



Society of the Divine Word (SVD)

SVD Lay Partners



Newsletter - from Around the World

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SVD Sesquicentennial Celebration - Jubilee Year from 8th September 2024 to 8th September 2025

Inside this Issue

EDITORIAL

SPECIAL TOPIC

2025: A Year of Graceful Transition 3

GROUP REPORTS FROM ...

AFRAM ZONE

. Ghana (GHA) – SVD LAY PARTNERS 6
 . Botswana (BOT) – SVD LAY PARTNERS, Phalaborwa 7
 . South Africa (BOT) – SVD LAY PARTNERS, Malamulele 8
 . Kenya (KEN) – FRIENDS OF SVD 9
 . Zambia (ZAM) – SVD LAY PARTNERS, Kabwe 10
 . Zambia (ZAM) – SVD LAY PARTNERS, Lusaka 11

ASPAC ZONE

. Indonesia (IDE) – SVD LAY MISSION PARTNER 12
 . Indonesia ((IDE) – SOVERDIA NAGEKEO 13
 . Indonesia (IDR) – PMSS 14
 . India (INM) – DDW, Andheri, Mumbai 15
 . India (INM) – DDW, Pune 16
 . The Philippines (PHC) – LSSAJ 17
 . The Philippines (PHN) – SVD-PHN MISSION PARTNERS 18
 . The Philippines (PHS) – LaMP-DW 19

EUROPA ZONE

. Germany (GER) – SVD-PARTNER 20
 . Italy (ITA) – COOPERATORI LAICI VERBITI 21

PANAM ZONE

. Argentina (ARE) – MISIONEROS SOCIOS LAICOS AMIGOS DEL VERBO 22
 . Brazil (BRA) – AMIGOS DO VERBO NA AMAZÔNIA 23
 . Panama (CAM) – MISIONEROS LAICOS DEL VERBO DIVINO 24
 . Mexico (MEX) – MISIONEROS AUXILIARES DEL VERBO DIVINO 25
 . Paraguay (PAR) – LAICOS VERBITAS DEL PARAGUAY 26
 . United States (USW) – SVD LAY PARTNERS 27

DIFFERENT TOPICS

INFORMATION FROM THE SVD

. Indo-Bangla Subzone – National Colloquium 28

SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS - JUBILEE YEAR

. ARE – Project of the Lay Partners 28
 . ECP – A Heavenly Letter 29

PROVINCIAL ACTIVITIES – INM

. Journeying with St. Arnold Janssen 30

SVD LAY PARTNERS ABROAD

. SVD-PARTNER visit the SVD in Mexico 31

EXPERIENCE REPORTS

. Amid Bombs and Chaos 31
 . The Coconut Story: Tragedy and Hope 32

FOR INFORMATION

. Ember Prayer Revitalised 33

COLUMN

. Jo's letter 33

CONGRATULATIONS

. Congratulation for the SVDLP Logo 33

List of lay partners' videos 34

In Memoriam 35

Impulse / Imprint 36

Editorial

Easter: The Sunshine of God's Favour

As the morning sun breaks through the darkness, Easter dawns with the promise of new life, hope, and God's boundless favour. Just as sunlight warms and revives the earth, Christ's resurrection brings light to our hearts, dispelling despair and filling us with joy.

Easter is more than a celebration; it is an invitation to step into the radiance of God's love. In a world often shadowed by fear and uncertainty, the Risen Lord reassures us that darkness never has the final word. His victory over death is our greatest hope; a reminder that no burden is too weighty, no sorrow too deep, and no stone too heavy for God's grace to move and transform.

Easter is a personal and communitarian time of renewal and hope. I have experienced times when life felt overwhelming, yet the promise of Christ's resurrection has always brought a new dawn. That same resurrection power is like the sunshine - warm, illuminating, and capable of dispelling all shadows. It is a personal reminder that we are never alone; His grace lights our path and fills our hearts with enduring hope.

This season, I'm also incredibly grateful for the opportunity to witness that light in action through our project of 'Feed the Hungry'. Every Saturday, together with the SVD lay partners, I walk the streets of Mumbai with a simple mission, to feed the hungry. With every meal we serve, I see gratitude in weary eyes and hope rekindled in tired hearts. The city's fast-paced life often overlooks those struggling to survive, but for a few hours, we remind them they are not forgotten. Rain or shine, we share warm food, a smile, and sometimes, a conversation. It's an expression of God's love, a tangible reminder that His favour shines brightest when shared with those in need. In giving, I receive – perspective, gratitude, and a deeper sense of purpose. 'Feed the Hungry' is not just a mission; it's a calling.

As Easter dawns, let's embrace the hope and light it brings. May His favour inspire us to reach out, act with kindness, and share our blessings with others. May the light of Christ's resurrection fill us, the lay SVD Mission Partners all over the globe, with renewed strength, peace, and joy that we can share from everywhere for everyone.

Wishing you a deeply personal and blessed Easter, filled with the warmth and hope of God's everlasting love.

Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Susan Noronha
 Chief editor

2025: A Year of Graceful Transition

From the SVD Lay Partners: With Hearts Full of Gratitude and Hope

A Warm Welcome to Fr. Marcelo Cattáneo, SVD

As SVD Lay Partners, we joyfully welcome Fr. Marcelo Cattáneo, SVD as the new Generalate Mission Secretary. Fr. Marcelo brings with him a deep missionary spirit, shaped by years of service in Latin America and Asia. His passion for intercultural dialogue, his close work with indigenous communities, and his dedication to youth and JPIC (Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation) deeply inspire us. As lay partners, we look forward to journeying with him and supporting his leadership as we continue the mission of the Divine Word in today's world.

Thank You, Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, SVD

At the same time, we offer our heartfelt thanks to Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, SVD for his generous and faith-filled service. Over the years, he has not only led the SVD Lay Partners with wisdom and compassion but has been a true friend and mentor to us. Under his leadership, we witnessed significant growth in lay participation across the SVD world. He championed the inclusion of lay voices in mission planning and inspired us to deepen our identity and role as co-missionaries. Many of our local and regional lay partner groups are flourishing thanks to his support, encouragement, and belief in the unique contribution of lay people to the mission of the Divine Word.

Letter from Fr. Marcelo Cattáneo



"Where one journey ends, another begins – always guided by the same Spirit."

Warm greetings to everyone! I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to connect with each of you. Thank you for this valuable space for communication.

16 - 22 January, we held our biannual meeting of the Extended General Leadership Team at the Generalate headquarters in Rome, Italy. It was a planning meeting for the current sexennium 2024-2030. I had the opportunity to introduce myself and to begin my service as Generalate Mission Secretary, Rome.

As you know, my work consists mainly of three areas: missionary animation (for both religious and laypeople), support for new missionaries, and fundraising for the universal mission. I would like to focus on the first area and share the following.

My entry at the Society of the Divine Word was influenced by the witness of a few nuns in my neighborhood and my involvement in a parish youth group. Throughout this journey, the parish community has consistently supported my vocational concerns, providing numerous signs of closeness and accompaniment.

During my years of initial formation, my connection to the Word of God was awakened and strengthened. This journey was shared with a team of fellow students and lay people from the parishes. I would say that it was my initiation into the meaningful reading of the Word, which continues to nourish my spiritual life up to date.

My first missionary destination was the Philippines, on Mindanao Island. Two significant experiences solidified my mission in that country: the collaborative training sessions for pastoral workers and participation in the NGO managed by the Divine Word, dedicated to implementing human development projects. The work on these projects always involved lay professionals and representatives from various societal institutions.

In Argentina, I primarily held roles in coordination, administration, and biblical animation. My responsibilities as a zonal coordinator and provincial animator provided me with significant learning experiences. Similarly, my involvement in biblical animation within pastoral ministry allowed me to collaborate with the laity of the parish and educational communities in our Province.

Reflecting on what my religious missionary life has been so far in the Society of the Divine Word, I can highlight two foundational and formative elements: my identity as a religious missionary of the Word of God, and the invaluable presence of the Christian community found in the dedication of many pastoral missionaries.

As I take on my new role as the Generalate Mission Secretary, I look forward to providing a personal service focused on the renewed evangelical motivation of our missionary consecration and in communion with the laity who identify with the spirituality, charism, and mission of the Divine Word.

Marcelo Cattáneo, SVD
Generalate Mission Secretary

Letter from Fr. Stanislaus Lazar



Partners in Mission

Dear SVD Lay partners / Associates,

With immense gratitude I come to you as you are partners in mission. All are invited to be aware, reflect, and act to continue the mission of God. In the theology of partnership in mission, it is said "For a true mutuality in mission we not only need each other's gifts, we also need each other's insights. No-

one has the monopoly of truth when partners engage in God's mission." Thus, as missionary disciples everyone has received grace, gift, and invitation to know the missionary God because God is the mission. The mission of God has the Church, and this propels the Church to move ahead and not stagnate and face the challenges of the world. Similarly, the mission of God has US, as we have received the baptism and are missionary disciples.

As the SVD partners in mission, you have received a gift that you are aligned with the charism of the Society of the Divine Word. At the same time, you have a task to continue to be partners in the mission to transform the world, to actualize the Reign of God, or to express your love for God concretely. I am aware that you are all doing wonderful works, some have shown very exemplary missionary discipleship in your activities – caring for the hungry, blind and sick, reaching out to the poor and widows, cleaning the seashores, asserting the rights of the Indigenous people and so forth.

Now, more groups are established; continuous formation is going on; and more people are interested in becoming partners in mission. I appreciate all the leaders who have taken a lot of initiative to promote these groups and missionary activities. I have always stressed, "have some programs or missionary activities" for each group. These activities in the future are to be aligned with the 19th SVD General Chapter documents. You had been part of this process. Therefore, continue with the formation of the members, search for relevant and transforming activities regarding safeguarding of creation (ecological concerns), address the concerns of youth and challenges in a family, and teach others on responsible use of digital media and use the social media for mission. Other than these, according to the context, the lay partner groups can work for human rights and dignity, the dignity of women, caring for the migrants, and so forth.

Keeping a good relationship with the local SVD confreres is significant. By becoming partners with the SVDs, one can find some relevant paths of concrete activities. At the same time, you can initiate some local activities and invite the SVDs to join and work with you. The key aspect is that we continue God's mission with the vision of the Society of the Divine Word, thus your partnership is valued, appreciated and honored.

I wish you all success, happiness, and progress in your mission. I thank you all for your excellent cooperation and support that I received in the past years.

Stanislaus Lazar, SVD
Former Mission Secretary

Memories of encounters with Fr. Stanislaus Lazar



First SVDLP Workshop, Nemi 2017



Second SVDLP Workshop, Nemi 2024



ASPAC Zonalmeeting – The Philippines 2019



AFRAM Zonalmeeting– DR Congo 2022



DDW Andheri and "SVD-Partner" Meeting, Steyl 2023



SVD Fraternity, INH 2022



DDW, INM 2022



India Subzone Lay Partner Workshop, Puri 2023



AFRAM ZONE



Ghana (GHA) – SVD LAY PARTNERS

Symposium and Sharing Memories

Symposium – Witnessing to the Light, from Everywhere for Everyone

On 28th February 2025, the Divine Word Missionaries in Northern Ghana organized a symposium under the theme "Witnessing to the Light, from Everywhere for Everyone" as part of activities to mark the 150th anniversary of the SVD. The guest of honour was Bishop Emeritus of Yendi Diocese, Most Rev. Vincent Sowah Boi-Nai.

The Provincial Superior Fr. Cyprian Kuupol highlighted some of the achievements of the Divine Word Missionaries in the province, particularly in the northern region of Ghana. Among them are building schools and supporting the needy and less endowed. He added that through the SVDs, numerous individuals had the opportunity to obtain formal education. However, these achievements were not without challenges and difficulties.

Sharing memories

A speaker at the event, Prof. Edward Mahama Salifu shared memories of his sixteen years of working with the SVDs. Within the period, he taught numerous SVD missionaries at the

Tamale Institute of Cross Culture Studies, built by the SVDs and is still operational. He encouraged missionaries to identify themselves with the people they evangelize to have successful missionary work.

Bishop Shares his Early Days in Ghana

Bishop Boi-Nai, SVD recounted his early days in the northern region as a missionary. He added that as a missionary, one will face challenges in different forms, whether financial or material.

The northern zone Arnoldus Family Feast was held after the symposium. Activities included indoor and outdoor games, a celebration of Holy Mass, dinner, and socialization. During the Mass, Fr. Kanjiramalayil Tomy Thomas celebrated forty years in religious vows, and Fr. Andrew Quaye-Foli Anumu celebrated forty years in the priesthood.

The SVD lay partners participated in the symposium and the Arnoldus Family Feast.

Thomas Toyibu Imoro



Botswana (BOT) – SVD LAY PARTNERS, Phalaborwa

New Group



A Historic Moment: Formation of Phalaborwa SVD LAY PARTNERS

The formation of the SVD LAY PARTNERS at Good Shepherd Catholic Church, Phalaborwa Parish, South Africa conducted by Fr. Jay De Leon, was a day filled with enriching activities. Fr. Jay led us through the history of the Society of the Divine Word and unpacked what it means to live as a missionary disciple. He shared insights on the SVD charism and spirituality, emphasizing the significance of Scripture, a core foundation of St. Arnold Janssen’s family.

Following the formation session, a planning meeting was held to discuss programs assisting our vulnerable brothers and sisters in Humulani. This initiative aligns with our mission of serving the less fortunate and embodying the SVD spirit of love and service.

On 5th October, the SVD LAY PARTNERS with Fr. Jay, dedicated an afternoon to spending quality time with children in need. We gifted them with school shoes, played, prayed, and shared moments of joy with them. The event concluded with a light meal, fostering a deeper sense of community and care.

St. Arnold Janssen’s Feast

The Feast of St. Arnold Janssen was celebrated at Good Shepherd Parish in Phalaborwa on 18th January. The date was



moved from the actual feast day to enable SVD priests and Holy Spirit Sisters to gather in Johannesburg for this special Mass honouring St. Arnold. The Mass was presided over by Fr. Jay with Fr. Norbert. The celebration attracted a large gathering of lay partners from various local communities, all proudly wearing their new SVD 150th Anniversary T-shirts.

St. Joseph Freinademetz’s Feast

The Feast of St. Joseph Freinademetz, the first SVD missionary to China, was celebrated at St. John Catholic Church. Fr. Jay reflected on one of St. Joseph Freinademetz’s most famous quotes: “Love is the only language that everyone understands.” He emphasized St. Joseph’s deep love for the Chinese people. Through his humility and dedication, he was given the Chinese name “Fu Shenfu”, meaning “Happy Priest.” After Mass, we gathered for light refreshments, sharing in fellowship and gratitude for the missionary legacy of St. Joseph Freinademetz.

Margareth Mabunda and Mpho Phatswe



South Africa (BOT) – SVD LAY PARTNERS

St. Benedict, Malamulele



Meetings and Novenas

Regular meetings are held unless there are parish activities scheduled, in which case we postpone to another date. Our parish priest, Fr. Marsel Samon, continues to support us, along with our Mission Secretary, Fr. Jay De Leon.

The group participated in praying the Novena to our Founder, St. Arnold Janssen, and we also took part in the Mass celebration in honour of St. Joseph Freinademetz. Our Provincial, Fr. Joseph Vadakkan, sends us online reflections to share with the group.

Pilgrimage and Christmas

We participated in the Blessed Benedict Daswa Pilgrimage, where we were honoured by the presence of His Grace, Archbishop Frank Nabuasah, from Gaborone, who presided over the Mass celebrating Blessed Benedict Daswa.

We enjoyed a Christmas lunch with our SVD missionaries, who are far from their biological families, to help foster a sense of belonging. It was a day well spent.



Palm tree saplings

Palm tree saplings are ready to be distributed to our local communities as planned. All outstations will receive saplings at their churches. This is an ongoing process until we cover all outstations.

Plans

- We will continue with our retreats and reflections, led by our parish SVD missionary as animator.
- We will participate in the build-up celebrations for SVD 150 years in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- We will also take part in the main celebration in Francistown in September 2025.
- Additionally, we will hold a Recollection Day for lay partners in our Diocese of Tzaneen.
- We will commission new members who joined last year, with the date to be confirmed by the Mission Secretary.

Thandi Mazibuko



Kenya (KEN) – FRIENDS OF SVD

New Board and Upcoming Activities



Convention and election of office-bearers

From 8th to 10th October, we held a convention at Burka parish in Arusha, where we joined lay missionaries for a webinar themed "Your Light Must Shine Before Others: Faithful and Creative Disciples in a Wounded World." Participants were encouraged to recognize and address the current societal wounds. The convention concluded with elections, resulting in the following leaders: Andrew Andera (President), Aley Bhoga (Vice President), Ruth Kagunda (Secretary), Letitia OpiOyo (Vice Secretary), Grace Mushi (Treasurer) and Basil Doel (Financial Secretary). District elections soon followed.

On 5th October, Diwopa parish celebrated a historic ordination, with two priests and ten deacons being ordained – the largest number in the province's history.

On 3rd December, FRIENDS OF SVD from Kenya accompanied Fr. Daniel for his father's burial in Kendubay.

Feasts of St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz

All parishes commemorated the feasts of St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz, our patrons, conducting Novena prayers for nine days leading up to the feast, with several parishes hosting cake-cutting ceremonies.



Handover and Commissioning

A handover and commissioning event on 26th January saw outgoing office bearers pass responsibilities to newly elected leaders during the Holy Eucharist ceremony at Mary Immaculate Parish.

From 28th to 29th January, members Lukas Mrombo and Ruth Kagunda represented our group at the National Assembly in CFC, Nairobi. Additionally, Holy Spirit parish and Diwopa parish, each visited a sick member as an act of mercy.

Upcoming Activities

- Lenten District Recollection, Nairobi District is on 8th March, Eldoret and Arusha Districts on 15th March 2025.
- Leaders will visit all Districts in the first quarter for member outreach.
- Planning for the 150th Anniversary celebration of the SVD is underway.
- The current office plans to honor the outgoing leadership for their exceptional service.

Ruth Kagunda



Zambia (ZAM) – SVD LAY PARTNERS, Kabwe

150-year Celebrations and Christmas with the Novitiate Family



Celebration of 150 Years of SVD

The 150-year Jubilee of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) was a significant celebration in the Arnoldus family. The lay partners in Kabwe and Lusaka were completely involved in this historic SVD event. The events in Kabwe began with a Eucharistic Celebration at Holy Rosary Parish in Mukobeko Kabwe, Zambia, which was attended by SVDs and lay partners. Fr. Biju George, the parish priest, invited the lay partners to participate in the launch. Such an invitation and subsequent active participation underlines the appeal for the lay faithful to actively participate in the church's mission.

Christmas Celebration with Novitiate Family

Christmas is a time for giving and sharing, a period when families around the world come together to share their hopes, dreams, struggles, and fears. This year, the Novitiate at Kabwe embraced the spirit of Christmas by inviting the Kabwe Lay Partners to join their celebrations. They accepted the invitation and turned out in significant numbers to share the joy of Christmas with the novitiate family.

The event celebrated on 22 December, was themed “Nine Lessons of Christmas and Carols Gala Night with the Novitiate Community.” The vibrant celebration featured passionately sung Christmas carols by the novices. The lay partners were

treated to a dramatization of the nativity story, presented in an eloquent manner that encouraged deep reflection on the personal significance of Christmas.

Not only was the event entertaining, but it also prompted attendees to contemplate the nine lessons of Christmas. These reflections focused on key themes, including the fall of man (Gen. 3), the prophecy of the Messiah (Isa. 9), the birthplace of the Messiah (Mic. 5), and the nativity narratives from the book of Luke.

The SVD LAY PARTNERS expressed their happiness and gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Christmas celebrations with the Novitiate family.

Mike Munyama and Ndalia Chileshe



Zambia (ZAM) - SVD LAY PARTNERS, Lusaka

Mission Sunday, Reflection and Lay Partners Meeting



Zambia Mission and SVD LAY PARTNERS Lusaka

It is always a pleasure when the Kabwe and Lusaka SVD LAY PARTNERS visit each other. Recently, the two groups celebrated Holy Mass together at the opening of the Formation House in Kabwe. The Kabwe executives reciprocated the visit by attending a joint meeting where several important topics were discussed, including the design of the SVD Lay Partners logo and the establishment of a new group in Livingstone at St. Francis Parish.

SVD Zambia Mission Central Division, as well as brothers and philosophy students. The presence of such a diverse group generated significant interest among the parishioners. The SVD LAY PARTNERS actively participated by reading the Word of God during two Masses and singing joyfully. It was a joyful occasion that concluded with a shared meal at the Parish House.

Mildred Sodala

A Day of Reflection

Our group consistently shares the Word of God at each monthly meeting. This year, we were honoured to have the Mission Superior guide us through a fulfilling Day of Reflection, themed "Encounter with the Lord."

Mission Sunday

Mission Sunday was chosen to launch the celebrations for the 150th Anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word. The lay partners in our parish were joined by all the priests from the





ASPAC ZONE



Indonesia (IDE) - SVD LAY MISSION PARTNER

Commitment and Recollection



Commitment as SVD LAY MISSION PARTNER - Ende Province

On 29th January 2025, at the Parish of Boanio, Fr. Patrisius Pa, Provincial of SVD Indonesia-Ende Province, presided over the commitment ceremony for 190 members who became SVD Lay Mission Partners. This event took place on the feast day of St. Joseph Freinademetz.

Recollection

In preparation for their commitment, the members participated in a two-day Recollection in two groups, the first group from 25th to 26th January at the Parish Hall of Wudu, Vicariate of Nagekeo, and the second group from 27th to 28th January at the Retreat House of Kemah Tabor Mataloko, Vicariate of Bajawa.

During the animation session, Fr. Yanuarius Lobo, the Mission Secretary, emphasized the importance for SVD lay partners to understand and emulate the character of St. Arnold Janssen, the founder of SVD, SSps, and SSpsAP. He highlighted the significance of learning about and understanding the four characteristic dimensions of SVD: Justice, Peace, and Integrity



of Creation (JPIC), Bible Apostolate, Mission Animation, and Communication.

Fr. John Camnahas, discussed two key aspects of our activities: mission ad intra and mission ad extra. Although these are distinct, they are inextricably linked. Mission ad intra involves activities aimed at developing ourselves internally through prayer, Bible reading, and participation in the Eucharist. Mission ad extra refers to our engagement with others, including our interactions with people and society. We must strive to be innovative, cheerful, and open-minded. SVD LAY MISSION PARTNERS must be prepared to be the "salt" of the community, embodying the spirit of St. Arnold Janssen.

Laurentius Lilylewar, a member expressed, "I am afraid. I feel unworthy of receiving the mission cross because it requires me to be fearless in witnessing Christ. I struggle with my flaws. However, I trust that the Lord Jesus, St. Arnold Janssen, and St. Joseph Freinademetz will help me, which gives me the strength and confidence to fulfill this commitment."

Rade Aloys Leonard



Indonesia (IDE) - SOVERDIA NAGEKEO

New Team Members and Solidarity with Sick and Disaster Victims



New Team Members

The election for the new board of SOVERDIA, Nagekeo District, was held on Wednesday, 15th January 2025, at the SVD Danga Lodge Hall. Coinciding with the feast of St. Arnoldus Janssen, the event began with a Thanksgiving Mass led by Fr. Ignas Dasion, along with Frs. Zakarias Kaju, Anton Hayon, and Amandus Mite. This was attended by thirty-six members from the Soverdia District and one from the Wudu Parish Sub-District. The election process followed, guided by Andreas Corsini Ndonga and Silvester Teda Sada. The following members were elected: Marianus Waja (Chairman), Andreas Corsini Ndonga (Vice Chairman), Amandus Embo (Secretary), Elfrin Hurek Making (Treasurer) and Elias Tae (Member)

Mass with People Infected with HIV/AIDS

World AIDS Day is commemorated every 1st December, with activities centered around an annual theme. For 2024, the theme was "Take the Rights Path: My Health, My Right!" promoted by the World Health Organization (WHO). In the Soverdia Nagekeo District, Holy Mass was held on 2nd December at the SVD Danga Lodge Hall, themed "Together SOVERDIA, We Fight for Equal Rights for All." Fr. Nikomedes Mere, alongside other priests, celebrated the Eucharist, followed by a meal, emphasizing love and brotherhood. A hug can



significantly boost the confidence of those affected by HIV and AIDS.

Solidarity for Lewotobi Mountain Eruption Victims

Mount Lewotobi Male has been emitting smoke and volcanic dust almost daily for the past ten months. On 3rd November it erupted violently, causing significant damage to houses in the surrounding area and resulting in the deaths of nine people, including Sr. Nikolin, SSps. The SSps convent and Santi Sima School were also destroyed in the eruption. In response to the disaster, Soverdia Nagekeo made cash donations and provided essential items. These contributions were partially directed to the SSps Monastery in Kewapante, Maumere, and partly to the JPIC of Ende Province, in Candraditya, Maumere, to support the communities affected by the disaster.

Elfrin Hurek Making



Indonesia (IDR) - PERSAUDARAAN MISIONER SANG SABDA (PMSS)

New Missionaries and Visiting Prisoners



Welcoming New Missionaries

Becoming a priest is not just a choice; it is a gift from God. This sentiment reflects the four new missionaries of the Divine Word Society (SVD) who were ordained on 5th October 2024, in Ledalero: Frs. Calvin De Flores Pala Geovani (Calvin), Nasu Hayon Ignasius (Ignas), Pehan Kelen Yoseph Norbertus (Yono) and Weki Antonius (Us). They were welcomed with a mission orientation and a Eucharistic celebration organized by the SVD lay partners. The chairman of the Soverdia wished them well, stating, "Good luck to our beloved missionaries. We will always pray for you. Take care of yourselves and be missionaries of light."

Celebrating SVD Jubilee with the prisoners

SVD Ruteng Province celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the SVD on 8th September 2024. The celebration began at the Sang Sabda Kuwu Novitiate honoring the Diamond, Gold, Pancawindu (forty years of priesthood/religious life), and Silver Jubilees of priests and brothers. The jubilee festivities will continue until 8th September 2025.

Soverdia of SVD Ruteng Province kicked off the Jubilee by visiting Class II B Ruteng prison. This activity was combined with the observance of World Sick Day. Our motivation for

celebrating the SVD Jubilee alongside World Sick Day stemmed from the belief that while the inmates may not be physically ill, their souls are suffering, and their mental health is in urgent need of support. They require loving care, compassion, and, most importantly, spiritual guidance.

We celebrated Holy Mass, followed by breakfast, and concluded with a free health check-up for the prisoners. We donated essential items, soaps, laundry detergents, toothpaste, and other necessities. The event was fulfilling for everyone, especially the inmates and their families.

The head of Ruteng prison expressed gratitude, stating, "We are very thankful to the Society of the Divine Word, represented here by the PMSS group, who have taken the time to be with us and share in our lives. The SVD has become a cornerstone in the history of Catholicism in Manggarai Raya."

Fr. Vitalis Hiburdin, SVD



India (INM) – DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE WORD (DDW), Andheri, Mumbai

Silver Jubilee and Various Activities



DDW Silver Jubilee

Twenty-five years ago, the flame of our mission was ignited by Founder Director Fr. Gregory Pinto, driven by commitment, compassion, and a shared purpose. As DDW celebrates its Silver Jubilee, we take a moment to honor the guiding light that has been carefully tended, nurtured, and strengthened over the years. The celebration began with a Eucharistic service, followed by social gatherings and dinner. Founder members, along with the Spiritual Director, were honored with shawls presented by Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, the Generalate Mission Secretary, who was present for the occasion.

Mission trip to Northeast India

On 15th November 2024, Maryanne D'Mello and three others embarked on a mission trip to Northeast India. Maryanne recounted: "Fr. Soby Joseph welcomed us at Guwahati Airport, where vibrant local tribes dressed in colorful attire greeted us at the Provincial House. The next morning, Fr. Soby took us to Shillong, stopping at various convents and parishes. The people of Arunachal Pradesh truly live in the moment and support each other in times of need. We are thankful to Fr. Soby for his companionship and to the priests who cared for us. This journey deepened our appreciation for the DDW and the resilient, joyful spirit of the people we met."



Advent Recollection

On 1st December, Fr. Richard Quadros gave the Advent Recollection talk on deepening personal connection with God through prayer and mission.

Christmas Celebration

On 15th December, we celebrated Christmas with the old, physically challenged, and lonely people. The program began with the Holy Eucharist followed by get-together and lunch.

Feast of St. Arnold Janssen

During the Holy Mass at the Sacred Heart Church, Andheri, Mumbai, on 15th January 2025, the DDW members from Bandra and Andheri renewed their commitment. Impelled by the Word of God and nourished by the Arnoldus Spirituality, they pledged to live a spirit-filled life and become empowered missionaries of Christ.

Susan Noronha



India (INM) – DISCIPLES OF THE DIVINE WORD (DDW), Pune

Ordination and Meeting with the Vice Superior General



Congratulations

Congratulations to Godfrey Fernandes, member of DDW Pune for designing the Logo for SVD Lay Partners.

Participation in the SVD Ordination and a visit to India Eastern Province (INE)

Fr. Lucas Jojo was ordained in Nuagaon, Orissa, on 8th February 2025. Leena Xavier participated in his Ordination and First Mass. The entire celebration was beautifully organized, featuring spiritual tribal dance and music. Bishop Kishore Kumar Kujur of the Diocese of Rourkela ordained Fr. Lucas.

Leena says, "During this trip, I visited some of the SVD mission houses where the DDW members have reached out. At Vidya Jyothi Minor Seminary in Lungai, I interacted with the first-year seminarians, discussing God's plan for their lives and the call to vocation. Vikas Deepti, Bargarh, a center for physically challenged children, is close to my heart. We have spent our time, talents, and resources here. I am grateful to INE Provincial Fr. Anuranjan Bilung, and his team, INE Mission Secretary Fr. Ronald Pereira, and other fathers for their hospitality towards me. May God bless all our SVD Fathers."



Meeting Vice Superior General, Fr. Xavier Thirukudumbam

Vice Superior General, Fr. Xavier T. visited INM province. Three lay partners from DDW Pune had the opportunity to meet with him for lunch on 17th February 2025, at Ishvani Kendra in Pune. After lunch, we met briefly with him to discuss our activities.

He appreciated our generosity, especially for funding the SVD seminarians' studies. This is one of our mission activities, in addition to feeding the hungry, providing dry meals to HIV/AIDS patients, and assisting our SVD fathers in hosting a retreat at Divine Word Seminary in Pune.

Fr. Xavier also commended us on our logo being ranked first among lay partner groups worldwide. We thank him for his valuable time.

Leena Xavier



The Philippines (PHC) – THE LAY SOCIETY OF ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN (LSSAJ)

First Year Anniversary Celebration on the Laudato Si Farm in Tagaytay City



A day to remember! On 30th November 2024, we celebrated the first anniversary of the SVD-PHC Lay Mission Partners at the SVD Laudato Si Farm in Tagaytay City. Members of the SVD-PHC lay mission partners, consisting of ten organizations, were greeted by a bright, sunny day. LAY SOCIETY OF ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN (LSSAJ); DIVINE WORD INSTITUTE OF MISSION STUDIES LAY MISSION PARTNERS (SVDLMP-DWIMS); HEART OF JESUS & MARY COMMUNITY (HJM); XVD ASSOCIATION; PERPETUAL ROSARY MOVEMENT (PRM); ARNOLD JANSSEN FOUNDATION ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM; SVD FRIENDS; MANUS DEI; HELP-C AND DIVINE WORD COLLEGE OF CALAPAN-4CD(DWCC-4CD).

Fr. Sam Agcaracar, Rector of the SVD Tagaytay, welcomed the delegates. The Opening Salvo was the Praise & Worship led by Bro. Freddie Adajar of the HJM, filled with jubilant praise and songs, reflects a connection and intimate space between us and God.

Fr. Sam Agcaracar shared valuable insights regarding the 19th General Chapter. He highlighted the important roles of the SVD lay partners in the SVD mission. Following his talk, Shirley Mendoza and Ayeene Bueno, lay partner representatives at the Second SVD Lay Partners' Workshop, Nemi, shared their experiences.

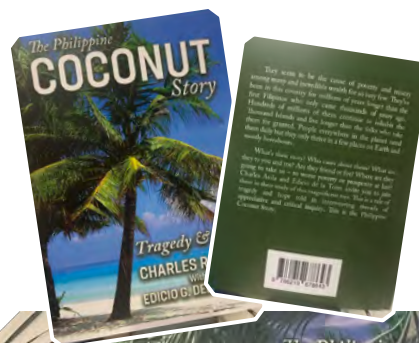
Fr. Eric Lacandula, Prefect of Christ the King Mission Seminary, spoke on the SVD history. He focused on St. Arnold's autobiography, highlighting his parents' impact on his spirituality, and his struggles. We especially appreciated

learning about the importance of praying for the intercession of the saints and the Quarter Hour Prayer.

Fr. Ferdie Bajao, leading the "SVD@150" celebration for the Central Province, discussed plans with the SVD South and Northern Provinces. He solicited feedback from lay partners on how to improve the celebration and will meet again to finalize the specifics. Bro. Tyrone Cimafranca, overall coordinator, addressed action plans for 2025. Sumptuous lunch was served.

The day concluded with a Eucharistic Mass officiated by Fr. Dondion Soriano, the newly appointed SVD-PHC Mission Secretary.

Daisy Leones and Shirley Ignacio



The Philippines (PHN) – SVD-PHN MISSION PARTNERS

The Making of the SVD-PHN MISSION PARTNERS Manual



“Inspired by a life exemplified by St. Arnold Janssen, we the SVD-PHN MISSION PARTNERS envision a community where everyone lives in harmony and equality, justice and peace, compassion and love along with each other and with creation; where there is inclusivity and respect for the poor, the marginalized and oppressed, the neglected and unwanted of our society.”

So goes our Vision Statement as stated in the SVD-PHN MISSION PARTNERS, a product of a six-year journey of dialogue and of understanding the diverse nature of mission partners in the Philippine Northern Province. The first fruits were realized on 4th August 2019 when this partnership was given a name: the SVD-PHN mission partners, during the first SVD-PHN LAY PARTNERS workshop, an offshoot of the two-week First International SVD Lay Partners Workshop at Centro Ad Gentes, Nemi, Rome in October 2017.

The visits to various districts since 2018, along with weekly Zoom meetings from 2020 to 2023 and discussions with mission partners, provided a clearer view of their diverse involvements.

The meeting in Holy Family Parish, Sadsadan, Bauko, Mount Province, on 27th to 28th February 2023, produced the framework for the SVD-PHN Mission Partners Manual. The six sections are the results of all the reflections, discussions, and encounters. During the first Joint General Assembly at the SVD



Retreat House in Baguio in August 2024, the mission partners unanimously approved the SVD-PHN MISSION PARTNERS Manual and suggested that it be submitted to the Mission Secretary and SVD-PHN leadership for final approval. Subsequently, the team came together on 25th January 2025 for their first official meeting at the SVD Provincialate, San Fernando, La Union. The Mission Animation Team (MAT), the governing body of the SVD-PHN MISSION PARTNERS, is essential for unifying and coordinating efforts within the organization. SVD-PHN mission partners are blessed with a servant’s heart, willing to offer their time, talent and treasure in the service of the Church.

Please visit “The Making of the SVD-PHN MISSION PARTNERS Manual” on YouTube

[Formation Manual](#)

Mike and GeeO Paderon



The Philippines (PHS) – LAY MISSION PARTNERS OF THE DIVINE WORD (LaMP-DW)

A Newly Built Home for a Family in Need

Turnover of a Newly Built Home for a Family in Need

On 18th January 2025, a significant milestone was achieved for a family in need of permanent housing. In honor of St. Arnold Janssen's feast day on 15th January, the SVD LAY MISSION PARTNERS (LaMP) in Bohol completed the turnover of a newly constructed home to a widowed mother and her three children.

The *Balay sa Gugma* project is an initiative of the Diocese of Talibon to provide permanent shelter to the homeless. This accomplishment was made possible through the collective efforts of LaMP members' generous pledges amounting to ₱75,000.00 (pesos) and the community's countless hours to the construction.

The Family

The family, who had spent years living in temporary shelters, finally settled into their new home. Angeline Espiritu and her children faced tremendous hardship after the death of her husband in 2021. He passed away from rabies, and their story had gained attention on social media. Since then, Angeline struggled to support her family by selling snacks in local markets.

A Home

The new house, though modest, provided them with a sense of permanence and hope. The family received a bag of rice, groceries, and a small amount for their livelihood. Angeline expressed her gratitude with a simple, heartfelt "daghang salamat ninyo. (Thank you so much to all of you.)" With additional support from their Cebu counterpart "LUSAD," kitchen utensils, pillows, and furniture were personally delivered to complete their home on 16th February 2025.



The Turnover

The turnover of the house marked not just the handover of property but the turning of a page for the family, offering them a fresh start. The SVD LaMP Bohol thanks its supporters including the HNU SVD Community for the vehicle to and from Brgy. Bunot-bunot, Buenavista, and all who contributed to this life-changing project.

"We must always be ready to answer everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have." – St. Arnold Janssen.

Nanelyn D. Wate



EUROPA ZONE

Germany (GER) – SVD-PARTNER

SVD-PARTNER: Start into the year 2025



Activities at the Beginning of the Year

SVD-PARTNER started their activities on 1st January 2025 with the invitation to the World Peace Prayer, which was followed by the Annual Report 2024 on 15th January and the online devotion in cooperation with the catholic sports association DJK on 5th February 2025. However, the meeting from 21th to 23th February 2025 in Sankt Augustin was the actual start of the new year.

Retreat in Sankt Augustin

At the centre of the meeting was the one-day retreat organised by Fr. Xavier Alangaram. Here, the members of the group examined their relationship with God and the significance of decisions in the life of each individual. In addition to time for personal reflection, there was also plenty of time for an exchange of ideas. The texts and discussions ultimately led to the text of commitment of SVD-PARTNER. It was also analysed in detail.



EUROPA Zonal Meeting in June

In addition, Fr. Xavier Alangaram and SVD-PARTNER discussed the organisation of the meeting of SVD lay partner from the EUROPA zone. It will take place from 18th to 22nd June 2025 in Sankt Augustin. The programme includes getting to know and networking, presentations on various topics, and a visit to Steyl.

Of course, the work continues after the meeting. The next invitation from the SVD-PARTNER will be online devotions during Lent. They are organised under the motto "Living faith with all senses" and take place every Wednesday at 7 pm. All information can be found on the website.

[SVD-Partner website](#)

Maria Wego



Italy (ITA) - COOPERATORI LAICI VERBITI

News from San Benedetto, SVD Parish in Rome



Eternal Word of infinite life, on our way we trust in You.

The year 2025 has started with great expectations concerning the Holy Year and excitement about the 150th Jubilee of SVD. We want to be pilgrims of hope and live trusting in God, witnessing joy and gratitude in a world where the news about war, destruction, and demolition of values seem to occupy 100% of the media.

Dona Nobis Pacem

In January we organized our traditional concert for Epiphany. The title this year was *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Give us Peace). We organized this concert together with another Parish of Roma, SS. Marcellino e Pietro. It's been quite successful, and many people were involved, not only singing and playing but also helping to promote the event to fundraise.

Bible weekend

In mid-January, we requested Fr. Jan J. Stefanow, General Secretary of the Catholic Biblical Federation, to organize a Bible weekend in our parish. It was a great honour to host such an informative, inspiring, and challenging workshop. This event has sparked a desire in many participants to read the Bible



regularly, addressing the crucial issue that "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance about Jesus Christ".

Feast of St. Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz

On the 15th of January, the Feast of St. Arnold Janssen, some SVD lay partners and parishioners attended the launch of the 150th Anniversary book, followed by a Eucharistic Celebration. It was truly a remarkable event that touched our hearts.

On the 26th of January, we celebrated the Feast of Sts. Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz in our parish, the Sunday of the Word of God was chosen to celebrate our two saints together in the community.

Isabella Gargiulo





PANAM ZONE



Argentina (ARE) – MISIONEROS SOCIOS LAICOS AMIGOS DEL VERBO

Meetings and Celebrations



How can I repay the LORD for all the good He has done for me?

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word, the SVD lay partners should reflect on their spiritual journey, acknowledge and express gratitude, and commemorate the missionary presence.

On 14th December 2024, the new leadership team was elected during the Provincial Assembly of the lay partners. The Provincial Fr. Héctor Maldonado, Mission Secretary Fr. Dedi Bonaventura, and Frs. Gerardo, Agustín, Mario, Pablo, Simón, Bro. Néstor, and lay partners of the four districts of the province participated.

ARE Province Coordinating Team - 2025-2027

Aurora Galarza (Coordinator), Isabel Ortíz (Sub-coordinator), Itatí Espíndola (Treasurer), Mónica Brusco (Secretary)
 Counsilors: Rosalía Gutiérrez, Alternate: Mariel Sánchez (Chaco), María Rosa Benítez, Alternate: Ricardo Montiel (Posadas), Blanca Gomez, Alternate: Angel Mattje (Alto Uruguay), Linda Rosa Mendoza, Alternate: Mercedes Beatriz Cano (Eldorado)



Meetings and Celebrations

Posadas

The District Posadas celebrated the feasts of Saints Arnold and Joseph. In the Parish of Fatima, the Holy Mass was celebrated in honor of St. Arnold Janssen, while in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, it was in honor of Saint Joseph Freinademetz

Chaco

Frs. Gerardo Ferreira, Juan Rodríguez, Pablo Bina, Praful Kispotta, Brother Raúl Acosta, and lay partners participated in the celebration. Fr. Praful reflected on, "Becoming Faithful and Creative Disciples". The joy of the Arnoldus Family was experienced in the celebrations of the Jubilee Year.

Eldorado

The Dabar Eldorado Misiones group meeting started with a prayer by Fr. Agustin. We found it very positive, discovering opportunities to learn and grow. As we enter the new year, we look forward to projects that promote the common good and support those in need of spiritual guidance alongside Fr. Agustin.

Alto Uruguay

We propose to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the SVD with joy and gratitude with Mary, Mother of the Word, St. Arnold Janssen, St. Joseph Freinademetz, and the Holy Trinity. Key events include:

- Holy Mass and celebration on 30th March at San Francisco Javier Parish in San Javier, Misiones.
- Promoting the life and work of our Holy Founders and supporting the SVD mission.
- Offering Masses for grandparents twice a month in their homes and neighborhoods.
- Participating in activities organized by MISIONEROS SOCIOS LAICOS AMIGOS DEL VERBO, Province ARE.

Aurora Galarza

Brazil (BRA) – AMIGOS DO VERBO NA AMAZÔNIA (AVA)

Various Activities



Mass in honour of Saints Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz

On 15th January 2025, the Feast of St. Arnold Janssen was celebrated to honour the Founder of the Society of the Divine Word. The celebration was in four languages – English, Portuguese, Spanish, and Nheengatu – reflecting the linguistic diversity of the five continents and the Amazon Region. Similarly, on 29th January, the feast of St. Joseph Freinademetz was celebrated, characterized by the dynamics unique to the SVD in the Amazon Region.

Workshop on 19th General Chapter

A group of lay partners participated in a formation workshop based on the reflections of the 19th General Chapter: "Your Light must shine before others", with the theme, "We will be faithful and creative disciples in a wounded world". The workshop was facilitated by the Regional Superior of SVD-BRA, Fr. Leonardus Gade, who highlighted the theme with the concrete realities of the people of the Amazon region.

Launching of the SVD Jubilee Year

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of the SVD, lay partners from the Amazon Region (AVA) will celebrate Holy Mass at the parish of São Raimundo Nonato. The events will include a workshop, a spiritual retreat focused on SVD identity, the General Chapter, and the SVD Jubilee year, bringing together around fifty lay partners from four districts.



Environmental Action

On 21st April St. Matthew Parish will engage in a social action initiative to plant trees in the Nova Vista do Juá neighbourhood. This effort is part of the celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the SVD. Lay partners from the Santarém District, in collaboration with the SVD-administered parishes, will participate in these activities.

Exchange of Experiences

From 29th April to 4th May, ten lay partners from the Brazil Central Province (BRC) will visit the Amazon Region for an exchange of missionary experiences with the AVA. This meeting will be a significant moment for the lay partners to strengthen our shared mission throughout Brazil.

Missionary Visit

Fifty-nine lay partners from the Santo Antonio de Alenquer-PA Parish met as members of the Regional Council of AVA to study the statutes of the lay partners of the Amazon Region. They reviewed the objectives, purposes, rights, and responsibilities of the lay partners upon joining the group.

Pedro Sousa



Panama (CAM) – MISIONEROS LAICOS DEL VERBO DIVINO (MLVD)

Mission Journey



Mission Journey

From 2nd to 4th November 2025, we went on a mission to the Marian Community in Penonomé, Panama. Our goal was to share the message of the Word of God, focusing on our four characteristic dimensions: Bible, Mission Animation, Communication, Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). During this mission, Fr. Bau, our Spiritual Adviser, accompanied the newly arrived priests in our Region: Frs. Chabi Ordu, Laudasi Alfredus, and Lerisam Wilfridus.

Celebrating the Feast of St. Arnold Janssen

On 15th January 2025, with joy and gratitude, we celebrated the feast of our founder, St. Arnold Janssen, a man of deep faith and tireless missionary vision at the San Jeronimo Cabima Parish. Following his example, let us renew our commitment to live as true witnesses of the Divine Word, bringing hope, love, and peace to all corners of the world. May his legacy inspire our hearts to walk together in mission, with courage and confidence in Divine Providence.

Jubilee Cross

At the St. Jerome Cabima Parish, the Jubilee Pilgrim Cross is carried with great reverence to sites where our devoted

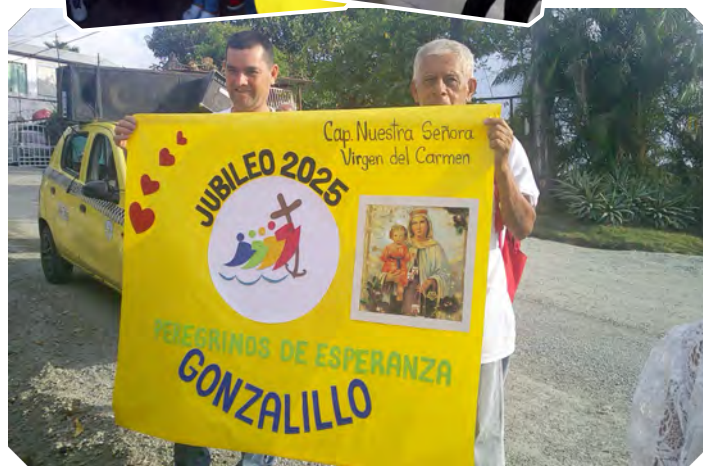


missionaries gather, symbolizing our shared faith and dedication to the community.

My husband, Rogelio Rodriguez-Pizza, and I are active members of MLVD. We participate in the parish activities of the diocese where we currently live. Our Jubilee motto is "Pilgrim of Hope with the Help of Mary."

The image of the Virgin Mary has embarked on a pilgrimage to the twenty-two communities that make up the Mary Help of Christians Parish.

Rubiela Ramírez de Rodríguez



Mexico (MEX) – MISIONEROS AUXILIARES DEL VERBO DIVINO (MAVD)

The Legacy of a Missionary Heart



Over the years, MAVD Mexico, has faced various challenges but has also witnessed countless blessings. The year 2024 came to a special close, marked by moments of unity and love shared with the MAVD family throughout the country. However, no member of the movement could have foreseen the trial that was to come.

That year, the coordination team was composed of Félix Ortega (National Coordinator), Juan Manuel Ahuatl (National Secretary), and David Meneses (National Treasurer), who transformed their vocation into tireless service to God and the community. Their dedication and leadership embodied the spirit of the group, fostering personal growth and strengthening MAVD in Mexico.

Nevertheless, as 2025 began, amid preparations for the National Coordinators' Gathering, the MAVD family received heartbreaking news: Félix Ortega, the National Coordinator, was battling a severe illness. Though his fight was brief, it was a testament to his unwavering faith and love. On 1st February, our beloved brother Félix departed for the Father's House, leaving behind his example and steadfast commitment to the mission.

"One heart, many faces" – This was his favorite phrase, and today, it resonates more powerfully than ever. Félix carried with him the love and faces of those he helped, and in our hearts, his memory, teachings, and the warmth of his sincere embraces remain deeply imprinted. The news of his passing arrived during the Coordinators' Gathering, and at an



emotional moment of prayer, we all united our voices to give thanks for his life and to pray for his eternal rest.

Given these circumstances, the MAVD found it necessary to appoint a new member to the team. After a process of discernment and selection, Vianey Salgado stepped into this vital role, reaffirming her commitment to the community and the evangelizing mission. The new leadership team of MAVD was thus established as follows: Juan Manuel Ahuatl (National Coordinator), Vianey Salgado (National Secretary), and David Meneses (National Treasurer).

With renewed spirit, we embark on this new liturgical cycle with reflection, gratitude, and enthusiasm for the path that God has prepared for MAVD. We now stand at the threshold of the Holy Week mission, a time of renewal and encounter, where, as every year, we hope to receive the grace of living Christ's passion, death, and resurrection in the community. Let us continue preparing to set out with the certainty that Jesus walks with us, strengthening our faith and renewing our missionary spirit. His presence drives us forward, embracing challenges with hope and love, and strengthening the family bond that empowers us to keep sharing the Gospel with the world.

"Let us not feel alone in whatever state we find ourselves. God is with us." – Félix Ortega.

David Meneses



Paraguay (PAR) – LAICOS VERBITAS DEL PARAGUAY

Formation and Celebrations



Feasts of Sts. Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz

In January, the Arnoldus Family in Paraguay celebrated two special feasts. The first was of our beloved founder, St. Arnold Janssen, on 15th January and the second was the feast of our first missionary to China, St. Joseph Freinademetz, on 29th January 2025. These celebrations inspire us to follow in the footsteps of these two saints. After the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, lay partners visited the cemetery in Hohenau, where Divine Word missionaries who died in this land are buried, to pay our respects

The Province of Paraguay celebrating 150 years of the Society

On the eighth day of each month since last October, Holy Mass is celebrated with a special intention in preparation for the Jubilee of the SVD. In October, we honored St. Joseph Freinademetz and prayed for all the missionaries serving in this blessed Guarani land. In January, we celebrated Mass in honor of St. Therese, the patron saint of the missions. February was dedicated to the Virgin of Lourdes, with special prayers for the sick. In March, we will remember St. Joseph, the patron saint of our Society.



Formation of Lay Partners

Since July of last year, a virtual formation meeting for the laity has been held on the first Monday of each month. These meetings aim to explore specific topics and promote growth among lay members of the SVD community. Initially, the discussions focused on topics related to our congregation and the lives of our two saints. Through these sessions, participants have gained a deeper understanding of the richness of our Society and its charism.

With the support of our Mission Secretary – Fr. Anthony Musonda, who organizes the topics and speakers, lay partners in Paraguay have a valuable opportunity to strengthen their mission while learning more about the Society.

An engaging agenda with interesting topics is planned for the coming months.

Jorge Sienkawiec



United States (USW) - SVD LAY PARTNERS

150th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Divine Word Kick-Off



Feast of St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz

The Queen of Angels Community joyfully celebrated the feast of St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz on Friday, 24 January with a Holy Mass. After the Mass, we shared warm beverages and sweet bread, fostering a spirit of connection and camaraderie. This gathering marked the beginning of a year-long Jubilee Celebration honoring the 150th anniversary of the Foundation of the Society of the Divine Word.

On 3rd March, the parish council members and several SVD priests crafted a meaningful plan for the September SVD Jubilee Mass, which Bishop Alberto Rojas will celebrate from the San Bernardino, CA Diocese.

Lay Partner Contributions

In April, the Mission Animacy Group, Bible Study Team, and Justice and Peace Team will work together on a shared formation program covering the missionary dimensions of the Bible, the Eucharist, Mary, and Church documents.

Formation of Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers

The Diocese of San Bernardino, CA, has started training sessions for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist to deepen



faith and strengthen commitment to serving God and the community, as well as for Lay Ministers.

Lent

The community is encouraged to participate in a Lenten retreat focused on the renewal of faith, prayer, and dedication. Every Friday, the parish holds two Stations of the Cross services in English and Spanish. Preparation is underway for the Passion Play and Holy Thursday Washing of the Feet. On Good Friday, the community will hike up the hill behind the SVD House while praying the Holy Rosary.

The Future

Our youth and young adult groups are active, engaging in weekend retreats, feeding the homeless, maintaining church property, and supporting the Keep America Beautiful campaign. They have exciting future events planned. In June, TODEC will be at Queen of Angels to assist undocumented individuals in processing their legal documentation.

Sylvia Angel



❖ Information from the SVD ❖

Indo-Bangla Subzone

National Colloquium on Arnoldus Spirituality and Mission Today

A National Colloquium on Arnoldus Spirituality and Mission Today was organized at Atma Darshan in Mumbai from 13 to 15 November 2024. This three-day event brought together sixty-eight members of the Arnoldus Family from the Indo-Bangla Subzone, including thirty-three SVDs, twenty-two SSpS, and thirteen SVD & SSpS Lay Partners. The theme for the colloquium was “New Wine in Fresh Wineskins: Becoming Creative Disciples in Today’s Wounded World.”

Fr. Stanislaus Lazar, the General Mission Secretary from Rome, delivered the keynote address. He highlighted creative methods for conducting mission work in today’s “wounded world” within the socio-political context of India. Following this, video presentations were made by Sr. Miriam Altenhofen, the Congregational Leader of SSpS, and Fr. Peter Dušička, the Coordinator for Spiritual Animation. Additionally, Fr. Xavier Thirukudumbam, the Vice General, delivered a message on behalf of the Superior General, Fr. Anselmo Ribeiro.

The Colloquium was organized by the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Network (AJSN) in India. The last National Colloquium took place in November 2011 at Atma Darshan, Mumbai. It was a genuine experience of togetherness, fellowship, and missionary response within the context of India

for the Arnoldus Family. Fr. Gregory Arockiam, the Coordinator of the India Subzone AJSN, along with the core team meticulously planned the three-day event.

Source: INM Provincial Circular – Nov./Dec. 2024



❖ SVD Sesquicentennial Celebrations - Jubilee Year ❖

ARE Province - Project of the Lay Partners to Celebrate the Jubilee Year

From the ARE Province, for the whole world – 150 years, 150 altars

We commit to praying for all missionaries and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us to places in need of the Light of Christ. From the beginning of this remarkable journey, we have never walked alone—priests, brothers, sisters, and laity alike. We are led by the Spirit in search of God’s will, with open hearts ready for dialogue and to be witnesses of the Light.

Who will build altars for the 150th Anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word?

- 1 altar for a Parish.
- 1 altar for the Foundation
- 1 altar for Educational Institution – initial, primary, secondary, tertiary.
- 1 altar for each lay partner family of our Province.

How should I prepare the SVD 150-year altar?

The central elements to remember are the Bible, Candle, and Rosary.

Suggestions to organize:

- The base of the Altar
Use a white tablecloth or a colour that symbolizes purity and faith, or you can use the colours of the five continents.

- Bible
Place an open Bible at the center of the altar. You may select a meaningful passage that reflects the mission of the SVD or emphasizes love and the Word of God.
- Candle
Place a lighted candle next to the Bible. The light of the candle symbolizes the light of Christ and hope. You may choose a white candle or a colour with a special meaning for the congregation.
- Rosary
Place a rosary in a visible place, perhaps on the Bible or around the candle. This represents devotion and prayer.
- Images that can be on the Altar
A Cross with the image of Jesus.
The Virgin under the invocation of her devotion.
Saints Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz.
- Additional elements:
You can add fresh flowers or plants around the altar to symbolize the life and beauty of creation.
A small picture or image of saints and those of our Holy Founders who are important to the Society of the Divine Word.

Activities around the altar

- Prayer
This can be done alone or in a group. Participants are invited to stop at each altar for a personal prayer.
Prologue by St. John
Quarter Hour Prayer
Invocation to the Holy Spirit
Prayers to the Sacred Heart.
Recitation of the Holy Rosary.
- Reflections
You can prepare short reflections to be read at each altar, related to the history of the Society of the Divine Word and its mission.

- Singing:
Include moments of singing or music that resonates with the theme of the celebration.

With these elements, you can create an atmosphere of reverence and celebration that will honour the 150th anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word and provide a profound spiritual experience for all participants. Blessings on this wonderful task!

Fr. Dedi Bonaventura, SVD
Mission Secretary

Heavenly Letter

How would St. Arnold Janssen View at the Work of the SVD Today and Congratulate to the Jubilee?

A special contribution to the jubilee year – a 'Letter from St. Arnold Janssen' - comes from the European Central Province, more precisely from Switzerland. Arnold Janssen was a keen letter writer, hundreds of his letters are in the archive in

Rome. So, what could be more natural than to publish a 'Letter of congratulations from Arnold Janssen' to mark the jubilee year? A heavenly letter was written in the style of the founder and read out on 15th January.



Heavenly Letter
from the founder
Father Arnold Janssen
to the Arnoldus family

A warm, heavenly greeting to all of you!

Who would have thought! 150 years ago! When I signed the purchase contract for the shabby house in Steyl on the Feast of the Sacred Heart in 1875. How good that I entrusted myself and the future missionary society to the Heart of Jesus!

Yes, the Heart of Jesus lives and works in our Arnoldus family to this day. How many women and men have courageously entrusted themselves to the Heart of Jesus in these 150 years. As sisters and brothers, as priests and lay people, they have left their homeland to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel around the globe, in deed and word, yes, with their blood. A heavenly thank you to all of them.

Thanks also to you, who are active today in our Central European Province. Thank you especially for your service with us, dear missionaries from overseas, from the 'former mission countries'. Thank you for your testimony. For your courage, for your imagination, for your patience. Thank each and every one of you for your dedication, rooted in this Heart of Jesus.

It is challenging today to live as a messenger of Jesus, to convince, to awaken the joy of following Jesus in the midst of the hectic, noisy, war-torn and wounded world. In a world where many, many people live without God. How many of them are insecure, disoriented, empty, lost.

How many of you also experience discouragement, powerlessness, fear and grief. Suffering from weaknesses,

from lovelessness and stubbornness, failure and disorientation.

Even 150 years ago, the world was turned upside down. Wars, poverty, fears. In this troubles, I felt the need to dwell in prayer even more than before. To listen quietly to the depths of my soul and the souls of my fellow human beings. To listen to the incomprehensible secrets of our history and the cosmos. And I realized: Every breath is a gift. Every heartbeat is a gift. I and all of us are embedded in the incomprehensible, supporting mystery that we call "God", even "Father". In this prayer of silence I received strength to entrust myself to HIM, and strength for the next step.

How much I wish you this power of silence, this trust, this strength, the courage to take the next step. In the spirit of Jesus' original intention: "Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness!" (Matthew 6.33).

Dear Steyler family. Many thanks to all of you! You have taken on a variety of tasks in our society. You bring your versatile talents to bear. In particular, a heartfelt thank you to those who stand up for the poorest on the margins of society.

Thank you, the community of Maria Hilf, for your tireless work - in pastoral care, in catechesis, in the fundraising. Thanks to the editors and the administration of Lebenjetzt. Thank you all who prepared and organized this Arnold-Janssen-Day in Steinhausen. Thank you all, dear guests!

Thank you, the Steyl Circle of Friends, for your loyal solidarity and support of the SVD. Thank you all who prepared and organized this Arnold-Janssen-Day in Steinhausen.

Thank you, dear Bishop Markus, for your openness to the worldwide, universal Church and for the goodwill for the Steyl Mission in the Diocese of St. Gallen.

Thank you for your prayers. Yes, pray that the heart of Jesus may live in our hearts and bear fruit. Continue your mission in the power of the Holy Spirit and a joyful, encouraging anniversary celebration!

With a heavenly greeting and blessing

Arnold Janssen



❖ Provincial Activities – India Mumbai Province ❖

Journeying with St. Arnold Janssen

The INM Lay Mission Partner Meet 2025

The INM Lay Mission Partners Meet 2025 was held on 4th/5th January 2025, at Atma Darshan Andheri East, Mumbai. Centered on the theme “Journeying with St. Arnold Janssen, Inspired by His WORD,” the gathering fostered reflection, sharing, and learning.

The event commenced with participant registration followed by a warm welcome from Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurathu SVD, INM Mission Secretary, and Fr. Gregory Pinto on behalf of Fr. Tony Menezes. The Bible enthronement by DDW Andheri set a sacred tone. Fr. Ittoop Panikulam facilitated an interactive session for group bonding, followed by a talk by Fr. Gregory Pinto on self-growth and group dynamics. The evening concluded with prayer led by DDW Pune and group activities conducted by Jayesh George DDW Andheri, enhancing camaraderie among participants.

Day two began with morning prayer by DDW Bandra and the Holy Eucharist celebrated by Fr. Tomy Thomas, INM Provincial Superior. A group photo session in 150th Jubilee souvenir T-shirts reflected unity. After breakfast, Fr. M.T. Joseph delivered a thought-provoking talk on "Mission of the Lay Partners in Today's Context," suggesting the group be named "SVD Mission Partners." Fr. Gregory Arockiam then highlighted the spirituality of the Divine Word Missionaries.



Following a tea break, Fr. Raja Reddy shared insights from the 19th General Chapter and future directions for the mission partners. The event concluded with a group activity and evaluation facilitated by Fr. Jolly. The final vote of thanks, delivered by DDW Andheri, expressed gratitude to all priests for their guidance and teachings.

The gathering was an enriching and transformative experience, fostering a deep sense of community. Participants described it as a family reunion rather than a formal event. Special appreciation was extended to Fr. Jolly for his exceptional leadership and to all the priests for their dedication. The meeting ended on a high note, inspiring participants to carry forward the mission of St. Arnold Janssen with renewed commitment.

Fr. Jolly Mudakkampurathu SVD
INM Mission Secretary

❖ SVD Lay Partner Abroad ❖

Germany (GER)

SVD-PARTNER Lourdes and Rudi Scholz visit the SVD in Mexico

During our recent visit to Mexico City, we had the opportunity to meet the Divine Word Missionaries. Among those we met was Fr. Louis Gbandi Nakpane, who is from Togo. Over the past ten years, he has taken the initiative to help underprivileged individuals living in remote areas once a year. His dedication encompasses various activities, tasks, and projects aimed at supporting these communities.

This year, Fr. Louis was part of a group of approximately forty people in the state of Hidalgo, Mexico. Hidalgo is located in central Mexico, about 90 kilometers from Mexico City. The group has visited three remote locations nestled between mountains, which can be difficult to access by car. The indigenous population in these areas lives in poverty and faces challenges with illiteracy.

During their time there, the group engaged in several activities, including:

- Prayerful and missionary walks (missionary rosary)
- Mass with the Divine Word Missionaries

- Activities and dynamics with adults, youth, and children
- Distribution of clothes, food, school supplies, and toys.

We are impressed by his commitment, dedication, and loving way to support many people in their different needs in one of the parishes assigned to the SVD in Mexico City, where Fr. Louis is working. We are amazed at the number of Divine Word Missionaries in Mexico City who live in four assigned parishes.

Surprisingly, we have not discovered any Mexican missionaries among the SVD in Mexico City. The missionaries there come from India, Africa, Asia, and Europe. We have been informed that there are also a few vocations within Mexico. Overall, we have observed a strong commitment from the Divine Word Missionaries in the region.

Lourdes and Rudi Scholz
SVD-PARTNER, Germany



❖ Experience Reports ❖

Amid Bombs and Chaos

Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

"I was born in war, I grew up in war, my family died in war, and I'm going to die in war ..." (Jonathan, 14, Goma, DRC).

"How long, Lord? Will you be angry forever?..." (Psalm 79:5). This cry of desolation, of weeping that the psalmist had long written, has become our daily reality in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thirty years of war, millions of dead, millions displaced, millions of refugees. A bloodbath that has become a news item in the eyes of witnesses. A news item in the ears of those far away.

"The vine you planted, the one your mighty hand planted, the offshoot that owes its strength to you; you clear the ground before it, you root it so that it fills the land. Her shade covered

the mountains, and her foliage the giant cedars; ...Behold, it is destroyed, burnt to the ground" (Psalm 79). This vineyard is Congo, which the Lord has endowed with the various riches of its subsoil, full of copper, cobalt, silver, uranium, lead, zinc, cadmium, coltan, diamonds, and gold, to name a few. These riches are the object of covetousness, illegal exploitation, killings, and the massacre of populations for the benefit of selfish and unjust economic interests.

Every phone purchased contains 8 grams of coltan, spilled from the blood of a Congolese. Yes, the buyer may not know it, it may not be up to him. In their weakness, the Congolese look to the Lord and hope. And it is here that we are called to "shine

our light to others; to be faithful and creative disciples” according to the call of the XIX General Chapter.

How do we grant forgiveness in the face of our tormentors? How can we bear witness to Christ in this spiral of atrocities? What can we do for these people, their children, and victims of violence?

As a humanitarian who shares the daily lives of children who are victims, orphans, starving, and desperate, I make an urgent appeal for the solidarity of the members of the SVD lay partners, who can do little to alleviate the suffering of the millions of children in the Democratic Republic of Congo. What good are our good intentions if we don't act? If we can't help that poor child searching for a glass of water for days? His only fault is being born in a wealthy country without knowing or benefiting from its resources.

Jean Paul Nico Luketo
SVD Lay Partner, UNICEF Educationist



The Philippine Coconut Story: Tragedy and Hope

The Launch of the Book

The highly anticipated book launch of the “Philippine Coconut Story: Tragedy and Hope”, authored by LAY SOCIETY OF ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN (LSSAJ) stalwarts Charles Avila and Edicio dela Torre, brought together a distinguished group of individuals who have significantly contributed to the advancement of coconut farmers and the industry as a whole.

Held in Pasig City, the event attracted key figures from various sectors, all united by a shared commitment to improving the lives of coconut farmers. “The Story of the Coconut in the Philippines is a story that must be told. We will not be able to understand the present condition of the coconut industry in the Philippines unless we are aware of its history”.

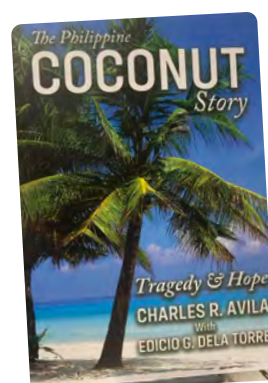
Dr. Toby Dayrit said in the book's foreword, “This thought-provoking book provides an in-depth exploration of the history, pivotal events, and current challenges facing the coconut industry with emphasis on social justice. It sheds light on the profound impact of the industry on its stakeholders and offers a critical perspective on its past struggles and ongoing efforts for reform.”

With its comprehensive approach, the Philippine Coconut Story serves as both a historical record and a call to action, offering

hope for a brighter future for the country's coconut farmers and their communities. In addition to the launch of the book, the event unveiled the inaugural award designed to recognize individuals whose exceptional contributions have significantly advanced the cause of coconut farmers and played a pivotal role in the development of the coconut industry – a cause that remains a crucial agenda for our nation.

The Launch of “The Philippine Coconut Story: Tragedy and Hope” brings together leaders and advocates.

Charles Avila
Chairman LSSAJ, The Philippines



❖ For Information ❖

Ember Prayer Revitalised

SVD-PARTNER Took up Largely Forgotten Church Tradition

In 2025 SVD-PARTNER call with the Ember prayer for vocations to the Arnoldus family. Everyone is invited to pray the Quarter Hour Payer for this intention. Those who like to take a little more time can reflect on selected Scripture passages (one Old Testament and two New Testament, see below).

With the Ember prayer, SVD-PARTNER takes up an old, largely forgotten church tradition. These days are days of prayer and fasting. The name goes back to Quattuor tempora (four times). They are held on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday in four specific weeks of the year, which roughly coincide with the seasons. The exact dates are determined by the bishops' conferences. As there are no globally valid dates, SVD-PARTNER decided to set the dates in a manner of SVD: the first week of Advent, the first week of Lent, the week before the Feast of the Holy Trinity, and the first week of September (time of creation).

Scripture passages

Lent

Wednesday: Ezek 1-2:3

Friday: Acts 9:1-22

Saturday: Matt 28:16-20

Holy Trinity

Wednesday: Exod 3:1-14

Friday: Luke 19:1-10

Saturday: Mark 6:6b-13

September / Season of Creation

Wednesday: 1 Sam 3:1-10

Friday: Matt 4:18-22

Saturday: Luke 10:1-16

Advent

Wednesday: Jer 1:4-10

Friday: John 1:45-51

Saturday: John 20:19-23

Maria Wego
SVD-PARTNER, Germany

❖ Column ❖



Dear friends,

For several years, 24 Catholic and Protestant organisations in Germany have been inviting people to 'Climate Fasting'. In doing so, they place climate protection at the centre of Lent. This year, the motto of the campaign is 'Setting off into the future together - climate protection in the community'.

This is a wonderful idea. The reflections for each week were as follows.

- Week 1 – New beginnings: I try to find out what prevents me from moving things forward or implementing new ideas.

- Week 2 – Facts. Feelings: I try to find out where my feelings and my reasons show me that there is a need for change.
- Week 3 – Path. Goal: I encourage three people in my community or parish who are frustrated and exhausted.
- Week 4 – Strength. Community: I look for opportunities in our church that could help me and others to strengthen our community.
- Week 5 – Together. On the road: I try to find out where we can act together.
- Week 6 – Values. Change: I think about what I need to lead a good, fulfilling life.
- Week 7 – Creation. Tomorrow: I look for where God's creation is groaning in my environment and waiting for renewal.

Although Lent is nearly over, the reflections maybe useful for retreats!
Jo

❖ Congratulations ❖



The SVD lay partners logo was designed by Godfrey Fernandes, a member of the Disciples of the Divine Word, Pune (Mumbai Province, India).

We extend our heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to him and his team for their creative efforts.

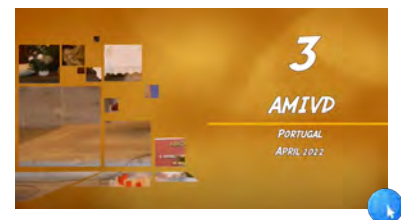
List of Lay Partners' Videos

Published by SVDMissionTV on YouTube

Since February 2022 SVD lay partners all over the world present themselves and their work in small videoclips published by SVDMissionTV on YouTube. Since issue no. 20

you find the complete list of all existing videos here. At the moment there are no new videos.

Start the video with a click on the globe.



More in production



In Memoriam – Deceased Lay Partners

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.



Mwansa Mary Ndofwa

† 24.07.2024

Zambia (ZAM)



Félix Ortega

† 01.02.2025

Mexico (MEX)

Gone from our sight, but never from our hearts.

We will miss you!

Rest in Peace



Happy Easter!

Impulse

All who are afraid like Peter
 All who fear for their power like Caiaphas
 All who judge like Pilate
 All who are victims of violence like Malchus
 All who suffer from state violence like Simon of Cyrene
 All who show mercy to the afflicted like Veronica
 All who admit their guilt like Dismas
 All who mourn for their child like Holy Mary
 All who stand weeping at a tomb like Mary of Magdala
 All who doubt like Thomas
 All who are in despair like Judas
 All who are on the way like the Emmaus disciples
 They all and all people may hear the Good News:

Christ is risen! He is truly risen!

Susan
Sophie
Jawra
 Matilda
Daisy
Isabel

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