

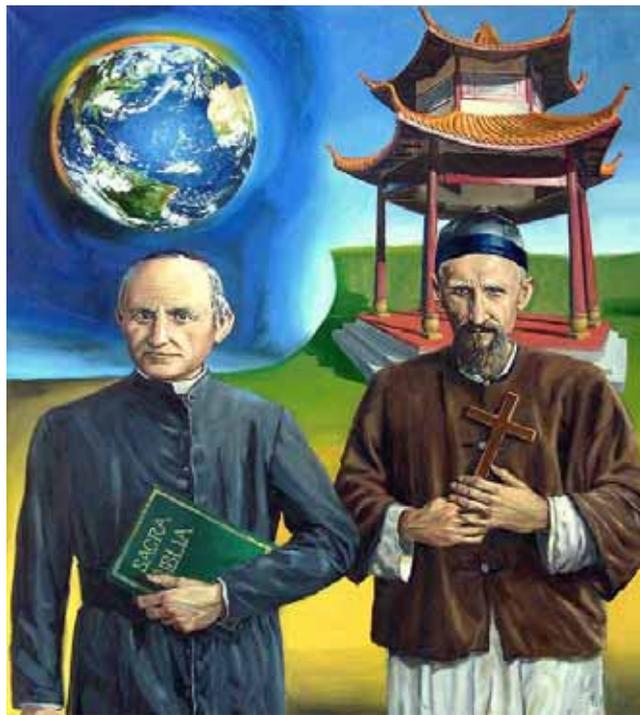


SVD BROTHERS

svd_brothersphil@yahoo.com, newlanyi@hotmail.com

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2 No. 6 September 2010



Society of the Divine Word celebrates 135 years...

September 8, 1875 – September 8, 2010

SVD BROTHERS bulletin offers a forum on the Brother vocation in our Society. The previous issues of SVD BROTHERS are available on the homepage of the SVD Generalate (www.svdcuria.org). The bulletin is written by its readers.

One month ago, we asked for your contributions about FREE TIME and RECREATION of SVD Brothers.

We asked for your replies to the following questions:

1. What is the sound relationship between work and recreation (*free time*), for an SVD Brother? In other words, what is the importance of free time?
2. How does the local community *promote* the physical and mental recreation of its members? How do YOU spend your recreation time?



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PRAY AND PLAY!

Fr. Pio Estepa, ROM



You're doing just fine with the e-bulletin for all confreres! Every issue is imaginatively done and substantial in content. I wonder how our brothers will respond to the question of leisure time. PLAY is just as important as PRAY, especially for our postmodern confreres, as you may have noticed.

FULFILLMENT IN CONSTRUCTIVE EXPERIENCES

Br. Franz Schurtenberger, SWI



In the inquiry, you mentioned the words of an elderly German SVD Brother: "You know, a loyal Brother has never a *free* time. If you think that you have more time than you use for your work, go to the chapel and pray! Or do something for your health. Or sleep! But don't nourish the illusion of a *free* time."

To that statement, an opposing statement can be said: One has never time besides what one saves it for.

If I am interested in the time I spare for something or for other people, then I say it is a fulfilled time with personal experiences that are constructive for me. This is the sense and the purpose of free or spare time. If my work is not constructive nor rewarding for me, then I have no relaxation at all. In my job, while I cannot totally decide on my own since I also have to obey my superiors and attend to my responsibilities, I can always decide what to do with my free time.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

Br. Michael Decker, USC



My response to the German Brother (s. the inquiry, mentioned in the sharing of Br. Schurtenberger) is this: I think that in the past that was the view of an SVD Brother, but things have changed. What is important is the ministry that we are responsible to do, as well as time for community and private prayer. However, free time and recreation are also important in the life of an SVD Brother. We need not only spend time with community members but also for

ourselves in order to do what nourishes one's life whatever that might be, such as reading a book, taking a walk and enjoying nature, learning a new language, or playing a musical instrument, to name a few.

1) SVD Brothers must be well-rounded persons who enjoy life holistically: one's ministry, one's community life, one's spiritual life, one's ongoing personal development, and one's social network not only within the SVD community but also outside if as much as possible, with both men and women from different age groups. In my opinion the words "free time" may not be the correct words to use. Ongoing development encourages one's own use of time to grow more fully as an SVD Brother. "Free time" can take on the meaning of being lazy to grow and develop.

2) I am one of the formators in the House of Formation in Chicago. During the regular school year we have community night every Thursday. Throughout the year, both the larger community (35 members) and the smaller community (12 members) celebrate together. Sometimes this means recreational activities such as volleyball or some other sports. We also observe different cultural celebrations such as the Lunar New Year since many members are either Chinese or Vietnamese.

Personally, I spend time with other members in the community through monthly gatherings where we share

Cont, Br. Decker

valuable life experiences. I also spend time with other Brothers, priests, and Sisters in the local area. I try to have a healthy balance of ministry, spiritual, community, and personal life.

We are starting another school year here in Chicago, with three Brothers in the Formation House, 17 students for priesthood, 5 students on CTP, and one Brother in Togo.

DO WE HAVE TIME FOR THAT?

Br. Charles Kofi Ashun, GHA



There are many things that come to mind when we speak of the Divine Word Missionary Brother, and even more when we come to talk about the relationship between his work and his recreation as an individual and as a member of particular Divine Word Missionary community. The Divine Word Missionary Brother belongs and will always belong to a community – a family. Hence his total life is shaped and harnessed by the community and the people he works with.

Life is a cycle of prayer, work, and recreation, and in these he

finds a reason to be. Starting the day with prayer and meditation, we move into our daily work with renewed strength to glorify God in our work and bring life into peoples' life. We try to make people experience God's love, peace and concern.

Nevertheless, looking at our daily lives, there is one song which we all like to sing especially when someone asks us for help. It is a one-line song with only four words – "I don't have time!" This is our song and irrespective of the nature of our work, it is the same song. It's a way of saying that something is not part of our plan at the moment. Yet at times that we are flexible enough to take a break from our routine work, we become refreshed and give another thought to what we do. Hence, we are rejuvenated.

No matter how we want to describe it or what word we want to use to refer to it, whether recreation or break, the opportunity is always there and it is up to the individual or the community to make use of it. As what the old German Brother told Brother Bela some year ago, "You know, a loyal Brother has never *free* time. If you think that you have more time than you use for your work, go to the chapel and pray! Or do something for your health. Or sleep! But don't nourish the illusion of *free time*." I think this is something we should all reflect on for the betterment of our lives as individuals and as a community.

We need to be healthy, prayerful, and sound in mind. Hence, the idea of having a sound mind in a sound body was how the first president of Ghana, Dr. Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, would always conclude his speech to workers. Now the question is if we have time for that. If we do, how does it refresh us as individuals and as a community? And if we don't, then what is making it impossible for us not to have it?

As a community, we have always found time to recreate. During meals, we talk and laugh about a lot of things. Prayer time brings us to commune with Him who has called us to be. The time we spend together watching the news, games, movies, and whatnot has always brought us laughter, tensions, sadness, etc. All these help us to become the human beings that we are. Hence in the community, we become strengthened, motivated, refreshed and renewed so that we can face the future with confidence.

As an individual, I try to find time for myself to play some sports with the students at the college. I join the students in their traditional dance practices, take walks, visit people and friends, listen to good music, you just name it. I believe that where there is no time for either community or individual recreation, we develop this each-one-for-himself-and-God-for-us-all attitude. With such attitude we forget the observance of Church seasons and feast days, and we fail to spend time for prayer with those

Cont. Br. Ashun

foolish I-pray-while-working and my-work-is-prayer excuses.

If we want to be religious missionary Brothers, then we should look back at our individual families. The way we cherish our natural families and do everything we can to enrich them should help us to make our religious communities a source of strength for all members. It is where we draw our strength for our work and all we do. Without this, we will all be very individualistic and die as a religious family.

All work without play makes Jack a dull boy. This was what my class one teacher would always say whenever she realised that it was time for us to go for recreation. Hence we should always remember that having sound minds in sound bodies is how we make it in life.

FREE TIME, A GIFT FROM GOD

Br. Miller Hernandez Diaz,
COL



It is possible that the following vision I am presenting may be a rather naive view of what we are invited to consider when talking about leisure time or

free time in an SVD context. However, in this little time that I have received as a gift from God, I venture to think and reflect on that.

Many ideas come to my mind because very often free time is misunderstood, such as: *Time to do nothing*. We often forget that this trend may bring us to gain a lot of weight, or maybe to loose a lot of weight; meaning to say, the first thing I have to say about this for the sake of physical and mental health is that this provision as a rule is harmful. If we think of free time as a great opportunity to do absolutely nothing, then there is not any balance in our physical and mental condition. In other words, time not to think and/or not to create, and even if sometimes we like very much to do nothing, there are exceptions that can not become the rule.

Free time can be understood and lived as a gift from God to feed us and make us more creative. Perhaps you don't agree with that I say, but I see it wise and timely *maybe free time is to do "whatever you want", what you like and need to benefit your personal formation, permanent and integral, but to do, to do being and feeling committed and fulfilled for a cause, which is your plan of life*. This would be the best way to use your leisure time.

Are you passionate about the Bible and it relaxes you? Then read it, of course, if that is what you want. Do you love languages and that is what you want to do? Study languages,

watch movies, videos, etc. Do you like communication? Communicate, visit, talk, share. A lot of successful people I've known began doing in their free time what today gives them success, it was not to do what rules and regulations told them they had to do, without discrediting the discipline and organization that this imprints on each individual. Free time was for them a gift from God; it was time to imagine, to create.

Free time if misunderstood may become a vague illusion. The use or abuse of it depends largely on each person; worth to say, how time flies when having a good time. I want to do a small comment in the leisure time-work ratio. I think that this ratio is fundamental in our lives. It is a mysterious dialogic relationship, because when you do what you want and need using your free time, you go to work revitalized, for you have done something different to what you always do, you have rested. Leisure time is time of "hard work", work for improvement and personal fulfillment, work to give to God the best of yourself. Work not to get too fat or too thin is the one that becomes leisure time and not vice versa.

Finally, I want to say that leisure time should be out of the frame of our daily tasks, that is why, for a missionary SVD, the recreation time is the main source of nourishment in order to get new energy, and should be used in accordance with what I want to be in the future, in case that the time needed for formal work will

Cont. Br. Diaz

not allow it. We always have goals, and free time well understood is a gift from God which can help you accomplish them. It is an opportunity to dream, to create and to give the best of oneself in the development and growth of our life and our religious missionary vocation.

JESUS ALSO TOOK RECREATION

Br. Stephen Bonsu, GHA



Recreation and free time are very important to me because they enable me to reflect on my life and the example of Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ often went to quiet and peaceful places by himself in order to pray and communicate with his father. As a teacher, I am always busy working in the classroom and dealing with my students. The only free time I have is during school vacations, during which I do some gardening as well as planting plantains and bananas. I spend my yearly month-long local leave with my family and friends. I also spend some of my free time playing football, shopping for my community, or reading the Bible. Every Sunday is recreation in our

community, we play indoor games and share our experiences in various fields of work. I usually go the beach for swimming during national holidays.

STIMULATING THE MIND

Fr. Adam Mac Donald, USC



1. It's important to have free time because it allows one to nourish one's spirit by engaging in activities that stimulate the mind, heart, and soul such as prayer, conversation with confreres and friends, exercise, and reading.
2. The Techny community promotes the physical and mental recreation of its members by encouraging them to make use of our exercise facilities, walk around the Techny campus, play cards and other games after meals, and attend community meetings where there's time for input by outside professionals. *(Fr. Adam is Vice-rector of the Divine Word Community in Techny, Chicago, US.)*

PSYCHOLOGY SUPPORTS THE NEED FOR REST

Br. Jerzy Kuzma, PNG



I believe that natural weekly cycle of workdays and Sunday rest is somehow built in human nature by the Creator. The example of the Soviet Union during the height of Communism supports this view. When the Communists organized work in factories in decades instead of following the weekly cycle, giving the workers a free day only after nine working days, the production in factories dropped significantly. Modern psychology also supports the need for rest and holiday. Research has found that workers who shorten or skip their holiday increase their risk of having stress-related conditions such as stroke or heart attack by 2-3 times more.

Personally, I try to organize my workload so that I am free from work during Sundays. I love spending time with nature. Here in PNG, I usually go to the beach to swim, snorkel, or sunbathe. During a busy day, the best relaxation I can afford for myself is to rest for around ten minutes in prayer. After work, I swim at the pool for around 40 minutes.

Cont. Br. Kuzma

I also noticed that when we are enthusiastic about our work, we can work for long hours without getting tired. On the contrary, when we are bored or not happy to do something, the lightest amount of work wears us out.

As a community we meet weekly for prayer and socials. After dinner, most confreres usually spend time together in conversations while playing cards. We have a monthly Bible sharing and social gathering, and a quarterly district meeting that includes evening socials.

(Br. Jerzy is a medical doctor.)

WITH RELAXED BRAIN

Br. Zoltan Andras, HUN



I think that we need a bit of free time in addition to our studies because only a relaxed brain can tackle studies well. In my case, I divide my time to 1/3 study, 1/3 relaxation and 1/3 work at the garden. I also take time to pray in the breaks between. Our local community helps me with flexibility and humour, and gives me time and space for personal development.
(Br. Zoltan is taking up theological studies.)

REGULAR RELAXATION TIMES

Br. Bruno Rehm, GER



In the beginning of my religious life, recreation was integrated and exactly regulated in the daily schedule. Today, everybody is responsible for one's own recreation, relaxation and even sleeping time. In fact, the need for relaxation and the demands arising from it are also very different. In this regard, everybody should take care of his biological clock. Despite all sorts of stress, burnout can be avoided in this way.

Since the needs and demands for relaxation are very different, the communities and their superiors in our Province allow each of us an individual freedom according to the respective range of duties. This is mostly true for both priests and Brothers.

It is not different in our small community in Nettetal-Kaldenkirchen. In addition to the common meal times, we have a weekly evening "socials" where we meet as a community. As often as possible, we use the hot evenings of the summer

months for grilling. This is already a long tradition. We take this time for ourselves. Because I have different jobs, I spend most of my day at work. But I always see to it that I follow a regular rhythm in my daily, weekly and yearly schedules.

I jog four times a week early in the morning immediately after rising. I also go swimming once a week. As a part of the church choir, I attend its weekly singing practice. Reading is very important for me, so I read a book or solve a sudoku puzzle before going to bed. If the weather permits, I usually go biking with a confrere for around two hours in the afternoon during Saturdays and Sundays. Every winter, I spend a week in the mountains skiing with friends. I also take two weeks during the summer for getting away from it all. A firmly planned schedule is very important for me. With it, an appropriate balance to demanding professional duties is achieved.



DISCIPLINE AND PRANKS

Br. Seraphim Varga, HUN

(RECREATION IN THE SVD SIXTY YEARS AGO AND TODAY...)



Br. Seraphim Varga entered the SVD at the young age of 16. He calls the time after his entry at the Szent Imre Mission House in Kőszeg (1942-1950) “the best years of his life.” He was happy despite the difficulties caused by WWII and the emerging Communist dictatorship, which finally dissolved the house in 1950. Bro. Seraphim had to pursue the dangerous way of life of the members of illegal religious orders. He always remained loyal to his religious vows. In 1989, the Communist regime fell and the SVD was again allowed. This was the second part of his “legal” religious life.

Thinking of Kőszeg, he recalls the presence of many young people in the Mission House. He worked at the publishing office of the Hungarian mission magazine. He and his confreres all worked in silence. Therefore, the time for common recreation became very important for him. It was during recreation that the entire community was together. The Mission House became his

home for 8 years until the Communists confiscated the religious house.

Yes, RECREATION is a necessity! Bro. Seraphim did not want to use the word “free time” because in his view, the question was not what one could do with his free time but rather whether the community had time for common recreation or not. Because he loved reading, he made sure that the religious house had a good library. He loved sports a lot, especially swimming, soccer, and table-tennis. He and his confreres could go downtown during Sundays, an activity they enjoyed a lot.

Even then, more than 60 years ago, religious life involved not only prayer and study but also fun. He remembers how he and his peers pulled off some pranks. One example was when a Brother in his cassock was pushed into the swimming pool. The superiors were very patient about this. They understood that 16- to 18 -year-old boys need a lot of exercise. “We were just teenagers, not mini saints *a la* St. Alois Gonzaga.” Patience and discipline are not contradictory.

Now, Bro. Seraphim lives in a home for elderly priests. Aside from praying regularly, he also plays cards or watches TV with other elderly confreres. Although he sometimes finds himself having a hard time trying to get some sleep, he takes a rest all the same by just lying down.

Conversations among confreres is an important part of religious life. It is important that confreres know each other. In 1994, a confrere in Kőszeg shared at the dining table that he had a friend who had to take insulin three times a day. Bro. Seraphim then told him that he himself had to take insulin not just three times but five times a day. It is often surprising that we know people “outside” better than our own confreres within our community. There is thus a need for constant communication among us so that we should know ourselves better. Let us talk not only about official matters but also about our personal concerns.

(Noted by Frt. Ferenc Pisztor, SVD)

MISSIONARY LIFE REQUIRES GOOD HEALTH

Br. Hugo Gutmann, ARS



I appreciate your greetings. I regret that in my situation I probably can't give you a clear and valid answer to be taken into account for the bulletin. By the way, I receive the bulletin regularly and share it with the community, especially with the few Brothers who are still here in San Javier Home and who read it with much interest.

Cont. Br. Gutmann

Because of my age and certain illnesses that come with it, I face a lot of limitations in trying to come up with a regular schedule. As such, cannot really speak much about free time. While I try my best to meet certain responsibilities, I am only able to do so whenever I am physically able. Even then, I usually have very little time to spare. But I do believe that it is necessary to respect the rules stipulated in the Constitutions.

Young people require some free time for sports and physical activity, this at least once a week. Then every day it is needed to have some free time for fellowship and chat with the confreres, a time for business and personal matters, free reading and/or listening to music and once or twice a week some longer time to share with the community having fun or any entertainment such as playing cards, chess or some other game.

Obviously, the latter depends on the situation and circumstances in which we find ourselves, because there will be different ways of enjoying leisure time, depending if we live in a big community or alone, far away in an isolated missionary station or maybe with a single confrere.

The responsibilities and work of a missionary require physical, mental and psychological health and if we do not respect the needed breaks sooner or later health will be affected. On the other hand, I believe it is also necessary to look into the

mirror of our surrounding reality and see the possibilities of the poor and workers, so that we may not become bourgeois or seek privileges, but to adopt a lifestyle of solidarity.

Surely I can not contribute with new ideas, but at least I want to show signs of life and be full of gratitude for everything that you and the Brothers in the Philippines do to foster the vocation of the SVD Brother and encourage them to go ahead and be firm.

The Lord bless you! Receive a fraternal hug and warm greetings to all in the Divine Word, from Rafael Calzada.

ALWAYS BUSY!

Br. Villamor Penoj-an, PHS



As a Brother in temporary vows, I am now preparing for my future profession by studying Chemical Engineering at the SVD-run University of San Carlos in Cebu.

I would just shake my head in response to the question about “free time” because I am always very busy. I do

get some sleep, but only whenever I am not working on school assignments or SVD programs. I almost always lack sleep.

However, our formation includes recreation such as the usual community game on Fridays, which I regularly attend. The SVD communities of Cebu usually gather for socials (the so-called ‘cocktail party’) on Sunday evenings. I am always happy to attend these gatherings in order to meet confreres in a more casual and leisurely atmosphere. Also on Sundays, I usually go out with Bro. Lando, a sports instructor at the university, to watch basketball games. My studies are easier when I am relaxed.

AGAINST BURN-OUT

Br. Silas Tumlay, BOT



I am very happy with my work as bursar at a Catholic school. The parish started this school with only 18 students,

Cont. Br. Tumlay

and today the population has reached 100. I also participate in the management of the parish. The people need me. As such, my first answer to your question would be: NO, I don't have any free time.

However, I do agree with the need for relaxation. I have to wake up almost everyday as early as 4:00 AM because I am the one assigned to pick the children up for school. Since I am not that young any more, I often feel very exhausted at the end of the day. Because there are only two of us confreres here for the school and the parish, the dangers of burnout is something we need to deal with on a daily basis. Therefore, we always take the Sunday supper with the sisters, one good way of relaxation.

Saturday is my sleeping day. I never wake up earlier than 7:00 AM on Saturdays since I try to get more sleep than what I usually get during weekdays. I also do several things which distract me from the school activities, my usual job. On Fridays I visit sick people. This is more like a pastoral activity for me. On school holidays, I try my best to take time for myself and if I can afford it, I usually love to go somewhere else.

While I actually have the opportunity to get what we call the local leave, I never really take it. I have always been work-oriented. I

always find myself busy in some kind of preparations either for the school or the parish. On top of that, I am also worried about the finances, about what such a local leave would cost us.

I am now happy that I have the chance to go home for a vacation. I can finally visit my beloved Philippines. This home vacation will hopefully recharge me with new energy.

(The conversation was noted down by Br. Bela Lanyi, SVD.)

BALANCE ONE'S DAILY ACTIVITIES

Br. Darwin Loro, ARS



Sports and recreation management provides real opportunities to balance one's daily activities. For many people, work and studies seem to be the most common thing to do as part of the day's routine, leaving little time for any kind of recreation and leisure activities. There is a wide variety of activities to do for free or at minimal cost.

Some of my companions have made it a point to participate in team sports, especially soccer - South America's passion!

Others take a walk to refresh the mind and the body after much studying or get involved in bio-dance as a tool for personal development.

As someone coming from another country, I try my best during my free time to learn about Argentina's history and culture. Watching local films and visiting museums and historical places are a great way of gathering information and learning. There are also occasional cultural shows and musical concerts that I consider as some of my other interests.

At the end of the day, how interested you are is all that is important.

IS IT GOOD TO WORK A LOT?

Br. Nestor Benitez, ARS



1. What is the sound relationship between work and recreation for an SVD Brother?

First of all, it is necessary to clarify what **free time** really is. It is commonly defined as "the set of occupations in which a person uses time, without being forced to do activities that correspond to formal work, or housework."

If we analyze it, we realize that the distinguishing feature is that it is a time for recreation, which can be used at will, as opposed to the rest of the time where one cannot decide what to do in a certain moment, since there are guidelines and regulations set for execution.

For some people, free time is also the realization of activities that are not specific work activities, but may have some kind of compulsion, for instance, to work on home repairs (painting, carpentry), solidarity activities, campaigns, courses or retreats, or to devote oneself to a motivating activity. For others, however, free time is devoted exclusively to leisure and to doing nothing.

Is it good to work a lot? The question has as many answers as the number of people in the world. But, for a Christian, for a religious SVD, we could add another question: **What is the meaning of work?** Working a lot is bad when done for the simple reason of economic efficiency or personal selfishness. But it is good when done with the awareness of doing service to others, **if we consider work as “man’s ability to adapt particularly to the environment according to his needs and the needs of his community, not only physical but also spiritual and emotional necessities.”**

This way of understanding work should be based on a spirituality of which the foundation is an intense religious life, undertaken with all its consequences and therefore penetrates our whole

being and doing. God calls us to a vocation of communion with Him and of service to others. In our case as religious Brothers, we respond to this call through work and the daily situations that we have to face.

Hardwork is actually praised in our Society, but we should ask ourselves: **Is it really healthy to work too much?**

We start from the premise that if work is excessive, then it cannot be healthy. Our society sometimes endorses the culture of leisure, at other times the culture of work, but it does not always provide a sufficiently valid reason for either choice. Working a lot is harmful when done for the simple reason of economic efficiency or personal selfishness. But it is good when done with the awareness of doing service to others, together with a spirituality that allows us to see that there are many necessities that must be given attention, not only through paid professional work in behalf of others, but also through many other actions that involve service.

I personally believe that work, our work, is an opportunity to meet God, and develop and mature in our own life. This may be summarized in three points: **to sanctify work, to be sanctified through work, and to sanctify others through work.**

To sanctify work, above all, is to do it well, with suitability and professional competence, as a service to God. **To be sanctified through work** is to develop one's human and supernatural abilities, specifically in ordinary life, which becomes the occasion of encounter with God and the possibility of practicing

the virtues. **To sanctify others through work** involves giving the professional activity a sense of service to others, and help build and prepare a better world for future generations.

Faced with all these inescapable responsibilities we could ask ourselves once again: **Have we lost the sense of free time?** In fact, we seem to have lost the sense not only of free time but also of our lives, and therefore that of all its activities. Nobody can deny that we are entitled to have free time. **First,** it is a biological need to get our physical and psychic strengths back. **Second,** it is essential for our own development as persons. **Third,** during free time, we can express our sociability beyond the requirements of our job. But free time should not be a selfish time, where only the “I” is important: my comfort, my pleasure or my satisfaction. Therefore, free time in the life of a person as a whole has meaning only if we do it in the function of spirituality.

How do we revalue the recreational aspect of a person as an integral part of hers? We revalue it by recovering the unity of life. This is not about turning life into a game to make it more enjoyable. It is about giving a sense of unity to one's whole life: spirituality, rest and work, and communitarian relations. When you have a clear goal to the divine call to holiness, all activities acquire meaning, preserving each of them its own function.

We need "to be with others" and more urgently "to be with ourselves" so that we will not live lost in space and in the

Cont. Br. Benitez

emptiness of ourselves. Would one who does not know to be with himself be able to be with others? We only serve and share with others when we are able to be alone with ourselves.

To rest does not mean "**empty time**" but rather a time of "**fulfilment and fullness.**" So that time may be a time of fullness, it is necessary to meet our inner being and our inner self, to discern our criteria and mentality, to hear those silent voices of the things that we usually do not listen to, to see and reflect about the reality that is around us and of which we have no time to think about, and to meet God hidden within ourselves and with the truth, the truth of our life.

Today we all have a lot of "free" time, but we do not really have real time devoted to "rest". We speak of that time of relaxation, peace and serenity, silence and encounter. We speak of that time that stops the clock so that we could stop living in "such a rush". Before, roads were meant for us to get somewhere while contemplating the landscape, passing through small towns, and observing people walking along the way. Today, major highways enable us to move faster and reach our destination sooner, but without having seen anything along the way. Worse yet, without having enjoyed anything.

WORK IS NOT ALL THAT COUNTS IN LIFE

Br. Marek Wojtas, POL



I am writing to you at the request of my Rector with regard to your questions about spending free time. I live and work in Pieniezno, Poland.

It is an old cliché that one needs to strike a balance between work and rest. As for your question on the "sound relationship between work and recreation (free time) for an SVD Brother," I believe everything depends on individual cases. There is no ready made prescription applicable to all. Of course it is important to have free time. Why? Once again, it boils down to the old cliché: Work is not all that counts in life. As far as I am concerned, frankly speaking, I am too busy to worry about how to spend my leisure time. Usually I read books or listen to music.

Regarding your second question: We spend some time together talking about various things over cups of coffee or tea. Some play football, others play soccer and so on. There is no written program about how we should spend recreation time as a community.

THE HUMAN BODY IS NOT A MACHINE

Br. Raoul Mayulu, PAR



I apologize for this delay. I was on vacation in my village, where there is no Internet signal. I just arrived at the capital and read your message. I know it's already late, but I am sending you something to show my goodwill. If you cannot include it, I will not complain.

1. First, the human body is not a machine and needs a time of rest. Even machines, after a long time of work, need a moment of rest. Second, work never comes to an end. One can work day and night, and realize that there is always something to do.

It is important to have free time in order to let the body and mind rest, and to devote time for prayer, a personal encounter with God. Of course, a job well done is also a form of prayer. Leisure time is necessary in order to spend time with brothers, lay people and others, who can all enrich us. Leisure time helps us to be informed by reading, listening to news, having fun, listening to music, practicing sports or walking.

2. In my present community, it is a bit difficult to promote community recreation because,

Cont. Br. Mayulu

2. In my present community, it is a bit difficult to promote community recreation because, in spite of belonging to the same community, we do not live in the same house. There are parish priests and directors. We have different schedules and we rarely meet to organize a common time even if it is necessary. It is also difficult to leave some of our personal activities to meet with our confreres.

FREE TIME IS WHEN I LEAVE MY FLAT

Br. Martin Tnines, PNG



Warm greetings from Goroka, PNG!

Free time for me is when I am able to leave my flat because it is not only a place to eat, sleep, and do private things, but it has also become my workplace. I rarely go to my office in a separate building from my flat, except when there is a need for printing articles or research/faculty meetings.

Whenever I feel tired or exhausted, I leave my flat and enjoy the cool breeze around the campus, read books in the public park, visit the town market or the town settlements.

Seminars, public engagement, teaching at the seminary and field research are activities that come under the category of free time. Cleaning my flat, watering flowers, listening to my favorite music, walking, washing and ironing clothes, attending quarterly district meetings, and hiking are also free time for me. Work is when I'm writing or editing research reports, and/or reading and assessing research proposals of other scholars.

What about the relationship between free time and work?

My activities during my free time boost my morale, give me energy, and enhance the quality of my work as a Melanesian missionary. I cannot answer the second question about the community promoted recreation, because I stay on my own.

(Br. Martin is an anthropologist scholar.)

MONDAY IS OUR HOLIDAY

Br. Carl Milos R. Bulilan, JPN



I am presently working with another Filipino confrere in our SVD Migrant Center here in Japan. Everyday we attend to the needs of our migrant brothers and sisters. We try to assist people not only spiritually but also in their struggle to live and be able to integrate in the new environment and culture. We encounter people with different issues coming to us for counselling, legal and financial assistance, and of course, for the sacraments and basic Christian formation.

In spite of the busy week, we decided to make Monday a free day so we can spend the whole day freely as we wish. For me, it is the time to walk around the city, go to interesting places, or just observe people on the streets. Sometimes, I just stay in my room the whole day and take a long sleep, or watch movies in my computer, chat with friends, do some personal projects, and of course, just be alone with the Lord.

Cont. Br. Bullian

This free time helps me to go back to myself after a week of working with other people. It is the time to relax and be ready for the next week. That is why I believe free time is important in order to avoid burnout and to find time to treat myself in simple ways.

CLEANING SNOW AS RELAXATION

Br. Piotr Szewczuk, POL



I am Br. Peter Szewczuk, POL. I have been a superior delegate of the SVD Polish Province for 12 years and a provincial councilor for three triennials. As a superior delegate, it is not easy to manage my work and recreation. My daily activities are a result of my planning and receiving messages from confreres who work outside of Poland. Their e-mail and phone information are part of my daily activities, even if they sometimes reach me just as "last minute" messages.

My usual day begins with the morning prayers and Mass at the chapel at 7:00 AM, followed by breakfast. At 8:30 I go to the office to check and answer e-

mails, and continue my duties according to earlier plans.

However, there are a few exceptions. There are days when I get up at 4:30 AM to see a confrere to the airport by car and days when I come back from the airport at 12:00 AM after fetching a missionary. Sometimes I also attend the funeral of some missionaries' parents very early in the morning and come back home very late in the evening.

Every year, from May to September, afternoon naps and community meetings in the evening are my only forms of recreation. On Saturdays I work at the garden by mowing and cleaning the lawn, and, during the autumn, clearing it of fallen leaves. I also clean my car.

In Poland during wintertime, we do not dream of a white Christmas. We always have white and cold Christmas. Oftentimes, my community goes to clean the outside stairs, terraces, patio, paths around the house, and the rest of our property from snow. Snow was thick in last year's winter so there were days when we had to clean the same places twice or thrice.

It is a beautiful time when all my community members participate in such activities, which often last for about an hour. Removing snow is hard physical work using shovels and wheelbarrows. Since the temperature outside the house is often minus 10 to 20 degrees Celsius, we gather at the

fireplace in the recreation hall afterwards in order to take a rest and drink hot tea or coffee. Christmas season in Poland always mean shorter days and longer winter evenings. We often gather to sing or listen to beautiful Christmas carols. We also decorate the Christmas trees in our garden with colored lights and other Christmas ornaments. These are truly relaxing recreational activities.

As a superior delegate, I usually have less work in autumn and winter, during which I spend time reading, attending an annual retreat, and getting involved in community work. I participate in all community events, and I always feel a sense of acceptance and satisfaction in being a part of them.

In my opinion, a sound relationship between work and recreation should be balanced within a rational plan of daily activities, despite frequent deviations from the daily community agenda. Another activity that brings community members together and creates a healthy relationship between work and rest is preparing daily supper and Sunday meals together. My community consists of five priests and me, the only Brother.

Community liturgical meetings have a great contribution to a healthy relationship between work and recreation. My community meets three times a day in our chapel during the morning, midday and evening prayers. My daily liturgical duties include preparing the

Cont. Br. Szewczuk

altar for Mass, reading and guiding midday and evening prayers every 6 weeks.

There are days when I feel very tired after my daily work or a long journey. For instance, I recently traveled about a thousand kilometers to Berlin and back to Warsaw for a visa to the Ghanaian Embassy. The important thing, however, is the feeling of fulfillment and accomplishment from having met the demands of my responsibilities.

During evening prayers, I always offer thanksgiving to God for the grace of a good and happy day. Community recreation in the evening with a glass of chilled beer never fails to give a sense of relaxation. When our missionaries are on home leave, I often discuss with them current religious, social, and political events, both local and global. The recent tragic death of our President, the First Lady and 94 other people that included high ranking political, military, and Church officials still make the headlines of our discussions.

Other activities, which integrate my community and create a healthy relationship between work and rest, are preparing everyday supper and all Sunday meals together. My community consists of 6 persons, 5 fathers and me as a brother.

A healthy relationship between work and recreation is the creative harmony of these two aspects. It should develop a

sense of responsibility for tasks and resources, which I use for the benefit of the community. We need to perform our tasks creatively and with enthusiasm, without expecting anything in return. My community entrusted to me all spiritual and material goods as our heritage and as the legacy of previous generations. They are for me to use properly and promote. Only a proper relation to the above-mentioned values and forming good interpersonal relationships will provide a healthy attitude toward work and recreation.

WE SCHEDULE A YEARLY TRIP TOGETHER

Br. Roberto Duarte, ECU



Thanks for the communication and for the work of the SVD Brothers Bulletin. It is encouraging to read it and receive the testimonies of Brothers. I send you a small contribution about free time in the life of Brothers.

Most of the times, because of apostolic commitment, we barely have time for rest, leisure, recreation, and relaxation to the point that we must schedule and

plan a trip for the community during the year.

Leisure or free time is vital to the integrity and development of a person, as with Jesus with his friends and companions in the mission. I believe that not everything in life is sacrifice, effort, and work, but also gratuitousness, compassion, reciprocity, and tenderness. Being constantly active often hardens us and we do not fully develop as persons.

Being aware of this human dimension is fundamental and for this it is very healthy "to throw our sandals" regularly, to share in freedom with our fellow brothers or with other people, or to enjoy in our solitude the free dimension of life in the form of a party perhaps, a game, a movie, a walk, a ritual, more sleep, a book, or a delicious meal.

Let the community know us not only because of our commitment to the mission but also because we know how to rejoice, enjoy, and freely share the re-creation of life at its most festive and gratuitous aspect.

Sometimes the community does not find spaces that promote the physical and mental recreation of its members. At times this is reduced to encounters of superficial talk and of drinking. At the SVD District level, we schedule a yearly

Cont. Br. Duarte

trip. During celebrations of the congregation, we organize sports and games that promote integration and fun.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

Br. Josimar Ferreira Souza, BOL



1. What is the sound relationship between work and recreation (*free time*), for an SVD Brother? In other words, why is it important to have free time?

Answer: Free time gives us a lot of benefits when it is not linked to idleness. In this context constructive ideas may be redefined.

Meditate and reflect on religious and personal life to be strengthened in the way.

2. How does the local community *promote* the physical and mental recreation of its members? How do you spend your recreation time?

Answer:

Through walks, celebrations in life, and sharing among confreres or other persons outside the community.

ONE FREE AFTERNOON DURING THE WEEK

Br. Simao Pedro, BRC



How are you my brother? It has been quite some time that I have not written, but I think it is necessary to do now.

Answer

1. What is the sound relationship between work and recreation (*free time*), for an SVD Brother? In other words, why is it important to have free time?

I can say that my only free time is on Sundays, but I try to have at least one free afternoon during the week. Although I am studying Philosophy, I still follow this scheme of getting one free afternoon in a week during which I do not study nor work. Instead I do something different like going to the beach or visiting my friends. However, while I try to do it

every week, it is not always possible.

2. How does the local community *promote* the physical and mental recreation of its members? (To *Brothers*: How do you spend your recreation time?)

We do not have community recreation activities. I miss recreation time like playing cards, dominoes or something else. There are only four of us and we are out most of the times.

HEALING TIME

Br. Servasius Retta Bara, IDJ



Most of our daily life is dedicated to work. As religious missionaries, our work is a symbol of thanksgiving to God. An SVD Brother who lives in a community should define recreation as a sign of culminating the day perfectly. I see recreation as a time for reconciliation, as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God who is present through our confreres in the community. Recreation time is important for a religious missionary. Aside from building up the relationship, it also sharpens our interpersonal concern. Recreation time can

Cont. Br. Retta Bara

also be used to evaluate our life and work for the day.

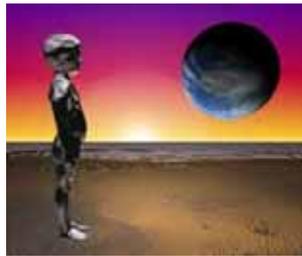
I live with three confreres in the community. In the morning, we say our morning prayers and celebrate the Eucharist. After breakfast, we proceed to our respective assignments. We meet again either during lunch or supper. We say our evening prayers together. We usually watch TV together. We always greet each other in the spirit of brotherhood. I always make it a point that our daily conversations should include discussions regarding our formation as well as the moral support we should give to each other. Sometimes we spend time for brisk walking where we also get the chance to share our experiences with each other and know more about ourselves.

Joining the SVD as a religious Brother has helped me develop and grow as a person especially that I have since stayed in a community with a different cultural background. I used the recreation time to enhance my interpersonal communication skills, express my ideas and creativity, and evaluate my work for the whole day. Please use your recreation time wisely for the benefit of the community and our mission in general.

ECHO

EYE-OPENER AND INSPIRATION

*Fr. Joseph Kallanchira
(TOG Provincial)*



It is always with joy that I receive copies of the SVD Brothers Bulletin—this new media venture that connects SVD Brothers and priests all over the world. Hats off to all Brothers who shared their experiences for this issue. Such sharing of diverse creative activities of our confreres in different parts of the world can surely be an eye opener and inspiration to many of us who are looking for new ideas and possibilities! The layout and design artist, Ms. Joeriza, deserves special mention here. She has done a good job in making the issue a very colorful and easily readable one.

More power to SVD Brothers all over the world! May you all keep writing and sharing.

THANKS FOR THE BOOKLET 'SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE SVD BROTHER VOCATION'

Br. Bernd Ruffing, AUS



Yesterday we received the booklet on the Second General Assembly on Brother Vocation, which took place in Cebu City in 2009. I would like to thank the editors and contributors. I read it with great enthusiasm. It provides motivation and inspiration to the spirituality of SVD Brothers. I always feel energized when reading it. For me, this book offers spiritual nourishment. May the Holy Spirit continue to inspire us in our Society! *(The booklet can be read on the homepage of our Generalate. -The editors.)*

A LASTWORD, FROM AN EDITOR

Do the sharing corresponds to YOUR OWN IDEA about recreation? We would be happy to read your echo. Please write to the following addresses: newlanyi@hotmail.com or svd_brothersphil@yahoo.com.

You may use your favorite language, English, Spanish, Indonesian, Polish, German, etc.

In the Divine Word,

Your SVD Brothers
Cebu City, Philippines



SVD-St. Joseph Freinademetz Formation House

Family Feast, September 17-19, 2010

Brother seminarians play for their parents.

The teams are named after the first SVD Brothers working at the University of San Carlos:

Br. Owski and Br. Van der Peet

*Editors: Br. Bela Lanyi, Br. Irol Torres, Br. Villamor Penoj-an, Br. Roy Lapingcao
Translators: Miguel Angel Monreal (Spanish), Br. Hubertus Guru, SVD (Indonesian)
Correctors: Br. Javier Kinderknecht (Spanish), Br. Miller Hernandez (Spanish), Sam Harold Nervez (English)
Technical Editor: Ms. Joeriza A. Lim*