



SVD BROTHERS

NEWSLETTER



svd_brothersphil@yahoo.com, newlanyi@hotmail.com

Vol. 2 No. 7 December 2010



CHRISTMAS IS APPROACHING, A GREAT FEAST OF THE FAMILY

We, Brother formators in the Philippines, frequently realize the importance of the FAMILY for religious vocation. I believe that this is true for all countries where SVD works. However, we encounter different family models as well.

SVD BROTHERS bulletin asked the confreres about their experiences with family, according to the following questions.

- 1. Did my family support my SVD religious vocation? (Please, explain briefly).*
- 2. Do you feel that our Society is a real family for you? (Please, explain briefly).*
- 3. What do you consider a healthy way of keeping in touch with one's parents, grandparents, siblings?*

Please, read the answers of SVD confreres from all over the world.



CONTENTS

	TITLES	PAGES
1	<i>Cover Page</i>	1
2	<i>Contributions</i>	
	FAMILY IS VERY URGENT AND IMPORTANT ISSUE IN OUR SOCIETY <i>Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden, IDE</i>	5
	"IS THERE ANYTHING GOOD COME FROM NAZARETH?" <i>Br. Gabriel Kesape Wangak, IDE</i>	5-6
	INSPIRED BY PARENTS <i>Fr. Adam McDonald, USC</i>	6-7
	THEY SUPPORTED ME WITH GREAT ANXIETY AND FEAR... <i>Br. Hugo Guttmann, ARS</i>	7
	FROM THE FAMILY TO FORM THE FAMILY <i>Br. Durai Raju, INC</i>	8
	WHERE IS MY HOME? <i>Fr. Bill Burt, AUS – Zonal Coordinator for Asia</i>	8-9
	ONE HEART, MANY FACES <i>Novice Matalim Anima Blikuleng, IDR</i>	9
	SEARCHING AFTER THE WILL OF GOD <i>Br. Vinzenz von Holzen, SWI</i>	10
	THE INSCRUTABLE CALL <i>Br. Bela Lanyi, PHS</i>	10-11
	THE HOLY SPIRIT HAD SPOKEN TO MY FATHER <i>Br. Stephen Bonsu SVD</i>	11-12
	DO YOU LIKE WHAT YOU ARE DOING? <i>Br. Michael Decker, USC</i>	12
	INTERESTED IN MY UPS AND DOWNS <i>Br. Karl Scharschmitt, KEN</i>	12
	GOD CHOSE ME AS THE FULFILLMENT OF MY PARENTS' WISH <i>Br. Sebastiao Tenorio da Silva, PHS</i>	12-14

	GROWING IN LOVE FOR THE SOCIETY	15-16
	<i>Br. Raj Kullu SVD, PNG</i>	
	WE ARE NOT FROM THE SAME PARENTS..	16-17
	<i>Br. Eduardus Reba, ARS</i>	
	I EXPERIENCE MY PERSONAL FAMILY IN AN ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT WAY	17
	<i>Br. Bruno Rehm, GER</i>	
	TO BECOME A TRUE FAMILY IN THE SVD	17
	<i>Br. Paul Tawiah, GHA</i>	
	FORMATION, LESS COMMUNICATION IS RECOMMENDABLE	18-19
	<i>Fr. Ernesto Salvar, PHS (Spiritual of the Brothers' Formation House, Cebu)</i>	
	I HAVE FOUND MY FAMILY HERE IN THE SVD	19
	<i>Br. Zoltan Andras, HUN</i>	
	WE, BROTHERS, ALWAYS KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER	20
	<i>Br. Bipin Surin, INE</i>	
	WE APPRECIATE THIS CONTRIBUTION FOR THE BROTHERHOOD VOCATION PROMOTION	20
	<i>Fr. Matheus Ruron, ZIM</i>	
	HOW IS INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD DAY CELEBRATED IN KERALA?	20
	<i>Br. Swaminathan Sathiyanesan, INM</i>	
3	A LASTWORD, FROM THE EDITORS	21

FAMILY IS VERY URGENT AND IMPORTANT ISSUE IN OUR SOCIETY

Fr. Paulus Budi Kleden, IDE



Dear Brothers, thanks a lot for initiating a discussion about a very urgent and important issue in our Society, also in Indonesia: our relationship with our family.

"IS THERE ANYTHING GOOD COME FROM NAZARETH?"

Br. Gabriel Kesape Wangak, IDE



Greetings from Ende, Flores. I hope this email find you and the readers of SVD Brother Bulletin in a good health and fine. Thank you for guiding questions which were sent some time ago. My answer to the first question is rather long since the beginning of my vocation

journey slightly different with other friends. And this is a reflection of my religious vocation as a Brother SVD.

In many occasions, either officially or unofficially said that being called as a religious vocation come from a family. So this phrase often heard "The family is the basic seminary." No wonder many priests, brothers and nuns in the past came from a family with Catholic background. They are usually attending a holy mass when a parish priest came to visit parishioners and celebrated the mass. They were not afraid to meet with the priests, nuns and Brothers. They were also have an encouragement to take part in other spiritual activities, such as the altar boy and lector.

On the other hand it must be admitted also that God choose people to work in the His vineyard from a non-Catholic people and also from Catholics which we call in Indonesia **NAPAS church-goers** (**NA**tal-**PAS**ka = Christmas-Easter). That means they usually go to the church on these feasts. God is never wrong in choosing people to be his servant.

My family is included in the second category above. Perhaps because of the influence of social life where my family lived. I come from a poor peasant family. My mom became baptized just in 1989, after I joined the SVD. My mom chose Saint Gabriel as her patron's name. Before she became a Catholic, mom believed the traditional religion (agama asli). Although my

mom was not a Catholic since childhood, but I'm proud of her. She taught us how to love, respect other people.

May 1983, I graduated from high school, then went to Kupang, Timor to attend carpentry and sewing courses. After finishing the courses (December 1983) I returned to my hometown and worked as a carpenter. July 1984 was the year which very important in my life. I have to make a decision. When I told my parents and relatives that I want to join the religious vocation, they did not agree. They did not allow me to enter the religious life. They told me that the youngest child must stay at home to take care parents. I faced the another problem. The Parish priest who supported my family, was against that I become a Brother. He said that I am not worthy to be a Brother because of my family background. I met him three times and I got the same answer. Finally I decided to enter Brother Formation House in Ende (BBK) without a recommendation letter from parish priest. Therefore when I decided to take my first vows I chose this text (Bible) as my motto: "*Is there anything good come from Nazareth?*" (John 1:46).

Until now and I am sure my family will continue to accompany me to carry out my religious vocation, even though their support were slightly different. Mom and members of my clan still hope that I will leave the SVD. For example, every time I went for holidays

Cont. Br. Wangak

some of the family members still asking me, when are you going to leave the SVD? Instead of answering their question, I just smiled . I never blame them. I am very proud of them. I found that my religious vocation is very meaningful. I feel free to live on my religious life, there is no coercion of my family in my life. This life is his own choice, not a family choice or choices of others. What I feel and experience is a consequence of the free decision of mine. I am grateful that my family never imposed their will upon my life. I must thank them. I also know that there are many prayer groups and congregations ecclesial (St. Anna, Sisters of St. Mary's (KSM), who never stop to pray for me. I feel strong to continue my vocation because God's love and all form of support from family, relatives and ecclesial congregations. "Is there anything good come from Nazareth" (Baopukang)? The answer is clear. I believe that "everything is possible for everyone who believes" (MK 9:23). this is the motto of my perpetual vows on September 7, 1995.

SVD is truly becomes a real family for me. Therefore there is a desire to be always at the community with the confreres. For example, when I went to visit my relative on Sunday, I usually came back to have lunch at our community. Or when I did my pastoral work outside of the community for some days of a week, I missed the community so much. I

quickly return to the community after going out on holidays. There is a desire to always be at community for eating together, recreation together etc.

As a member of the SVD, I think a healthy way of keeping in touch with our parents, grandparents and siblings is making contact with them. Of course there are many ways to make contact with the family such as praying for them, write letters, phone calls or send a greetings. But one way that is considered as a good and healthy way is to visit, as Saint Elisabeth did it for her sister Mary. Therefore, when we go for the annual holiday we should visit all the family members and also the family of our confreres.

INSPIRED BY PARENTS

Fr. Adam McDonald, USC



1. Yes, my family was (and is) very supportive of my SVD vocation. I grew up in a very religious household where my parents were very active in our local parish and where I witnessed their example of lived faith on a daily basis. Although my parents never pressured or directly encouraged me to be

a priest or religious, they were very happy when I announced my decision to pursue formation with the SVD, and they have been behind me 100% ever since! Evidence of how much my vocation was inspired and nurtured by my parents can be seen in the fact that my younger brother, Timothy, decided to become a priest for our home diocese of Lansing, Michigan while my oldest brother, Eben, is currently studying for priesthood in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles as a "belated vocation."

2. I definitely feel that our Society is a real family. My two best friends are SVD confreres, and we've journeyed together as brothers for many years now, coming to know, love, and accept one another more and more with each passing year. Whether it's here in my local community, throughout the Chicago Province, or even other places I've traveled around the SVD world, I've always felt very much at home with and amongst my confreres, and I have a real sense of our being brothers.

3. I consider a healthy way of keeping in touch with parents, grandparents, and siblings to be making phone calls or sending them emails on a weekly or biweekly basis, sending letters and cards on special occasions like birthdays, Christmas, and Easter, and making personal visits when

Cont. Br. Mc Donald

the opportunity presents itself. I also enjoy welcoming my parents and siblings to visit me in my SVD community whenever they have a chance to travel, and they always express gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to them by the members of the community.

THEY SUPPORTED ME WITH GREAT ANXIETY AND FEAR...

Br. Hugo Guttmann, ARS



Did my family support my SVD religious vocation? They certainly did, in a positive way, but with great anxiety and fear, as there were a lot of requirements for admission that time, including:

- Health: history of the family up to the grandparents, with medical certificate from the family physician. (My mother had a history of tuberculosis.)
- Financial: big amounts for linen, personal clothes and clothes for work were required. To complete all these implied tremendous sacrifices and many renunciations for the whole family. In fact, I have never used many of these things

personally, but some of them I have been using for 45-50 years already since my admission.

I also did not lack support in prayer. My family was deeply religious, so that religious practices and family prayers were never lacking. I think that today, as before, the example of the life of faith, the teaching, the education, and the transmission of faith from parents are crucial for the shaping of vocations that, unfortunately, are already difficult to find.

In the country of my ministry the practice was very different, the requirements were minimal and boys were collected at an early age for primary education. The Congregation did all the sacrifices and for the families, it was an opportunity to get a good and cheap education for their children. The Lord could then use a few of these students for His kingdom. Nowadays, being middle-aged and having a defined personality are required for admission, but there are no financial requirements. (If there were any, hardly any young man would enter). The vocational interest, for instance, is only from the individual and, most of the time, it does not come from being supported in an environment of a religious family tradition.

Do you feel that our Society is a real family for you? As an institution, I always felt the congregation is like family. I must admit, though, that many of its members have disappointed me on several occasions. However, we must

not confuse individuals who make up the institution with the institution itself, which intends to be a family for all. Some little black sheep can be found in many other families as well.

During the first few years I tried to maintain monthly contact with my parents through letter. (To visit home and/or vacation was not yet conceived and parents were allowed to visit their son in the convent only once a year, but the distance and the cost of the trip prevented such a visit.) Later the frequency of letters gradually decreased to just once every two or three months while my parents were still alive. Now I take the occasion of a birthday or the holidays of Easter and/or Christmas to get in touch with my brethren. To me that is enough. Because of my health and age I cannot visit my country anymore. Moreover, my brethren also have health problems, although a visit would be welcomed. However, a stay of several days would also be very annoying for them because of the pace of life imposed by age and health, so that a greeting letter or a phone call makes us happy and comforts us. That is usually enough for both sides.

Brother, I have had quite frequent doctor visits and been hospitalized a couple of times lately so that I find very little time in general. I want at least to give a brief account of my personal experience about vocation and my relationship with my family.

FROM THE FAMILY TO FORM THE FAMILY

Br. Durai Raju, INC



My family supported my SVD religious vocation as a Brother. Family is a true companion along the road of religious vocation. When I expressed my desire to join the seminary to become a Brother after my high school, my parents were very cooperative to go along with me to meet the parish priest in order to get his views and green signal. Vocations normally come from healthy and religious families, from families who give witness to their religious convictions and have control of the superficial environment which surrounds them. There are parents with a There are parents with a profound desire that vocations come from their families. It is a desire which they keep hidden in their hearts and do not discuss with their children. In former times, it was a high honor for a Catholic family to produce vocations. Today, that attitude is not so evident. Why does this happen? I think that today's man is

more materialistic and less religious. That is the fruit not only from the society of consumption but also from the example and education in our families. But my parents were simple and innocent that they kept in their heart which was not fathomable to them before 20 years. The family is a kind of school of more abundant humanity. There is no magic formula that will tell how understanding or supportive a family might be. In general, Catholics who have had positive relationships with priests, brothers, or sisters are more supportive than families that are unfamiliar with Catholicism or religious life. We are from the family and for the family to the formation of truly Christian families SVD Consti.109.1. Where ever we are appointed we live like a family and striving to live a really family. Whatever may the differences between two whether young or old, north or south or east or west states, we are living in a community (family). I consider the healthy way of keeping in touch with one's parents, grandparents by way of visiting at least once in a year and staying with them. Our congregation is better than some of the Sisters' congregations who allow once in two years. We are lucky to go home and meet our family members.

WHERE IS MY HOME?

Fr. Bill Burt, AUS – Zonal Coordinator for Asia



Reflecting on the concept of "family" for an SVD, I find myself pondering a related question, "Where is my home?". When I was young this was easy to answer. My home was where I had lived with my parents and sister. When I joined the SVD and went away from the place where I had grown up, I always looked forward to "going home" for holidays. "Home-leave" was important, and the thought of it kept me going when I was lonely and alone, going through culture-shock or feeling "home-sick". Then over the years my family situation changed. My parents sold the family home and moved into a retirement village. My sister married and moved away also. I found myself without a physical home to go to on home-leave. My extended family of my nephew, my cousins and inlaws were important to me, but the places where they lived would never be my home.

Now, at 63 years old and living in Australia, with my only immediate family members living a long way

Cont. Br. Burt

away from me (My sister in England and her son 1000km away from Melbourne), I am truly home-less. But am I?

As an SVD I can honestly say that I feel totally at home with my confreres. This feeling of being at home has nothing to do with any particular place, for wherever I am with confreres I am at home, and this is something to be celebrated! My home-land is Australia and that will never change, but where my personal home is, is always open to change. Years ago, someone wrote a song, "Where I hang my hat is home." I resonate with that sentiment.

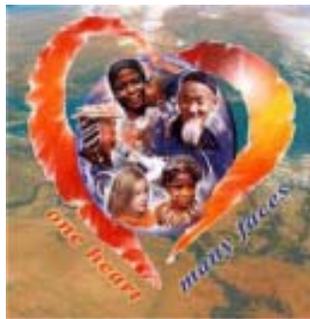
As ASPAC Zonal Coordinator I have had opportunities to visit SVD communities, large and small, in many different places. In each place I feel at home. I have also stayed in the houses of diocesan men and other religious orders that have been very welcoming, but they're not "home". I think the difference has something to do with shared ideals and experiences, a common understanding of life and a consciousness of sharing a special SVD history. This doesn't make us necessarily better than anyone else, but we are special, different.

My home is now in the SVD parish of Preston, in the Archdiocese of Melbourne,

Australia. I talk regularly via skype with my sister and my only nephew, and have a close family bond with them. However, my confreres with whom I live are truly family for me too. Some of my parishioners and my small circle of close friends are like family as well. I don't know where I would go if I was to take "home-leave"! But I don't think that's a real problem!

ONE HEART, MANY FACES

*Novice Matalim Anima
Blikuleng, IDR*



For me, becoming a religious starts within the family. At first, my family did not agree with my choice to be an SVD religious, no matter how hard I tried to explain to them that it was the best for me and that it didn't get in the way between me and my work. I have been an officer in the forest department called Sikka Regency until this day. If we can assure our family that our choice will

make everyone happy, then I believe they will support us. Right now, I am so happy that my family and friends are very supportive.

I have been very happy with my decision to become an SVD religious, and I thank the Lord for all SVD members because with them, I am able to realize my life and work. Thank you, St. Arnold Janssen for the grace of vocation! Because of you, my life has changed. Now I enjoy doing many things with the confreres in all situations, even if we are different in character. Our differences has taught me to always do something for others. If we know and understand that we are different, every trouble can be solved. Our differences should unite us to be God's servants who are ready to witness that God created us differently but with the intention to unite us all. We are truly "one heart with many faces" in the SVD.

SEARCHING AFTER THE WILL OF GOD

Br. Vinzenz von Holzen, SWI



Did my family support my SVD religious vocation ? This question encourages me to remember once more and to write down the reaction of my family to my vocation. There were some special aspects to it.

In my family I was the first boy, born after two sisters. Six more children followed, together we were nine. Our father was a simple worker, with a very small salary income. Life was not easy. So when my two older sisters finished the schooling, they had to start working immediately, to help the family. When I finished nine years of basic schooling I got the chance, to do an apprenticeship in commerce and accounting. After finishing it, I

got a good job and got a salary, higher than my father, who had to care for 9 children. About three years later I explained to my family, that I had made the decision to enter the SVD as Brother. The very first reaction was, we will lose your support to the family. But it was a short one; considering that my decision came after quite some searching after the will of God for my life, they supported me fully, prayed for me, and

joined with joy my first and later my perpetual vows celebration.

Also my decision, to be a SVD-Brother and not to go towards priesthood, was fully accepted. I told them that I had considered for quite some time this possibility, but came to the result, my vocation is the missionary brotherhood; a decision I never regret.

Yes I do feel that our Society is a real family. I think there are two major reasons for this. I always considered my confreres and my community as a family for me. I tried to understand and help and to have relations with my confreres the same way brothers and sisters have. And also, I tried to take the tasks, the orientation and the problems of the SVD and of my community also as my personal tasks. So the SVD is a real family for me.

I always tried to tell keeping in touch with my personal family, explaining in spoken conversation and in letter-writing about my understanding of Mission, of the problems we see and have, and of the missionary aspect each Christian has. I shared with them my life, but also went on to feel with my parents, my brothers and sisters about their lives, the happenings in the families, the joys and sorrows each has; especially they were each day in my prayers, and they know about it.

THE INSCRUTABLE CALL

Br. Bela Lanyi, PHS



I have been rather a "self-appointed" SVD. Nobody had recruited me. When I entered religious life, the SVD was forbidden in my home country Hungary, due to the Communist rule of that time. I even did not know any confreres in Hungary. But the good reputation of SVD as an effective missionary Society was still alive among us Catholics. I had to leave the country to enter the SVD. This emigration was illegal. My parents objected to my SVD vocation, because they found it risky to cross the border and with that, to violate the law of the native country. The SVD-myth of "forever abroad" also seemed to be difficult to them. However, the family could not hinder me in entering the SVD in Austria. Besides my home country Hungary, the Austrian Province became my home province, because it openheartedly accepted me, after I had left Hungary and the border again had closed

Cont. Br. Lanyi

behind me. The collapse of Communism in Hungary (1989) brought freedom and then, my parents and my family were eager to visit me in Austria. They started appreciating my vocation. Somewhat correcting my sentence, I think I was “self-appointed” because God called me. In the beginning it was surely an inscrutable call for my family...

To me, the SVD members are really “family members” Wherever I am, I feel accepted in the SVD houses with the warmth of a real family. Of course, as in native families, we have members who are closer to us. Today’s media (like email) make it possible to keep contact with many people, with both members of the native and the Arnoldus family. We, Brother formators in the Philippines, frequently realize the importance of the family for religious vocation.

Cont. Br. Lanyi

To our candidates, we try to hand down an image of SVD-SSpS-SSpSAP which resembles a big family. We call it “Arnoldus Family”. All three branches are here in Cebu. We regularly meet them. This image helps our young people understand that they will not be alone later in their mission. We

also visit the families of the candidates.

In the Philippines, strong families give the vital force of the whole society. Therefore, if the family of our candidates and junior Brothers does not accompany the young people on their missionary journey, they lose an important support. We notice that some families initially support religious vocation, but later, the parents of these families decide to “take back” their sons, to get financial support for important tasks of the family, like financial support for studies of younger siblings. (In rural families, there is little tolerance for “individualism”. What the family members earn, will be used for the whole family.) Replying to this situation, I used to tell the parents of our candidates that money is not everything. While the siblings will earn money for the big family, this son in the SVD will look after the Lord’s blessing for the parents, siblings and relatives. We also try to help our candidates become conscious of their own, unique vocation. With that they can become Brothers for much more people than their native relatives. Truly, “our parish is the whole world”.

THE HOLY SPIRIT HAD SPOKEN TO MY FATHER

Br. Stephen Bonsu SVD



I remember when I decided to join the Brother vocation I informed my family. My father did not agree initially. The reasons my father gave me was that he will not have grand children from me. Secondly who will take care of the studies of the younger siblings and also the financial support of the family when they grow old? My mother did respond to my request positively and she encouraged me to go ahead. When I received my admission letter to join the Brother vocation my father was the first to read the letter. After reading the letter, he laughed and said ok, ok, ok three times.

Since that day he was not happy, and so he would intentionally go to farm on Sundays and lo and behold if I did not follow up to the farm to work with him there would be trouble. His policy was that if I did not go to the farm and work that day there was no

Cont. Br. Bonsu

food for me. My mother would have to hide some food for me, but she could only give me the food when my father was not around the house or was sleeping.

One day he called me to the sitting room, only the two of us in the sitting room. I think that day the Holy Spirit had spoken to him. The message that came from him was that, "You said you want to become a religious brother?" And I said yes and he said to me "Go ahead, I am in full support of that".

My family supported my SVD religious vocation by caring for my studies financially when I was having my Technical courses. Some of my family members cannot understand that their son, brother, uncle and nephew as an SVD Brother cannot so generously support them. For in supporting me, they expect my support for them.

There are many of my younger brothers and sisters who are in dire need of school fees, financial support to learn a skillful job but because of my vow of evangelical poverty I am not able to help them. Any time I visit home during my local leave some of my family members have to move out of their bedroom just to

give me a place to sleep till my home leave is ended. I wish if there could be possibility where there could be a way of supporting our poor families as a token of our appreciation.

I feel that our Society is a real family for me because there are many opportunities that I have achieved and I am still achieving. Spiritually I have come to know better God through the Society.

One healthy way of considering in keeping in touch with my parents, grandparents and siblings is by making phone calls through mobile phone, e-mails through the internet especially through the facebook, visiting them when I have my home leave and writing letters through the post, attending yearly festivals, paying visits when a family member dies and once a while I could also invite them to visit my community.

It is my hope that the constitution will be reviewed so that there will be a way we could be of a little help to our parents.

My parents gave me freedom in my religious missionary vocation. Of course, they were glad that I took this step. But they did not force me in any way. I think that they would have accepted it with

understanding if I would have interrupted my vocation journey.

I know many orders and I also have good contacts to religious of other orders. However, I can not imagine any religious community where I would feel more at home than in the SVD. The worldwide openness is a good feeling. But in my personal experience, it is going too far to call our community as family. We feel appreciated and we are practically everywhere on Earth at home. But I experience my personal family in an essentially different way. I am there – so as I am – accepted and protected.

To me, it was always important to keep on the good relationship with my grandparents and parents. This gave me a support in my religious vocation as well. I cultivate the same good relationship to my siblings, nieces and nephews. It is also cordially returned. The vibrant contact is maintained by both sides. This relationship is helpful for my religious vocation as well. So far they can, my relatives selflessly support our projects.

DO YOU LIKE WHAT YOU ARE DOING?

Br. Michael Decker, USC



1). Yes, my family did support my vocation to the SVD Brotherhood. My father had a cousin who was a Religious Sister, thus he supported my decision. In 1979 when I was considering to join the SVD I did not know what this all would mean as a SVD Brother. This also, included my parents and family. During my Formation years in the 1980's my parents would ask me every time when I came home, " Do you like what you are doing?" Every time I said yes. In explaining to my parents what I was doing in my Education and in my Ministry was strange and challenging for my parents, since my world was different from theirs, by living with many people from many different countries. In my assignments working in the African-American community, plus being assigned to the Philippines and being away from my parents was difficult for them. However, my parents supported me all the time.

2) In my many experiences with the SVD's since 1979 I have met many SVD from throughout the world and this has enriched my life. Yes, the SVD is my family and

continues to grow and develop each and every year. Coming together for SVD celebrations is an opportunity for me to reconnect with many SVD who I have met in the past. It is always a time for celebration.

3) Things have changed over the past 30 years. In the beginning it was by letters and phone calls and visits once a year. Now, it includes, phone calls, e-mails, and more visits to parents since they are elderly, age 90. I am closer to my parents then ever before, only a 4 hour trip. Thus, I am able to have trips to visit my parents more often, but only for a few days each time. I do not know how much longer my parents will be alive. Every minute with my parents is a blessing for me which I treasure.

INTERESTED IN MY UPS AND DOWNS

Br. Karl Scharschmitt, KEN



My family supported me very much in my religious vocation. They would have even liked to see my two brothers join the religious life, since they studied Secondary School with the

SVD. My parents were sorry but respected their decisions.

In my community as well as in our province I feel accepted. In the SVD, we are one family and there is no looking down on the brothers. We are treated all equal.

It is good to keep good contact with our relatives, by writing, calling and sending pictures. My relatives are interested in my work and want to know what are my ups and downs.

GOD CHOSE ME AS THE FULFILLMENT OF MY PARENTS' WISH

Br. Sebastiao Tenorio da Silva, PHS



In my simplicity I will try to share my experience with my family and SVD family.

I want to express my gratitude to you for giving me an opportunity to share my thoughts to everyone connected to the Brothers

Cont. Br. Da Silva

network and the society. This in fact makes me so happy and encourages me to share my experiences. First of all, I would like to wish all of you A MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR. I humbly admit that whenever I was asked to pen down my thoughts in the SVD BROTHERS Boletim, I felt shame because of my poor English. So this time, I risk myself to share my simple experience in my hometown, Igaci City and Palmeira dos Indios City, located at the of Alagoas, Brasil. In Sao Paulo, the biggest city in Brasil, wherein I worked for 5 years before entering the Societas Verbi Divini – SVD.

Though I was born in a hospital, I lived in the interior part of the city (I am the fifth siblings). One of the desires of my parents and grandparents was that one of us should become a religious missionary or a diocesan priest, and for this, they always implored the grace of God unceasingly. Their purpose was to contribute to the welfare of this world and thus participate in the mission of God on this earth. They considered that this would be best way to show gratitude to God who blessed them abundantly with grace and peace. I am very

grateful to God that He has chosen me as the fulfilment of my parent's wish.

My parents gave the opportunity to go to school. My day was divided in two parts- morning in the farm and afternoon in the school. But the weekend was meant for church and leisure. I had the chance to attend the catechism in the community near our house and after which I used to go the municipality school. All these activities enabled me to grow in faith, knowledge and love for the mission of God. I worked more ten years in various fields in different cities. During these years, my involvement among the people eventually made me to opt for Religious Life. After responding to the invitation from the SVD's to know about of Vocation, I decided to join the SVD in 1999. After experiencing the initial Missionary Life in the Formation House, I was able to opt for the Philippines so that I continue the mission of God. I believe in God's will for me and this gives me courage to love and live in Philippines, I truly live my life here, because I am sure that the most important language in the world is the language of love. I believe that God has given me the patience and courage to be His servant for his plan by loving this people.

Did my family support my SVD religious vocation?

Yes. My family supports my SVD religious Vocation. But not all of them knew the difference between a religious brother and a priest until I explained to them. I must tell that my family always pray for the missionaries and believe that religious life is the most effective way in making the society better. Whenever we sat around the table for the meals, we always used to share about family, profession, prayers, and dreams and so on. In this way, everyone knows about the life of the other and encourage and sometimes give suggestions or advices. This is not because we are expected to give advices or suggestion but we care for each other. So, everyone knows about the other, what are his/her dreams of life. More importantly, we always pray for his/her success in his/her options for profession or work.

Do you feel that our Society is a real family for you? (Please, explain briefly).

I believe and feel that the SVD is my choice and my Family. We are international in culture, language and living. This has its own beauty at the same time it is more challenging. But we are Bothers to one another (with the same father – Arnold

Cont. Br. Da Silva

Janssen) and always ready to help others by respecting one's own limitations, culture, and belief systems. Of course this helps me to learn more from the other in order to grow myself in various aspects of my life.

What do you consider a healthy way of keeping in touch with one's parents, grandparents, siblings?

The most common way is the spiritual way. We can keep contact through our prayers. But also through email, letters and Sometimes, use the pictures to renew the feeling and keep in touch with my family not only blood family but also with my confreres, and to friends. One thing I do sometimes is to offer my prayer and candles to them, especially to ours faithful departed.

GROWING IN LOVE FOR THE SOCIETY

Br. Raj Kullu SVD, PNG



Before answering the paused questions to share on the news bulletin, let me mention a few lines of my family back-ground in order to understand me better. I am the eldest of five siblings of my parents. Mother died from snake bite when I was grade 5 at parish boarding school. Since my childhood, I was supported and cared by paternal uncle's family. I was only the fortunate one among the siblings to do primary and high school in the family. Although, every year Diocesan vocation director came to my mission agent high school for vocation promotion but never showed interest to join for as my mind was fixed to do in a town college. At end of my matriculation, when vocation director visited school, for fun I met him and shared about my family background. Having heard from me, he asked if I were interested to join the summer vocation camp. Without the knowledge of my home people I went for three days camp, not knowing what would be a consequence. In the camp there were four priests from different congregations and an SVD brother. After going through the process of interviews during the camp, I was inclined to give name for the brotherhood and landed into the mixed diocesan and SVD minor seminary formation at Jyoti Bhavan, Sambalpur. When I received the letter of invitation I informed my people and it disheartened the plan of my uncle who was waiting for me to join for college study.

Although, my father didn't do his formal education but he was

in every situation kind and generous to wards my schooling and well being. My uncle who was in the city always stood in the background for my higher studies. When in high school, he encouraged me to study in the field of health science. In looking back, the choice to be what I am today as Divine Word missionary brother was a contrary to the choice of my family members. I do remember when I first broke the news about my choice of seminary formation, saying 'if you are not comfortable in seminary studies, make your option to come back home'. During the seminary holidays always loved to spend my time with home people. They always cared for my travel and personal allowances at my initial stage of formation. I feel that although, they wanted to be someone but they respected my personal choice. In many ways I experience that home people are happy with me as they share their joy and sorrow, especially during my home holidays. At this stage of home situation, they are of the opinion that it is long enough to be in the mission and they wish me to work in India that I could make presence with them at least once in a year.

The secret of success and being happy in the mission of PNG is the experiences of fraternity in the community and the in the district structure that we have in PNG. As to the question if the Society or the province is a real family, I would say 'yes' in understanding the concepts of family values, care and support that I receive from Society.

Cont. Br. Kullu

Often I hear from the friends and confreres while chatting that it is an unnatural or artificial family. In many ways yes, because we don't feel the affinity of blood relationship. We lack the spirit of brotherhood. Often we don't experience the sense of belongingness as of expected from confreres. Rather in bottom line we tend to compete, discourage, gossiping and resenting the value based community building spirit. As brother, I make effort to understand through the help of prayer that the Society is as a family as it nurtures, sustains and secures my personal identity and my future. In ways of relating with a few valued confreres and friends strengthens my life and mission. When I take the ownership of my life and vocation, I grow in love for the Society and feel that I am in a family. It is always a challenge to maintain the spirit of family unless I make my foundation in the spirituality of the Society.

I am convinced that family is my root of my personal vocation. Without the family support, I won't be happy in the mission and as a religious brother. Having roots in an Asian family it is important to be in touch with my family members as to draw energy from home people along with the personal prayers. I am happy about the importance of home holiday that we cherish in the Society in order to get in touch with the family members.

WE ARE NOT FROM THE SAME PARENTS..

Br. Eduardus Reba, ARS



I am from Indonesia and I am currently working at the School of "El Salvador de Jujuy" - Argentina. Together with other teachers, I am in charge of the Christian Formation. The School of "El Salvador" is a school that belongs to the Congregation of the Divine Word. In other words, it is our school.

It's true that the family is the soil where both religious Brother and Priest vocations grow. It all depends on the situation and spiritual life of the family. A well-united family, well-formed in Christian spiritual life, will surely be the source where religious vocations arise abundantly. In my case, my vocation as a Brother is not something unusual or new. My family is closely identified with the church in its active participation in the parish life. They are collaborators in the life of the parish that is currently under the Missionaries of the Divine Word. For this reason, and for the pastoral life of many

Missionaries of the Divine Word, the religious and missionary vocation is well understood and accepted in my family. I personally feel the strong support of my family to my missionary religious vocation as an SVD Brother. While there is sometimes confusion between the priestly vocation and the Brother vocation, it all depends on how we well explain this matter to our families.

I will never believe that the congregation is a real family for me. From the reality we have lived and continue to live, I doubt that we could be a real family. It's good that our Constitution always reminds us that "*as brothers of one family, we share our resources with the communities and brothers in need*" (Const. 210.1). But we must realize that we are not from the same parents. We come from different countries, cultures, languages, and ways of being. Above all, we have different feelings. I am not pessimistic, but the reality has shown the truth about who we are and how we live.

This situation helps me understand that the differences we have are not to divide us nor to create bonds among us, but they are for us to accept as they are. We should give others the opportunity to act as they are.

Cont. Br. Reba

If we want a true community as a family, the key is in accepting and respecting others in all positive and negative aspects. Let's have the ability to live with differences and see it as something that will help us mature in fraternal life and enrich one another. Let us prove that we live with many faces, but only with one heart.

3. What do you consider a healthy way of keeping in touch with

The best way to communicate with the family (one's parents, grandparents, siblings, etc.) until now is using the public telephone or the cell phone. Obviously it is very expensive to communicate with them because of the distance between Argentina and Indonesia. Therefore, what we do is to communicate by telephone twice a year (Christmas and Easter).



I EXPERIENCE MY PERSONAL FAMILY IN AN ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT WAY

Br. Bruno Rehm, GER



My parents gave me freedom in my religious missionary vocation. Of course, they were glad that I took this step. But they did not force me in any way. I think that they would have accepted it with understanding had I interrupted my vocation journey.

I know many orders and I also keep in touch with the religious of other orders. However, I cannot imagine any religious community where I would feel more at home than in the SVD. The worldwide openness is a good feeling. But in my personal experience, it is going too far to call our community as family. We feel appreciated and we are practically at home everywhere on Earth. But I experience my personal family in an essentially different way. When I am with them, I may be as I am

really – and I am accepted and protected.

It has always been important for me to maintain good relationship with my grandparents and parents. This gives me support in my religious vocation. I cultivate the same good relationship with my siblings, nieces and nephews. It is also cordially returned. The vibrant contact is maintained by both sides. This relationship is also helpful for my religious vocation. As far as they can, my relatives selflessly support our projects.

TO BECOME A TRUE FAMILY IN THE SVD

Br. Paul Tawiah, GHA



The role of the family is one of the most important elements of our Religious Life today. The vocation to the Religious life is first of all, natured and flourished in the context of family life. It is important to note that, often, our families offer us the environment necessary to sustains and encourages us in this new way of living our vocation in the Church. In

Cont. Br. Tawiah

other words, we are called to this pattern of life to a particular and radical living the love of God as a Religious Missionary Brother with our gifts and talents. I freely chose this life-style as a faith response to God's call. In this way, the vows, promises made to God shape my life-style as a Brother in the Society of the Divine Word. These vows affect my choices, decisions and attitudes in the same way as marriage vows do in the family life. Another essential feature of the Religious life is the community living, thus creating a new family. However, I am no longer free to live as a bachelor. By my commitment to the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, I devote my life to the service of others out of love for the God who first loved me unconditionally.

In the light of the above, I now share how my family supported me in my formation and even up to date. When I expressed the desire to become SVD Religious Missionary Brother, I was at the age of 21years. I had a tremendous support and words of encouragement from my parents, my brothers and sisters. We are seven children, five boys and two girls, which I am the elder son. Mine, being devoted and practicing Catholics, it was not difficult for them to comprehend and also accept this way of life. But their

difficulty was the outcome of this decision if I would be able to complete it successfully, the question of acceptance and offering. Therefore, their challenge motivated me in a way that, I created a sharing relationship with my family to educate them and also Deeping their understanding of the demands of the Religious Missionary life. This approach helped me to shape my life and also helped their understanding of what the Consecrated life is all about. This sharing helped me to free myself from the demands and requests of the family. Let them see clearly what you stand for in life, they would support your endeavours. In the Society, we are called to live in a community as a family of believers in Jesus Christ. The God who takes the initiative in seeking the lost and the dispersed, in reaching out to the sinner and the abandoned. A God so liberal with his love and forgiveness. A God who loves even the unworthy and forgives even those who do not ask for forgiveness. His mission is our mission.

But due to the institutional nature of the society, we lack some essential ingredients to that of truly family settings. In conclusion, permit me to mention some few aspects of these deficiencies in institutions which people hid behind or masked themselves to that of the family values. In institutions we talk about Conformity and Uniformity, Perfectionism, Personal

Recognition and Reputation, Unfair Criticism and Fault Finding in the name of the truth and Earned respect for what you do. In the family, they believe in Unity and Diversity, Sense of belonging and true Sharing, Shared Recognition and Reputation, Sharing genuine concerns and respect for who you are. In other words, let us foster a true spirit of solidarity and also cultivate the gospel values which Jesus Christ demonstrated so well, which is the hallmark of true family life, the family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus.

DURING THE FORMATION, LESS COMMUNICATION IS RECOMMENDABLE

*Fr. Ernesto Salvar, PHS
(Spiritual of the Brothers'
Formation House, Cebu)*



Regarding the question on family support, this is what I could say. At the start, there was not much support, except that they did not object to my decision to enter the SVD. I was a

Cont. Fr. Salvar

school scholar, so they did not have to worry so much for my schooling in USC (for a year only before going to the Postulancy in Tagaytay). And I remember that during those days, we had to work a couple of hours in the University or in the farm. I guess that was the way we paid for our board and lodging.

At this point in my life, yes, I do feel that the Society is a real family for me, but of course not at the level as my very own family back home. Whether we like it or not, there is still a difference between the two in the sense that unlike our own family, we in the SVD belong to different families and background, cultures and sub-cultures, from different parts of the Philippines and even in the world, we speak even with different languages, etc.

For me, a healthy way of keeping in touch with one's parents, grandparents and siblings is relative to the stage of formation and the state of health of the parents, particularly. In the first year (collegians), perhaps we will be more

understanding because this is the first time they are separated from their parents and siblings. From there onward, I guess there is a need for them to learn to distance and detach a little bit with them. So, less communications is recommendable. Later, when one is already in vows or so, he should see the balance. For this, the seminary has a policy. By entering the Society, we have decided to offer ourselves to the Lord through the SVD. Parents and relatives then should take the back-seat but it does not mean forgotten. When parents are advanced in age or sickly, regular communication is understandably necessary. Now that my parents are old and sickly, I tried to be regular in communicating with them by calling them once a week. To every SVD, informal formation or not, I believe vacation should be spent at home, as much as possible.

I HAVE FOUND MY FAMILY HERE IN THE SVD

Br. Zoltan Andras, HUN



Yes, my family had a hard time accepting my decision regarding vocation. But I am sure that my mother supports my religious life with her prayer. Despite some difficulties, I have found my family here in the SVD. I maintain correspondence with my mother. My grandparents died several years ago. There are some relatives who live close to our Formation House, but I rarely meet them in person. We sometimes speak on the phone.

WE, BROTHERS, ALWAYS KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER

Br. Bipin Surin, INE



I received your digital message and information. Thank you for keeping me in touch with you. I feel glad that we, Brothers, always keep in touch with each other. You have requested me to contribute articles for our bulletin. You have my full support and I assure you that I will tell our Brothers in the Province about it. Prayers for God's blessings!

WE APPRECIATE THIS CONTRIBUTION FOR THE BROTHERHOOD VOCATION PROMOTION

Fr. Matheus Ruron, ZIM



Warmest greetings from Bulawayo Zimbabwe. Thank you very much for sending us the newsletter. We appreciate your effort to present this contribution for the Brotherhood Vocation Promotion. God bless you all!

HOW IS INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD DAY CELEBRATED IN KERALA?

*Br. Swaminathan
Sathiyanesan, INM*



I am forwarding the feast day celebration of our ST. John's Mission Seminary in changanacherry (Kerala) news written by my rector. I am sure that you may like see them.

It was a unique experience for everyone in St. John's Mission Seminary. As the feast of St. Francis Assisi is commemorated as International Brotherhood Day, the inmates of St. John's grabbed the opportunity with both hands to celebrate it meaningfully. It all began with an hour long conference on religious life on the eve by Bro. Swaminathan. During the Eucharist on the

Feast day, the Rector highlighted in his homily the important role Brothers play in the SVD ever since its inception. The seminary chapel had a royal festive look as the seminarians took extra effort to decorate it to perfection. The festivity gathered momentum during the day with an inter-community volley ball match and a sumptuous meal. The crowning moment was the cultural night during which the students enacted the life of St. Francis. Besides the entertainment, the day's celebration brought home some important insights on Brotherhood which the seminarians appreciated very much. To sum up, "...I just gave an idea and the students gave a touch of perfection to it...", remarked Bro. Swaminathan. Meaningful celebrations of this sort in our Provinces could better promote a positive understanding of vocation to Brotherhood.

(What do you think of a worldwide celebration of the International Brotherhood Day, which has already been cultivated in India? Maybe, the beautiful pictures can convince you which Br. Swami has attached to this message. Please visit our Facebook-account SDV BROTHERS INTERNATIONAL and take a look at the colourful celebration in Changanacherry, Kerala! The editors.)

A LASTWORD, FROM THE EDITORS

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 in Cebu City



SVD Brothers Philippines
Meeting at USC Maribago, Lapu-lapu City
October 24-25, 2010

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