

SPAIN PROVINCE

Official language: **Spanish**

Vision Statement

We are witnesses of the Divine Word that incarnates among us. We announce His Word and we live in communities that encourage people to collaborate in the Mission of God. We practice the inter gentes prophetic dialogue and proclaim the liberating message of the gospel. We go beyond social borders and we are present where God and the Church need us.

Mission Statement

We, Missionaries of the Divine Word of Spain Province, serve God and the people that He has entrusted to us in the following ways:

Walking with migrants, refugees and displaced people who have arrived in our country. We give them a message of hope by encouraging them to document themselves and join their struggle for life and justice.

Through biblical ministry, through publications and meetings, we foster the love of the People of God through His Word.

Through the pastoral care of parishes, accompanying families and young people in their journey of faith and life.



Committed to justice, peace and the integrity of creation, we carry out a work of caring of the poor and the marginalized of the society.

1. Social Setting

Spain occupies the greater part of the Iberian peninsula and its main borders are with Portugal and France. Throughout its history, Spain has received large migratory flows, the main being the Celts, Iberians, Romans, Visigoths and Arabs. Because of this, the ethnic composition of the current Spain is very mixed and varied. On the other hand, all these migratory flows have left important imprints on the cultural heritage of Spain. A set of seventeen autonomous communities, some of them of historical character, today form the map of Spain. All this has resulted in a very diverse, although not divergent cultural symbiosis, in regards to languages, customs, traditions and national sentiment.

The population of Spain is currently about 47 million inhabitants, although it is significant that, of them, some seven million were born outside Spain. The main migrant populations today are the Moroccans and Romanians. The South Americans (mainly from Ecuador and Bolivia) represent around 10% of the total number of migrants. There is also a strong presence of Filipinos, although many of them are second generation. The Chinese presence is commercial and increasingly there is a greater number of these people living and working in Spain. The native population of Spain has aged rapidly since it has one of the lowest birth rates in the world.

The enormous economic crisis which we experienced in recent years, and that the country is slowly recovering from, produced a massive loss of employment, especially among young people. This was the breeding ground suitable for the emergence of populism of the extreme left, breaking the traditional two-party system. This led to an unprecedented political crisis in which the government was functioning for a year. The current government in Spain is center-right, such as the majority of Spaniards voted in the last elections in 2016.

2. Ecclesial Setting

The Church in Spain is also suffering from a slow and progressive decline. The economic contribution of the faithful to the Church through taxes declined last year by more than one million and a half euros. Church institutions seem

to have lost credibility and the recent Church scandals have failed to improve the situation. The vast majority of Spaniards today follow neither the doctrine nor Catholic morals, especially on issues related to sexuality. Pope Francis' visit was a breath of fresh air for the Church in general, even though the conservative wing of the Church has shown itself to be challenging.

Sunday attendance has been drastically reduced and most of the parishioners participating in the Mass are elderly women. Young people are those who are most distant from the Church and its religious practices. Many of those who still have faith live it out regardless of the ecclesial institution. There are, however, ecclesial movements of a conservative character that are attracting a considerable number of followers, especially among the youth. The Church attracts more people in their social activities, especially through the NGOs linked to the congregations or Church. The crisis has not only been felt by the Catholic Church, but also by evangelical churches which have stopped growing at the pace that they did in the past decade.

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Verbo Divino
is the jewel in
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Currently Spain is multi-religious, with a peaceful coexistence of all religions, including Muslims, who are now approaching 3% of the population. However, the vast majority of the population here is not religious and is unconcerned with religion. Spanish society can be defined as changing, lay and pluralistic.

3. Intercultural Life - *Ad Extra*

Those in Final Vows

IN ACTIVE MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Parish	26	45.6	46.0	32.5
Education	0	0	0	0
Schools	0	-		
Universities	0	-		
Formation/ SVD Vocation	1	1.8	2.0	2.5
Administration/ Support	3	8.8	8.0	30.0
Other Apostolates	7	12.3	22.0	15.0
JPIC	1	-		
Bible	1	-		
Communication	1	-		
Mission Animation	1	-		
Others	3	-		

Those in Final Vows

NOT IN MINISTRY	Personnel	2018 (%)	2012 (%)	2005 (%)
Studies/ Orientation	2	3.5	6.0	2.5
Retired/Sick	16	28.0	16.0	7.5
Others	0	0	0	10.0

Characteristic Dimensions

Mission Animation: We have opted for a mission model that emphasizes dialogue, especially with immigrants and people seeking faith, or who are in need of the new evangelization. We publish the magazine “In Family” two times a year, in which we publish letters, reports and projects coming from our missionaries. The magazine is oriented towards mission reaching out to a general audience. Our missionary calendar is also very popular.

Lay people of the Divine Word (LVD) collaborate mainly with the mission secretary regarding mission animation and the promotion of province mission projects. The LVD share our missionary charism and our roots in the spirituality of the founding generation. Although they are few in number, the LVD contribute with enthusiasm and joy. We see how fundamental is the formation of lay people, which takes place in pastoral activities and through the publication of biblical materials and biblical training courses offered by our publishing house.

The Biblical Pastoral Ministry and Commu-

nication: La Editorial Verbo Divino is known throughout the Spanish-speaking world for its dissemination of the Bible and biblical-themed books. It provides biblical training with online courses (see www.verbodivino.es). Our parishes and chaplaincies serve as a basis for the Bible courses and programs of the Bible week.

There is **Grupo Editorial** Verbo Divino formed by our editors, biblical centers, bookstores and SVD distributors in PANAM and Verbum Bible of the Congo, with the support of the EVD of Spain. The province also has a website: www.misionerosverbodivino.com that constantly presents our missionary concerns.

JPIC: Various confreres are involved in social projects, usually in partnership with NGOs, other congregations, or other ecclesial groups. As of last year, we have become part of VIVAT INTERNATIONAL Spain, which has become a platform for social justice issues, along with the other congregations that comprise VIVAT. Also, in collaboration with two other religious congregations, we are working with JUPIC through the foundation “Everyone’s Home” in our parish of Seville.

Priorities among Congregational Dimensions

The priorities of the Congregational Dimensions which the province of ESP has chosen from the last General Chapter are the following: a) migrants and refugees, b) first evangelization, c) family and youth, d) justice and peace.

The province implements these priorities through

Chaplaincy: At this time the province of ESP maintains chapels in Madrid attending to Filipinos, Poles, Africans and Chinese, with 4 confreres working full-time and 2 part-time. An important feature for our work with immigrants

is our growing internationality and multiculturalism. Working with immigrants has to do primarily with the recognition and defense of the human dignity of these people. The attitudes of dialogue and respect are fundamental and manifested in services that we provide in direct attention, welcome, integration and spiritual care.

Parish Pastoral Service: Currently the SVD in Spain have 17 parishes and 20 confreres (34% of the total) work wholly or partly in parish ministry. The parishes are located in the Diocese of Madrid, Getafe, Valladolid, Pamplona, Seville and Huelva. Many have active youth groups. Our parishes provide a meeting place and warm reception of the elderly and sick, people who have less and less in an aging society. In addition to our missionary charism, we want to also strive that our parishes will engage themselves in the same process that is taking place in society and in the pastoral ministry: participation of laity, subsidiarity, modernization of the Church, living and participative liturgy, and a welcoming significant presence in the life of the neighborhood.

Editorial Verbo Divino: This prestigious institution is the *jewel in the Crown* in the province of ESP. Its publications are known for Bible study and advanced ecclesial thinking in the Spanish-speaking world. Their sales and influence have crossed many borders, coming mainly to Latin America and the United States.

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ALBA (an NGO in Madrid, which takes its name from the SVD parish, Virgin of the Dawn of Alcorcón) was founded and is managed by lay personnel and receives the support of the Congregation. It was created to work in developing cooperation with our SVD missions and to serve immigrants providing free legal services at its headquarters. It also runs a facility for leisure and free time with the goal of giving formation to young people in the city of Valladolid.

Some of our confreres also act as chaplains or spiritual directors at hospitals, residences for senior citizens and schools.

4. Intercultural Life – *Ad Intra*

MEMBERSHIP	2018	2012	2005
Clerics	54	50	38
Brothers (final vows)	2	2	2
Scholastics	3	3	9
Total	59	55	49

AGE AND COUNTRY	2018	2012	2005
Average age	60.1	58.6	51.7
Nationalities	14	11	9

Spirituality: The continuing education through annual retreats shared with the province of Portugal, and the annual Bible conferences, encourage the province members to grow in their faith

and missionary commitment. Sharing the Bible is a common practice in the spiritual life of our communities with weekly biblical prayer using the *Lectio Divina* method. The Center of spirituality at Dueñas, with the House of Spirituality and youth hostel, offers not only welcome for SVD retreats and meetings, but also for other congregations, parishes, lay movements, and institutions of the dioceses.

Community: Meetings and activities foster community life and the missionary spirit. Communities celebrate with joy the feast days of the Congregation. There is a generally harmonious and fraternal spirit that builds spiritual growth. We are aware that community life is, in itself, proclamation of the Gospel. We want to give testimony of communion in the province that promotes international communities as schools of dialogue and respect for the values of other cultures.

Leadership: There are leadership workshops, organized by the SVD or by the Spanish Conference. The leaders of the community at all levels strive to promote personal responsibility, mutual respect and fraternal dialogue. We continue to count on the presence of confreres from other countries and continents that will eventually assume leadership positions, recognizing the challenge that entails.

Finance: There is financial transparency in our province. Each year a report on the economic situation of the province is presented to the provincial assembly. There are initiatives for

confreres to educate themselves about basic economics which could eventually help them to assume the role of administrators in the community or in the province. Recently we have concluded an external audit with a report that strengthens our transparency criteria.

Formation: Communities are provided with materials from the EVD that are employed for

continuing education on the personal and community level. At the provincial level the biblical days are organized in December, where for several days a biblical scholar encourages us to reflect on specific issues in the Bible. There is also a training program for “10-plus” confreres. In addition, there are workshops organized by the Pastoral Institute of the Pontifical University of Salamanca.