



Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

# SVD Lay Partners

Newsletter - from Around the World

Issue 16, August 2021

Associazione Amici Verbiti, Italy



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## Editorial

### Solidarity, Shared Responsibility

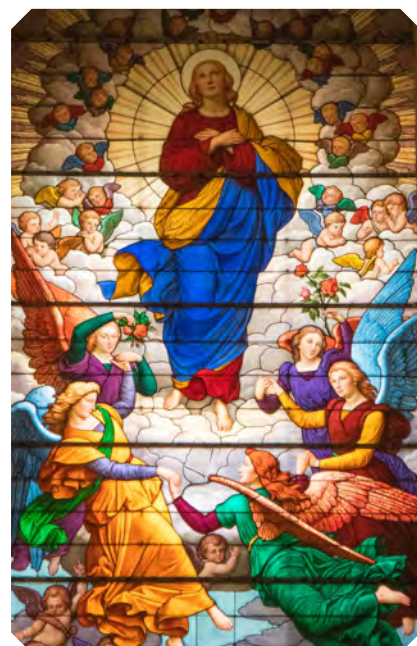
We are still at risk. Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic we have done everything possible to protect ourselves and our loved ones. And yet, we are still very much in the pandemic. No country is safe. Our world is still struggling.

COVID-19 pandemic is, above all, a human crisis that is calling for our solidarity and shared responsibility - a daily choice to see other people as our brothers and sisters. It is showing us a way to walk together. We are not doing something to them or for them. We are on our life journey with them. Though we are anxious and still grieving at the loss of our confreres, lay partners, family members and friends, we are looking for a way to help each other. We do not know how long this stretch of the road is or what will follow after this pandemic. Nevertheless, it is clearly lighting up our path to God and how, even in difficult times, there is consolation to be found.

Our SVD confreres and lay partners are journeying with people who are hit hard by the pandemic. We have responded to the pandemic either individually or as a community based large-scale comprehensive response. In spite of hopelessness and despair, we have seized opportunities to share the stories of hope and resilience all around us. Inside this edition of our newsletter, you will read many such stories of courage and strength.

We celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary on 15<sup>th</sup> August. In the Gospel of Luke (Lk 1:46), the first thing Mary says is: "My soul magnifies the Lord". She proclaims the greatness of the Lord, she praises Him saying that He is truly great. COVID-19 crisis has unearthed a human spirit, a level of solidarity, a new unity of purpose. We are called to take this solidarity forward, together, towards a healthier tomorrow. Let us allow ourselves to be taken by Mary's hand, guiding us on a path, towards better future.

Susan Noronha  
Editor in chief



## Associazione Amici Verbiti, Italy

### Presentation of One of the Eldest European Groups



*After a long break, the special topic in this issue is again dedicated to the history of a lay group, the Associazione Amici Verbiti from Italy. They can look back on a history of almost 30 years.*

#### Who we are

The *Associazione Amici Verbiti*, dedicated to St. Josef Freinademetz, was founded on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1992 by about twenty former students of the SVD mission house in Varone. They came together to connect themselves with friends and with their formators in the mission house. They also supported some solidarity initiatives suggested by the Italian missionaries. The association has its statutes. The Board of Directors are reelected every five years. They also have their SVD Spiritual Director.

#### Reliving History and Heritage

1,146 boys entered the missionary institute of Varone from 1939 to 1985 when the school was closed due to the lack of priestly vocations. After the first 3/4 years of schooling in Varone, the boys then continued their studies in Padua for high school. They then continued their theology studies at the Divine Word Mission houses in Austria, Germany or Rome. About fifty of these students have reached the priesthood in the congregation of the Divine Word and some in diocesan service.

The students who entered Varone mostly came from the Friuli Venezia Giulia area, from Veneto, Lombardy and many from Trentino Alto Adige. Even today, for our usual meetings, a couple of them drive about 3/4 hours by car. We are based in Varone, we also consider it our home, but we all live far from it.

#### Tasks and Purposes

INFORMATION is shared with letters that we send to members, and also editing and distributing the magazine *Missionari Verbiti* that we publish online and the active participation of some of us in the *Scrutare Orizzonti* meetings proposed to the local population at the Dialogue Room of the Divine Word Missionaries in Varone.

FORMATION is done with an annual meeting, usually on the last Sunday of Lent, on cultural, social and religious themes with important speakers.

SOLIDARITY is established with the creation of a fund to establish a network of solidarity towards missionary action, which in the early years concerned our Italian Verbiti friends in the world. Lately we support the CACAJ project of the Arnold Janssen Children's Center Association in Luanda (Angola) and Msgr. Estanislau Marques Chindecasse, SVD, Bishop of Dundo (Angola) to support the theology students of the Diocese of Dundo.

## Our Activities

Every year we organize a tour, named Verbita Tourism with family members, to visit important Italian and European places. We have visited the various Divine Word Institutes in Germany (Sankt Augustin, Sankt Wendel), in the Netherlands (Steyl), in Austria (Sankt Gabriel), in Switzerland (Marienburg), in Portugal (Fatima), in Romania (Roman, Traian and Cordun) and of course in Rome, the Generalate and sometimes Centro Ad Gentes, Nemi.

Every year we hold our annual meeting for the approval of annual activities and annual budget. This year, unfortunately due to the pandemic, we had to suspend both. In September 2020, only a few were able to meet for a brief assembly in Oies in Val Badia (Bolzano), at the birthplace of St. Josef Freinademetz.



These are in short, are our activities carried out with great difficulty, as we come from many distant territories and many of us, moreover, are engaged in the various missionary groups

that are active in many of our parishes. So, with our possibilities, we try to do the best.

We are an association of alumni and unfortunately it is getting thinner and thinner due to many departures from this world in the recent years. In fact, the first students date back to the years 1930/1940. So, we begin to become elderly (in body and not in spirit). I myself am from 1947 and I entered Varone in 1957 at the age of 10.

I also regret that none of us know the languages required to participate in the Newsletters of the SVD groups which we truly admire.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Association, to extend my heartiest greetings and best wishes to all our fellow missionaries. We will continue to spread Jesus' message of spiritual love and brotherhood.

Carlo Rossi  
Secretary





## AFRAM ZONE



### Ghana (GHA)

#### Friends of SVD – Formation and Delegates Conference



#### A Day of Formation

The Friends of SVD from Saint Joseph Catholic Church and Holy Trinity Catholic Church in the Techiman Diocese held a day of Formation on 22<sup>nd</sup> May at the Holy Trinity Catholic Church. Mission Secretary, Fr. Stephen Dogodzi, SVD led the formation session with Fr. Mathias Yaadar, SVD. Activities included: Bible sharing and talk on historical overview of the Friends of SVD by Fr. Dogodzi. He entreated all to embrace the Society and make it grow in their community. The participants were guided to identify various projects that could be carried out by them in their parishes and the local community.

#### Second Delegates Conference

The Second Delegates Conference of the Friends of SVD was held on 12<sup>th</sup> June at St. Augustine's Parish-Ashaiman. Thirty-eight delegates attended from Archdiocese of Accra and Diocese of Koforidua. The parish priest of St. Augustine's, Fr. Ignatius Ayivor, SVD welcomed and wished the delegates a successful conference. The Provincial Superior, Fr. Cyprian Kuupol, SVD in his address entreated the delegates to

continue to respond to the call of St. Arnold Janssen. He assured support from the SVD leadership and confreres. He added that the Arnoldus family is not just the Religious but encompasses the lay partners as well.

Fr. Dogodzi reiterated the support St. Arnold Janssen received from the laity when he founded the Society. He encouraged the delegates to do same. A talk on the theme of the conference "How can SVD Lay Partners Respond Practically to the Call of Mission Especially in Assisting the Vulnerable in our Parish Communities" was delivered by the JPIC coordinator, Fr. Nicholas Aazine, SVD. He stressed that assisting the vulnerable in the community is key in all the four characteristic dimensions of the SVDs; that is mission animation, Biblical apostolate, communication and JPIC.

The conference concluded with a Eucharistic Celebration in honour of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the feast of the day. The main celebrant, Fr. Cyprian Kuupol, SVD told the Delegates to reflect on "how immaculate is my heart?"

Matilda Anim-Fofie



## South Africa (BOT)

### SVD Lay Partners, Malamulele – Introduction



SVD lay partners in Malamulele is still in the initial stage of Formation. We had our brief introductory meeting conducted by Thandi Mazibuko with few members. The aim was to identify some members who can work together and deepen our understanding on the SVD mission and Arnoldus Spirituality. Thandi Mazibuko attended few virtual meetings on several topics like: “Arnold Janssen and the Lay Partners”, “Pandemic and Prophetic Dialogue” as well as “Pandemic and Arnoldus Spirituality” conducted by the Generalate.

#### Orientation Program

Fr. Jay De Leon, SVD, the Mission Secretary of Botswana Province (South Africa and Botswana) conducted an orientation program on SVD charism and Arnoldus spirituality and gave us an understanding about the SVD lay partners. Fr. Jay indicated that, apart from mission activities, formation of members is important. It includes undergoing processes like: Initial formation, ongoing formation, retreats and other formation activities. The program concluded with lunch and sharing.

Comments from the participants:

“The orientation program taught us to know more on the history of the SVD, how to evangelise in word and deed, and teach our people about God and the Church. With this program, we will be able to reach out to our people in *Xitsonga* (native



Language) and teach them to participate in sharing and living the Gospel...” (Nozenzo Vala)

“I see that it’s encouraging us to know more about the Word of God” (Hlamalani Malepfana)

#### Social Reachout

Needy school children were identified and school uniforms were bought and distributed to them with the guidance from Fr. Marsel Samon, SVD. They smiled with their eyes as smiles were behind their masks. What can we say! Pandemic and its consequences! Some managed to steal a moment to smile!

We are learning from the experiences of other lay partner groups in other countries, like the groups from Ghana, Congo and Togo. I thank Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, SVD, the presenters, translators and lay partners from the webinars, who shared their experiences and challenges. I am grateful.

Thandi Mazibuko



ASPAC ZONE

Indonesia (IDT)

Paguyuban Soverdia Kupang – Sharing Love with Blind People



With the worsening situation of COVID-19 pandemic, yet another disaster - tropical cyclone Seroja hit Timor-Leste, resulting in significant loss of life and displacement. In East Nusa Tenggara region, the tropical cyclone damaged many homes and public facilities and claimed many lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the devastation from cyclone Seroja, have been very detrimental to the blind people's groups. Many blind people who work as masseurs are now without a job. Their income is greatly reduced. For some of those who have lost their jobs, it is difficult to meet the needs of their daily lives.

This desperate situation inspired the members of *Paguyuban Soverdia Kupang* (IDT SVD lay partners) and the SVD community in Kupang to immediately reach out to these blind people. After coordinating with the local government authorities, we conducted a survey on the number of blind

people in the area and understood their needs. We bought basic food rations, including rice, cooking oil, sugar, eggs, utensils, blankets, soap and detergents. We also collected few usable clothes to donate to these blind people.

On 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 SVD community and lay partners in Kupang travelled to RT 26 Maulafa District, Kupang City to donate few basic necessities and clothes to around 72 people, including 53 families. This act of care and compassion was led by the Mission Secretary of Timor Province, Fr. Agustinus Hironimus Dae Soro, SVD and the Coordinator of Kupang SVD lay partner group, Isidorus Lilijawa. SVD priests, brothers and members of the SVD lay partner group collaborated together and were a part of this humble mission.

Isidorus Lilijawa



## Indonesia (IDJ)

### Soverdia – Many Activities Despite Pandemic



During the pandemic, IDJ SVD lay partners remained active in charity programs and other social activities.

#### Novena to St. Joseph

Soverdia St. Yoseph Parish held Novena Mass and Rosary prayers to Saint Joseph from 10<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March at St. Joseph Freinademetz Pastoral Services Center. This was in preparation for the feast of St. Joseph and was attended by SVD lay partners and others.

#### Lent Virtual Recollection

We held our first virtual program - Lenten Recollection on 21st March. The Recollection with the theme “Brotherhood Mission in the Light of Fratelli Tutti” received a very good response. 96 lay partners participated led by Fr. Sarto Mitakda, SVD, Mission Secretary and our Spiritual Director. Provincial Superior, Fr. Gregorius G. Kaha, SVD acknowledged the actives carried by the lay partners. We were invited to develop an attitude of solidarity with the marginalized, poor and suffering regardless of skin color, ethnicity and religion because we are all God’s creation.

#### Visit to Parents of SVD Missionaries in Palasari

On Divine Mercy Sunday, lay partners of St. Yoseph Parish visited parents of SVD missionaries working abroad, from Palasari Village in West Bali. Some of them live alone. We had time to chat with them and pray together. Our presence, greetings and smiles made them happy. May our missionaries working in various parts of the world, be blessed to continue their mission.

#### Soverdia Care for East Nusa Tenggara

Tropical cyclone Seroja devastated most of the Province of East Nusa Tenggara bringing landslides and floods in the area. Through SVD - JPIC, we channeled funds and some goods to disaster victims through the Flobamora Secretariat in Denpasar.



#### Caring for others during COVID-19 Pandemic

Around 10 of our members were tested positive for COVID-19 and 2 have succumbed to the virus. One of the SOVERDIA members, Mrs. Henny, was from the Bali-Lombok District. Some of us visited her family to pay condolences and to pray for the family.

#### Visit to Kerobokan Prison

On 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 we visited Kerobokan Prison and donated prayer books, rosaries and Holy water to the Christian prisoners.

Paulina Suharsi



## India (INH)

### SVD-Fraternity – Introduction and Activities Overview

SVD-Fraternity is an associate lay group of India Hyderabad Province (INH). Taking the cue from the General Chapters of SVD, this lay group formulated the Vision, Mission and Objectives on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2013 and was registered as a Society with the Registrar of Societies (India) on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014, making it a legal entity. We have over 900 members officially registered.

#### Missionary Activities

Encouraged by the words from Fr. Heinz Kulüke, SVD our former Superior General and Br. Guy Mazola, SVD General Councilor, the association launched various missionary activities starting with the planting of saplings of fruit trees at the SVD Formation House in Trichy, and also providing financial support to the seminarians. Few members visited SVD missions to understand their missionary activities.

#### Birth Centenary of Fr. Karl Ritz, SVD

We celebrated the birth centenary of Fr. Karl Ritz, SVD, the pioneer missionary to Tamil Nadu, India, and organised a series of mission awareness programmes.

Some of our Fraternity members lend their services to the formation of students at our minor seminaries in Trichy and Chennai. Members deliver lectures to the seminarians, conduct classes on English handwriting, teach English

grammar and organize classes on music. We propagate mission awareness by distributing annual calendar every year.

With the able leadership of Rajendran K. Lazar as the President and Arul Raj as General Secretary, the Fraternity is running professionally.

A major project of building home for the workers of the seminary, has been launched by the Fraternity, in collaboration with the SVDs. SVD-Fraternity has contributed generously to this cause.

The past two years have seen the worst ever havoc played by the pandemic the world over, bringing the curtains down on mobility, economic activity and causing untold suffering and deaths! Our fervent prayer is that our Merciful Father may spare His people from the prolonged misery!

Rajendran K. Lazar



## India (INM)

### Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW-Mumbai) – Expanding our Circle



We began our “Feed the Hungry” project in September 2019. Hot lunch cooked by our members was distributed to the hungry people living on the streets, slums, etc. It was an act of compassion towards the poor and a demonstration of the presence of God’s mission. Though active and enthusiastic, our circle was small and limited.

March 2020, COVID-19 pandemic caught everyone by surprise. In the midst of this chaos and tragedy, we continued with our “Feed the Hungry” project. SVD confreres collaborated with the lay partners. We provided food essential kits to poor families and healthy, tasty cooked meals to hungry people in and around Mumbai. It was here we witnessed the clear signs of humanity and compassion. We went beyond our boundaries. Our circle was expanding and strengthening.

Followed by, there was the devastating second wave this year. As human tragedy unfolded, India’s health system collapsed. There was a shortage of everything – oxygen, drugs, beds, vaccines, even cremation/burial space. The month of April 2021 witnessed the worst ever health crisis. Due to the pandemic, many children now live in the streets while their families are unable to work to meet their essential needs. After a brief pause due to stricter lockdown guidelines, we are again on the move feeding the hungry. The poor are more threatened by hunger than by the virus.

Our circle, of both receivers and supporters, is getting bigger by the day. All this reveals the mystery of human being. We are vulnerable and yet we are capable of serving others. We are wounded and yet are to feel compassion. Not all travellers leave the wounded person on the road; the least expected, the Samaritan, is the one who stops and takes care of him.

Susan Noronha



## India (INM)

### Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW-Pune) – Virtual Meeting and Social Aid Projects



#### Mission of Love and Service for the Needy

In March 2021, we were blessed by the presence of Fr. Richard Mathias, SVD, Provincial Superior and the team of Councilors of the India Mumbai Province (INM). At the meeting, they appreciated the generous commitment of SVD lay mission partners and acknowledged them as a great asset to the SVD community and to the universal Church at large. With these blessings, DDW-Pune began the “Feed the Hungry” project where members volunteered to cook, pack and distribute food packets to the hungry in the community.

#### Virtual Meeting

Amidst the lockdown, DDW-Pune members conducted a virtual meeting to discuss ideas on how they could reach out to the needy. The members decided to provide dry-ration food kits which were procured through monetary contributions from DDW members. Our members also volunteered to pack the food kits - each kit including food items that would meet the requirements for a family of four for at least a month.

#### Food Distribution Drives

Just when it looked like we were on the path to recovery from the pandemic, April-2021 recorded a devastating COVID-19

surge that impacted lives of many people. With families exhausting their lifetime savings in medical expenses; losing the bread-winner; or income sources – a number of our brothers and sisters were in urgent need for help.

Food distribution drives were organized at the *Sarva Seva Sangh*, Pune to distribute the food packets to the beneficiaries, with pandemic protocols followed to ensure the health and safety of all those involved.

We thank God for all His blessing on our members. May the heart of Jesus live in our hearts and in the hearts of all people.

Godfrey Fernandes  
Leena Xavier



## The Philippines (PHN)

### SVD-PHN Mission Partners – Virtual Meetings

That tiny virus, SARS-COV-2, may have prevented many from coming together in one way or another but not with the SVD-PHN Mission Partners. It has been a year - since 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, we have started to meet via Zoom regularly. With four out of five districts present, and mission partners belonging in different contexts, and with the SVD leadership present - Fr. Romeo Fajardo, SVD (Provincial Superior), Fr. Oscar Alunday, SVD and Fr. Dominador Ramos, SVD, it was apparent that the “new normal” would be virtual meetings.

Since then, the SVD-PHN Mission Partners from all five districts attend the virtual meetings. From the new normal emerged a “culture” unique of SVD-PHN, our tatak (our brand as SVD-PHN Mission Partners). Each Wednesday we have a theme as inspired by the life and example of St. Arnold Janssen.



First Wednesday of the month is Devotion Wednesday or the Mission Rosary Wednesday. Second is Formation Wednesday dedicated to reflect the four characteristic dimensions (4CD) of the Society with the SVD-PHN 4CD coordinators as speakers and sharers. Third, Bible Sharing Wednesday (Vigan Method). Fourth, Faith-Sharing Wednesday where a mission partner/SVD/friends share their faith-journey. Fifth Wednesday, if any, is Arnold Janssen Spirituality Wednesday.



These meetings have helped us to grow in spirit and faith, in relationship and friendship, in mission and vocation. SVD-PHN Mission Secretary Fr. Emil Pati, SVD has gracefully accompanied us and journeyed with us throughout this year.

#### SVD Friends of Abra

*Mangtedka ti Kabaalam, Alaem ti Kasapulam* (Share according to your means, get according to your need)

SVD Friends of Abra initiated a community pantry in April at the SVD district house of Bangued, Abra, reaching out to poor families in the community. This initiative continues to grow and has so far served more than 6,000 families and counting. On 3<sup>rd</sup> July the group met in preparation for the SVD Friends community gardening project.

Mike and GeeO Paderon



## EUROPA ZONE

### Portugal (POR)

#### Diálogos - Leigos SVD – Hope and Kindness in the Heart



In this past year, we have been faced with a new reality that has forced us to rethink life, to pause, to question certainties, to doubt everything and almost everyone. The pandemic brought about distances, suspended hugs, interrupted lives, loss of jobs among others. How do we deal with it? How do we look at the horizon without being engulfed in sadness? We are just fragile beings!

As Pope Francis said: “hope is like throwing the anchor to the other shore.” It is hope that leads us to walk forward on the road of life, on a much more beautiful path, if only we nurture goodness in our hearts. Being good is our very essence, for God is good “and his faithful love is eternal; his faithfulness is from generations to generations” (Ps 100:5).

Being good however is not such an easy task; it requires lots of hard work. Goodness implies opening one’s heart, moving towards the other, listening to the other, seeking justice, defending the truth, being righteous, merciful, and compassionate. This pandemic has opened our eyes to many challenges with explicit calls for kindness to be put at the service of humanity.



Some of the activities are: caring for a neighbour; helping some elderly person who lives alone; taking food to isolated families, or those who have been left without any source of income; volunteering at some institutions; making prudent management decisions, always putting people first; extending generosity to those we come across or in whatever we do; in the family; at work; at school; taking care of the home; caring for others, in our parish community; in the institutions and groups to which we are connected, participating in initiatives aimed at helping the weak and the poor, etc...

There are so many ways to spread goodness in these challenging times! And to paraphrase the late Frère Roger\*:  
“Whoever lives of God chooses to love. And a heart determined to love can radiate boundless goodness.”

Fernanda Ramalhoto



#### Frère Roger Schutz

The Swiss-born Calvinist priest lived since 1940 in Taizé, France. There he founded in 1944 the first ecumenical order, the *Communauté de Taizé* and became its prior. Throughout his life, he worked for reconciliation between all Christians and especially sought dialogue with young people. He received numerous awards, including the Templeton Prize and the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 1974, the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 1988 and the Dignitas Humana Award in 2003. On 16 August 2005, he was stabbed to death by a mentally ill woman during evening prayer in Taizé.

## Germany (GER)

### SVD-Partner – One and a Half Year On The Road In A Different Way



A look at the Acts of the Apostles shows: Jesus' disciples were constantly on the move. Due to the pandemic SVD-Partner are currently unable to follow the example of the apostles and travel from place to place. But the digital network is open and is used intensively.

#### Praying for People in the Pandemic

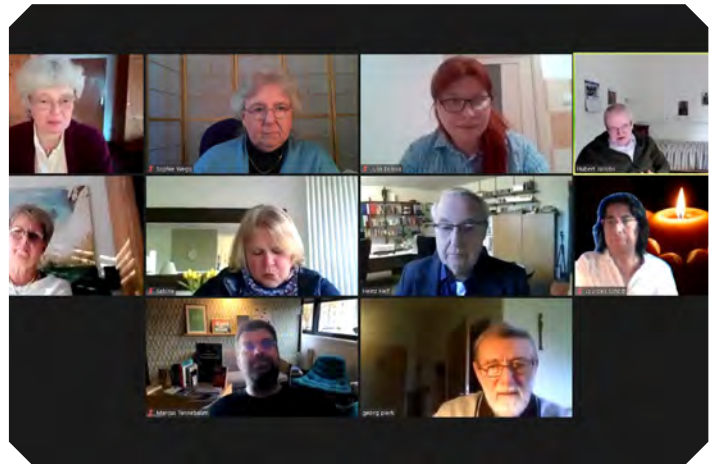
Now more than 500 days the digital prayer calendar "Praying together for people during the Corona pandemic" invites to personal prayer. The prayer calendar will be continued as long as the pandemic lasts.

[Link: Prayer Calendar \(only in German\)](#)

#### Prayer and Conversation

After the Australian SVD lay partner invited to an international Arnold Janssen Novena in January 2021, the German-speaking online prayer community wanted to continue to meet. At the invitation of SVD-Partner, meetings with prayer and conversation followed during Lent and Easter-Season. Since June prayer and discussion takes place on the first Wednesday of every month at 7 pm.

[Link: Wednesday Prayer \(only in German\)](#)



#### Meetings and Discussions

Besides prayer, there is always an exchange of ideas. SVD-Partner took part in international meetings and are involved in the preparations for *Katholikentag 2022* (German Catholic Convention). As long as meetings in Steyl or Sankt Augustin are not possible, the group meets online for exchange. At two meetings, spiritual director Fr. Jürgen Ommerborn, SVD gave talks on Josef Freinademetz and Johann Baptist Anzer. This was at the request of the group, which wanted to learn more about the founding generation.

#### Established and New

Invitations will be sent out for the International Prayer Bridge for the World Day of the Poor on 14<sup>th</sup> November. All materials will be available on the website soon; registrations are already possible. SVD-Partner are part of a small international group currently planning an International Rosary Prayer in October.

[Link: Prayer Bridge](#)

Maria Wego



## Russia (URL)

### Lay Mission Partners of the SVD - A Film on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SVD in Russia and Belarus



The lay mission partners of the SVD in the Ural Region, have started working on a film on the 30 years presence of the Divine Word Missionaries in Russia and Belarus. The lay mission partners have already visited one of the northern parishes – in Arkhangelsk and one on the banks of the Neva – in Saint-Petersburg. In addition, they have organized interviews on the East – in Chita and Blagoveshchensk. They are planning a trip to Lake Baikal, Kaliningrad and the cities of Belarus.

This project helps us not only to learn more about the SVD history and missionary work in our multicultural communities, but also allows us to get to know our country and its cultural traditions better. Our region is so huge and it stretches for more than 9,000 kilometers. We are not afraid of distances!

Conversations with SVD confreres open to us their spirituality. It allows us to understand their missionary spirit and charism more deeply. How interesting it was to learn that Fr. Josef Roman, SVD built a chapel for his parishioners with his own hands, under a thirty-degree frost, without stopping for a day! Parishioners of the Vietnamese community in Moscow, raised funds to repair the facade of their church! It was no less interesting to learn about how vocations are born in our country and how beautiful the prayers are!

We hope that our film will be released in September 2022, and will be interesting not only in Russia and Belarus, but also in other countries as well. If you want to help our project, first of



all with prayer or interesting ideas, maybe you know someone who served in the SVD Ural Region, please email us at [svdrusia@gmail.com](mailto:svdrusia@gmail.com) and we will be happy to respond to each of your letters. Our founder, Saint Arnold Janssen, said once: "Any good work started by the will of God, is strengthened and supported by His hand"

Julia Belova





## PANAM ZONE



### PANAMA (CAM)

#### Misioneros Laicos del Verbo Divino – Retreat and Formation



In Panama, we continue to meet every third Sunday of the month to pray for the missions at the international level, as missionaries. Directed by our Spiritual Director, Bro. Pedro Azuaga, we received guidance on Formation and our missionary commitments.

#### Spiritual Retreat

From 29<sup>th</sup> March to 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Angél Cobian and his wife Marcela from Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino (MAVD), Mexico visited us. They shared their missionary experience at the national level since they had the opportunity to visit different parishes. Together with us, they participated in the Spiritual Retreat guided by our Regional Superior Fr. David Selvasekar, SVD at the Central House on Holy Thursday. The retreat centered on the Biblical quotation: “Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me.... feed my sheep’” (Jn 21:15-19). We are all brothers and sisters invited to fraternity and social friendship (Mt 23:8). We are called to the service of God and to promote the common good and human dignity, welcoming and integrating migrants and all those who need us.

#### Lay Ministry of the Catechist

On 16<sup>th</sup> May, we received formation program facilitated by Br. Carlos Arboleda, SVD. The program was about the Ministry of the Catechist, in response to the call of Pope Francis who instituted the Lay Ministry of the Catechist on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021. Br. Carlos spoke on the gifts and charisms, as catechists and missionaries, at the service of the Church.

From 19<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> June, on the invitation of Fr. Luis Antonio Vergara, SVD, to accompany the community of Isla Otoque Occidente (Panama), we had the Novena of the Holy Family of Nazareth, celebrating the month of the family.

The love of Triune God and the Blessed Virgin continues to assist us as we pursue our missionary commitment as lay partners.

Rubiela Ramírez de Rodríguez



## Mexico (MEX)

### Misioneros Auxiliares del Verbo Divino (MAVD) – Introducing Region B



Region B is located in the center of Mexico. It is referred to as the Bajío Región, known as the cradle of our country's independence. Bajío has repeatedly been recognized as the region with the best quality of life. It is the safest region and the most dynamic in Mexico, that is experiencing an ongoing socio-economic revitalization.

Our greatest wealth is the *Cerro del Cubilete* better known as *La Montaña de Cristo Rey* located in Silao, Guanajuato, a place where oak is abundant. There is great diversity of sweets, such as *cajeta* and other typical sweets. Our people are hospitable, loving and supportive of each other. We are the grandeur of the Bajío Región.

Fr. Manuel Mayvet, SVD arrived in León, Guanajuato in 1987. He gathered children, youth and adults where the *Miguel Agustín Pro* group was born.

Two years later he visited La Piedad, Michoacana, and formed a group of 5 young active members, who were enthusiastic in serving God. They were willing to follow the missionary path as far as possible, and named their group as *Sagrado Corazón* group.

Thanks to the group of *Miguel Agustín Pro*, yet another group was born and was called the *San Juan Pablo II* group. Currently it has 20 active members. Sooner, one more group was formed, it was called *Padre Pio de Pietrelcina* with 10 active



members in León, Guanajuato. And finally, we have the *Granito de Mostaza* group with 6 active members in Monterrey, Nuevo León.

"We are Region B" characterized by being a joyful, united and committed region, with gifts for music, prayer, proclamation and service. We are always ready to bring the Word of God to people and make it come alive in the place where we are sent.

Sandra Rebeca Herrera Pérez  
Karina Margarita Amador Valadez



## United States – (USS)

### The SVD Lay Partners/Associates (Louisiana) – Introduction and Activities



Our group was established by Fr. Rofinus Jas, SVD on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017 at the Holy Ghost Catholic Church of Opelousas, Louisiana. We are a group of lay people, committed ourselves as followers of St. Arnold Janssen, in spirituality, charism and mission work. We meet quarterly for workshops, to discuss business and for a day of prayer and reflection. We invite guest speakers who are members of Arnoldus family, to present at our workshops. These help us to develop a stronger prayer life, a deeper spirituality and to understand our call to service.

#### Social Activities

We meet to foster spiritual growth, and also to plan programs and activities to help our church, community and others. Post COVID-19, we have sponsored many social activities, viz. annual youth conference, assistance to school drivers, education items, help to feed the hungry, visits to the sick and shut-ins, monetary donations, etc.

#### Spiritual Activities

Our members are very active in our church and community. We assist as; CCD religious education teachers, pastoral council members, baptismal preparation class facilitators, ministers to the sick, choir members, etc. We also prepare prayer services



for funerals. SVD lay partners/associates are very visible in every ministry of our church.

#### Spiritual Growth

During the pandemic, we have continued with our spiritual growth and development by attending YouTube video teachings by Fr. Rofinus Jas, SVD. Now that things are opening up, we will gradually return to our activities.

#### Farewell to our Spiritual Director Fr. Rofinus Jas, SVD

Farewell celebration was given to Fr. Rofinus on 19<sup>th</sup> June, as he begins his new assignment at Our Mother of Mercy parish, Pass Christian, Biloxi, MS. As a part of our appreciation and gratitude, we presented him with words of encouragement and support on his new journey. As he mentioned in his farewell speech, "My address may change but my destination will remain the same as yours prayerfully, that we will all one day line up in God's Kingdom." The SVD lay partners/associates will continue to pray for Fr. Rofinus Jas, SVD and for his ministry.

Christenia Ventress  
Rose Sam



~ Last but not Least ~

## Life Stories of SVD Lay Partners

### Jean-Paul Nico Luketo Musete, Fraternité SVD (DR Congo)



*In the last issue, we started to introduce supporters of the SVD in the column “Silent Workers”. But it is not only worthwhile to take a look at the “silent workers”, but also at the lives and special commitments of the members of the lay partners. Here is a report about Nico Musete by a friend of him.*

I have known Jean-Paul Nico Luketo for decades, a man full of new initiatives, hardworking missionary. He is married to Madame Elysée Sanduku and has four children, three boys and a girl. Coming from a devout Catholic family he has a small Chapel erected inside his house. Every evening at 7:00 p.m. his family prays vespers together, and sometimes participate in the Eucharist when there is a priest visiting them, giving glory to the Lord.

#### Specialist Education – UNICEF

As Specialist Education - UNICEF, Nico works as a humanitarian official. He is in charge of the education program in 15 provinces with 26,000 schools, and with an estimated school population of around 15 million. During the coronavirus pandemic, Nico worked more than 20 hours a day, to mobilize



his educational partners, so that children, teachers, and parents are protected from the virus.

#### Indefatigable Missionary

An indefatigable missionary, Nico travels in his UNICEF Jeep long distances on roads, to places often difficult to access, in order to sensitize people, especially the fight against coronavirus. He distributes hand washes, buckets, soaps, thermo flashes, masks, etc. to fight this disease.

#### Pastoral Commitment

Nico believes in pastoral commitment. As the National Coordinator of the Fraternité SVD in Congo, responsible for the formation of new members, he does not deviate from any of these other commitments. In his parish, he and his wife are Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist. They take Holy Communion to the sick and visit the homes of the Basic Living Church Community (CEVB), a pastoral commitment which they are passionate about.

A dynamic SVD lay partner, an educationist at the UNICEF, Jean-Paul Nico Luketo loves his family. He is passionate about the education of children, slow to anger, always patient, full of love and very understanding.

Article Courtesy: Fr. Kiye M. Vincent, MAfr



Fr. Vincent, a friend of Nico, is working in Mali and belongs to The Missionaries of Africa, commonly known as the White Fathers.

## Silent Worker in the SVD Vineyard

### Helen Dzikunu from Ghana



*Helen, how long do you know the SVD and how did you get to know them?*

I was baptized in a parish established by the SVD in my home village. I really got to know the SVD when we moved to the capital city where we started attending Church services in another parish established by the SVD. However, it was until 2009 when I got involved in the activities of the SVD, besides parish activities.

#### *How did you help the SVD?*

I was elected to lead the newly formed Friends of SVD in my parish. It was the first SVD lay group in Ghana. I led the group in many of our activities, like visits to the seminary and novitiate. I encountered SVD priests who served in rural communities, and brought our little donation of food items to

support them. I also solicited for funds with the help of the group, to procure household items to support a poor parish and communities.

I have visited many SVD parishes to talk about the Friends of SVD, and how parishes could establish one such group. It has yielded fruits in some way. Now, we have more SVD lay partners' groups in Ghana. I collect used but good clothes from Friends of SVD and others, to distribute to the villagers around an SVD community that takes care of a farm.

I have volunteered to participate as a member of the board to Health Institution, also at the College of Education.

#### *What do you particularly enjoy about this work?*

I like to serve. I am happy when my service brings appreciation. I enjoy travelling to various parts of the country where the SVDs work. I enjoy learning about other people, and how they could be served.

Interviewed by Matilda Anim-Fofie

## Pandemic and Prophetic Dialogue

### Webinar on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021

*The webinar was organized by the SVD Generalate, Rome and was attended by invitees including a few SVD lay partners around the world. Below is the response from one of the participants.*

Dear Fr. Stanislaus,

Thank you for organizing the webinar on "Pandemic and Prophetic Dialogue".

I feel very privileged to have been part of the participants, representing lay partners from INM, Mumbai. I'm also grateful to Susan and Fr. Gregory Pinto, SVD for having selected me. I am a DDW member for 20 years and have worked with the SVDs. I was in awe and admiration at the work that is being done all over the world, during these challenging pandemic days.

The webinar was very timely and relevant. A lot of study was done by the speakers on the concrete work that is being done by the confreres and lay partners to help those affected by the pandemic. I also learnt, that we should learn to dream and work towards that dream. The theological and pastoral aspects were also well represented. After attending the webinar I'm all charged to see what I can do in my parish/diocese and as SVD lay partner.

Lorna D'Souza  
DDW-Mumbai, INM

**SVD GENERALATE, ROME**

**WEBINAR**

**PANDEMIC & PROPHETIC DIALOGUE**

**23 & 24 APRIL 2021**

**14.00 to 17.20 HRS (ROME TIME)**

**REGISTER YOUR NAME BEFORE APRIL 16**

**23 APRIL 2021 (FRIDAY) CONTEXT**

1. DIALOGUE WITH ECONOMIC CRISIS - Joseph
2. DIALOGUE WITH SICK, INFECTED, AND AFFECTED PEOPLE
3. DIALOGUE WITH PSYCHOLOGICALLY AFFECTED PEOPLE
4. DIALOGUE WITH PRIESTS, RELIGIOUS, AND AFFECTED PEOPLE
5. DIALOGUE WITH FRONTLINE WORKERS - M...
6. **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**
7. NEW PASTORAL METHODS - Nicholas Sen
8. MINISTRY AMONG FAMILY AND YOUTH - W...
9. CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION MINISTRY - Pi...
10. PANDEMIC, MEDIA, AND MISSION - Cirene
11. REACHING OUT TO THE POOR AND THEIR I...
12. NETWORKING WITH OTHER AGENCIES - B...
13. MINISTRIES TO THE WOUNDED PEOPLE - I...
14. MINISTRY AND ENVIRONMENT: NEW APP...
15. RESPONSE TO RACISM AND OTHER DISCR...
16. ENGAGING WITH RELIGIONS AND GOVT. P...

**THE TALKS WILL BE IN ENGLISH WITH**

**REGISTRATION IS NEEDED FOR THIS EVENT**  
FR. STANISLAUS LAZAR, SVD

## Save the Date

### A Month of the Holy Rosary

The pandemic has forced us to seek new forms of worship. Everywhere people are meeting and gathering for virtual prayer and worship. In January 2021, the international novena to St. Arnold Janssen took place. Building on this experience, virtual rosary devotions are to take place in October.

A small team of lay partners from Australia, India and Germany is currently preparing the framework for the devotions.

An invitation to all groups with more detailed information will be sent out in September.

**OCTOBER**

**A MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY**

Pray with us

"Let us run to *Mary*, and,  
as her little children, cast ourselves  
into *her* arms with a perfect  
*confidence.*"

*Details to follow. Watch this space.*



### International Prayer Bridge



On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2021 the Church celebrates the fifth World Day of the Poor. Again SVD-Partner Germany invite everybody – single person, family, group, parish, monastery – to come together in prayer and build a Prayer Bridge around the world.

If you want to be a part of it send an e-mail to [kontakt@svd-partner.eu](mailto:kontakt@svd-partner.eu)

Please, do not forget your name, organisation/parish, place, country.

Planned: To prepare oneself for World Day of the Poor Swiss Steyler Freundeskreis and German SVD-Partner are currently considering inviting to a “pilgrimage in everyday life” via the “pilgerwegapp” (pilgrim's way app). The pilgrimage lasts from 20<sup>th</sup> September till 6<sup>th</sup> November. More information will be found on the SVD-Partner's website

- [Link: Pilgrimage in Eveyday Life \(only in German\)](#)
- [Link: Message of Pope Francis](#)



## Culinary Trip Around the World

### Supper from Indonesia - Bacon Fried Rice and Lemon Ginger Tea

Travelling means getting to know people, their culture, their way of life. And what better way to do that than to eat with them. But unfortunately, this is not possible for everyone in normal times, and now in times of the pandemic it is no longer possible for anyone. But culinary travel is also possible without leaving home. And so the meals of the day will be presented in loose order from different countries. ASPAC will start with a supper from Indonesia.

#### Bacon Fried Rice



##### Ingredients:

- 3 cups of cooked white rice
- 8 pieces bacon, cut into small pieces (according to taste)
- 2 chicken eggs (lightly beaten)
- 1 carrot (peel and cut into small cubes)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil

##### Seasoning:

- 1/2 onion, cut into small pieces
- 5 garlicks, crushed, cut into 2
- 5 shallots, cut into thin strips
- 1 bunch of spring onions, cut into small pieces
- Salt to taste
- Royco (flavoring) to taste.

##### How to make:

1. Heat the butter until it melts, add the onions, shallots, garlic, saute until fragrant and slightly dry.
2. Stir in the bacon back and forth until the bacon releases the oil.
3. Add in the eggs and then scramble the eggs.
4. Add salt, Royco (flavoring), pepper, sesame oil, mix well.
5. Add the scallions, stir well until wilted.
6. Stir in the rice and mix well.
7. Lift, ready to serve.

#### Lemongrass Ginger Tea



##### Ingredients:

- 2 lemongrass stalks
- 2 ginger sticks
- 1 tea bag
- Lime juice (to taste)
- Honey (to taste)
- Boiling water

##### How to make:

1. Clean the lemongrass and crush the lemongrass stalks.
2. Clean the ginger and crush the ginger.
3. Place lemongrass in a cup along with ginger.
4. Pour boiling water into the cup.
5. Add honey and lime juice, mix well.
6. Serve while warm.

#### Enjoy your meal!

Paulina Suharsi  
SOVERDIA, IDJ



## Meuse Flood in Steyl

### Picture Gallery

The Motherhouse of the Steyl Missionaries “St. Michael” is located on the banks of Meuse river. Living close to a river means always being exposed to the danger of flooding and having water in the cellar and on the ground floor from time to time. This happened more than once in Steyl. The highest water levels were in 1926, 1993 and 1995. The high water marks are on the outside wall of the church. After the last big flood in 1995, the city of Venlo extended the flood protection and raised the dikes and installed devices to build bulkheads. This prevented St. Michael's from being flooded again during the last flood of the Meuse in July this year. Here are some impressions of the flood in Steyl.



## In Memoriam

For God so loved the world,  
that he gave his one  
and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him  
should not perish,  
but have eternal life.



**Theresia Henny Suryandari**

† 08.03.2021

SVD Lay Partner IDJ (Bali)



**Fr. Antonius Sarto Mitakda, SVD**

† 05.07.2021

Spiritual Director of SOVERDIA and  
Mission Secretary of IDJ Province



**Dionisius Soediono Williyanto**

† 07.05.2021

SVD Lay Partner IDJ (Java)



**Fr. Lawrence Nemer, SVD**

† 09.06.2021

Australian Province  
One of the Newsletter's most loyal  
readers and valued friend of the lay  
partners.

Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts.

We will miss you!

Rest in Peace



## Impulse

Mary - who is she?

An unknown girl 2000 years ago.  
No one takes any notice of her.  
History books do not mention her.  
Nevertheless, she leaves traces,  
more clearly than the "great ones" of world history.

This is where her story begins:

She is approachable.  
She does not live in a closed world.  
She is not a prisoner of her wishful thinking.  
She does not revolve around herself,  
She is fundamentally open,  
open to the unexpected.

And that is her secret:

She is open and responsive - also to God.  
That is not self-evident and easy.  
For God does not speak loudly and obtrusively.  
No one hears God directly.  
God always speaks only through others,  
often differently than we expect.

Most people hear nothing  
or - hear only themselves.  
But Mary distinguishes among the many voices -  
God's voice!

Let us also be open to God's voice like Mary  
and respond to His call.



Sophie Wego

## Imprint

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