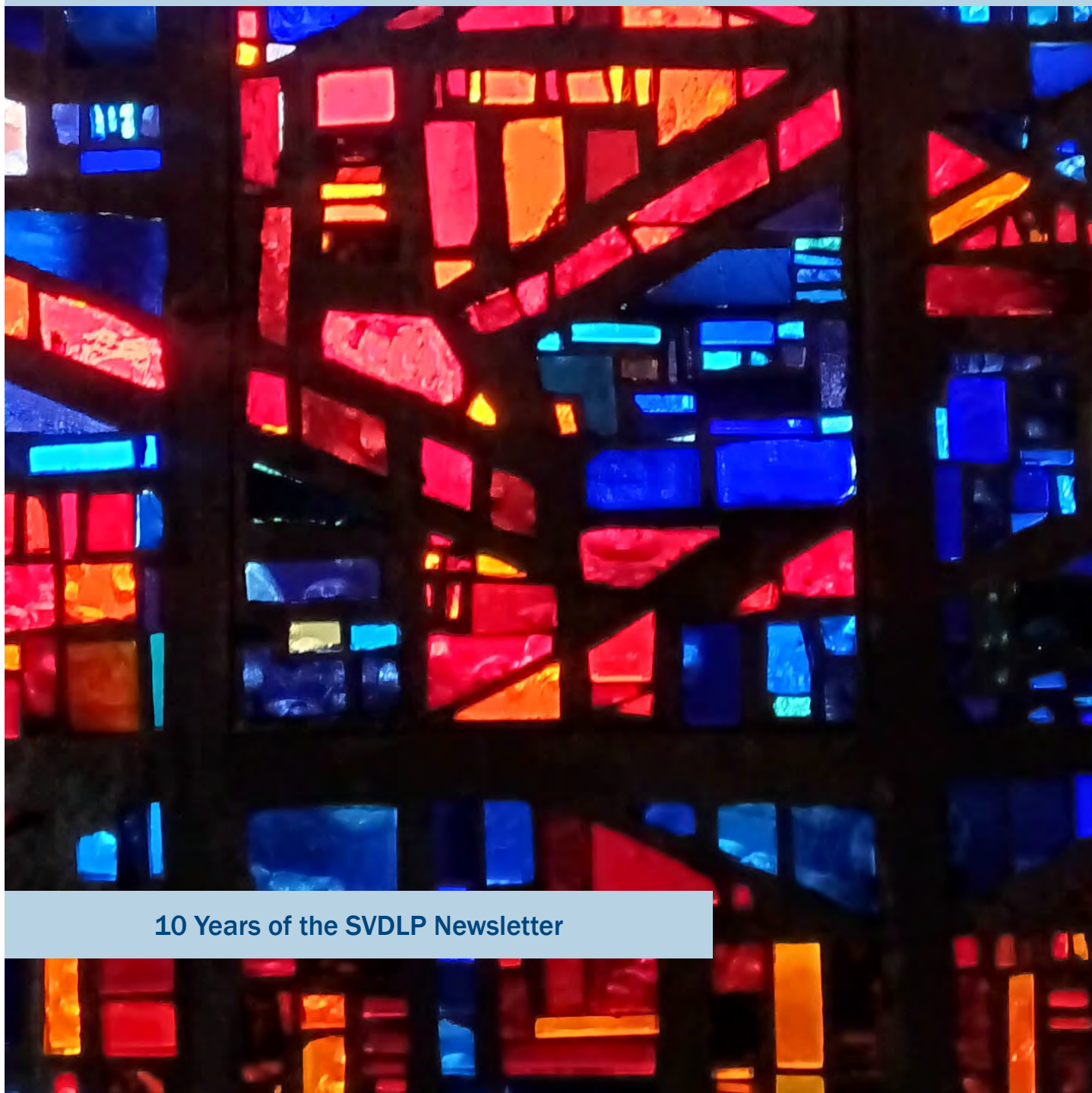
Societas Verbi Divini (SVD)

SVD Laici



EX GREGE

Nº 31 – 7/2026



10 Years of the SVDLP Newsletter

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Editorial

The Stories Between the Pages

As I began writing this editorial for the 10th anniversary issue of EX GREGE, I found myself asking a simple question: What have these ten years really taught me?

When I first became Editor, I thought my task was to edit articles. Looking back, I realize I have been entrusted with something far greater: the privilege of witnessing God's mission through the lives of SVD Lay Partners around the world.

Every few months, stories arrive from different countries and cultures. They speak of formation, outreach, celebrations, service, joys, and struggles. At first glance, they seem different. Yet, after reading hundreds of them, I have discovered one beautiful truth: the Gospel has many expressions, but only one heart.

A story shared in one corner of the world often finds a home in another. Without ever meeting, we become companions in mission. Stories travel where we cannot, quietly building bridges across continents.

Perhaps this is what the Society of the Divine Word means by Mission Circles—spaces where people gather to listen, share, and discern together. Over the years, I have come to see EX GREGE as one such circle. Though separated by continents and cultures, we meet through our stories, discovering that our diversity enriches the one mission we share.

It is fitting that this anniversary issue is published on the Feast of the Assumption. Mary first listened, trusted, and quietly said "yes". Her Magnificat became a testimony to God's work in her life. In the same way, every contribution to this newsletter bears witness to God at work through ordinary people who generously live the mission each day.

As Editor, my heartfelt thanks go to every writer, translator, photographer, reader, and contributor who has entrusted us with a part of their journey. My special appreciation goes to our editorial team, whose dedication, creativity, and quiet commitment have shaped EX GREGE over the past ten years. The artistic vision and thoughtful layout have transformed these pages into a welcoming home for our stories.

After ten years, I have come to believe that the greatest gift of EX GREGE is not simply the stories we publish, but the communion they create.

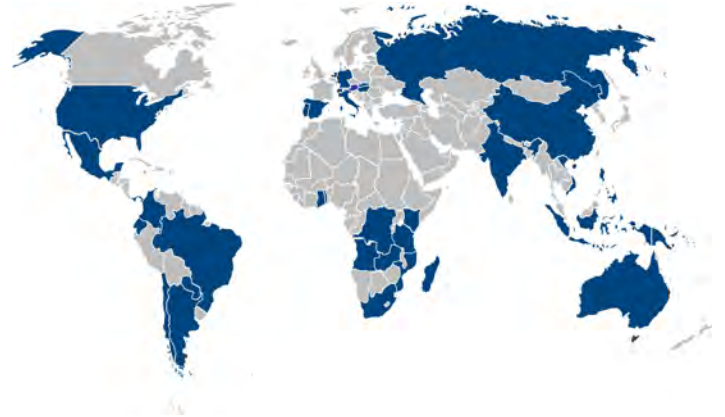
Different stories. One Gospel. One missionary family.

Susan Noronha
 Editor-in-Chief

10 Years of the SVDLP Newsletter – A Small Anniversary

In this issue, the special feature is dedicated to the newsletter itself. Ten years may not be a major anniversary, but waiting until the 25th anniversary seemed a little too long. So we are celebrating this small anniversary, especially as a great deal has happened over the past 10 years.

What has not remained static but has grown steadily is the number of contributions. There are now, on average, contributions from 18 groups across 13 countries / 16 PRMs. In total, over the past ten years, 81 groups from 37 countries / 50 PRMs have reported on their group and their work,



It all began in August 2016 with five group reports from five countries / five PRMs: Ghana (GHA), India (INM), Portugal (POR), Mexico (MEX) and the United States (USW). By the second issue in December 2016, the number had already grown to eight contributions from eight countries / PRMs.

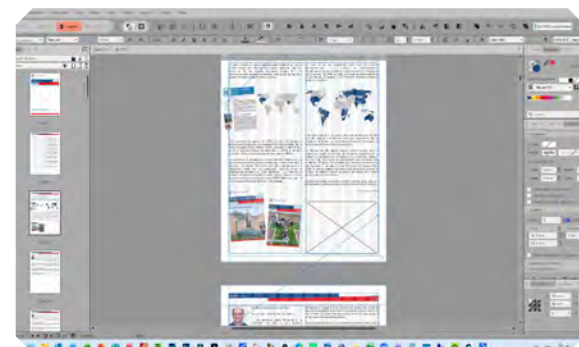
With issue 7 in August 2018, the layout changed and, in addition to the group contributions, a special feature and the 'Last but not least' section were introduced. This structure has remained in place to this day, with minor changes such as the thematic organisation of 'Last but not least'.

This is a remarkable figure, and there are certainly still groups that have not yet contributed, but will hopefully do so in the future. The growing participation demonstrates the interest in international exchange.

Producing the newsletter involves a great deal of work for the editorial team, from requesting articles, through editing, translating, layout and proofreading, right through to the finished issue. The layout alone takes an average of 35 hours. And as the number of contributions grows, so does the amount of work involved. But given the positive response from groups worldwide, the work is well worth it and is carried out with pleasure—now and in the future.

Here's to many more years of interesting contributions from all over the world in EX GREGE.

Text: Sophie Wego





10 Years of Sharing News

A Net That Sustains Our Mission

love received and shared". (MH 48)

Dear brothers and sisters,

I wanted to start my reflection with a brief quotation from Pope Leo XIV's recent encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, to once again acknowledge ourselves from the perspective of our shared dignity, which we enjoy by belonging to God and taking part in His Mission.

This Newsletter celebrates its tenth anniversary. In biblical symbolism, ten years signifies a complete time, that is, a cycle that deserves an overall view. Our perspective on the sustained initiative of intertwining stories, experiences of faith, faces, contexts, and cultures is full of richness and gratitude. The Newsletter we share three times a year contributes enormously to the fabric of an intercultural network of which we are all a part. Each one, with its own color, consistency, and elasticity, reminds us of the net that held 153 fishes without breaking apart (Jn. 21:11).

With gratitude, we celebrate the journey of groups that have been part of this mission for nearly fifty years. We stand in solidarity with those striving each day to deepen their identity and mission in the Divine Word, and we joyfully welcome the groups that are just beginning the evangelical adventure of

shared mission. Every issue of this newsletter bears witness to the unique journey of each group and enriches this intercultural tapestry.

The richness is at once overwhelming and thought-provoking, as it reflects diversity as a gift of the Holy Spirit, as well as the call to deepen the bonds of communion, formation and organization. "We are all missionary disciples" was Pope Francis' conviction, and in this spirit we all place ourselves to keep learning from one another and supporting our participation and service in God's Mission.

The variety and number of groups across the four Zones today requires a dynamic of communication and coordination that values and uses the learning of the 'elders', while also being open to listening to the needs of the newcomers. We are walking together in shared discernment to achieve greater cohesion within our groups, a common proposal for ongoing formation in the spirituality, charism and mission of the SVD, and an organizational framework at the Sub-Zonal, Zonal and Inter-Zonal levels.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the editorial team who, with professionalism, dedication and a missionary heart, have kept us connected for a decade. In the same spirit, I warmly invite those with the gift of writing and documenting our shared experiences to help add consistent threads to this common fabric of the Divine Word Missionary Lay Partners.

In the love of the Triune God,

Fr. Marcelo Cattáneo, SVD
Generalate Mission Secretary





A Milestone to Celebrate

The SVD Lay Partners, members of the Arnoldus Family, are growing in most provinces and regions around the world. This growth is evident through their activities. We are all aware that actions speak louder than words, as people know a person's intentions by their deeds.

St. Arnold Janssen, deeply united with the Holy Spirit, recognized the value of lay partners for the missionary congregation. He built the society with trust in the Spirit and in his lay collaborators, namely Helene Wolters (Holland), Magdalena Leitner (Austria), Biber (Austria), Joseph Althoff (Germany), Emilie Huch (Poland), and others who were strong pillars. Over the years, countless people have prayed for the Society to have more vocations and effective mission work, supported missionaries during their tribulations, joined in their activities, and spread the message of God's power through their involvement in the missions.

We see this spirit and enthusiasm spreading in various countries through many activities. When we know the convictions and involvement of others, we are inspired. To provide inspiration and awareness regarding the activities of the lay partners, the SVD Lay Partners newsletter, *Around the World*, now SVD Laici, EX GREGE was started by a committed, inspired, and enthusiastic editorial team and other collaborators.

Today, memory is important. The newsletters do not only record information or display photos; they also help us remember our vocation and the richness that flows through it in concrete action. This newsletter is a "redemptive memory", recalling past growth and struggles while looking confidently toward the future.

Due to the digital world, communication has taken many directions. Plenty of information is available, and at times, it is too much to comprehend, leading people to pass on quickly to the next item. This newsletter is different; it contains lived experiences where faith is shared and portrayed through actions. These aspects are well captured by the contributors, and the editorial team has worked meticulously to collect, edit, and format the newsletter. In this publication, lay partners are recognized, their activities are remembered, and their groups are acknowledged.

As you move forward, may the Word empower you, let the Light of Christ be known through your actions, and let the SVD lay partners grow with wisdom, strength, and unity to witness to the world.

Congratulations to all of you, with special thanks to the editorial team headed by Susan Noronha from India, Sophie Wego from Germany [Layout], and all the other supporters and well-wishers.

Stanislaus Lazar, SVD
Generalate Mission Secretary (2012–2025)

Today, the Hearts of the SVD Lay Missionaries are Filled with Joy

From ARE Province, we congratulate EX GREGE – SVDLP Newsletter / SLSVD Boletín on its 10th Anniversary. Every page, every article, and every image has reflected one beautiful reality: that God's love, through the Arnoldus charism, continues to bear abundant fruit in our land.

Inspired by the spirit of St. Arnold Janssen, who understood that communication is a vital tool for mission, we congratulate everyone for their commitment to communicating the truth, inspiring hope, and sharing the joy that springs from an encounter with the Divine Word.

Aurora Galarza (ARE)

From ARE Province (Misiones and Chaco), Argentina, we congratulate the SLSVD Newsletter on its 10th Anniversary. Through its pages, the love of God and the richness of the Arnoldus charism continue to reach beyond borders.

Lorena Paola Vera (ARE)

With great joy, we join in celebrating the 10th Anniversary of EX GREGE, sharing with the entire Divine Word Family the work that the Lord our God continues to accomplish among us.

Blanca García (PAR)

A Special Greeting to EX GREGE

As EX GREGE celebrates its 10th Anniversary, we pray that it will continue to be a source of information, formation, and missionary inspiration, strengthening the communion of the Divine Word Family.

Atanásio Walasse (MOZ)



How well do you know the SVDLP Newsletter?

1) How many pages do all the issues of the newsletter have in total?

- a) 678
- b) 759
- c) 932

2) Was there a special edition of the newsletter?

- a) Yes, to mark the Holy Year 2025.
- b) Yes, to mark the 150th anniversary of the SVD.
- c) No, there were always only three issues a year.

3) Where did the first editorial team members come from?

- a) India and the USA
- b) Kenya and the Philippines
- c) Panama and Indonesia

4) Since when has the newsletter been called 'ex grege'?

- a) Issue 7/2018
- b) Issue 22/2023
- c) Issue 29/2025

5) How many pages were there in the first issue?

- a) 5
- b) 8
- c) 12

6) Since the newsletter was first published, which three SVD Fathers served as Superior General?

- a) Fr. Heinrich Barlage, Fr. Antonio M. Pernia, Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden
- b) Fr. Heinz Kulüke, Fr. Antonio M. Pernia, Fr. Anselmo Ricardo Ribeiro
- c) Fr. Heinz Kulüke, Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden, Fr. Anselmo Ricardo Ribeiro

7) In 2023, the newsletter reported on a first. What was it?

- a) For the first time, two SVD lay groups from different zones met.
- b) The first videos of SVD lay groups were published.
- c) The first zone meeting took place.

8) How many issues of 'A visit to Steyl' were published during the pandemic?

- a) 2
- b) 4
- c) 5

9) Since which issue has the SVD Laity's common logo been featured on the front page of the newsletter?

- a) Issue 24/2024
- b) Issue 27/2025
- c) Issue 29/2026

10) What has never appeared on a front cover?

- a) a picture of St. Arnold Janssen
- b) a picture of St. Joseph Freinademetz
- c) a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary





AFRAM ZONE



South Africa (BOT) – SVD Lay Partners

Growing Together in Faith and Mission



Retreats – Renewed in Faith

The SVD Lay Partners from Phalaborwa, Giyani, and Malamulele continue to grow in faith, formation, and shared mission through regular meetings, recollections, and community outreach. A recent retreat, enriched by presentations from SVD missionaries and Sr. Marita, SSPS, offered participants an opportunity to deepen their spirituality and Arnoldian charism. Holy Eucharist, prayer, and fellowship strengthened their commitment to missionary discipleship.

Formation for Mission

Formation remains a priority. The group continues to use the SVD Lay Partners Formation Manual prepared by Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, SVD, while adapting it to their local context. Bible sharing using the *Lumko* method, daily online reflections shared by SVD missionaries, regular meetings, and Zoom gatherings help sustain their spiritual journey.

Their mission also finds expression in simple yet meaningful acts of service. Members collect clothing for families in need, nurture palm seedlings for parish outstations to use on Palm Sunday, visit the sick and bereaved, and actively participate in

Small Christian Communities. Recently, they introduced a touching initiative of preparing Sunday meals for their priests, who often return late and exhausted after celebrating Mass in distant outstations.

Walking Together

These initiatives reflect the spirit of SVD lay partnership: growing in prayer, formation, and service while responding to the needs of the Church and the local community. Together, they continue to witness that mission is lived not only through great events, but also through faithful acts of love, generosity, and shared commitment.

Text: Thandi Mazibuko

Photos: SVD lay partners BOT media team



Ghana (GHA) – SVD Lay Partners

Growing Together in Faith and Mission



Annual Retreat

The Tesano group, comprising members from the Arnold Janssen Community and St. Charles Lwanga Parish, held its annual spiritual retreat at the St. Arnold Janssen Spiritual Centre, Tuba, on 1 May 2026. The day was dedicated to prayers and meditation, and concluded with a fellowship meal, where members shared love and laughter.

Pentecost Novena

SVD Lay Partners from parishes across Ghana participated actively in the Pentecost Novena held from 15 to 23 May. The celebration reached its climax on Pentecost Sunday, when the Lay Partners renewed their commitment through a special consecration to the Holy Spirit. As a sign of gratitude for the many blessings received during the novena, they also presented the offertory during the Eucharistic celebration.

New Provincial Superior for Ghana Province

On 1 June 2026, members of the St. Arnold Janssen Fraternity gathered at the Bishop Noser SVD Retirement Residence, McCarthy Hill, Accra, for the installation of the new Provincial Superior, Fr. Andrew Obeng, SVD, and his Provincial Council. Fr. Andrew succeeds Fr. Cyprian Kuupol, SVD, whose dedicated leadership and service were gratefully acknowledged at the conclusion of his term. The celebration brought together SVD



confreres, the SSps and SSpsSAP Sisters, and SVD Lay Partners in a spirit of unity and thanksgiving.

Empowerment in the Holy Spirit

The Tamale Community organized a programme of spiritual empowerment in the Holy Spirit, providing members with an opportunity to deepen their faith through prayer and reflection on the Word of God. The initiative aimed at fostering personal spiritual growth and renewal. Similar programmes are planned in other communities, where priests will continue to accompany and strengthen the Lay Partners in their missionary journey.

Text: Irene Atignongo

Photos: Media Team Ghana Province



Mozambique (MOZ) – Leigos Associados a Congregação do Verbo Divino (LACVERDI), Beira

Forming Missionary Leaders in Búzi

Inspiring Young People

On 27–28 June, LACVERDI conducted a two-day formation mission at St. Anthony of Barada Parish in the historic community of Novo Sofala, District of Búzi, Mozambique. The programme sought to strengthen the missionary spirit of young people and candidates preparing to become SVD Lay Partners.

The first day brought together 52 young people from the parish and boarding school. Atanásio Walasse, LACVERDI Coordinator, led a formation session on the dangers of online and offline gambling and drug abuse, encouraging participants to make responsible choices rooted in Christian values.

The second day focused on the identity and mission of the SVD Lay Partners. Participants reflected on the life of St. Arnold Janssen, the SVD charism, and the vocation of lay missionaries. The programme concluded with the distribution of formation materials to support their ongoing missionary journey within their parish communities.

Living the Gospel through Solidarity

On 7 June 2026, LACVERDI-Beira organized the 3rd edition of *Junho Solidário* 2026 at Blessed Isidore Bakanja Church in Nhangu, Beira, bringing together the local community for a day of faith, solidarity, and service. The day began with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist and brought together more than 500 children from different communities and Christian denominations.

The outreach included a fellowship meal, the distribution of school supplies to orphaned and vulnerable children, clothing for families in need, and a formation session for young girls on early marriage and domestic violence. Members also visited a home for the elderly, sharing meals, friendship, and hope with the residents.

Through these initiatives, LACVERDI - Beira continues to proclaim the Gospel by forming missionary disciples and serving those most in need, witnessing God's love through faith, solidarity, and compassionate action.

Text: Atanásio Walasse

Photos: Atanásio Walasse, Joaquim Chivia



A Journey of Faith, Mission and Gratitude



The SVD Lay Partners (LACVERDI) in Beira, Mozambique, have joyfully embraced their missionary vocation since the group was established in 2023 at St. Francis Xavier Parish, Ndunda.

As EX GREGE celebrates its 10th Anniversary, we are grateful for this opportunity to share a glimpse of our history, our present mission, and our heartfelt gratitude as members of the worldwide Divine Word Family.

Our Beginning

Our story began during the celebrations marking the 25th Anniversary of the Divine Word Missionaries in Mozambique in Maputo. Inspired by the witness and charism of the SVDs, we embraced Arnoldus spirituality and deepened our commitment as lay missionaries in the life and mission of the Church.

Presence and Mission in the Community

Today, LACVERDI–Beira has grown to more than 30 members who witness God's love through prayer, fraternity, solidarity, and service. In collaboration with the Divine Word Missionaries, we are actively involved in:

Pastoral Ministry: Formation of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and service in the Justice and Peace Ministry.



Social Outreach: Visiting the sick and promoting human dignity through community service.

Skills Development: Organising vocational training, including baking, basic electrical work, and other practical courses that empower individuals and strengthen families.

Growing in Faith Together

Our mission is sustained through ongoing formation, prayer, and close collaboration with the Divine Word Missionaries. We are especially grateful to the SSps Sisters, particularly Sr. Edite Mário, whose guidance during our retreats has enriched our human and spiritual growth.

Atanásio Walasse



Zambia (ZAM) – SVD Lay Partner, Kabwe

Growing Together in Mission



Strengthening Our Mission

The Kabwe SVD Lay Partners continue to grow in their missionary vocation through formation, outreach, and active participation in the life and mission of the Arnoldus Family. Guided by the SVD charism, they remain committed to strengthening their faith while serving communities with dedication and hope.

Walking with Future Missionaries

One of the group's most meaningful ministries is its close relationship with the SVD Novitiate. The Lay Partners accompany the novices they have adopted as their spiritual children, strengthening the bonds of the Arnoldus Family through friendship, cultural sharing, prayer, and encouragement.

Their commitment was especially evident during the Investiture Ceremony of eight new novices on 26 June, where they celebrated this important milestone and presented small gifts as a sign of their continued support and accompaniment.

Formation for Mission

A recollection on 27 June at St. Monica outstation, led by Fr. Lennon Kapinga, SVD, encouraged the Lay Partners to remain faithful and effective missionary disciples while



bringing the Gospel closer to communities living far from the town centres.

On 14–15 March, the group participated in a two-day workshop facilitated by Fr. Klemens Amaunut, SVD, focusing on identifying community assets, mobilizing local and external resources, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and supporting the pastoral mission of the Arnoldus Family and the SVD mission in Zambia. These sessions strengthened the members' ability to respond creatively to the needs of their local communities.

A Mission of Communion

Through regular formation meetings, outreach initiatives, and social projects, the Kabwe Lay Partners continue to deepen their commitment to mission. Their journey reflects the spirit of communion that characterizes the Arnoldus Family, as they walk together in faith, support future missionaries, and joyfully witness the Gospel through service.

Text: Manase Phiri

Photos: SVD lay partners, ZAM media team





ASPAC ZONE



Indonesia (IDE) – SVD Lay Partners, Lembata

What We Throw Away Returns to Our Plates



A Beach in Need of Care

A light drizzle covered the shores of Rayuan Kelapa, Lewoleba Utara, Lembata Regency, on 14 March 2026. That morning, dozens of young people gathered on the beach, where the shoreline had been littered with waste washed in by the waves.

At 6:30 a.m., they began collecting plastic, bottles, and household waste. As their sacks gradually filled, they became a visible sign of the group's care and commitment to the environment.

A Community Initiative

The clean-up formed part of the Ecological Fasting Movement, initiated by the St. Yosef Freinademetz Waikomo Catholic Youth in collaboration with the SVD Lay Partners of the Lembata Subdistrict and supported by Plan Indonesia through the PANTAI Project. The activity covered the coastal areas of RT 15, RT 16, and RT 17.

More than a beach clean-up, the initiative was a living expression of faith. Caring for the environment was seen as part of the Christian call to protect God's creation. For the local coastal communities, the sea is a precious source of life that must be cared for and preserved.

Robiyson Wilhelmus Wuwur, leader of the St. Yosef Freinademetz Catholic Youth of Waikomo, reminded participants that caring for the environment is a shared responsibility. Ms. Ika from Plan Indonesia highlighted that waste thrown into the sea eventually returns to people through the food chain.

The message was clear: protecting the sea is not only about keeping our beaches clean, but also about safeguarding life for future generations.

Stewards of our Common Home

For the Catholic Youth and the SVD Lay Partners of the Lembata Subdistrict, this initiative reflects an ongoing commitment to care for our common home. In the light of faith, protecting the environment becomes a tangible expression of love for God and responsible stewardship of His creation.

Text: Yoseph Yoneta Motong Wuwur

Photos: Erik Wuwur



Indonesia (IDE) – Soverdia Nagekeo

Living the SVD Charism in Everyday Life



For the members of Soverdia Nagekeo, the SVD motto, “Our name is our mission” is a call to live the Gospel through prayer, service, and missionary commitment.

As an SVD lay missionary community of the Ende Province, we live this mission through the Society of the Divine Word’s four characteristic dimensions: Bible Apostolate, Mission Animation, Communication, and Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

Bible Apostolate

Our love for the Word of God is nurtured through regular Bible reading, reflection, and sharing. We have also deepened our understanding of Sacred Scripture through formation sessions with Fr. Lukas Jua, SVD, a Scripture scholar, as well as through Bible quiz activities that strengthen both our knowledge and our faith.

Mission Animation

Mission Animation remains at the heart of our community life. We support missionary work through mission fundraising initiatives, the accompaniment of Soverdia Children, collaboration with SVD missionaries, and by introducing the spirit and mission of Soverdia to parishes and mission communities.



Communication

Through communication, we share our experiences of faith and mission with others, believing that every story can become a source of hope and inspiration.

JPIC

Through our JPIC ministry, we strive to be signs of God's compassion. We visit people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), accompany sick members and the elderly parents of SVD missionaries, support victims of natural disasters, and care for our common home through environmental initiatives, including regular plastic waste collection.

As we continue our journey, we remain grateful for our vocation as SVD lay partners and renew our commitment to participate actively in the mission of the Church and the Society of the Divine Word.

“Our name is our mission.”

Text and photos: Elfrin Hurek Making



Indonesia (IDJ) – Soverdia

Growing in Mission and Commitment



Vocation Promotion

During Vocations Week in April, the SVD Lay Partner group joined vocation promotion activities organized by the SVD Novitiate, Batu-Malang, and the Surya Wacana Major Seminary, Malang. Around 100 young Catholics participated, learning about the missionary vocation and the worldwide mission of the SVD. The Lay Partners also took part in a Vocation Action Booth together with the SSsP Sisters and the SVD Priests and Brothers.

Mission Rosary

Throughout May, SVD Lay Partners dedicated themselves to praying the Mission Rosary for SVD missionaries and their mission worldwide. At the IDJ Province level, every Monday members from seven districts across seven islands gathered virtually, strengthening fraternity through prayer and fellowship. At the parish and community levels, members also prayed the Mission Rosary in one another's homes, fostering closer relationships with families.

Welcoming New Members

To involve more parishioners in the ministry of the SVD Lay Partner group, several SVD parishes welcomed and confirmed new members. They recited the Membership Promise as a sign of their commitment to surrender themselves to the Most Holy



Trinity. Guided by the light of the Holy Spirit and the spirituality and charism of St. Arnold Janssen, they pledged to serve God and proclaim His Word to others. The celebration also included the Renewal of the Membership Promise by existing members.

Receiving Mission Cross

SVD Lay Partners who have been active members for more than five years and have committed themselves to lifelong membership received the SVD Lay Partner Mission Cross after a period of preparation and formation. Receiving the Mission Cross is a sign of fidelity and commitment to God's mission with the SVD Lay Partner group and the Society of the Divine Word. It accompanies and strengthens members throughout their missionary journey and remains a source of comfort throughout life.

Text: Paulina Suharsi

Photos: SVD lay partners IDE



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

Rooted in the Word, Growing in Faith

We in Meghalaya continue to grow in faith through prayer, formation, and service to our communities in the hills of Northeast India.

Every Sunday, after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, we conduct catechism classes for children for about an hour or more whenever possible. Through these sessions, we help them understand the importance of their Catholic faith and encourage them to know and love Jesus through His Word.

Praying Together as Families

We also take part in Family Prayer Meetings held in our respective villages. Whenever we have the opportunity, we share simple reflections on the Gospel, helping families to deepen their faith and strengthen their trust in God amid their daily lives.

Building Small Christian Communities

Every Wednesday, we gather with the hostel children who are under the care of the SVD Fathers and with the families in our villages for KBB (Small Christian Community) prayer meetings. Reading and reflecting on the Word of God together has

brought us closer as a community and strengthened our Christian life.

Growing in God's Word

One of our greatest joys is to see children and families eagerly participating in these gatherings. Many have developed the beautiful habit of reading the Bible regularly and praying together at home. Their growing love for God's Word encourages us to continue our small mission with renewed enthusiasm.

We thank our loving God for His constant guidance and blessings. As SVD Lay Partners, we remain committed to sharing His Word and being simple witnesses of His love wherever we are called to serve.

Aida Mary Sutnga

Photos: Aida Mary Sutnga, ING Media Team



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

Renewed in Spirit



Lenten Journey

DDW Andheri began their Lenten journey with a Lenten Recollection on 22 February, offering members an opportunity for prayer, reflection, and spiritual renewal as they prepared for the season of Lent.

Second India Subzone Workshop

From 27 February to 2 March, the SVD Lay Partners Workshop was hosted by the Mumbai Province under the theme, “SVD Lay Partners as Missionaries of Hope”. The workshop provided a rich experience of prayer, formation, fellowship, and sharing. The highlight was the presence of Fr. Marcelo Cattáneo, SVD, General Mission Secretary, who inspired participants to embrace their missionary vocation by becoming witnesses of hope in their families, workplaces, parishes, and communities. Through talks, group discussions, and the sharing of experiences, participants deepened their understanding of the SVD charism and strengthened their commitment to the mission.

Formed for Mission

On 14-15 March, members undertook a mission trip to Tala, where they visited Fr. Nickson Gabru, SVD, and Fr. John Singarayar, SVD. The visit offered firsthand experience of



missionary life and the Church's outreach to local communities. Through prayer, the Eucharist, fellowship, and sharing around a bonfire, participants deepened their faith and experienced the joy of mission and community.

A Table of Freedom

The Lenten season concluded with a meaningful Lenten Passover on 29 March. Participants recreated the Passover experience as described in the Book of Exodus. Through symbolic rituals, Scripture readings, prayers, and a fellowship meal, they journeyed through the events of Israel's liberation from Egypt, gaining a deeper appreciation of God's saving action in history. The experience also helped participants reflect on the connection between the Jewish Passover and the Eucharist instituted by Christ, renewing their faith and strengthening their sense of community and gratitude.

Text: Anupama Subodhanan
Photos: Susan Noronha



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

Various Activities



Visit to Home for the Aged

On 18 April 2026, eight members visited Walburga's Home for the Aged, managed by the Sisters of Our Lady of Fatima, Pune Diocese. We spent time with the elderly through songs, games, prayer, and fellowship. We also donated some cash towards the home's needs.

While saddened to learn that some residents we had met earlier had passed away and some were ill, we were grateful for the opportunity to bring them joy and companionship. As we departed, they requested our prayers and future visits, making it a truly meaningful experience.

Mission and Fellowship at SVD Seminary, Goa

From 10 to 16 May, eleven members and three children visited the SVD Seminary in Raia, Goa, where they were warmly welcomed by the Rector, Fr. Innocent Fernandes, SVD.

The group interacted with Fr. Aaron Joachim Dias, SVD, a missionary serving in the Democratic Republic of Congo, who shared the joys and challenges of missionary life. They also met the seminarians and kept missionaries and the people they serve in their prayers.



During the visit, Fr. Michael Pereira, SVD, introduced the group to a migrant tribal settlement in Pernem, where he is helping families obtain Government identity documents and access basic human rights.

The group visited Holy Family Church, the Pilar Pilgrim Centre, the Basilica of Bom Jesus, and other historic churches in Goa. The pilgrimage concluded with fellowship and recreation, making it a spiritually enriching experience.

Welcoming our new Spiritual Director

On 14 June, we warmly welcomed Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, SVD, as the new Spiritual Director of DDW Pune.

In his introductory address, he reminded us that "Feed the Hungry" lies at the heart of our identity and mission, calling us to serve with courage, compassion, dedication, and prudence. We are grateful for his guidance and look forward to growing in faith and service under his leadership.

Text: Joseph Kakkanatti
Photos: DDW Pune



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

Faith Transforming Life: A Gospel Response to a Nation's Call



Faith in Action

On 28 June 2026, thousands of Filipinos gathered peacefully in the White Ribbon March, a public expression of hope for the nation's future. Organized by interfaith and civil society groups, the event began with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at the EDSA Shrine, presided over by Bishop Jose Colin Bagaforo of the Diocese of Kidapawan. The participants then proceeded in a peaceful march to the EDSA People Power Monument in Quezon City, praying and advocating for justice, integrity, accountable leadership, and respect for the dignity of every person.

An Interfaith Witness

One of the most inspiring aspects of the gathering was the participation of people from different faith traditions—Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Born-Again Christians, and other religious communities—who came together in a commitment to peace, justice, and the common good.

Missionary Disciples in Today's World

The LSSAJ, a mission-driven organization, recognizes that these aspirations resonate with biblical principles. As Scripture reminds us, we are called to “seek the welfare of the city” (Jer 29:7) and to pray for those entrusted with public responsibility (1 Tim 2:1-2). Guided by the vision of “Faith Transforming Life” the members believe that lasting transformation begins with Christ. When hearts are renewed by God’s grace, lives are changed, families are strengthened, communities are restored, and nations are blessed.

Jesus calls His followers to be “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world” (Mt 5:13-16). Our mission is not defined by political movements but by the Kingdom of God. Through prayer, faithful service, compassionate witness, and the proclamation of the gospel, we participate in God’s work of transforming lives. May this experience continue to inspire us to live our faith with courage, humility, and hope, pointing others to Christ, the true source of lasting peace and transformation.

Text: Daisy A. Leones
Photos: Tony Alvarado



The Philippines (PHC) – Lay Mission Partners, Divine Word College, Calapan

Celebrating 150 Years of Mission

A Journey of Faith and Renewal

The celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) became a time of spiritual renewal for the Divine Word College of Calapan (DWCC) community. Throughout the year, students, teachers, staff, and Lay Partners participated in activities that deepened their faith and strengthened their missionary identity.

Growing Together in Mission

The journey began with the arrival of the Jubilee Cross on 24 November 2025, received from St. Augustine Seminary, followed by the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. Renato L. Malbog, SVD, together with the seminary formators.

Another significant initiative was the Enthronement of Patron Saints in the college offices and schools. Led by the Campus Ministry Office, it encouraged teachers, staff, and students to deepen their faith and seek the intercession of the saints in their daily lives.

The opening of the school year was marked by the arrival of the SVD Mission Lamp, brought by Fr. Ferdinand Antonine Bajao, SVD. As a symbol of Christ the Light, the Mission Lamp united the Divine Word schools of the Philippine Central Province in celebrating 150 years of SVD missionary service under the theme "One Heart, Many Faces."

Inspiring the Next Generation

Young people also participated in the WORD Youth Summit, held from 15 to 18 January 2026 at Christ the King Mission Seminary, joining students from Arnoldus schools and SVD parishes in celebrating their missionary vocation.

The celebrations concluded with the Gawad Arnoldus, organized by the Holy Spirit Novitiate, recognizing the generous and faithful support of the SVD Lay Partners to the Novitiate over many years.

These celebrations renewed the missionary spirit of the Divine Word College of Calapan community and inspired all to continue proclaiming the Gospel with faith, hope, and joyful service.

Text: John Angelo Abrigo Alejo and Shirley Mendoza

Photos: John Angelo Abrigo, Rosita Ferrer and Shirley Mendoza



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

Third Annual Assembly



Gathering as One Missionary Family

The SVD-PHS Lay Mission Partners successfully held their 3rd Annual Assembly from 4–6 June 2026, hosted by LaMP Bohol at the HNU Mission and Spirituality Sanctum, Tagbilaran City, Bohol. The gathering brought together 75 Lay Mission Partners from Agusan, Surigao, Cebu, and Bohol for a meaningful experience of fellowship, faith renewal, mission reflection, and collaborative planning.

The assembly opened with the Holy Eucharist presided over by Fr. I Wayan Heriyanto, SVD, Mission Secretary of SVD-PHS. The opening sessions provided an opportunity for the groups to share updates, challenges, membership developments, and initiatives in strengthening lay mission partnership.

Reflecting on Our Shared Mission

The afternoon featured a reflection on Mission Circles by Fr. Marcelo Cattaneo, SVD, General Mission Secretary. Participants reflected on the vital role of Lay Partners in the SVD mission and concluded the day with a fellowship dinner at the SVD St. Gabriel Community, strengthening bonds of friendship and communion.

On the second day, participants were enriched by the SVD-PHS Mission Secretary's Report and the Mission Direction



presented by Fr. Narciso Cellan, SVD, Provincial Superior. The groups also developed their action plans for the coming year.

Strengthening the Arnoldus Family

A visit to the Holy Spirit School for an enriching encounter with the SSs and SSs Associates, a campus tour of Holy Name University, and a fellowship dinner at the St. Arnold Janssen Retirement Home strengthened communion within the Arnoldus Family.

A Journey of Faith and Hope

The assembly concluded with a Faith Tour, visiting the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine, the Virgin of Guadalupe Shrine, the Chocolate Hills, the Man-made Forest, Kinaiyahan Forest Park, and the Mirror of the World. The experience deepened their faith, creation, and their shared missionary vocation.

The assembly renewed the SVD Lay Mission Partners' commitment to journey together in faith, service, and mission.

Text: Nanelyn D. Wate
Photos: LaMP Bohol, SVD PHS



Papua New Guinea (PNG) – SVD Friends PNG

Strengthening Justice Through Partnership



Working Together

In June 2026, a three-day workshop on the Collective Reflection and Evaluation of the Transformative Response to Law and Justice Issues in Madang Province was held at the Megiar Pastoral Centre, Papua New Guinea. The workshop brought together SVD Lay Partners alongside representatives of the police, judiciary, churches, women's groups, community leaders, civil society organizations, magistrates, and development partners to strengthen collaboration in addressing justice and community concerns.

The workshop assessed the progress of the PNG Law and Justice Sector Program, which promotes access to justice, addresses gender-based violence, Sorcery Accusation Related Violence (SARV), drug abuse, and restorative justice practices.

Sharing Experiences and Building Hope

The SVD Lay Partners shared their experiences and lessons learned through community-based initiatives, including strengthening village courts, youth rehabilitation programmes, and awareness campaigns on human rights and gender

equality. Participants emphasized that lasting peace and justice require the shared commitment of communities, institutions, and faith-based organizations.

While acknowledging improvements in coordination among law and justice agencies, participants also recognized ongoing challenges, including limited resources, capacity gaps, and cultural barriers. They affirmed that transformative change requires not only institutional reform but also active community participation.

Looking Ahead

The workshop highlighted the important role of traditional leaders and faith communities in conflict mediation and support for victims of violence. Participants called for stronger collaboration between government institutions and local communities to ensure that justice services remain accessible, inclusive, and culturally appropriate.

The workshop concluded with recommendations for enhanced training of law enforcement personnel, improved data collection, and increased support for community justice initiatives. These outcomes will contribute to the next phase of the Madang Law and Justice Sector Strategic Plan, reaffirming the province's commitment to building a safer and more just society.

Text: Vincent Wasaring
Photos: Greg Yule



EUROPA ZONE

Austria (ECP) – Steyler Freundeskreis

A Circle of Friendship



Meetings

We are a group of *Steyler Freundeskreis* (Friends of the Divine Word Missionaries), made up of adults and senior members, and have been meeting for about four years. Most of us come from our parishes or through personal friendships. At larger gatherings, we have around 30 participants or more; at smaller ones, around 20. Between gatherings, we stay connected through regular letters. Since the beginning, our circle has been coordinated by a team of friends together with several SVD confreres.

All our members come from Vienna and Lower Austria. Many are actively involved in their parishes, and most were already familiar with the Society of the Divine Word.

Growing in Spirituality and Mission

Our meetings focus on SVD spirituality and mission, inspired by the Society's four characteristic dimensions.

We were delighted to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word. The Pentecost celebration was a

special occasion, made even more meaningful by the presence of our Superior General, Fr. Anselmo Ribeiro, SVD. Many members of our *Freundeskreis* were able to participate.

Looking Ahead with Gratitude

At present, we have no plans to introduce a more formal structure to our Group. Perhaps we simply need more time. We are deeply grateful for the generous support of Fr. Stephan Dähler, SVD, Head of the Mission Procurator's Office and Mission Secretariat, as well as our Provincial and the Rector of St. Gabriel.

We are grateful to everyone who is part of the *Freundeskreis* of the Divine Word Missionaries and extend our heartfelt congratulations to all. We pray that God will continue to bless and strengthen all our sisters and brothers throughout the SVD provinces.

Text: Fr. Hans Ettl, SVD, St. Gabriel and team
Photos: ECP Province



Germany (GER) – SVD Lay Associates Arnold Janssen (SVDLA AJ)*

From Tent to Rake to PC – From the Work of the SVD Lay Associates Arnold Janssen



Tent

At the “Church Mile” during the Catholic Convention in Würzburg in May, the SVDLA AJ supported the SVD in the “Steyler Tent”. They informed visitors about the work of the SVD in general and that of the laity in particular. As always, once the Catholic Convention is over, preparations for the next one in 2028 begin, and, as in previous years, they are happy to be part of the organising team alongside a representative.

Rake

The highlight of the weekend gathering in Steyl from 12 to 14 June was the day of action on Saturday. By the end of the day, the anniversary garden was shining in new splendour once more. After the flowerbeds had been tidied, the paths cleared and various other tasks completed, everyone rounded off the day with a barbecue together with the community of St. Michael. Alongside “ora et labora”, there was also “celebrando” - which did everyone good.

PC

Some work takes place on the computer at home. For instance, articles were written for the next issue of the Mission Chronicle and for the SVD Generalate’s publication on the theme of synodality. In addition, there is the regular task of preparing church services and devotions for the local and online

communities as well as the developing of the new WhatsApp channel “WortZeit”.



Being part of it

As part of the Arnoldus Family, the SVDLA AJ were delighted to be able to take part in the ordination of three ‘old’ acquaintances in Sankt Augustin: they know Anthony Tran Khac Phuc, Emmanuel Faakang and Yohanes Engelbertus Paji, amongst other things, from their joint work at previous Catholic Conventions.

As members of the ecumenical network “Eine Erde” (One Earth), the SVDLA AJ are delighted with the calendar for Season of Creation to which they have contributed for the first time. The calendar covers the entire Season of Creation from 1 September to 4 October - and, of course, also features some “Steyler” content on certain days.

Text: Maria Wego
Photos: SVDLA A, SVD (GER)

*Based on the definition of “Lay Partners” and “Lay Associates” established at the last General Chapter, our group changed its name in April from “SVD Partner” to “SVD Lay Associates Arnold Janssen”.



Hungary (HUN) – Verbita Barátok

Open the Gates



Happiness is within us

We made a pilgrimage to Bali and Flores Islands, led by Fr. Sebastian Benven Madassery, SVD, a journey filled with faith, joy, and new experiences. One of the most beautiful moments was seeing people of different religions living together in peace. In the main square of a small village, Catholic, Hindu, and Buddhist places of worship stood side by side, reflecting harmony and mutual respect.

Walking in the Mission

On Flores Island, we visited the SVD Major and Minor Seminaries, the Retreat House, and the Pink Sisters. At Jopu, we joined the local children for Holy Mass, inspired by their joyful spirit and beautiful singing.

We also prayed at the Shrine of Mary, Mother of All Nations on Mount Nilo and celebrated the birthday of one of our fellow pilgrims with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded by an SVD missionary.

Another touching experience was meeting orphaned and differently abled children who are cared for with great love. We also climbed Golo Curu Mountain to pray at the Marian shrine and paid our respects at the mission of the late Hungarian SVD missionary, Fr. Tamás Krump, who served the people of Flores for sixty years.

A Lesson to Take Home

Throughout our journey, we met happy and cheerful people, especially the children. Their happiness came not from having many possessions, but from being grateful to God for what they had.

Guardians of our Planet

Our pilgrimage concluded with the 3rd Verbita Festival, beginning with praise and the Holy Mass. A morning presentation reminded us that we are all guardians of our common home, the Earth.

The celebration continued with international cuisine and vibrant cultural performances from several countries, highlighting the richness of the SVD family. Traditional music, dances, and a concert by two internationally renowned artists brought the festival to a joyful close.

The pilgrimage truly invited us to open the gates of our hearts; to God, to one another, and to His beautiful creation.

Test: Zsuzsa Seregely
Photos: Istvan y Zsuzsa Seregely





PANAM ZONE



Argentina (ARE) – Misioneros Socios Laicos Amigos del Verbo

Various Activities



Missionary Mate Bingo

As part of the celebration of four years of commitment as Lay Missionaries, collaborating in the parish mission under the patronage of our Saints Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz, we organized a joyful gathering of games, prizes, and fellowship. The Missionary Mate Bingo strengthens community bonds while raising funds to support the parish and its missionary activities. Upcoming events will be held on 14 July at St. Catherine of Siena Parish and 9 August at St. Francis Xavier Parish.



Solidarity Bicycle Ride 2026 – Roque González Institute

Under the theme “We Are All One”, the Arnoldus Family participated in the 26th Solidarity Bicycle Ride, which brought together hundreds of students and families to support homes, soup kitchens, and community meal centres.

Fr. Juan Rajimón, SVD highlighted that this initiative strengthens solidarity throughout the community. Thanks to donations of non-perishable food from students, families, businesses, and institutions, food will be distributed to homes and community kitchens across the province.

A Jubilee Mission

The Lay Missionaries and the community of Divine Word Parish in the Chaco District are united in prayer for Mission 2027 (15–23 January).

Three themes inspire the mission:

Past: Grateful remembrance of the pioneers and the anniversaries of the Parish Missionary Group and the parish.

Present: A missionary Church reaching out through the Lay Partners and the parish ministries.

Future: A new sowing among children and young people, ensuring the continuity of our charism for future generations.

Text: Aurora Galarza

Photos: Misioneros Socios Laicos Amigos del Verbo



Pilgrimage to Fatima (Posadas District)

During the Month of Mary, the Posadas District participated in the 64th Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Fatima, walking nearly 12 km from the Cathedral of Posadas to the Shrine of Fatima in Garupá. The day was marked by prayer, hymns, the Eucharist, fellowship, and gratitude to the Mother of the Divine Word.

Text: Coordinating Team – ARE Province

Mass for the Elderly and Family Visits (Alto Uruguay District)

In El Soberbio, Holy Mass was celebrated in the home of the Valiente family at the request of the Bella Vista community, together with Fr. John Sine, SVD (Papua New Guinea). At St. Francis Xavier Parish, San Javier, the mission continues through visits to elderly and sick people, sharing the life and spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen with the support of Fr. Dedi Bonansa, SVD (Indonesia) and Fr. Edwin Bestudio Borromeo, SVD (Philippines).

Text: Nilda Paredes and Blanca Gómez da Silva

Commitment, Encounter and Prayer (Chaco District)

Under the motto "In Communion, We Are Mission," the group at Divine Word Parish, Resistencia, gathers each third Monday in honour of the Holy Spirit to pray for the mission, missionaries, and lay partners. Together with the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, they promote Eucharistic Adoration, silence, and contemplation. Visits to the Pink Sisters remind them of St. Arnold Janssen's words: "The more the mission grows, the more we must pray." They are accompanied by Fr. Gerardo Ferreyra, SVD (Argentina) and Fr. Iwan Agung, SVD (Indonesia).

Text: Lorena Paola Vera

Photos: Misioneros Socios Laicos Amigos del Verbo



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

Activities



With the blessings of God and Mary, Mother of the Divine Word, we joyfully share some of the significant moments that have marked our journey as a Lay Partner group.

Election of the New Leadership Team

On 20 December 2025, MLVD elected a new leadership team in the presence of Fr. Bau Van Nguyen, SVD:

Coordinator: Julián Degracia

Vice Coordinator: Rubiela de Rodríguez

Treasurer: Meivys G. de Urriola

Secretary: Ana Luisa Vásquez

Communications: Eymi Degracia

Meeting with Spiritual Director

On 1 March, we held our first meeting with our Spiritual Director, who encouraged us to live the SVD charism with greater commitment. He reminded us that the Bible, prayer, and mission are inseparable, and that proclaiming the Word also means responding to the needs of others under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Visit of our Superiors

On 19 March, we welcomed Fr. José Nicolás Espinosa, SVD, and Fr. Jerome A. Márquez, SVD, who reminded us that, as members of the Divine Word family, we are united by a



common mission. They encouraged us to recognize Christ in the Eucharist and in those who suffer, witnessing His love through service. We also welcomed Fr. Pablo Cong Khac, SVD, as our second Spiritual Guide.

Formation Day

On 17 May, Fr. Mikhael Malik Kabelen, SVD, our founder, led a formation session on St. Arnold Janssen, St. Joseph Freinademetz, SSPSAP, and SSPS. He deepened our understanding of the Society of the Divine Word, its motto, and its four pillars: Bible, Mission, Communication, and JPIC. The day concluded with the Eucharist at St. Jerome Parish, presided over by Fr. Jerome A. Márquez, SVD, together with Fr. Mateo Yeng, SVD, CAM Regional Superior, and Fr. David Selvasekar, Parish Priest.

Text: Rubiela Ramírez de Rodríguez

Photos: MLVD Panama



Paraguay (PAR) – Laicos Verbitas de Paraguay, Asunción

We Are Family, We Are SVDs

The Mission that Unites Us

The Lord is alive in our brothers and sisters who are sick, elderly, lonely, imprisoned, far from their homeland, or suffering from violence, addictions, and many other difficulties. Through His living word, He draws us close to them, bringing hope in the midst of their suffering. Accompanied and encouraged by our pastor, Fr. Alfredo Haurón, SVD, we continue to discover that it is the Lord Himself who carries out the mission through us. Blessed be the Lord!

Moments of Faith and Communion

We joined the World Day of Prayer for Peace, called by the Holy Father. We also joyfully welcomed Fr. Eryk Koppa, SVD, General Councillor. On this occasion, the Lay Partners presented a photo exhibition of their activities of service, collaboration and mission.

The gathering concluded with a solemn Eucharistic celebration, during which we prayed for world peace, for vocations and for the Divine Word Missionaries in Paraguay. Afterwards, we shared a fraternal meal and enjoyed Paraguayan music and dance.

Celebrating Our Faith

During June, our community prepared for the feast of St. John the Baptist with the traditional *Grito de San Juan*, creatively presenting Gospel scenes from his life and mission. The patronal feast was celebrated joyfully according to the traditions of our people.

Arnoldus Spirituality

We also participated in the gathering of the Arnoldus Family in Quito, Ecuador, where the SVDs, SSsP Sisters, and Lay Partners of the PANAM Zone deepened their Arnoldus spirituality. We thank Sr. Maria Cristina Avalos, Frs. Manuel Brand, Miguel Somers, and Nevil D'Silva for their warm welcome and for sharing experiences of faith and mission. It was a beautiful, enriching, and unforgettable experience.

May the Holy Triune God live in our hearts!

Text: Blanca Garcia

Paraguay (PAR), Asunción – Caring for Our Common Home

As part of the 2026 Season of Creation, the Laudato Si' Readers' Club of St. John the Baptist-Divine Word Parish, Asunción, organized initiatives promoting ecological spirituality and care for creation. Through prayer, Scripture reflection, Eucharistic Adoration, and community outreach, participants renewed their commitment to protecting our Common Home in the spirit of Laudato Si'. The programme also included a solidarity lunch for 80 vulnerable people and concluded with the parish receiving certification from the Laudato Si' Movement in recognition of its ecological commitment.

Text: Margarita Peña

Photos: Laicos Verbitas Communication Team PAR, Asuncion



Paraguay (PAR) – Laicos Verbitas del Paraguay

Strengthening the Mission of the SVD Lay Partners



A Mission of Encounter

On 14–15 March, the Coordination Team of the SVD Lay Partners made a fraternal visit to the communities of northeastern Itapúa and Alto Paraná. The purpose of the visit was to strengthen communion, encourage the missionary spirit, and accompany the journey of the local lay groups.

The visit brought together moments of prayer, formation, reflection, and dialogue, renewing the Lay Partners' commitment to the Gospel. It also provided an opportunity to share experiences, strengthen the bonds of the Divine Word Family, and encourage continued growth in mission.

Marked by fraternity, joy, and hope, the visit reaffirmed that the SVD charism continues to bear fruit through the generous witness of Lay Partners serving the Church and society.

Forming Leaders for Mission

As part of its commitment to strengthening the mission of the SVD Lay Partners in Paraguay, the National Coordination launched the Training of Trainers Workshop, an initiative designed to prepare new leaders to accompany and form future members of the Lay Partner communities.

The programme deepens participants' understanding of the spirituality, history, charism, and mission of the Society of the Divine Word. Conducted through four online modules from May



to July, it will conclude with an in-person gathering. This formation equips future leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to support the growth of the SVD Lay Partners in their parishes and communities.

Looking Ahead with Hope

The Coordination Team expresses its sincere gratitude for the warm welcome received in every community. The hospitality of both the SVD Lay Partners and the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) made everyone feel part of one missionary family.

This journey of encounter, formation, and communion strengthens our missionary identity and inspires us to continue as missionary disciples at the service of God's Kingdom, living the words of Jesus: "Let your light shine before others." (Mt 5:16)

Text: Jorge Sienkawiec

Photos: Carlos Román y Jorge Sienkawiec



United States (USS) – Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino

A Mission Without Borders



A Growing Community

With great joy, we share the journey of the Divine Word Lay Missionaries of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Baytown, Texas. Founded on 8 September 2024, our community will celebrate its second anniversary this year, grateful for the many blessings God has poured upon our mission.

Today, we are 26 active members, united by the desire to proclaim the Gospel and live the charism of St. Arnold Janssen. Guided by Fr. Dilip Soreng, SVD, Fr. Joachim Bilung, SVD, and our lay leadership team led by Irma Topete and Gloria Guevara, we continue to grow as one missionary family.

Formation and Evangelization

Spiritual formation, evangelization, and works of mercy are at the heart of our mission. Last year, we organized the retreats “From Misery to Miracle: Jesus Heals Your Home and Your Life” and “Do Whatever He Tells You: A Love That Trusts and Transforms”, and are now preparing new retreats to continue nurturing our community’s spiritual life.

As missionary disciples, we participate in the monthly Eucharist, promote the Rosary, visit the sick, organize formation and evangelization programmes, and carry out charitable outreach to those most in need.



Beyond our Borders

The Lord has also led us beyond our parish. We donated mattresses and recliner chairs to the Divine Word Retreat and Formation Center in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi; sent toys and food baskets to families in need in Colombia at Christmas; and supported the restoration of a Chapel in India, contributing to the Society’s universal mission.

These acts of service strengthen our faith and remind us that mission knows no borders. As we celebrate our first two years, we renew our commitment to proclaim God’s Word with joy and hope.

“May the Divine Word continue to guide our steps as true missionary disciples at the service of the Church and the world.”

Text and photos: Gloria Guevara



United States (USW) – SVD Lay Partners

Strengthening Our Mission Through New Leadership

A Renewed Structure for Mission

The SVD United States Western Province (USW) continues to grow in diversity, collaboration, and missionary vitality. The Provincial Superior, Fr. Peter Linyong Zhai, SVD, together with his Council and the Mission Secretary, has introduced a renewed leadership structure to strengthen the accompaniment of the SVD Lay Partners throughout the province.

Under this new model, one confrere has been appointed as District Lay Associate Director for each district, ensuring closer communication, ongoing formation, and stronger collaboration with the lay communities.

Serving the Lay Communities

The new District Lay Associate Directors are Fr. Beni Leu, SVD (Riverside West), Fr. Deebar Yonas, SVD (San Bernardino East), Fr. Miguel Ruiz, SVD (San Francisco/Northern California), Fr. Jesus Zamarripa, SVD (Arizona), Fr. Binh Quang, SVD (San Diego), and Fr. Ricardo Gonzalez, SVD (Los Angeles).

Together, they will accompany the Lay Partners in their respective districts, fostering unity while respecting the rich cultural diversity that characterizes the province.

Guided by the SVD Charism

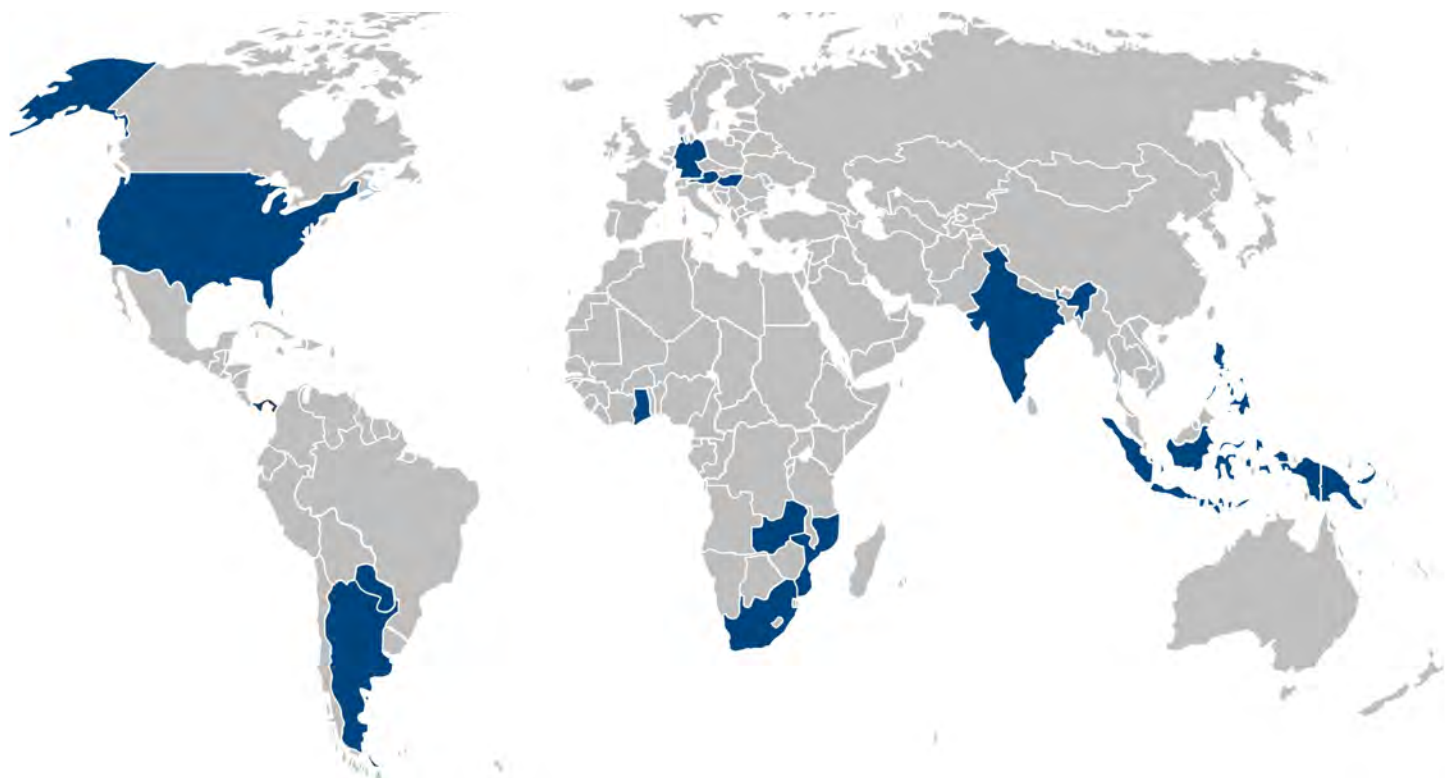
Their ministry will be inspired by the four characteristic dimensions of the SVD mission: Biblical Apostolate, Mission Animation, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), and Communication. These dimensions will guide formation, evangelization, outreach, and community life.

One Family, One Mission

At the heart of this renewed structure is the commitment to strengthen the Divine Word Family—SVD missionaries, SSpS and SSpSAP sisters, and Lay Partners—journeying together in interculturality, prophetic dialogue, and Gospel witness.

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of EX GREGE, we look forward with hope. This new leadership model strengthens our shared mission and deepens our identity as one family, one province, and one Spirit-led community.

Text: Sylvia Angel



❖ Zonal Activities - ... ❖

Second National Workshop for SVD Lay Partners – India Subzone



Gathered in Hope

From 27 February to 2 March 2026, 48 SVD Lay Partners from the five PRMs of the India Subzone—India Mumbai (INM), India East (INE), India Central (INC), India Hyderabad (INH), and India Guwahati Region (ING)—together with Mission Secretaries, Spiritual Directors, SSpS Sisters, and resource persons, gathered at Atma Darshan, Mumbai, for the 2nd National Workshop for SVD Lay Partners – India Subzone. Organized by Fr. Luis Ronald Pereira, SVD, Mission Secretary of India Subzone, the workshop reflected on the theme “SVD Lay Partners as Missionaries of Hope”.

A Shared Mission

The workshop was inaugurated by Fr. Tomy Thomas Perumprayil, SVD, Provincial Superior of the India Mumbai Province (INM), with the enthronement of the Bible and the lighting of the lamp. This was followed by a keynote address by Fr. Marcelo Cattáneo, SVD, Generalate Mission Secretary, who reminded participants that lay partners are not merely collaborators but a constitutive part of the missionary identity of the Society. He invited everyone to embrace a shared mission rooted in communion, prophetic dialogue, and hope.

Stories that Inspire

Through inspiring presentations, participants reflected on their vocation as Missionaries of Hope, as co-workers in God's mission, on the spirituality and charism of St. Arnold Janssen, and on the evolving role of lay partners in today's world. The sessions emphasized that lay partners are called to be witnesses of hope, builders of communion, and agents of transformation, living the Gospel through dialogue, service, and authentic Christian witness.

A highlight of the workshop was representatives from each Province and Region sharing their ministry reports and

personal faith journeys, demonstrating the diversity and vitality of lay partnership across the India Subzone. Group discussions produced practical recommendations for leadership formation, communication, youth involvement, and strengthening collaboration among lay partner groups nationwide.

Mission in Action

On the final day, participants visited Mount Mary Basilica and the Urban Community Development Centre (UCDC) in Bandra, where they witnessed the SVD's outreach among migrants and marginalized communities. The exposure programme served as a living example of the Society's commitment to justice, compassion, and human dignity.

Moving Forward

The workshop concluded with renewed enthusiasm and a deeper commitment to the shared mission. Participants returned to their respective PRMs inspired to strengthen lay partnership, nurture Arnoldus spirituality, and become true Missionaries of Hope in their families, parishes, and communities.

Text: Susan Noronha and Anupama Subodhanan
(Secretaries for the Workshop)
Photos: India Subzone Media



Gratitude Notes from the 2nd National Workshop for SVD Lay Partners – India Subzone

Dear Fr. Rony, I would like to sincerely congratulate you on the excellent organization of the three-day SVD Lay Mission Partners Workshop. Your diligent planning, careful coordination, and personal commitment were clearly visible in every aspect of the programme.

The selection of appropriate and competent resource persons, the smooth coordination with all the Mission Secretaries and Spiritual Directors, and the active involvement of the SVD staff at Andheri truly enriched the entire experience. Your collaborative spirit, along with the dedicated support of Fr. Dixon D'Spuza, SVD, ensured that the workshop was not only well-structured but also deeply meaningful and inspiring.

Thank you for your leadership and for the passion you bring to strengthening the mission partnership of the Society of the Divine Word. May God bless you abundantly and grant you the grace to continue inspiring and guiding many more in the missionary journey.

Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurathu, SVD
Mission Secretary INM

The workshop was truly a precious and grace-filled experience. Every session offered fresh insights, deeper understanding, and renewed inspiration for our missionary journey. We were richly blessed by this programme.



With immense love and deep gratitude, we are grateful to Fr. Tomy Thomas - Provincial Superior of the INM Province, Fr. Tony Menezes, SVD - Superior of Atma Darshan, all the Spiritual Directors, and the entire organizing team for planning and conducting this beautiful workshop.

Monika Isyas (INC)

I sincerely thank all the Lay Partners and Fathers for your constant support, guidance, and dedication. Your service and commitment mean a lot to us. May God bless you abundantly.

Asha Raja (INH)

Truly, it was a memorable workshop. Every talk gave us new insight and learning. With a grateful heart, I pray for God's abundant blessings on all of you as you work in His vineyard for His greater Glory. Thank you one and all.

Apoline D'Souza (INM)



Answering the Call

The 2nd National Workshop for SVD Lay Partners – India Subzone, held at Atma Darshan, Mumbai, from 27 February to 2 March 2026, was a grace-filled experience of learning, prayer, fellowship, and missionary renewal. Bringing together lay partners from different provinces across India, the workshop focused on the theme "SVD Lay Partners as Missionaries of Hope."

The inspiring inputs by the resource persons deepened our understanding of the vocation of SVD Lay Partners as co-workers in God's mission. Through reflections on Arnoldus spirituality, prophetic dialogue, and the missionary charism of the Society of the Divine Word, we were reminded that our call is not simply to support the mission but to live it with conviction and hope.

Learning from One Another

One of the most enriching moments was listening to the ministry reports and personal faith journeys of lay partners from different provinces. Their experiences reflected the diversity, commitment, and vitality of the SVD Lay Partner movement in India, encouraging all of us to strengthen our missionary involvement in our own communities.

The workshop also provided opportunities for meaningful group discussions, fellowship, and sharing, helping us to reflect on future directions and practical ways of strengthening lay partnership, leadership, communication, and youth involvement.

Experiencing Mission First-hand

The pilgrimage to Mount Mary Basilica and the mission exposure at the Urban Community Development Centre (UCDC), Bandra, enabled us to witness the SVD mission among migrants and marginalized communities. It was a powerful reminder that proclaiming the Word also means serving people with compassion, dignity, and hope.

As we returned to our respective provinces, we carried with us renewed enthusiasm and a deeper commitment to live the SVD charism. The workshop strengthened our identity as SVD Lay Partners and inspired us to become true Missionaries of Hope in our families, parishes, workplaces, and communities.

Text: Sumit Dhanraj



❖ Experience Reports ❖

Serving the “Least of These”: A Reflection on Healing and Hospitality



A Ministry Rooted in the Gospel

In the bustling corridors of Holy Spirit Hospital in Mumbai, the daily rhythm of medical care frequently intersects with a profound spiritual calling. As a Lay Partner of SVD and SSpS, my profession is not merely a career—it is a living ministry. Whenever the days grow demanding, my heart returns to the grounding words of Mt 25:35–36: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat [...] I was sick, and you looked after me.”

These verses serve as the blueprint for my daily interactions. At Holy Spirit Hospital, we encounter a vast tapestry of humanity. Whether caring for locals, international travellers, people from marginalized backgrounds, or those of different faiths and cultures, I strive to treat every patient who walks through our doors as a member of my own family.

Seeing Christ in Every Patient

This calling feels especially close to home when SVD missionaries come for treatment or wellness check-ups. Witnessing their vulnerability is a humbling experience. Whatever care I can offer seems so little compared to the sacrifices they make while serving in distant mission countries with limited resources and medical facilities.

Recently, this commitment was put to the test when an elderly German lady was admitted to our hospital. She remained with us for 54 days, alone and without family by her side. From the very first day until her last, we cared for her not as a burden, but as a sister. Throughout her stay, my strength came from the words of Jesus in Mt 25:40: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Seeing Jesus in the face of that lonely stranger—and in every poor, sick, or marginalized person who comes to us—transforms our hospital wards into holy ground. It reminds me that healing is not only about medicine; it is about extending Christ's compassion and hospitality to a world in need.

Text and photo: Sheeba Mathew (INM)

❖ Announcements ❖

10th World Day of the Poor – Sunday, 15 November 2026



“The Lord is the refuge of the poor.”
(Ps 14:6)

Since the first World Day of the Poor in 2017, SVD Lay Associates Arnold Janssen (SVDLA AJ) has invited people around the world to pray together. Once again, this year, they are inviting everyone to pray on this day for—and above all, with—the poor.

The new texts and prayers will be on the website of SVDLA AJ from mid-October. The texts from 2017

to 2025 have been compiled into a single document and can also be downloaded from the website.

 [Prayers of the World Day of the Poor](#)

The Message of Pope Leo XIV can be downloaded from the Vatican's website.

 [Message of the Pope](#)

Text: Maria Wego

❖ JPIC Column ❖



Dear friends,

Water is life. It is certainly easy to start a conversation with people on this topic and to develop ideas together for the protection of creation. The situation in Germany—a country that is actually rich in water—serves as a prime example of just how urgent it is to take

action: more and more water is being lost due to intensive agricultural use, soil sealing and climate change. The figure stands at 2.5 cubic kilometres—or 2,500,000,000,000,000 litres – per year. This makes the country one of the regions on Earth that has experienced the highest annual water loss in recent years.

It is good that the Christian churches have chosen 'Living Water' as the theme for the Season of Creation 2026. The Biblical text is drawn from Ez 47: 1- 12, which portrays God's life-giving water flowing from the temple of God. We are all called upon to safeguard water and, with it, all of God's creation so it may heal and all living beings may live well together.

 [Season of Creation 2026](#)

Of course we don't have to wait till Season of Creation. Let's start action now!

Jo

Prayer on this topic

María Fernanda Carranza (Ecuador): Prayer for the Gift of Water, in: Social Concern Prayers SVD Lay Partners, Rome 2020, p. 16

❖ Miscellaneous ❖

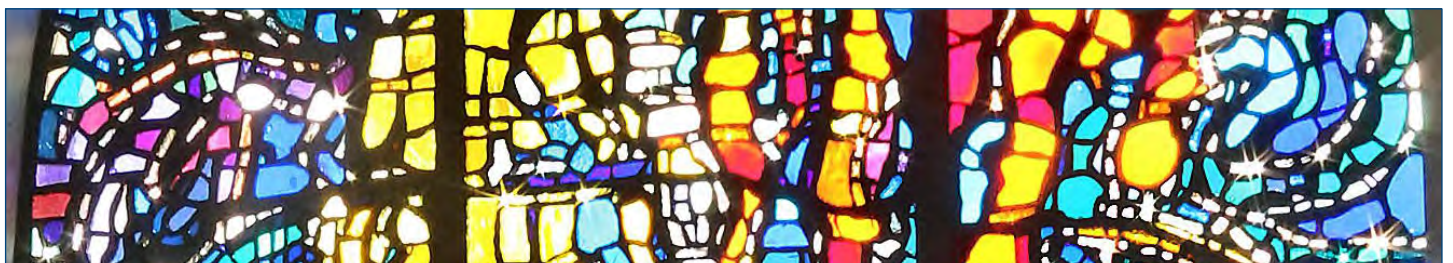
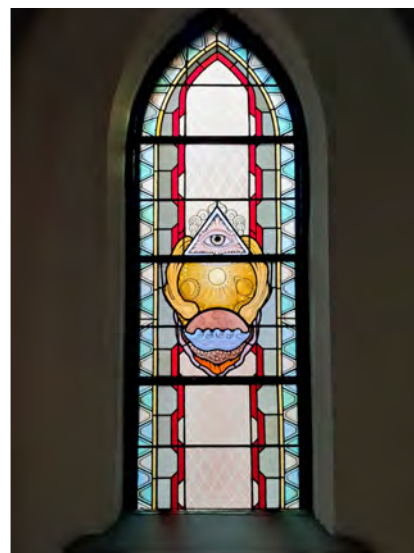
Prayer for the 2026 Catholic Convention in Germany: Thoughts on an Unusual Spelling

When looking at the prayer for the 2026 Catholic Convention in Würzburg, the eye 'stumbles' immediately upon the very first word: GΔtt (GΔd). A typo? No, it is not a mistake. A brief explanation of the prayer, written by youth spiritual adviser Laura Kunz, states:

The Δ is intended to prompt us to pause and reflect on our own image of God and our own relationship with God. The triangle aims to open up space for the incomprehensibility of God.

A triangle as an attempt to represent the Triune God is well known and can be found in many places, such as in Steyl. But in a text? Does this make me feel something?

Text: Maria Wego (GER)
Photo: Sophie Wego (GER)



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.



Khatarina Lies

† 19.05.2026
Lay partner, IDJ



Florentinus Bambang Risono

† 18.06.2026
Lay partner, IDJ

Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts.

We will miss you!

Rest in Peace



Prayer

Living God,
 you have chosen Mary among all people
 to become the mother of your son Jesus.
 She said YES to her vocation
 and trusting in you
 she went her way through life.
 She was faithful to you and your promise
 even though her life was not always easy.
 In this she is also an example for us today.

So we pray to you, good God:
 Help us, too, not only to hear your word,
 but to keep it in our hearts
 and through our faith
 to make it human
 in the here and now of our lives.
 We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
 your incarnate Word
 and our brother and Lord.
 Amen

Fr. Norbert Cyupers, SVD



Photo: Krzysztof Kolodynski, SVD
 (Source: SVD Mission Photo)

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Photos

Bro. Heinz Helf, SVD (p. 35, bottom; p. 37, top); Sophie Wego
 (coverpage; p. 36, background)

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