



SVD BROTHERS

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NEWSLETTER



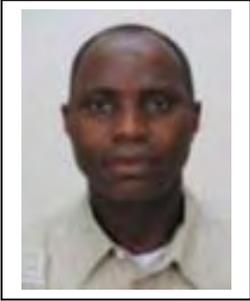
But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" - these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 2:7-10

Theme:

ON THE PATHS OF OUR GREAT SVD BROTHERS

FOREWORD of our Brother General Councilor:



Dear confreres and readers,

“The Brothers are called to carry out the missionary task of the church, entrusted to every Christian in baptism and confirmation, in the decisive way called for by the religious life. Through their varied services and witness to the gospel, the Brothers share in the mission of Christ to renew all things...” (c.515)

The situation and the needs of people among whom we live today is a decisive factor for us as to how we are going to bring the Good News to them. Most of our Brothers today have a commitment directly intended for the people. Many of them, through their various professional activities and pastoral care, their life style and their commitment have been a great impact on our lives. They have exerted an influence on us. They are there to show us the way to Christ himself..

“I was taught by religious Brothers in high school. They not only can help with understanding God and the Church, but they bring a special something to their teaching that, perhaps, lay teachers don't. My learning experience, I think, would have been quite different, not as complete, if it weren't for the dedication and caring of the religious who were my teachers. I remember many of them - things they said and did for me - to this day... Not only do we still need them, we need more of them.” This is a testimony of a man who frequented a school running by religious Brothers.

There have been also many SVD Brothers in our lives that we have looked up to over the years.

In this issue, we would like to remember those (dead or contemporary) SVD Brothers who have had an impact on our lives. We would like to acknowledge the great service they rendered or are still rendering in our congregation. We would like to share with others how they have personally touched our lives, making a difference in us. We learn, why do we admire them, how we might like to emulate them, and we read about concrete examples that illustrate their importance in our lives.

We need to lean on those Brothers to help us understand Church's mission more clearly, in order to appreciate them, trust them, treasure them and let them help us to know and understand Christ and His Church more fully.

I would like to thank God for giving us religious Brothers who truly do care for our mission and are a visible example of Christ for all people. Let us follow their example so that we can, in our turn, impact others' life.

Happy Easter to all!

Br. Guy Mazola, SVD (ROM)

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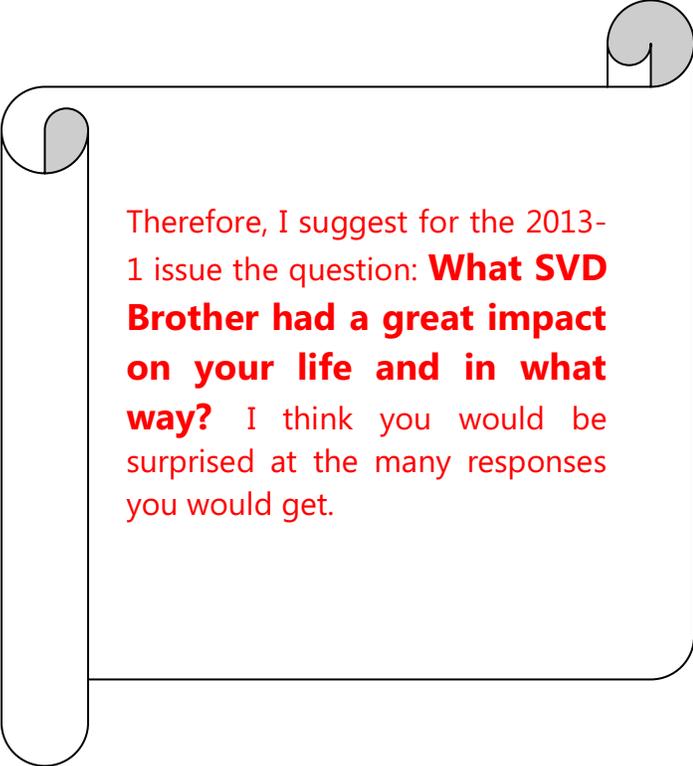
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THE GUIDE QUESTION OF THIS ISSUE

By Fr. Larry Nemer (AUS)

Dear Brothers,

I enjoyed reading the 2012-3 issue with the theme "My Vocation Story". You said you invited priests as well to tell a Brother's Vocation Story but last time, no priest



Therefore, I suggest for the 2013-1 issue the question: **What SVD Brother had a great impact on your life and in what way?** I think you would be surprised at the many responses you would get.

confreres responded. You have to remember that those of us who were formed and lived much of our religious life before the 1967 General Chapter were not allowed to talk with Brothers except on certain feasts. We had separate dining rooms. And so we never would have heard the Vocation Story of any of these great men who did have an influence on us.

Your letter set me off reminiscing about the many outstanding Brothers that I knew that have impacted my life. One example would be Brother Archangel (Jan) Prszybylski. Born in 1881, he was a coal miner in Poland before he joined the Society by taking first vows in 1906

and perpetual vows in 1912. I do not know when he came to Techny, but he was in charge of the bakery all the time I was at Techny (1950-1969). "Arky", as we called him, made over two hundred loaves of bread and two hundred pies every week in addition to some special cakes for Sunday. In the summer of 1955, I heard that "Arkie" would be alone in the bakery since he had lost his assistant and so would not be able to go with the Brothers on their vacation. I told my Superior that I had no special commitment for that summer and would be delighted to work with him so that he could still take a summer vacation with the Brothers in August. It was a life-changing experience for me. Those were the days when we still worked either in silence or while praying the rosary together during the day. But he did have to teach me to make the bread and the pies so there were short conversations; I don't think he trusted that I would ever learn the complexities of baking those special cakes. I can still remember one morning when we were cutting up apples for the apple pie and I saw tears coming out of his eyes. I asked: "Arkie, what's wrong?" He said he was just thinking of how hurt God must feel when people sin against Him. This changed my understanding of God which went beyond the academic books. When I was ordained a priest in 1960, I asked him if he would like to serve my First Mass. He said he would be honored. I felt like I was honored by having a living saint assist me at my First Mass. Although he has been dead for many years now my memory of him is still fresh and his experience of God continues to have an impact on me.

COMMITTED RELIGIOUS BROTHERS

(Brs. Luis Hartel, and Br. Dionisio Prediger)

By Br. Roberto Duarte (Generalate's Brother Coordinator)



There are several SVD Brothers who have influenced my life. I want to mention two of them.

The first one is Brother Luis Hartel (RIP) a German who served for many decades in ARE, my home Province. When I joined the SVD he was responsible in different works such as cleaning, gardening, farming and coordinating the liturgy. I learned a lot from him and through his example I began to like these works and be creative in them. His intelligence, his tirelessness and serene joy motivated me to continue in my religious formation.

There were many weekends that I went with him to parishes and Christian communities for a kind of vocation animation. He organized these visits and included me and the other Brother candidates so that we could share to the people our own formation process and our call to religious life. It was very interesting to see how Br. Luis lived and exemplified his religious vocation as a Brother to the people. He made them feel his passion and his desire as a missionary. Since that time, and thanks to the living witnessing of Br. Luis, my vocation as a Brother was somehow awakened.

The second Brother who influenced me positively is Br. Dionisio Prediger. He is an Argentinian Brother who accompanied us Brother candidates in many instances in our formation process since the Novitiate. I want to single out Brother Dionisio's clarity and love for his Brother vocation. It was something that he radiated in many ways, for example, in his formation talks, his joy in playing sports, his fraternal closeness, his love for the people, etc. His witnessing strengthened my decision to become an SVD Brother. I saw in Br. Dionisio that it was possible to be a fulfilled person serving the Kingdom of God by being a Brother.

The two Brothers I have just mentioned had a positive impact on me. By being happy consecrated persons they made credible and possible the following of the Lord in a human and faithful manner.

BROTHER EDITOR AND BROTHER

BUSINESSMAN By Fr. Michael Madigan (AUS)



I joined the SVD in 1962 in Ireland and was ordained in 1969. The two most impressive SVDs at the time were Brothers Paul Hurley and Oliver Moynihan, both now deceased. Paul was editor of the WORD, a magazine which was reader-friendly, which was spiritual but which you would read out of real interest and not out of boring duty, and which, I'm sure, attracted at least 80% of all Irish SVD vocations. He was also a friend to most Irish SVDs. Paul died a few months ago and I'm sure that at his funeral in Ireland many interesting and uplifting things were said, including many endorsements of his life by other SVDs like me. If you are interested, contact the Irish province.

Oliver Moynihan had been brought back from India to work in the office in Ireland. He had terrific business acumen and set up the Irish SVD Christmas card business which, I'm sure, earned millions and set up the Irish province financially. He died some years ago.

As I say, both men were among the most impressive SVDs I have ever met.

HE COULD DO SO MANY THINGS

(Br. Victor Eugen Kopf)

By Br. Andrey Hugo (SWI)



I entered the Society of the Divine Word in Marienburg, Switzerland in 1954. Before that, I went for a visit to Marienburg. A Brother with a long beard opened the door and welcomed me. He was very friendly and showed me the way. I never forgot my first contact with a Brother. He was Brother Goar as I later got to know. As a student in Marienburg I went often to the Brothers on the farm and garden. There was Br. Ludolf, an Austrian, Br. Gregor, a Swiss and Br. Victor, a German. I got a liking for Br. Victor. He had been in the war in Germany; he was a prisoner in Russia; and there he was a sacristan to a priest. He had good luck because he was working with a priest. He got out in 1949 and came to Marienburg, Switzerland. In 1954, when I entered the seminary, they were building a "Sportplatz" (= playing field). Br. Victor made the drainages. Then I saw him cleaning the barrels. He made Süssmost and Gärmost (=cider). He also butchered a pig or a calf. Br. Victor cemented the pathway, fixed the roof, milked the cows, worked in the garden or farm, and even took over the kitchen and cooked for 100 people. Together, we put the rope around the tower of the very old Sternburg tower which was pulled down and created a mighty cloud of dust. He could do so many things. I would help him cut the grass on the hill with the scythe. Afterwards, he would bring me to the kitchen where Br. Nathanael would give us bacon, cheese

and bread. Br. Victor would also mix cider with alcohol. After I studied, sleep came easy. Br. Victor was an excellent example of a Brother. He surely had a great impact on my decision to be a Brother. Very often you could see him in the chapel before the official prayer began. What impressed me most was that he could do so many things. He was friendly and helpful. He was good in whatever job he had to do. I'm sure he enjoys God's glory and love in heaven.

(Br. Victor. Kopf Eugen 1913 31 33 39 died on the 8th of Febr 2003, 89 years old)

THE BROTHER WHO OVERCAME RACIAL AND NATIONAL PREJUDICES

(Br. Stillfried Wahl, SVD)

By Br. Mike Decker, USC



The Brother who made a big impact on me was Stillfried Wahl. The reason is because he came from Germany to the USA for ministry during WW II. He suffered much in the USA because of the attitude some people had after WW II for German people. However, he still loved the people and served them faithfully, especially in the African-American ministry. This made an impact on my life by trying to do the same.

Stillfried was a community and prayerful person. His life was his example to those he lived with and served. He was a good model for me to follow. In his retired years, he suffered much from his physical ailments, but he still showed his support by actions and prayers to the younger SVD Brothers in the province of US.

Cont. Br. Decker

Let us read about his life. The following article is written by Br. Jim Heeb, SVD.

Br. Stillfried Wahl, SVD

SVD Brothers are rooted in the Gospel and perform a variety of ministries in the Church. One example was Bro. Stillfried Wahl, SVD who was born in 1909 in Germany. Br. Stillfried joined the SVD in the 1920s. On September 8, 1929, he entered the Novitiate in Driburg, Germany. He took his first vows in 1931, and his perpetual vows were in 1937 in St. Arnold Mission House. From 1933-37, he received his training in carpentry and cabinet making. Br. Stillfried applied to go to Papua New Guinea, but was assigned to the Southern Mission in the USA.

In 1938, Br. Stillfried arrived in Bay St. Louis, MS and stayed until 1947. During his time there from 1938 until 1947 he did cabinet work at the seminary in Bay St. Louis as well as other carpentry work. Much of the excellent woodwork in the seminary buildings attest to his masterful skills. Also, Br. Stillfried served six week periods throughout the Southern Mission in Jackson, Yazoo City, Meridan, Clarksdale in Mississippi as well as in Point a la Hache in Louisiana. While Br. Stillfried was in St. Augustine Seminary in Bay St. Louis, he was the mentor of young men who wanted to become SVD Brothers. Br. Stillfried made a huge contribution to the Southern Missions. He was competent and inspiring to others and was well known for his just discipline measures. Br. Stillfried first ministered through his life of prayer as a Religious and as a carpenter to help build up the Southern Missions.

In 1947, Br. Stillfried was assigned to Holy Rosary Institute in Lafayette, Louisiana for six weeks but stayed for 43 years. At this time he taught auto mechanics and carpentry at Holy Rosary Institute. In

the first three years, Br. Stillfried studied at the University of Southwest Louisiana, English and Architectural Terminology, since he was new in the

USA. Later he was in charge of the cabinet making department and carpenter shop in Holy Rosary. Also, to Br. Stillfried's credit at Holy Rosary Institute was the construction of the boy's dormitory in 1947, a trade shop in 1949, a gym in 1950, a second boy's dormitory in 1951, and a library in 1956. Because of his many accomplishments, Br. Stillfried became known as, "Mr. Rosary," because of his dedication to Holy Rosary Institute and praying his rosary every day. Every Saturday, Br. Stillfried would run a small shop to raise money for Holy Rosary. Br. Stillfried was well respected by the faculty and students at Holy Rosary Institute. The principal once said that Br. Stillfried was a friend, a brother, a great all around person. Many of Bro. Stillfried's students received first place awards in Industrial Arts. He was a man of prayer, a teacher, a counselor, and a builder at Holy Rosary Institute. The mascot at Holy Rosary Institute is an Eagle. Holy Rosary did a video on Br. Stillfried and they called him, "The Gentle Eagle." Br. Stillfried was a stern teacher who demanded the best from his students. Because of this, many students owed their success in life to Br. Stillfried. His spirit of cooperation with teachers and parents was outstanding.

In 1969, Br. Stillfried received from the Diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana, the "Teacher of the Year" award for his outstanding classroom teaching at Holy Rosary Institute. Also, in 1988, Br. Stillfried received a "Service Award," for his unselfish dedication to Holy Rosary. On May 1, 1988, the gym which he built, was named, "Stillfried's Gym."

Every day Br. Stillfried would walk four city blocks to Immaculate Heart of Mary, one of the largest African-American Catholic parishes in the county for mass. Many of his students came from that parish.

In 1990, Br. Stillfried retired in Bay St. Louis, MS and died there on Sunday, January 12, 1997. After dedicating himself to the Southern Missions and especially to "Holy Rosary Institute," for over 43 years, his work was done and he was ready to rest with God.

Cont. Br. Decker

About the Author: Br Jim Heeb has been a Society of Divine Word Brother for 52 years. During these years he served the Society in different capacities at St Mary's in Techny, Illinois, as a missionary in Ghana, West Africa, and in the US Southern Province at St Augustine's in Bay St. Louis, MS.

THE BROTHER'S QUESTION

By Fr. John Niessen (USW)



When I was in the fourth grade of my 7-year grade school, three boys who finished the 7th grade went to the minor seminary somewhere. Our 4th grade teacher mentioned this in class, and asked: 'Has anyone of you guys ever thought of becoming a priest or a missionary?' True or not, I felt that he looked at me.

The idea never completely disappeared from my mind since. But I knew how poor we were and I never thought it would be a real possibility.

One evening, an SVD Brother came to our house with the next door lady. He looked like a simple, good man to me. The purpose of his visit was to sell subscriptions to the SVD missionary magazine. Then, he said: 'See you have three boys here.' Has anybody ever thought of becoming a missionary?' At that moment I knew that if ever I could go to a seminary, it would be the SVD. Again sometime later, I went to confession when I was in my last year of school. The priest asked me: "What are you going to do when you finish school?"

Out of the blue I said: 'I'd go to the SVD seminary, but I don't think my parents can afford that.' From one thing came the next and I ended up going to Uden (Netherlands) to the SVD minor seminary in 1937

(blown up by the Nazis in September 1944). I was ordained on August 19, 1951 and finished my theology a year later in St. Augustin (Germany).

This is the result of a question by an SVD Brother I never knew.

MY MASTER

(Br. Heinrich Gerhard Backes, SVD)

By Br. Franz Schneider (GER)



It was on October 1, 1955 when I became a candidate in the Mission House St. Wendel (SVD). I just graduated from the Hauptschule. (A Hauptschule ([German](#): general school) is a [secondary school](#) in Germany, starting after 4 years of elementary schooling. Wikipedia). I wanted to study a trade. Or rather, I desired to become a missionary, a Brother missionary. At the introductory retreat, I learned that the workshop of the Mission House ("Wendelinushof") had already enough apprentices and the carpentry was also full. I gave up the hope of learning a profession that would be interesting for me.

Consequently, as I had to look for another opportunity, I was sent to the handbook bindery. Just try it, I was told. Finally, I convinced myself. "Be open for everything and enjoy surprises!" Then I fell in love with this work. There were two other apprentices with me, but they had already more experience than me. There was also a journeyman, four years ahead of me. (A journeyman is someone who has completed an apprenticeship and is fully educated in a trade or craft, but not yet a [master](#). Wikipedia). Moreover, there was the head of the workshop, the Master who had everything in his hand. I was impressed by the work climate. I

Cont. Br. Schneider

had no problems with manual work. I showed interest in everything and therefore, I learned fast.

But this good working climate was created through the efforts of the Master who kept everything together. He was very communicative, and he also had the ability to make fast contact with everybody. However, he was perfectly thoughtful in everything he said. Our workshop, the bookbindery resembled an artists' forum. This was the place where senior and junior high school students of our Mission School met if they needed something from us. We were discussing, but mostly my Master did. I was always amazed to listen to these discussions. It was really a forum of information about what was going on with the students.

Missionaries on home vacation also came around. I can still remember my many encounters at the end of the 1950s. But everything was revolving around this Master, Brother Gerhard as we called him at that time. He was never boring. He was always entertaining. But not in a way that we would have the whole time only talking and talking during our manual work. No, we were praying the Rosary and we were singing religious songs. Brother Gerhard, whose real name is Brother Heinrich Backes, was an excellent singer in the choir and in the Latin schola. We were also singing popular songs, but sometimes we kept silent. Frequently, we prayed the Quarter Hour Prayer. Everything was discussed and in fact, there were no secrets. Yes, there was an open atmosphere!

Brother Heinrich also played an important role in the community of the Brothers. He always supported us, younger confreres, but he could also become energetic if something was not okay. However, a new era set in and we, younger Brothers also came under its influence. The pioneering spirit of Vatican II, and the social changes in the society endowed us with a revolutionary look. But it was the conflict of generations that made the views of elderly confreres incomprehensible to us. Many of their ideas seemed to us "cranky" and obsolescent. Reflecting on this after many years, I think that this aging generation

might be today in a similar situation with the young generation. Despite these thoughts, Brother Heinrich remains for me forever a fatherly person that gave me so much orientation. I will always remember him and thank him for being my mentor.

A LIFE OF GREAT VALUE

(Br. Cyrill Schroeder)

By Br. Ray Albers (USC)



Thank you for the invitation to write 'What SVD Brother had a great impact on my life and in what way'. In my sixty four years of being an SVD Brother, there are so many Brothers that positively impacted my life; it is difficult to pick one. However, there is a 'trait' that stands out among Brothers, spirituality, how we live in the emerging patterns of SVD consciousness. Brothers do not preach the Word, but we find ourselves living a Nazareth lifestyle with the Divine Word in mission ministry.

Our Founder, Saint Arnold Janssen, had a vision of Brothers in the Society. Eventually, the number of Brothers increased. Over the past century, the Society of the Divine Word is seen to evolve in the consciousness of Brothers. Spirituality unfolds in shifting patterns of inclusivity, best understood in times when the Holy Spirit sparked one General Chapter after another to accommodate how Brothers live their commitment in each period. We do not clearly see the change in every shift, but there is a deep felt feeling resonating collaborative ministry in dialogue with those we minister in achieving holistic goals of being Divine Word Missionaries.

Cont. Br. Albers

Brother spirituality shines like gems in our worldwide mission. In our Techny Community 'a 100 year old gem' has impacted our lives in many ways. Brother Cyril Schroeder, SVD celebrated his '100th birthday' on January 14, 2013. His 80 years of faithfulness to the daily praxis of spiritual principles stands out among many. Cyril's spirituality is as meaningful to us his contemporaries, as well as for the novices living in our community.

Spirituality envelopes the entirety of Cyril's life, living in good, and not so good times. Entering the Society of the Divine Word at age 18, Cyril was trained as a qualified linotype technician in our Techny Mission Press. His day was spent sitting at a linotype machine, as he typed hot lead poured into sentences, paragraphs, onto chapters for publication. Cyril typed from English, German, and Latin scripts for whatever publication was in process. After years of inhaling hot lead fumes, he got lead poisoning.

Rehabilitation was a lengthy ordeal for Cyril. Lead poisoning took him out of the linotype room, but it did not take linotyping out of him. Cyril not only read the script while typing but he learned composition. In recovery, he first worked as a tailor until we no longer wore the cassock. Then he was asked to be the porter and the community librarian. As the librarian, he read everything as if he was back to script reading linotyping, unbeknown that an on-going education process was taking place in his life. At age 100, he spends a good amount of time reading newspapers, periodicals, and books, and is aware what is going on in the world and the church. One hesitates to argue a view if you have not kept up with issues pertaining to health, religion, and politics. Cyril is a 'walking example' of health attained from reading his favorite magazine, PREVENTION, on health issues. Looking at his food tray you get a good idea how a balanced meal keeps him energized.

Living with Cyril in retirement is a joy. He is a convivial community person, whether at mealtime, work, or recreation. He spent his time for community prayer and

attendance at liturgy. One likes to be in his company even if he cannot hear that well, but the vibes are communicated with a smile. Brother Cyril's spirituality refreshes many of us, and recognizing it beckons us forward to integrate all aspects of our life in being Divine Word Missionaries.

How did Brother Cyril impact my life? One time we worked together tailoring, and the impact was exemplified in how he went with the flow, accepting change as it came. Tailoring was my initial trade. Learning this discipline gave basis to use the techniques in design of carpentry and building construction. Alcoholism is my illness. Now, thirty nine years sober, recovery integrates the good and not so good. Spirituality in recovery leads to helping others, as well as being a useful servant of the Divine Word. Spirituality of living opened academia doors, granting me university skills in counseling, gerontology, and formation direction. My last position as director of Brother Formation was giving back what was freely given to me, not so much in the doing, but living it in the amazing grace of spirituality.

I am sure spirituality and how we live, will be reflected in the forthcoming anticipated world stories from Brothers around the world.

THE BROTHER FORMATOR WHO IS AN ARTIST (Br. McDaniel Acquah)

By Br. Stephen Bonsu, GHA



The Brother vocation is a call to an individual person. But it is the sacred duty of all confreres, especially those working in the parishes, to promote vocations to the Brotherhood. We should always explain to

Cont. Br. Bonsu

prospective candidates that the SVD is a congregation of both Brothers and priests, where equal opportunities exist.

Looking around the SVD Ghana Province, I saw many SVD Brothers who in one way or another have great impact on my life. However, I had to reflect very well before choosing one person who is none other than Br. McDaniel Acquah, SVD. He was born in Cape Coast, Ghana, in 1960. After his Primary and Secondary School levels, he did Interior and Exterior Decoration studies in 1985. Then he attended the Asuate Farm Institute to help improve the traditional way of farming. In 1991, he entered the SVD Postulancy as a Brother candidate and did the Novitiate the following year. After professing his first vows in 1994, he attended a French language course in Parakou, Benin. In 1998 he also did a one year Formation Program in Eldoret, Kenya. Later on, he professed perpetual vows in 2000 and got his first assignment to Ghana province. Since then, he has been working as Brother Formator and Local Treasurer of the Common Formation Center (CFC), in Tamale. In 2006, he attended the Dei Verbum Course in Nemi, Italy. That same year, he did Formation Studies in Manila, Philippines, returning to Ghana province in 2008. More recently, he was appointed Director of the Vocation Promotion for the Ghana province, as well as the Director of the Brother Formation.

Reflecting on the background of Br. McDaniel Acquah, SVD, I wish to say that he exhibits a great gift God gave him-The Interior and Exterior Decoration he studied. I happened to be in the same formation house at St. Arnold Janssen House Tesano-Accra. That time the house was being renovated and we, the Brothers had to paint the whole house. I saw the good art work Br. McDaniel Acquah around the house. The painting was the most beautiful art in the whole vicinity.

As Director of the Vocation Promotion for the Ghana province, as well as Director of the Brother Formation, he is one of the great formators of our generation. I

observed that the desire for vocations to the SVD Brotherhood had been dwindling but when he was put in charge, many young Brothers and seminarians joined the SVD society.

Br. McDaniel Acquah is always ready to tell jokes and hardly ever gets angry. He is a very outgoing confrere. He makes people laugh and it is good he has been given the Director of the Vocation Promotion for the Ghana province, as well as Director of the Brother Formation. Br. McDaniel Acquah is now a retreat Director to the confreres and novices having their thirty days retreat. He is a hard working confrere and he really needs to be appreciated and rewarded.

THE MODERN BROTHERS

(Brs. Gary Bruno Burr and Jim Fisher)

By Br. Bernie Spitzley (USC)



There are many Brothers who have made an impact on my life. I'd like to begin with Br. Gary Bruno Burr. This is a man, who in my opinion, is the Father of the modern-day SVD Brother. Bruno, as he was known then, incorporated the changes of the 1968 General Chapter and brought the vision of Vatican II to Brother formation. The result was that Brother candidates were given a basic theological education along with their professional training. Under his leadership, the Brother formation program grew to include: human development, missionary and spiritual development, technical training, and further education. We now have a wide range of occupational

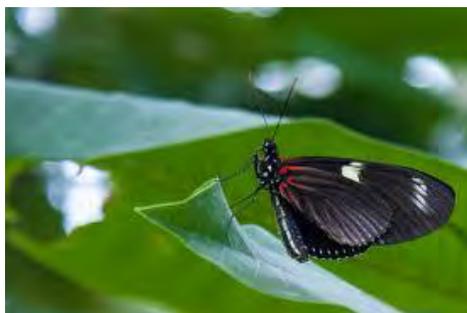
Cont. Br. Spitzley

activities which have become possible fields of ministries for the Brother. Br. Bruno's efforts greatly enhanced and enriched the Brother formation programs in the USA and in the Philippines.

Another Brother who had a major impact on my life was Br. Jim Fisher. One of the great joys I had as a Brother, teaching at our College Seminary, was to take Seminarians and Brother Candidates to Lafayette, Louisiana where we witnessed firsthand Br. Jim teaching carpentry at the high school there. More importantly, we saw how Br. Jim related to the people, as an equal, and as one who empowered the students and the laity to use their gifts for the reign of God. Br. Jim took this gift of "Brothering" to the people of Maurice, Louisiana as the parish administrator, and later at St. Anselm's Parish in Chicago, Ill. This vibrant and gregarious Brother's life was cut short by a massive heart attack on October 18, 1998 at St. Anselm's. He left this world at an early age, but his spirit lives on in the parish with Brother Jim Fisher.

THE UPRIGHT ATTITUDE

By Br. Gerhard Osthues (GER)



I am not a very good writer but this time I want reply. Here is my contribution to your questionnaire for the bulletin. I don't want to name a specific Brother because during my time in the German Province and even during

my stay in Ghana for my OTP I met quite a few Brothers who had some influence on my life. What struck me is their upright attitude. I have to write in the presence because some of them are still alive. They are very open and good listeners and always ready to serve. Virtue is part of their lives and common and private prayer the center of their lives as missionaries. They are not concerned about themselves in the first place but concerned about their mission and vision. We have a mission to accomplish and we have to work hard to achieve it. This applies to all SVD-missionaries in general. I met a few Brothers who are concerned about their health and try to keep themselves fit because they don't want to get ill and create expenses for the society. Some Brothers may have some difficulties in their lives but kept going and tried to do the best. Honesty towards ourselves is very important.

A GREAT MEASURE OF HUMILITY

(Br. Henry Miller)

By Mr. Augustin Sande



Brother Henry Miller SVD has given a lifetime of cheerful and diligent service to the great work of Christ, preaching his good news to people who had not yet heard it. When Brother Roger first went to Ghana in 1948, it was shortly after World War II., he endured attacks from scorpions in mission and snake bites on various occasions. On one occasion, he explains the horror he underwent, "one never knew what to expect next. I met an eight foot black

Cont. Mr. Sande

cobra which was stretched across my foot after evening prayer when it was night time. I had no light. The snake struck and hit my trouser." On one occasion he had a local leave for two weeks and made arrangements for a Brother to pick him up from the station. It was fourteen miles off the main road, and the Brother never showed up. He started to walk from 5pm without a torchlight depending on the moonlight reaching the mission destination for his vacation after six hours. Later he called the Brother who was to pick him only to apologize that he was tired and fell asleep. It takes a great measure of humility to accept that. Brother Miller was born in 1922 in Baltimore, Maryland on the third of January. He was raised in an orphanage run by Franciscan sisters from the age of two.

THEY EXCELLED IN EXPERTISE AND IN HUMILITY

By Fr. Pelagio "Jun" Pateno (USC)



I had always the privilege of working with the SVD Brothers in places of our mission work. In Ecuador, the efficient workmanship of Brother Federico is worthy of appreciation. From being the treasurer of the Ecuador province up to his assignment in our college in Guaranda, his cooperation and support to the society is worthy to behold. Brother Peter Gasio of the Central Province in Manila, (may he rest in peace)

exemplifies in his humility of serving the community. Brother Peter Villena excels in his expertise being in-charge also of the finance department of the college in Calapan.

These Brothers and many more were always there to dedicate their time and efforts in serving our society. More power to all our SVD Brothers.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE AND GOOD IN PROFESSION

By Br Darwin Loro (ARS)

Having lived in a few different

SVD communities here and abroad, a number of SVD Brothers had caught my attention during the span of my seminary formation and after. I remember a Filipino Brother who was very attentive and creative as well. He had such a good style that you know you are being trained and attended properly. That surely made an impact in my life.



In another community, a single piece of [constructive criticism](#) I received from an Australian-born SVD Brother helped effect a positive change in my life. There was also an Argentinean Brother who was actively involved in community organizing, participating in various activities including involvement with low income people. He was young at heart as he animated youth groups and joined playful games and sports. He was truly a happy and life-giving person. His varied missionary experience, unassuming manner and gentle attitude surely epitomized a Brother worth emulating.

Cont. Br. Loro

These are just three of the many more Brothers that I truly admire. Thus, the calling to the Religious Missionary way of life does not limit to following social norms in religious communities and gaining knowledge in one's professional duties or pastoral ministry. Maintaining a healthy Christian life coupled with a positive attitude in one's field of specialization and the desire to deepen one's spiritual journey are all that matters.

HE ENCOURAGED ME

(Br. Gabriel Kloos)

By Br. Jim Mullen (USC)



Br. Gabriel Kloos, SVD had a great impact on my life. His work was house cleaning at the Divine Word Minor Seminary,

Girard, PA. I was a young Brother in temporary vows assigned to work three years on the seminary farm. During those years Br. Gabriel made a very strong impression on me by his prayer life, conversation and daily work. He did encourage me and even complimented me on my work.

COMMITTED TO SERVE THE LESS

FORTUNATE (Br. Joseph Urban)

By Fr. Adam McDonald (USC)



Br. Joseph (Joe) Urban made a significant impact on my life because of our many years of close friendship when we were both assigned to the SVD community at Techny. Br. Joe and I worked together on a number of projects including a

program to deliver donated bread to the poor. He inspired me by his commitment to serving the needs of the less fortunate, but he also impressed upon me the importance of being available and willing to serve the needs of our SVD confreres. When Br. Joe was called to heaven, his family gifted me with his SVD ring, and I wear it to this day as a sign of my SVD identity and as a reminder of Br. Joe's friendship.

I LEARNED ABOUT BROTHERS FROM AN SVD-PRIEST

By Br. Stefan Würth (GER)



Actually, I have to thank a priest, Fr. Josef Dolmen that I have entered the Society of Divine Word. I wanted to graduate from a Catholic secondary school and therefore, I wrote to different religious congregations in my diocese: to the Comboni Missionaries and to the Society of Divine Word in St. Johann.

From the Combonis, I received no response, but the SVD gave more than just an answer. They informed Fr. Josef Dohmen who was on his way to his province "Saarland" and so, he dropped in on us.

Fr. Dohmen stayed with us for the whole afternoon. A vocation promoter at this time, he related about the mission of his congregation: how priests and Brothers work in different countries. When he described that the Brothers received a craftsman training, so that they can be with the local people and help them build up something for a good basis for life, then it flashed on me and I understood that this would be my predetermined way. Well, everything that I tried before, led me in this direction.

Through Fr. Dohmen, I came to the SVD Mission House St. Wendel where I made a gardener course. At this time, I was regularly attending the "Days of Encounter and 17-Meeting" that was also accompanied by Fr. Dohmen. Conversations with other participants who partly were there also for searching helped me learn more and differentiate. Moreover, the settlement of the

Cont. Br. Würth

Brothers of the Mission House, called Wendelinushof, made a great impact on my journey in the SVD. The community of life and work impressed me very much. The togetherness of the Brothers was very good. Unfortunately, no other younger Brothers came later. So I remained by far the youngest one which caused some problems later. My professional training, then later my assignment as manager of the garden and the first steps in working with persons with disabilities gave me an important basis for being a religious in the midst of challenges.

Fr. Josef Dohmen was also the one who personally brought me from St. Wendel to the postulancy (Steyl). This personal treatment meant a lot for me. I sometimes consider it a foundation-stone for my journey as a Divine Word Missionary. Basically, it is not important, if we work as priests or Brothers. It is much more important that we are in one community doing our jobs with a healthy mindset and a happy heart, together with other people that encounter and join us. We have to listen to God, since he is the one whom we have to follow.

THIS FLEXIBLE BROTHER IMPRESSED

ME (Br. Darwin Loro, ARS)

By Mrs. Maria Kokkaris, through Br. Maurice Taylor (AUS)



The impact Br Darwin Loro (ARS) has on my life is the way Darwin is a flexible missionary in whatever he is currently called to do; even in an immediate

situation that can turn around his vigorous intent in another direction with patient endurance. This challenges me to be so realistic in situations that require what is actually essential, authentic mission action!

THE IMPACT OF BECOMING AN SVD BROTHER

By Br. Pancratius Suban Hayon (IDE)



SVD Brothers are full members of Divine Word Society. They are really religious and missionaries of SVD. I am satisfied enough and happy of becoming an SVD Brother in this Society. By becoming an SVD Brother, I can closely follow Jesus and become His real disciple in this particular status and way of life as a religious Brother and missionary. This is the ultimate and the primary goal and impact of being an SVD Brother I want to underline. Another impact of being an SVD Brother can be seen as follows:

As a religious SVD Brother I have to belong to a particular SVD community and to live in it. Belonging to an SVD community and living in it isn't enough. I have to follow all regulations and programs of that community: in my case, St. Josef Community in Ende of Ende Province. Along with this, I also do all the works and jobs trusted to me by the Rector of the Community. The effort of all the works, though little, are fully given to the community I belong to. I also participate in all religious programs and activities in the community such as: daily prayer and Mass, weekly benediction usually every Monday evening and first Friday evening, saying rosary during months of Mary (May and October), the way of the Cross during Lenten season, eating and drinking together with confreres, recreation, and all other activities as far as I could (I am a retired Brother because of my age and my sickness). This above activities I attend as a part of missionary works ad intra.

Cont. Br. Hayon

Though I am a retired member and sickly and have not been sent as missionary outside of Indonesia, I regard my staying in communities within the country a mission and myself as a religious missionary too. Why? Because I pray also for missionary works all over the world done by SVD confreres, in the community in community prayer or in my private prayer. And this satisfies me. It is enough for me. I also pray for the dead (confreres and lay people as well). I pray for the sick, the needy, the poor and the marginalized as well in community prayer or in my private prayer. I join planting trees and reforestation as part of JPIC program programmed in Ende Province. By paying attention to the needs of other people who needs my help. I help them if I can. If not, I pray for them in my private prayer. I regard all of these activities as part of missionary works ad extra.

GOD WANTS ONLY OUR FAITHFULNESS

By Br. Ashadi Sandy (ROM)



I recall that when I entered postulancy program, the director, a Carmelite priest advised me to follow my vocation to priesthood rather than becoming a Brother. He said that if I became a Brother I would not do anything special as Brother does not enjoy the same status or rights as priest. However I still pursued my calling as an SVD Brother because I felt that I could do better things if I become one.

After experiencing the initial formation I was transferred to the provincial house to assist the communication coordinator. There I could use my

talent properly. I created websites and produced books and newsletter which are used for our mission.

Gradually I developed my understanding what my vocation means through my service in the society, unlike what the postulant director said to me that I could achieve nothing if I became a Brother. I loved to work at the office and I realized that life at the provincial house is more comfortable compared to the major seminary where my fellow seminarians reside. It is not luxurious but it offers a good atmosphere to work and to live. I thought I was lucky to be there. Perhaps that is because I follow my vocation as an SVD Brother.

I took my perpetual vows in 2009 and I received my first assignment to go to Rome to work. That was more than I could imagine. Not everybody can go to Rome to work. There I became Generalate staff to assist the publication director. Becoming Generalate member is something new for me. I can use the Generalate facilities. There is no financial worry, I can afford to buy decent clothes and other necessities. I also can attend Generalate social gatherings. If a member celebrates his birthday, the Generalate community will gather to sing and to drink together. The general superior and the councils attend the party if they are present. I also experienced various things, visited many places that reflect the meaning of Brother vocation to me.

Recently I was appointed Director of the Generalate Publication. I didn't expect that I could occupy the position considering that I do not have much experience and talents. But this is the trust given to me by General Superior and the General Council and of course, I will try do my best for the society. There are a lot of things I still have to learn.

As I experienced these things I feel that the Brother vocation has an impact on somebody like me. Of course not everybody has same experience. Perhaps if I would have chosen another vocation I would not experience these things or I could not accomplish something big. For me it is just the beginning and the more important thing is to live up to my vocation as a brother faithfully. I once read Mother Theresa quote: God does not require that we be successful only that we be faithful.

AS A FORMATOR, HE SIMPLY LET ME GROW (Br. Bruno Burr)

By Br. Brian McLaughlin (USC)



Br. Bruno Burr, who died on February 9, 2000 at age 61, had the greatest impact on my life. For the lives of SVD Brothers in general, Bruno Burr's accomplishments also had significant impact. Bruno was one of the first Brothers to enter graduate school and earn a master's degree in counseling from DePaul University in Chicago, USA. In addition to being academically accomplished, Bruno also put the Brother formation on solid ground in the United States. I came in contact with Bruno through my formation as a Brother. Although I did not appreciate him at the time, I grew to respect him tremendously throughout my life as an SVD. What I appreciated most about Bruno's guidance as a formator was the fact that he simply let me grow. He sensed I was going through some troubling times throughout my formation, but he simply let me be. Rather than kicking me out or berating me, he provided me with the navigational tools to find my own way. As I look back on those years, I have come to greatly admire Bruno Burr. I often think of him and thank him deeply within my heart. Your life, Bruno Burr, was a life well lived!!

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI IS MY EXEMPLARY BROTHER

By Br. Alex Szabó (HUN)



I spent my highschool years with the Franciscans in 1995-1999. Those years profoundly contributed to the birth of my religious vocation. In the beginning, I began to get interested in knowing more about the religious life, so I started reading first and foremost the life and spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi.

Going through his life, I was so touched by his simplicity, humility and obedience. He truly lived according to his religious calling and followed the footsteps of Christ. My spiritual director would always say that time: „My son, you know St. Francis is our founder but in fact we can say that he is the father of all religious - the best model, a great example in the world.” During that time, I didn't really grasp what he meant by this.

Pope Benedict XVI once said: „The consecrated life is a testimony that the Church is a community.” In the community, we accept each other's values, talents and on the road, we are journeying together constantly renewed in proclaiming the Good News.

For thirteen years in the SVD, every father and Brother I have been with so far especially during the formation years influenced me a lot and contributed unceasingly to grow more in my commitment to my religious calling. The great examples of the fathers who came back to Hungary after long years of working in the mission offer a great testimony. You can notice in them the great characters lived by the saints hundreds of years back. They possess simplicity, humility, and obedience. As the years went by, the same words continue to echo as it was before.

Cont. Br. Szabó

Whether I am thinking of our very own founder St. Arnold, or other saints like St. Francis of Assisi, or even St. Benedict, the words of Paul to the Corinthians would always come to my mind: „For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” Whatever religious congregation we belong to, the same examples of Christ we follow. Indeed, Christ who called me to the religious life, is the one who must always influence and have an impact on my life, not only in the beginning, nor in the middle or at the end, but all the days of my life.

MY CAPABLE SPIRITUAL COMPANION

(Br. Eugenio Orog)

By Br. Irol Torres (PHS)



He is Br. Eugenio (Eugene) Orog, SVD. He holds several firsts in my SVD life: he is the first SVD Brother I met, my first Brother formator, and the first formator to know my decision to re-enter SVD as a Brotherhood applicant. He has also been my official (and unofficial when we are not living in the same community) Spiritual Director since I was a pre-collegian, and now that I am preparing for my perpetual profession of vows. He may not be a very extraordinary person nor a perfect formator, but I am drawn to him because he is a very supportive Brother and a very capable spiritual companion.

Our spiritual companionship dates back when I was a 17-year-old-and-one-half pre-collegian clerical candidate in 1995 at our Davao Formation Center and he was then on his last year as seminary Spiritual Director. Five years thereafter, I met him again in

Tagaytay as our Assistant Postulancy Director. We again parted ways for about six years as I took a leave from the seminary. Yet like two old friends surely meeting again, we were reunited in 2006 when I expressed to him my desire to come back to the SVD. Sure enough and with the grace of God, I came back in 2007. Another four years passed and I again have him as my Spiritual Director as I do my theological studies here in Tagaytay. I'm now on my second and final year here in Tagaytay (and on my Perpetualist Program) and Br. Eugenio is still my Spiritual Director!

Practically half of my life (I'm now 35 years old), Br. Eugenio and I have known each other. He is my spiritual companion for so many years now. The fact that I am ever strong in my resolve to become an SVD Brother is for me a concrete proof of his able guidance and companionship. Really, I cannot thank him enough for what I am now and what I will be. For everything, thank you very much Br. Eugenio!

HE CAN SEE JESUS IN THE MARGINALIZED

(Br. Tarcisius Ruyter)

By Br. Thaddeus Nyanuba (MOZ)



Thanks very much for your invitation to share a bit on a Brother who had an impact on my life. I must confess in all sincerity in the first place, that even dreaming of becoming a Brother did not come to my mind. I don't know this Brother not even his congregation. Yet what I heard about him was enough to ignite my heart of becoming a Brother. Yes it all started when I was still a little boy of about six (6) years old, my uncle (the young Brother of my father) who had lived in the south western part of Ghana for many years returned home to live with us. Apparently, he met one Rev. Brother who

Cont. Br. Nyanuba

became his mentor. So the better part of that he told us stories again and again about that Rev. Brother so much so that everyone of us, children wanted to be Brothers. So one day after listen to him again, I spontaneously said ``uncle when I grow up I will like to become a Brother in order to be good to people like this very Brother`` and this was how my dream of becoming a religious missionary Brother began. Then after few years I had the opportunity of seeing a Brother for the first time in the person of Brother Karl, a German missionary of Africa. He came to supervise a Church building in my village. Though a little boy by then I can still vividly remember Br. Karl as a very disciplined hard working, yet very friendly and down to earth especially for children. Indeed, in him we saw the confirmation of the stories of the other Brother he heard about from my Uncle hence most of us little boys in the village wanted to be Brothers. Indeed, it is not for nothing that three of us actually became Brothers though different congregations.

Now on the side of SVD, I must say also that there are a number of SVD Brothers whose lives and contributions have had a remarkable influence in my life. However for the reason of time and space I will like to share with you about, Br. Ruyter Cristophoru Tarcisius. Br. Tarcisius, the name he is popularly called in Ghana is a Dutch SVD missionary to Ghana. In my opinion he is a missionary to the marginalized in society, especially to those who are physical challenged. As a young Brother he might have had his own dreams, however, down the line he saw many people with disabilities especially children neglected who were desperately looking for help. Moved by compassion and love, he took up the challenge to give them reason to smile. Even though these were not considered by the society and even for some parents were a shame to count them as part of the family, Brother Tarcisius saw in them Jesus who needed our help and therefore, he did all within his reach to get them integrated back in society. So he founded an orthopedics training centre in Adoagyiri Nsawam (Ghana) where they are continuously rehabilitated and integrated in their families. At that time, he was not an Orthopedics yet.

HIS MAGICAL APPROACH

(Br. George Tirkey)

By Br. Muktal Ekka (INE)



For me it is Late Br. George Tirkey SVD who introduced me what SVD is and who SVDs are.

I had met him in 1982 as a high school student, and attended the vocation camp conducted by him. Much more than he recruited, he cared for me and nurtured so lovingly. He passed away in 1984. In spite of his ill health, he was full of life and enthusiasm, specifically for the youngsters. He had his magical approach to everyone, and everybody appreciated him a lot for the way he was. His commitment to the given tasks was amazing. He did everything joyously.

Today he is my role model. I hadn't interacted with him much, but he had already spoken everything, without speaking anything. He was a highly talented man, and so simple and loving in his approach. He was a man for everyone and every time. He continues to inspire me a lot. I feel blessed and privileged for having come to know such a wonderful person.

TO BE BROTHER FOR OTHERS

By Br. Gaby Wangak



I came from a Catholic family and my parents are farmers. This forces me to work and study hard to earn living. To be an SVD Brother was not my dream

Cont. Br. Wangak

because I don't know what is Brother all about. After finishing my studies in Senoir High School, major in Teacher Education in Lembata, Indonesia in 1983, I attended the short courses in carpentry in tailoring in Kupang, Indonesia. After the course, I returned to my home town in Baopukang, Ile Ape, Lembata and worked there as carpenter.

Accidentally, in 1984 I met my classmate named Paulus Boli. He invited me to apply to join the SVD Brothers. There were reasons for me to join the SVD Brothers although I did not really understand the Brotherhood like for example I wanted to have a higher education, wanted to play soccer and to eat bread.

My longingness and wish were not smooth due to the disagreement of my parents and the parish priest. As the youngest in family, my parents wanted me to stay at home and take care of them. Thanks God, although they did not want me to join the SVD Brothers, I finally was accepted to the St. Conrad Brother Formation House in Ende 1984.

WHAT SVD BROTHER HAD A GREAT IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE AND IN WHAT WAY?

Honestly, I would like to say that I don't regret to be an SVD Brother. I experienced the great impact of the SVD Brothers on my life. The Senior Brothers witnessed through their prayer life, simplicity and diligence in doing their mission work entrusted to them faithfully. They do love their work. Aside from that, they give good example and act as model in the community life so that everybody can feel their "Brotherhood and warmth" in the community as one family, one community and one congregation. The presence of a Brother in the community makes the difference and makes our congregation unique.

In this context, I am aware that my vocation as Brother is something that special, unique and indeed challenging. Special and unique because there are very few people who could join to be a Brother. On the other hand, it is challenging for me due to the following reasons: 1. There are parents who don't want their son to be a Brother; 2. Trying to be Brother for the others in the community where I belong; 3. To give witness, to inspire, and to become a good example for others, following the good example of the senior confreres (both Priests and Brothers) in terms of praying, working and community living.

Therefore, to live my identity as a Brother, I tried to love the work entrusted to me by the superior and to become a true Brother for the confreres, dialogue partners and people whom we serve. I also visit the elderly and the sick by giving them the Holy Communion every Sunday.

THE "TRINITY" BROTHERS

A Trinity sui generis (Brs. Franciscus, Anacletus, Sofronius)

By Br. José de Jesús AMARO (Portugal)



There was not one Brother but three: Franciscus, Anacletus and Sophronius. Their influence in the community was done in a very discreet way through their distinctive personalities. However, Franciscus was sometimes very irritable. But both Sophronius and Anacletus were the personification of serenity. In addition, Sofronius was the most discreet person I have ever met in my life.

Franciscus was someone who loved nature, the garden and the forest. His "die Planten" (=plants) was the center of his work and interest. His attention to nature equals the way a father cares for his son. He did not allow anyone to treat his plants in a rude manner. If a soccer ball or any ball for that matter, falls in the vicinity of his "Planten" a big crisis would arise because he would shout: "No ball can ever fall, step and destroy my plants". In spite of his irritable moods I love Franciscus. He was very authentic!

Anacletus was like a king with a kingdom of his own. He was called by his family "König," a German word for King. His kingdom was the kitchen. He was the senior chef and he took pains to prepare meals. Even though difficult and hard times come about, I never saw him lose his head or his peace of mind. Not even when he witnessed a "serious accident" in which my companion and I were involved. While we were playfully exchanging bad jokes a dozen dishes accidentally fell off. It was a joy to contact and relate with Anacletus. Anacletus' speeches

Conf. Br. Amaro

were short but meaningful. They lack big concepts and often limited to only a few monosyllables.

Sophronius reigned in the carpentry. Many doors, windows, tables, desks, chairs, seats, lockers were created by him and his assistants. He was a man who works quietly and limitedly converse with his assistants giving them limited, brief and very concise instructions. With Sophronius you can converse in an intimate way.

I remember them. The Trinity Brothers always sat on the last rows in the chapel and in the oratory. Their prayer books were in German. They only used the Portuguese language for specific matters not as a language to communicate and relate to others. I appreciated them just the way they were. I keep a fond and a beautiful memory of all them. With Franciscus I have had the playful privilege of exchanging with him practical and innocent jokes.

GOOD COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND THE BROTHERS

By Br. George Johannes Pierk (GER)



I am a so called "late vocation". I Entered in England/Ireland. When I got to know the SVD's in England (Liverpool, 1964), I met two Brothers who impressed me very much: Br. Agatho, German-born, who travelled for "The Word", and Br Mathew Swift, American-born. Both have died already, but left a great impression as religious Brothers, to me as well as to the people who they contacted for the Word Magazine, a missionary work that I got to appreciate very much, because of their great dedication and

conviction as religious Brothers. And this gave me a lead to work with communication media later on.

These two Brothers, although both of very different characters, were very community-minded. Every time when they came back to their basis at Saint Gregory's, Halewood Road, Liverpool, there was great joy among all of us. And the Rector, Fr. Lesly Hatfield, recognized the value of the Brothers for the community spirit. For me, this was my first experience in a small community, the value of which I started to defend since in my missionary life till today.

Br. Agatho helped me to get social contacts with various families, which helped me very much, not only in my study of English but also to get into a different cultural thinking.

Br. Mathew, who had been thrown out of China and preferred to stay in England, taught me to eat with sticks in Chinese restaurants, which he loved to do, and also to bet on horses. We had a lot of fun, while I was helping him promote the Word Magazine, in which he was really a specialist. He taught me also within a short time how to approach people to get them interested in our SVD-magazine, when we started our daily routine by 9 a clock, walking from house to house, according to his organized plan for promotional work in a previously contacted parish, like in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, etc. I loved these two Brothers for their mature thinking, faithfulness and open approach with people.

During my Novitiate in Ireland (1965-68) I also got to appreciate the presence of Brothers, from Br. Paul in the printing press to the carpentry and the farm at Donamon.

Finally, of my experiences in Brasil, I can never forget Br. Hilario (Theodor Hegholz), whom I thought an ideal of religious Brother, the stabilizing faithful element in our local religious community in Guarapuava, Paraná, who in his simple way of life, as the only Brother among Fathers, was capable to pass on social and religious values of the past and contribute very much to an integrated community with that neighborhood, where everybody loved Br. Hilario.

BROTHERS AND PRIESTS IN ONE SOCIETY

By Br. Eduardo Reba (ARS)



With this email I want to share my thoughts on the question on how a Brother had a great impact on my life.

At first I did not know who is a Brother, what does he do and what was his lifestyle. This was because since my childhood I only have met a priest from our parish who happened to be an SVD. It was only between 1992 and 1993 that I had the opportunity to learn about the vocation and life of a Brother. I was then working in a construction job and the foreman of the construction was an SVD Brother.

I was struck by this Brother's personality, closeness to the workers and masons, simplicity, and fraternal concern. He had the ability to hear the complaints and grievances of the workers. He treated everyone the same. This caught my attention and as a result a desire to know about religious life specifically the vocation of a Brother came about. At that moment, I imagined religious life as a vocation and life full of harmony and a community spirit. I thought that in the SVD community there was no distinction or separation between the Brothers and a Priest. However, I ran into a reality where some fellow priests acted superiors over the Brothers. Well, this was something that happened in the past but sadly, this is still reflected in the attitude of some confreres who feel that we, Brothers, are second class citizens. We must work together to build a community of Brothers in Jesus, our Big Brother.

Nothing more for now. Thank you very much.

RELIABLE IN PROFESSION, FRIENDLY

IN SOCIALS (Brs. Heinrich "Eufredus" Michael, Johannellus, Robert Stockdreher, Gebhard Rahe)

By Fr. Hermann Bickel (GER)



During my formation years at the boarding school and at the Theologate, many Brothers impressed me in a very positive way. I would like to list up some of them here.

1. Br. Heinrich (Eufredus) Michael, +1980

He was an excellent joiner master. His former apprentices and journeymen praise him even today. He was loyal, exact, reliable, pious and friendly. As a travelling Brother, he was working for our SVD media. In this job, he did a lot of good deeds. He had many contacts to friends and benefactors. Due to his hobby, *conjuring*, many people kept him in long-lasting memory. Following my example and encouraged by me, he became a member of the German Association of Conjurers. On the way to conjurers' congresses, we were frequently praying together. His nephew, Sigi Schawe, is a good friend of mine, and a fellow conjurer.

2) Br. Johannellus und Br. Robert Stockdreher (+1999)

These Brothers were assigned to Mission House St. Arnold (Germany) where we had a mission high school. They knew all students by name. Although officially they were not allowed to maintain personal contacts to the students, they managed to congratulate each birthday celebrant personally. Their simple lifestyle impressed me very much. They were friendly, pious, and industrious.

3) Br. Gebhard Rahe in St. Augustin *1937

Among our contemporaries, I may mention Br. Gebhard Rahe, the present director of our Museum of People and Cultures, at the Mission House St. Augustin, Germany). He is very sociable in all his different fields of responsibility. We know him as a reliable, friendly, open-minded, committed confrere. We need Brothers like he.

LIFE IS LIKE A BICYCLE

By Br. Sebastiao Tenorio da Silva (PHS)



While reflecting on my life in preparation for my perpetual vows, I feel an excess of gladness. I thank God, and each one who has been part of my life, before and after I joined the Societas Verbi Divini (SVD). In fact, so many people helped me.

However, I will never forget that the person of St. Joseph Freinademetz was the one who exerted the strongest influence towards my decision to become a missionary, dedicating my full life to lead people to God.

Confreres, parents, and friends who were journeying with me on the way of witnessing and trust: I thank you for your friendship! You all know that my life is based on a constant love. As Albert Einstein said, life is like riding a bicycle. In order to keep your balance, you must keep moving. I am now moving towards my perpetual vows as an SVD Brother.



A BROTHER MISSIONARY IN THE PHILIPPINES

(Brother Richard Huette)

By Br. Karl Schaarschmidt (KEN)



Br. Richard entered the Mission house in Steyl already long before the second world war. After his basic education in Primary school, he learned the trade as a carpenter and furniture maker. He had already a fiancé, the daughter of the owner of a big carpentry shop, and was seen as the successor to take over the business. Unfortunately he got a very bad eye sickness, and the doctors told him that he might become blind. Richard made a vow to God, that in case he will be healed, he will enter religious life. And so, when his eye site became better, he joined the SVD.

After his novitiate and junior Brother formation, he was assigned to go to the Philippines, to help building up the different mission stations. He was staying in Christ the King, Quezon City, and he occupied the, so called “Steel house” the first prefabricated house which was send from Steyl, when the first missionaries came to the Philippines. Richard started a small carpentry shop in Christ the King. When they had stone build the solid seminary, Br. Richard converted the old buildings into a big carpentry shop. There he employed many young man from Abra, and trained them as carpenter. He employed more than 100 craftsmen, and made church and school furniture, for the catholic churches and schools all over the Philippines. He was not only training and giving employment, he also was supporting the mission seminary in Christ the King and Tagaytay, and many of our first Filipino fathers are owing their priesthood to him. He was there during the second would war and the occupation by the Japanese, which was a very hard difficult time, but because of his skills, he survived.

Cont. Br. Schaarschmidt,

Even he had to manage a big furniture factory, he never neglected his personal spiritual life, and was always the first in the church for prayer in the morning, and the rosary he prayed in the evenings after work, even though tired from hard work. I had the privilege to be his assistant for 12 years, and took over the management from him, and he was than my humble assistant. He died in the retirement house in Christo Rey, in 2004. May he rest in peace.

HE SPENT LONG HOURS IN PRAYER

(A Belgian SVD Brother)

By Br. S. Swaminathan Valiyavilayil (INM)



To answer this question I just recall the life of a couple of senior Brothers who had created great impact on me from the very beginning of my Religious life journey. I had to come down to the level of a minor seminarian at the age of twenty-seven years. It was rather difficult for me in the initial stage of my formation. Soon I got a chance to live in the SVD Brothers' company in the seminary itself. There were two senior Brothers together with a few junior Brothers. The Rector of the seminary, considering my age and life experience, asked me to join the senior Brothers to work in the Farm attached to the seminary. Their selfless life and hard work boosted my thirst for serving the Society and the people around. Their lives were very exemplary so much so the priest confreres considered them as the pillars of our Society.

They lived and served the Society and the humanity in the prime of their life as Brothers and then switched over to priesthood in our Society. Even though they left the Brotherhood, I still remember and cherish their dedication, commitment and hard work. The switching over of Brothers to priesthood even after celebrating their silver jubilee/ruby jubilee brings disgrace and discouragement on the junior Brothers.

With this experience I reached the Novitiate with renewed energy and a good foundation in spirituality. In the Novitiate staff there was an elderly Brother, native of Belgium. He was an inspiration to all the Novices and the staff over there. His prayer life, reaching the chapel at four in the morning and spending long hours in prayer even in the coldest season was very unique to be mentioned. His hard works during the whole day in the Farm and around the house were some of his life qualities to remember and cherish. He was always happy and smiling as a little star, spreading around life and light to the people. No doubt that he preached the Good News of Jesus through his life example for every person who came in contact with him.

In course of time, I came in contact with many SVD Missionaries both Priests and Brothers, local as well as foreign, engaged in various types of Missionary apostolate. The Brothers were engaged mainly in farming, administration of temporal good, treasurers, educational, medical, technical and engineering, printing press apostolate and village Mission activities etc. Their life style and spirituality was very attractive and inspiring for the junior Brothers and me. Some of our senior Brothers passed away but they live afresh in my memories. Brothers are very much accepted and appreciated by the members of SVD Society and the clerics in the church and yet the vocation for Brotherhood is slowly diminishing. I feel, the present scenario of the world is craving to capture the power,

position and wealth by competing each other for selfish motives. It also influences the Catholic faithful and brings a negative attitude, which leads to the dwindling of the Religious Brotherhood vocation. Let us continue to live our vocation with conviction and dedication.

HE WAS A MAN OF GOD

(Br. Amadeus Balk)

By Br. Norbert Ruf (SIN)



There were several Brothers who impressed me, but if I had to name one, it would be Brother Amadeus Balk in Steyl. Br Amadeus had already worked in the printing press for decades, when I dropped in, in the early eighties, during my postulancy. I had heard about him, it was said that he was an inventor, that he had even officially patented one of his inventions. The invention was a device that controlled, during the gravure-printing process, the exact match of the four colours, which eventually become a printed picture. Since I had no idea about the whole printing process, it all sounded pretty impressive, and I expected a well-educated, engineering type of a man. Br Amadeus, however, was a very humble little man, already way past retirement age, who had been trained as a printer, but had later on taught himself the basics of electronic circuit design and even tool making. I was more impressed by his discipline and intellect than by his invention. Here I was, just out of engineering school, and this smiling old man was in many ways ahead of me in terms of practical ideas and knowledge. He had an amazing eagerness to keep learning. He often asked me, the young postulant, for advice when he worked on another improvement to some machine, while I had a hard time to follow his flow of thoughts.

There was barely a machine in the whole printing press in Steyl that Br Amadeus hadn't improved with one or more "invention". But he didn't let it rest there; he tirelessly worked on further upgrading to make the complicated processes of printing and book-binding etc. always more trouble-free and more economical. The two of us eventually became a great team, when after Novitiate, I returned to Steyl for two more years of working with him, before I went to Taiwan. He never considered himself as my boss, he only wanted to train someone who could walk in his footsteps, continue the great vision he worked and lived for. He felt his age and accepted it, felt how his eyes grew tired fast and how his memory started to fail him. It has to be seen on this background, that he was quite disappointed when I told him that I wanted to go to Taiwan. At many occasions he tried to talk me out of it, "Stay back in Steyl", he would say, continue the tradition and the work of all the good brothers, especially continue his legacy. But he saw it eventually as God's plan for me and for him, and accepted it. Because the other inspiring aspect of Br Amadeus was that he was a very religious man. He surely was very pious, crossed himself with Holy Water when entering his workshop, was maybe one of the few who regularly still prayed the Quarter-Hour-Prayer. He also had his humour: once on a high feast (was it on Assumption?) he still came to the shop, in his cassock, sat down and said "So, heut schaff ich nix." (Today I will not work).

To me, he was a model religious, always on time for prayers, Mass and the other spiritual exercises, that characterize the community of Steyl. But I felt he was not superficial, he was deep in his heart a man of God, a man of prayer, a pious man in the best sense of the word. I am sure he prayed for me and my vocation, and continues to do so in heaven.



A LASTWORD, FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Confreres,

The SVD BROTHERS bulletin wishes to serve as a Forum on Brother Vocation in the Society of the Divine Word. It is written by the readers. This bulletin is not only for Brothers. It also welcomes contributions from the SVD priests. Please, join us and write for the bulletin!

The initiative for this bulletin was born on the 2006 General Chapter where a group of Brothers (and Fathers) decided to intensify communication among Brothers in order to highlight the many opportunities of witnessing through the Brother vocation. We continue counting on your voice. Please write to the following addresses: lanyji.svd@gmail.com or svd_brothersphil@yahoo.com . You may use the following languages: English, Spanish, German, Indonesian and Polish.

In the Divine Word,

Your SVD Brothers in Cebu City

Happy Easter to All!
Happy Easter to All!



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