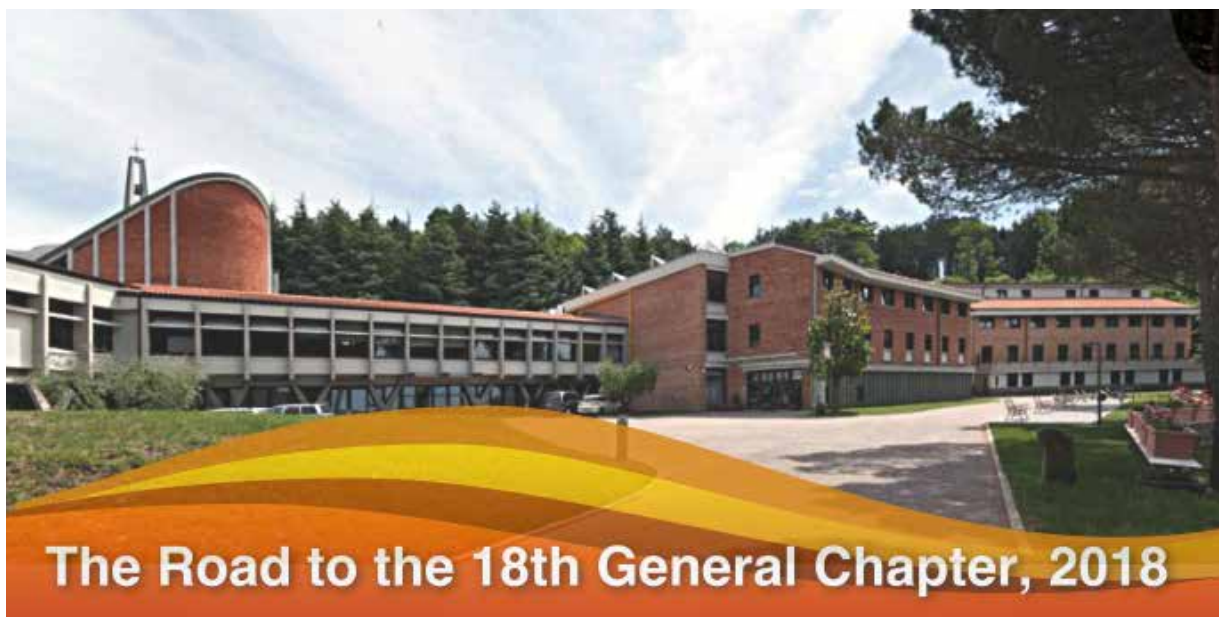




## ‘The Love of Christ impels us’ (2 Cor 5:14)

On June 17, 2018, a total of 132 participants, broken down into one hundred eighteen voting capitulars and fourteen non-voting observers, will officially embark on the responsibility to carry on the spirit and nature of a General Chapter. As in the preceding seventeen General Chapters, their task is to inspire all our members towards a new zeal, a renewal, and a re-thinking of our religious-missionary life and activity.



## XVIII GENERAL CHAPTER, 2018

### List of Participants and Staff

Key:  
 EX = Ex-officio with voting rights  
 DEL = Elected delegate with voting rights  
 BRO = Invited with voting rights  
 OBS = Observers without voting rights  
 LAY = LAY  
 ST = STAFF (Secretaries, translators, etc.)  
 \*\* = Brother

### PARTICIPANTS

#### CURIA GENERALITIA

EX Kulüke, Heinz  
 EX Kisala, Robert  
 EX Pinto, Gregory  
 EX Dias, Arlindo Pereira  
 EX Kleden, Paulus Budi  
 EX Mazola Mido, Guy\*\*  
 EX Silva, José Antunes da  
 EX Pernia, Antonio  
 EX Dikos, Peter  
 EX Gerdes, Stephan  
 EX Nguyen, Peter Sam Cao  
 EX Lazar, Thanuzraj Stanislaus  
 EX Weber, Mark

#### SSD

EX Naduviledathu, Francis Joseph

#### TCD

EX Koubi, Djagre

#### TOG

EX Kpakpayi, Seraphin

#### ZAM:

EX Mappoore, Biju George

#### ZIM

EX Miten Ruron, Mateus

DEL Cherian, Michael

#### INE

EX Pereira, Luvis Ronald  
 DEL Soreng, Ignatius

#### INH

EX Antony, Joseph  
 DEL Nagothu, Ananda Raju

#### ING

EX Rodrigues, Maxim

#### INM

EX Mathias, Richard Charles  
 DEL Quadros, Richard

#### ASIA PACIFIC ZONE

#### AFRICA-MADAGASCAR ZONE

#### COORDINATOR

OBS Kallanchira, Joseph Babu

#### ANG

EX Soyepia, João Ladeira António

#### BOT

EX Afagbegee, Gabriel Lionel

#### CNG

EX Mazenga Kadjim, Alpha  
 DEL Kufwakuziku Malemba, Ange-Albert

#### GHA

EX Angmor, George Clement  
 DEL Obeng Aboagye, Andrews

#### KEN

EX Amissah, Anthony Borkey

#### MAD

EX Songcog, Jerry

#### MOZ

EX Furtado, Johnson I

#### COORDINATOR

OBS Suban Koten, Gabriel

#### AUS

EX Adler, Henryk  
 DEL Le, Anthony Duc

#### IDE

EX Jua, Lukas  
 DEL Hasuli, Hubert Thomas  
 DEL Rangga Hayon, Dominikus

#### IDJ

EX Jaga Dawan, Yoseph  
 DEL I Wayan Marianta, Yohanes  
 DEL Genane Kaha, Gregorius

#### IDR

EX Masan Toron, Yosef  
 DEL Tolo, Paulus

#### IDT

EX Nai, Yustinus Didimus  
 DEL Yasinto, Yulius

#### INC

EX Thirukudumbam, Xavier

#### JPN

EX Ziebur, Eugeniusz  
 DEL Mere, Stefanus Winibaldus

#### KOR

EX Kim, Jong Il Benedict

#### PHC

EX Festin, Jude Raymund  
 DEL Guru, Hubertus  
 DEL Layugan, Michael G.

#### PHN

EX Fajardo, Romeo  
 DEL Pugat, Gaudencio

#### PHS

EX Rocha, Eduardo  
 DEL Rebayla, Generoso Ricardo Jr.

#### PNG

EX Maciolek, Józef  
 DEL Durero, Joseph

#### SIN

EX Chang, Jih-Liang John  
 DEL Wang, Baoliang Stephen\*\*

#### TLS

EX Suban Gapun, Yohanes

**VIE**

EX Tran, Hung Minh Joseph  
DEL Dinh, Nguyen Trong Paul

**EUROPEAN ZONE****COORDINATOR**

OBS Dusicka, Peter

**ECP**

EX Dähler, Stephan  
DEL Helm, Franz

**ESP**

EX Villalón, Macario  
DEL Grondziel, Adam Peter

**GER**

EX Üffing, Martin  
DEL Ruffing, Bernd-Alfred\*\*  
DEL Narh, Peter Claver Kwame

**HUN**

EX Burbela, Grzegorz Ludwik

**IBP**

EX Lehane, Timothy  
DEL Keenan, Kevin

**ITA**

EX Girardi, Giancarlo

**NEB**

EX Kunnekkadan, Avarachan  
DEL Wooning, Huberto

**POL**

EX Koppa, Eryk Jan  
DEL Szymiczek, Henryk Piotr  
DEL Nyklewicz, Ireneusz\*\*

**POR**

EX Leite, António Augusto  
Lopes

**ROM**

DEL Miotk, Andrzej

**SLO**

EX Kruták, Pavol  
DEL Stefanec, Ján

**URL**

EX Blaszczyzyn, Jakub

**PAN-AMERICAN ZONE****COORDINATOR**

OBS Cattáneo, Marcelo E.

**ARE**

EX Reis, José Fernando  
DEL Klinikowski, Adam Dariusz

**ARS**

EX Corral, José Luis  
DEL Ríos, Walter Federico\*\*

**BRA**

EX Antunes, José Cortes dos Reis

**BRC**

EX Oliveira, João Batista de  
DEL Castro da Silva, Edson

**BRN**

EX Lima, Carlos Vieira  
DEL Berger, Alfonso José\*\*

**BRS**

EX Lobo, Ronald  
DEL Nogueira, Alexandre  
Antônio

**BOL**

EX Beguem, N'Ghaba

**CAM**

EX Selvasekar, Jesu David

**CHI**

EX Beltrami, Graziano  
DEL Kota, Yuventus Patrisius  
Yohanes

**COL**

EX Cuesta Pino, Emigdio

**ECU**

EX Cudjoe, Kwamevi John

**MEX**

EX Beñas, John  
DEL Gómez, José Antonio

**PAR**

EX Puthankudy, Jacob P.S.  
DEL Hasler, Thomas\*\*

**USC**

EX Dinh, Quang Duc  
DEL Macatangga, Carlos T.,  
DEL Oleszczuk, Adam

**USS**

EX Kahan, Paulus Papa  
DEL Myladiyil, Sebastian

**USW**

EX Sebastian, Soney  
DEL Kirby, Jon

**INVITED BROTHERS FROM THE ZONES (WITH VOTING RIGHTS)****AFRAM**

MOZ BRO Nyanuba, Thaddeus\*\*

**ASPAC**

INC BRO Paulraj, Kalaimani\*\*

**EUROPA**

NEB BRO Ertl, Michael\*\*

**PANAM**

USC BRO Decker, Michael\*\*

**INVITED CHAPTER MEMBERS (WITHOUT VOTING RIGHTS)****Generalate Area Coordinators**

OBS Narui Daisuke, Paulo  
OBS Munimi Osung, Modeste  
OBS Vanus, Marek  
OBS Duarte, Roberto\*\*

**Representatives of SSps**

OBS Shalini, Philomena M.  
Chakkummootil  
OBS Ortega Torres, Juana

**Invited Lay Participants from the Zones****AFRAM****Kenya**

OBS Rono, Patrice Kibitok

**ASPAC****India**

OBS Noronha-Chettiar, Susan

**EUROPA****Germany**

OBS Wego, Sophie

**PANAM****USA**

OBS Uhal, Leonhard Joseph

## STAFF

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ST Altenhofen, Miriam SSpS              | Co-Facilitator                    |
| ST Norton, Timothy,                     | Co-Facilitator                    |
| ST Jiménez, Gino                        | General Service Manager           |
| ST Bissue, John Kobin**                 | Assistant General Service Manager |
| ST Rasonabe, Mario Roberto              | Secretariat Coordinator           |
| ST Szukalski, John Anthony              | Chapter Secretary                 |
| ST Lobo, Stany Gilbert                  | Assistant Chapter Secretary       |
| ST Sengson, Nicolas                     | Liturgy Director                  |
| ST Nguyen, Trong Joseph                 | Assistant Liturgy Director        |
| ST Espinosa, José Nicolás               | Translator-ENG/SPA                |
| ST Candia, Sergio Patricio              | Translator-ENG/SPA                |
| ST Roman Diaz, Reynaldo Rodrigo         | Translator-ENG/SPA                |
| ST de Rivera, Crescente Antonio (Sonny) | Translator-SPA/ENG                |
| ST Kunnathu K., Rajimon John            | Translator-SPA/ENG                |
| ST Nguyen, Le Bao Louis                 | Technician                        |
| ST Sun, Kieran                          | Technician, Photographer          |
| ST Mojs, Ján**                          | Driver and Contact with CVD       |

## General Profile of SVD Chapter Participants (SCP)

➤ This general chapter has a total of 132 participants, broken down into:

118-voting capitulars and 14-non-voting observers (08 SVDs, 2 SSpS and 4 Lay partners)

➤ Of the voting capitulars,

71-are ex-officio capitulars

43-are elected delegates

04-are specially invited Brothers.

➤ Of the non-voting observers,

04-are the generalate coordinators for JPIC, Bible Apostolate, Communications and Gen. Assistant for Brothers' Formation

04-are the four Zonal Coordinators of AFRAM, EUROPE, PANAM, ASPAC

04-invited lay participants from the Zones

02-SSpS representatives

➤ A breakdown of the composition of the SCP according to zones shows the following numbers.

17-Generalate capitulars

16-AFRAM capitulars

23-EUROPE capitulars

30-PANAM capitulars

40-ASPAC capitulars

➤ Median age of SCP as distributed by zones are:

EUROPE: 55.91

PANAM: 53.00

ASPAC: 53.27

AFRAM: 49.12

Median age of all participants: 53.61

➤ Priests: 112; Brothers: 14

➤ The youngest SCP by zones are:

EUROPE: Fr. Peter Claver Kwame Narh, Age: 40  
Delegate GER

PANAM: Bro. Walter Federico Ríos, Age: 36  
Delegate ARS

ASPAC: Bro. Kalaimani Paulraj, Age: 38  
Delegate INC

AFRAM: Fr. Andrews Obeng Aboagye, Age: 41  
Delegate GHA

➤ The youngest SVD chapter participant is Bro. Walter Federico Ríos born: 1982; thus, 36 years old.

➤ Fr. Huberto Wooning, delegate of the NEB Province, has the honor of being the most senior (oldest) of the Capitulars; born in 1938, thus, 80 years old.

➤ A representation in terms of the country of birth of the SCP:

India with 22 capitulars

Indonesia with 18 capitulars

Poland with 12 capitulars

Philippines with 11 capitulars

Ghana with 07 capitulars

Argentina with 06 capitulars

Brazil with 05 capitulars

Germany with 05 capitulars

Slovakia with 05 capitulars

Vietnam with 05 capitulars



## The Road to the 18th General Chapter, 2018

The road to the 18th General Chapter involved a process of discernment, planning, collaboration, reflections, and discussions. At the heart of all these outstanding efforts was the prayer that reigned throughout the months preceding the Chapter. Long before the start of the 18th General Chapter, members of the Society of the Divine Word and the rest of the Arnoldus Family and our lay collaborators have been enthused about this significant occasion and journeyed together towards its realization. In a few days the Capitulars and the rest of the participants will gather in Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi in the name and for the sake of every member of the Society.

Let us follow the road taken towards the 18th General Chapter and appreciate the elaborate process and planning leading to it.

### ***Official communication from the General Superior and his Council***

The General Superior and his Council informed and motivated the members of the Society through circulars and official letters related to the General Chapter. The General Council made it clear that participation and collaboration are necessary to guarantee the full results of what was required of them. A total of ten circular letters were sent to the different Provinces/Regions/Missions (PRMs) covering different themes and issues related to the 18th General Chapter. The following are the official communications:

-March 2015: Letter of Superior General asking the PRMs for proposals on the theme and main concerns for the 2018 General Chapter.

-January 2016: The proposals and concerns from the PRMs were discussed during the January Caucus meeting. On 26th January 2016, the Superior General sent a letter to all PRMs announcing the theme of the Chapter: "The love of Christ impels us (2 Cor 5:14). Rooted in the Word, committed to His mission." A Guide for communal reflection with some questions was also sent to the PRMs to facilitate the discussion at the local and provincial level on the Chapter theme. Every PRM was required to submit a summary of those reflections to the Generalate.

July 2016: In a circular letter the General Council asked the PRMs to send an updated report for our SVD Mission 2018. This is in keeping with the tradition of publishing a book on SVD Mission before the General Chapter, popularly known as the Yellow Book.

August 2016: In a letter, the Superior General appointed an international preparatory commission, whose tasks were spelled out as: 1) putting together the reports from PRMs on the theme of the Chapter; 2) envision the process to be used by the General Chapter for the treatment of the theme.

January 2017: The Superior General sent the Second Guide for Communal Reflection to all PRMs. A circular letter, containing some orientations on how to continue the preparation for the next Chapter, was also sent. A prayer for the 18th General Chapter was assigned to be used by «every confrere, community, and mission partner» so that the coming Chapter «becomes a moment of oneness and grace to deepen our relationship with the Lord, the confreres and with the people».

September 2017: The Superior General officially convoked the 18th General Chapter. It will take place at the Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi, Italy, and will begin on 17 June 2018. The Chapter's primary agenda will include the following: Reports from Generalate, Zones, Provinces/Regions/Missions, Review of the resolutions, recommendations, and Congregational Directions of the 17th General Chapter, Proposed resolutions and recommendations from the Generalate, PRMs, and individual confreres and Election of the Superior General and Council.

October 2017: The Superior General announced to the Society the members of the Second International Preparatory Commission. The task of the Commission will be to go over the reports and reflections from the PRMs on the Second Guide for Communal Reflection for the 18th General Chapter. More importantly, the Commission would prepare a short draft document which will be used as the working document at the General Chapter.

December 2017: The Superior General commu-



indicated about some further issues in our preparation for the Chapter, namely: Length of the Chapter, Logo of the Chapter, Songs/Poems on the Theme of the Chapter, encouraging talented confreres to compose songs. To experience interculturality at the Chapter, PRMs and delegates were asked to bring along to Nemi materials for cultural evenings, art and decorations, especially of minority communities and national costumes.

January 2018: The Superior General and his council, in a circular letter, presented to the members of the Society the official logo for the 18th General Chapter. The selected logo was designed and sent in by our lay partner, Mr. Arturo Meneses, from the lay partner group in Mexico (MAVD). The official logo of our Chapter was shared with all confreres and all others who accompany us in our preparation for our upcoming General Chapter.

April 2018: The Superior General sent a circular letter containing some practical and essential information for the smooth running of the Chapter and safe and pleasant travel to Rome and Nemi for those coming to the 18th General Chapter. The Generalate Administration also asked the Provinces, Regions, and Missions to postpone those matters of ordinary administration (appointments, transfers, etc.) which require decisions of the General Council but which are not especially urgent during the General Chapter.

### ***International Preparatory Commissions***

The **First International Preparatory Commission** was held from December 1-9, 2016 at Collegio del Verbo Divino and the members were tasked with putting together the reports from the PRMs on the theme of the Chapter. They were also responsible for formulating the prayer which we recite in our communities in preparation for the Chapter. This Commission consisted of ten members from the Generalate and the four Zones. The members were: Fr. José Antunes da Silva [CUR], Fr. Stanislaus Thanuzraj Lazar [CUR], Fr. Andrews Obeng [GHA], Fr. William Odeke Owire [KEN/NEB], Fr. Michael Layugan [PHC], Fr. Savari Rayan A. [INC], Fr. Ralf Huning [GER], Fr. Stanislaw Grodz [POL], Fr. van Thanh Nguyen [USC], and Bro. Victor Hirsch [ARS].

The ten members of the **Second International Preparatory Commission** met at Collegio del Verbo Divino from April 16-24, 2018. They studied and analyzed the reports and reflections on the Second Guide for Communal Reflection submitted by the PRMs. Fr. Tim Norton, SVD served as a facilitator. The Commission came up with a draft text that will eventually serve as a working paper. The members of this commission were: Fr. José Antunes da Silva [CUR], Fr. Stanislaus Thanuzraj Lazar [CUR],

Fr. Joshua Gariba [GHA], Fr. Lawrence Likulano [ZAM], Fr. Kristoforus Bala [IDJ], Bro. Carlos Ferrada Montero [PHS], Fr. Franz Helm [ECP], Fr. Dariusz Pielak [URL], Fr. Anselmo Ricardo Ribeiro [BRN], and Fr. Carlos Macatangga [USC].

The work of the two preparatory commissions provided significant steps, clarity, and direction to the 18th General Chapter. Coming from different zones, they worked together as a team and were guided by the representatives of the Generalate. When you come from different educational backgrounds and fields of expertise, the process of working and reflecting together is a challenge, but all the efforts yielded good results. We would like to thank these confreres for their availability, as well as their Superiors for allowing them to be part of these Preparatory Commissions for the General Chapter.

### ***Guides for Communal Reflection***

The **First Guide for Communal Reflection** was sent in January 2016. The Guide contained a short contextualization of the Chapter's theme and some questions to facilitate the discussion in every local community. PRM Superiors were entrusted to organize the process and phases of communal reflections so that «wide participation of confreres» could take place. Moreover, where possible, the SSpS and our lay partners could be invited to participate in the discussion. Based on the reflections and discussion at the local level, each PRM was required to send a written summary to the Generalate. The First Guide for Communal Reflection was based on the responses received from the PRMs and reflects the sincere desire for renewal among our members.

The **Second Guide for Communal Reflection** was sent to the PRMs in January 2017. The Second Guide for Communal Reflection is divided into three sections following the theme of the Chapter: The Love of Christ Impels us, Rooted in the Word, and Committed to His Mission. Each section suggests a format for communal reflection, called conversations, with concrete proposals, including some Biblical texts to be used for faith-sharing, and questions to facilitate the discussion. At the end of each section, the Second Guide offers a proposal to promote mutual sharing and to stimulate further dialogue. Watching a video, participating in Bible sharing, sharing one's reflection and outlining personal action plans with one another could help discern what God wants us to do now. Each community and district was asked to meet three times at regular intervals for discernment and discussion based on the three sections of the Second Guide.

After three gatherings, each community/district was asked to send a report to the PRM Superior. These reports were to be collated and used again

for study, discussion and discernment during the Provincial Assembly/Chapter. Afterward, a report should be sent to the Generalate containing: 1) a statement on the content of renewal and transformation; 2) a statement on the process of renewal in their community; 3) a process of renewal which could be institutionalized or structured in all the communities in the PRM for personal and community renewal and transformation.

### ***Participation of the Provinces, Regions, and Missions***

The road that leads to the 18th General Chapter included the involvement of the whole membership in different ways. The Superior General and his council, through their various circular letters, asked the PRMs to engage themselves in reflections and discussions to help out in conveying the theme, direction, and vision of the Chapter. The following are the occasions when the PRMs were asked to collaborate, along with their responses.

*Proposals on the Theme and Main Concerns for the General Chapter.* On March 2015 the Superior General asked the PRMs to relay two significant concerns that the Province/Region/Mission feels the Chapter should address. These concerns should be of a universal character so that they are relevant to the entire Society and our religious-missionary mandate in the present ecclesial and secular situation. Secondly, based on the two concerns, they were also requested to propose a theme for the coming General Chapter. The deadline was September 30, 2015.

Response: The majority of PRMs sent their reports (EUROPE-11; PANAM-13; ASPAC-15; AFRAM-10).

*First Guide for Communal Reflection.* Towards the end of January 2016, the Superior General sent the PRMs the first communal reflection with questions. This communal reflection is part of the preparation of the Chapter, and these questions need to be discussed in all the local communities. Based on the observations and discussions of the local communities each PRM is required to send a written summary of its reflections on the theme of the Chapter. Other than the reflection on the given questions, the PRMs were asked to address their concerns as part of their summary reflection. The deadline was September 30, 2016.

Response: Fifty PRMs and also the communities from Rome sent their reflections. The First International Preparatory Commission worked on these reflections and concerns.

*Second Guide for Communal Reflection.* On January 24, 2017, the Superior General sent a circular letter to all the PRMs that included the Second Guide

for Communal Reflection. The PRM Superiors were asked to send a report to the Generalate based on the reflections and sharing. The deadline for this report was March 25, 2018.

Response: Several PRMs did not follow this orientation and sent a reflection on the three elements of the theme of the Chapter: the love of Christ, rootedness in the Word, and commitment to God's mission. Some PRMs also sent personal stories of renewal written by individual confreres.

*Yellow book.* The Yellow Book 2018 contains updated reports of the PRMs and the progress of the PRMs in terms of the last General Chapter's Congregational Directions. There are also statistical data provided to have a more holistic view of the PRMs' personnel and ministries

Responses: The statistical data and updates were provided by the PRMs and an Editorial Team reviewed, edited and collated them.

*Logo of the 18th General Chapter.* There was interest among confreres from the different zones in submitting a logo. Artists came up with their interpretation of the theme of the Chapter employing different lines, strokes, colors, and graphics. We thank our confreres for sharing their time and artistic skills.

### ***Conclusion***

On July 1, 1898, our Founder wrote to Father Piel the following: "I merely conclude the realities and situations - It is the Lord who provides them." The road to the 18th General Chapter brought infusions of realities and situations, concerns, and future commitments by individuals, in communities, in provinces, in commissions, in caucus and leadership teams. As a Society and with our trust in the Holy Spirit we believe that this work preceding the 18th General Chapter with the theme "The Love of Christ impels us' (2 Cor 5:14): Rooted in the Word, Committed to His Mission" has already fostered in us a process of personal and communal spiritual rekindling and brought us back to the Word of God as the source of our life, vocation, mission, and our religious missionary commitment.

## Messages to the Capitulars of the 18th SVD General Chapter, and to all the members of the Society

**‘The Love of Christ impels us’ (2 Cor 5:14): Rooted in the Word, Committed to His Mission”**



### Message of Sr. Maria Theresia Hörnemann SSsP Congregational Leader

**P**ease and Joy of the Holy Spirit! It is with joy and gratitude that I greet you on the occasion of your 18th General Chapter, another milestone not only for your Society, but also for the whole Arnoldus Family.

You have prepared yourself on different levels in a spiritual journey for this event. The theme of your 18th General Chapter “The love of Christ impels us – rooted in the Word of God” reminds me of the Chapter directions of our 14th General Chapter “communion and widening the circle”. There seems to be an urgent stirring in us religious missionaries to go and to reach out and at the same time to be deeply rooted in the Word of God, to deepen our communion with the life-giving God and with the whole of creation. More than ever, we know that reaching out without being deeply rooted is dangerous and can easily lead to activism and in the long run to empty words and action.

In his newest Apostolic Exhortation “Gaudete et Exsultate” Pope Francis says: “Let us ask the Lord for the grace not to hesitate when the Spirit calls us to take a step forward. Let us ask for the apostolic courage to share the Gospel with others and to stop trying to make our Christian life a museum of memories. In every situation, may the Holy Spirit cause us to contemplate history in the light of the risen Jesus. In this way, the Church will not stand still, but constantly welcome the Lord’s surprises” (#139). It called to my attention that in the same Apostolic Exhortation, he dedicates ten paragraphs to the topic of discernment (#166-175), a gift of the Spirit that enables us to identify the driving forces for our life and actions.

Dear Brothers, I wish and pray that your 18th General Chapter will be an experience of the God of surprises. With sisterly greetings,

--- Sr. Maria Theresia Hörnemann SSsP  
Congregational Leader



### Message of Mother Maria Elizabeth Klein, SSsPAp Mother General

**Y**ou are almost at the point of beginning one of the greatest and most important events of your Society and of our Arnoldus Family, which is the 18th General Chapter of your Congregation. It is a great event because it brings together representatives from all the countries where you are present and it embodies the reality of all the members of the Society and their mission. We pray that the Holy Spirit will pour out abundantly his gifts on each Capitular and guide all the activities, discernments and decisions to be made in this General Chapter. Our founder, Saint Arnold Janssen, was able to read the signs of his time and gave an amazing response to them. Its echo is still resounding until now in the whole world through your activities.

We know that the present situation of the world demands an answer full of love and compassion, which only God can fully provide. It is in His Word that we can find the life that human beings and the whole creation are so much in need of now. May the love of Christ impel you even more to bring this Word of Salvation to the whole world and to all the realities that you meet daily! We, your “Pink Sisters”, continue to rejoice with you for being partners of the Divine Word, bringing light, life and grace to the people, and we thank you wholeheartedly for your fraternal support and for your prayers for us. May the good God reward you and give you the grace to move forward with faith, courage and joy, trusting in Him who called you to this wonderful life and ministry. You can always count on the support of our prayers.

With our sincere sisterly esteem and in communion with the Triune God,

--- Mother Maria Elizabeth and Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters





**Message of Bishop Emmanuel Kofi Fianu, SVD  
Former General Secretary**

**I**t is a great honor for me to be invited to send a goodwill message to the Capitulars and all members of the Society of the Divine Word on the occasion of the 18th General Chapter to be held in Nemi.

All too soon, six years have gone by since the 17th General Chapter. Every General Chapter is occasion to take stock of how we lived the theme and the resolutions of the last General Chapter. It is also occasion to reflect on the way that God wants to lead us in the coming six years.

The Mission SVD 2018 with the reports from the Provinces/Regions/Missions shows there is a lot for which we should be grateful to God. He continues to allow us to share in his mission. We can therefore say that his mission is our mission. This however supposes our readiness and willingness to read the signs of the times, to listen to the voice of God in our midst and to allow his will to be done through and in us.

The discussions, reflections and sharing at the General Chapter are a source of communal discernment of the will of God for the Society of the Divine Word today. It is therefore necessary that we all pray for God's favor on our Capitulars so that they will be docile to the Spirit.

As we enter into the 18th General Chapter, I pray that with the intercession of our saints and blessed, the Lord may inspire our Capitulars to a greater understanding and openness to the voice of the Spirit calling us to mission. May his Spirit guide each Capitular to make his personal contribution to what will eventually become the fruits of the 18th General Chapter. May the love of Christ continue to impel us to be true to the mission of the Divine Word who has called us to share in his mission.

I wish all the Capitulars and the entire Society of the Divine Word many blessings.

--- Bishop Emmanuel Kofi Fianu, SVD  
Diocese of Ho



**Message of Father Konrad Keler, SVD  
Former General Councilor and Vice Superior General**

**L**ooking into the history of our Society the General Chapters indicate a road map of a changing and evolving expression and manifestation of our missionary charism and spiritual identity in the Church and in the worldwide cultural and religious situation. The Chapters mark efforts to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and implement His love in the hearts of the people. The next 18th General Chapter will show the condition of our Congregation in the field of evangelization. Each Chapter takes place

in a specific world situation and missionary challenges. We live in a time of intensive migration processes wherein millions of people on all continents are affected. There are few countries that are not marked by the migration of peoples. Such a world situation is an enormous challenge for our missionary commitments. There is a need to look at this precarious situation in the light of "the love of Christ" which impels us to face the present situation in the spirit of our missionary charism.

We are rooted in the intercultural and interreligious societies and we are expected to give an authentic evangelical testimony as missionaries through our intercultural communities. Lay people expect from us and seek our collaboration in the intercultural and interreligious dialogue. I hope the coming 18th General Chapter reinforces in us the motivation to live, to work, to pray, and to look for new ways of dialogue in this continuously changing and demanding contemporary world. I wish the Chapter will develop and deepen the intercultural understanding of our religious life which cannot be separated from our mission. We need to reinterpret our religious life in the light of the intercultural challenges in our religious vows, spirituality and perhaps some canonical and disciplinary rules. It would be illusive to speak about the intercultural communities and mission without the reinterpretation of our theological, spiritual and canonical concepts worked out in a specific cultural context. Of course, this task cannot be accomplished during one General Chapter. Each Chapter is an indication of a long process that involves the whole membership of the Society.

The Chapter is supposed to lead our Society in a process that guarantees a good direction and an orientation. We are reminded to be rooted in the Word of God. Being immersed in the Word we can foster and enrich our mission in a pluralistic world being impelled by the love of Christ even in the extreme difficult situations.

--- Father Konrad Keler, SVD  
Sulejowek, Poland



**Message of Archbishop Leo Cornelio, SVD  
Former General Councilor**

**A** General Chapter, a once in a six-year event, is a privileged moment, a time of grace for religious congregations. It is a God-given opportunity to deliberate and plan together for the coming six years. At the same time, it is also an invitation to set a vision and look ahead to the journey of the congregation while making the necessary course corrections by viewing the mission of the past years. Perhaps all the congregations are quite aware that a General Chapter is not just an exercise but a 'celebration' to fulfill a mandate. However, the real challenge for the capitulars coming together from different realities is to share their experiences and assess the 'pulse' of the people in their pastoral outreach to be the light, salt and leaven for the people they are called to serve (cf. Mt. 5/13,14)

Coming to the reality of our SVD Congregation, spread into so many countries, it is undoubtedly essential for the Chapter delegates to reflect together as to how to 'fan into flame' this fire, - the missionary spirit, - which our Founder St. Arnold Janssen and our Founding Fathers and Mothers were enkindled with. In his Apostolic Letter to the consecrated people in the Year of the Consecrated Life Nov. 30, 2014 to Feb. 2, 2016, - Pope Francis exhorted the religious to strive for three basic ideals, the so-called A B C of Religious life, that is: A- for Anchoring/Awakening; B- for Breaking boundaries/walls and Building bridges and C- for creating cosmic Communion. In fact, what Pope Francis says is not something entirely new. I am well aware that our past General Chapters have touched on many of these concerns, using terms like frontiers, awakening, crossing over, building communion, reaching out to the peripheries of the society, etc. But it is easier said than done!

Today our religious and missionaries are confronted with different challenges. Our traditional ministries like education, healthcare, social/developmental services, are taken over and even bettered by private or governmental agencies. However, there are other frontiers to which the spirit of the Lord impels our missionaries to reach out also though these may involve much sacrifice and suffering. Giving up the modern comforts that the world offers and to become deeply aware of our being in the world but not belonging to the world (Jn.17/14), is possible only through deep faith and conviction. Following in the footsteps of our master and striving to make 'His mission our mission and His life our life' alone can make us authentic witnesses of the Gospel. (ref. R. Missio 42). While the old 'die-hard' missionary spirit of our older Confreres may be challenging to see today, the presence of the Divine Word Missionaries in the Local Churches is still viewed with positive appreciation, thanks to the SVD spirit of willingness to cross over boundaries and cultures in order to delve into the cultural ethos of the people in a sense of service.

I wish and pray that guided by the Holy Spirit, the Society in general and the Capitulars in particular, may have a very fruitful and enriching General Chapter, resulting in real fruits, not only for the Society but the whole Church and the People of God.

Faternally in the Divine Word,

---- Archbishop Leo Cornelio; SVD  
Archdiocese of Bhopal



**Message of Father Hebert Scholz, SVD  
Former General Secretary and General Councilor**

**A**s the 18th General Chapter 18 starts, my warm greetings, wishes and prayers go to all the capitulars. Theirs is a heavy and delicate task that will have consequences. May they be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. Only thus will they be able to make their decisions and do their elections truly in line with "what the Spirit says" to the Society and not according to personal or partisan preferences.

While the capitulars are rightly at the center of attention my thoughts also go to the many who before, during and after the chapter work hard to give shape to the preparatory material of the chapter, assure the smooth running of its activities and processes and attractively present its results. Their contribution, often hidden and little noticed, deserves to be acknowledged.

Although the chapter is only about to begin I also have a wish for all the members of the Society. The chapter is not for itself, but for the whole Society and even beyond that, for the Church (*continue...*)

and humanity. May no one think “Let those up there in the chapter do what they want, but just don’t disturb me in what I am doing”. Those far away from the chapter’s activity, in spite of bulletins, emails and Facebook, may feel a certain temptation along these lines. Let us not permit this to happen. The chapter, we hope, will do everything to make its results relevant and manageable for the confreres. The confreres, on their part, I hope, will gladly do everything to grow with the help of the chapter so that through their activity “the word of God may spread rapidly and be glorified” (2 Thess. 3:1) (Concluding words of Vatican II Constitution Dei Verbum and motto of the beatification of Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz in 1975).

--- Fr. Herbert “Bubi” Scholz, SVD  
Steyl, GER

## 18th General Chapter: An Overview of the Schedule of Activities

The 2018 General Chapter (2018 GC) officially begins on Sunday, June 17 at Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi. This 18th Chapter in the history of the Society formally ends with the closing Eucharistic celebration on Saturday, July 14. The Chapter covers full four weeks and each week is designed with carefully designated presentations, discussions, sharing and the like. Here is an overview of the 2018 GC and what to expect will happen in the coming four weeks of the Chapter. These activities are still subject to the official approval of the Capitulars.

► The 2018 GC officially starts at 10:45 AM on Sunday, June 17 at Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi. This will be followed by an official welcome, introduction and practical information on issues about the Chapter.

► The first full week (June 18-23) of the 2018 GC is mostly centered on Province Reports, zonal, inter and intrazonal sharing and discussions. The sharing and presentations will be based mainly on the Congregational Directions (CDs) as they are practiced and experienced. Examples of best practices in CDs, coupled with lessons learned, and concrete suggestions will inevitably come to the fore.

► At an early stage of the Chapter, the Capitulars will also be electing those who will form the Planning and Proposals Committee, both important in the course of the Chapter process.

► The second week (June 25-June 30) centers on the Generalate Administration. There will be reports from the different secretaries and general coordinators, namely: Formation and Education, Biblical Apostolate, JPIC, Mission Animation, and Communication. The Treasurer General and the Procurator General will also present to the Capitulars the reports for their respective fields. Other reports of significance are also scheduled this week.

► The third week (July 2-7) will invite the Capitulars to a discussion of the implementation of resolutions and recommendations of the 2018 GC along with giving an analysis of the electoral process

for the Superior General and his council. This week the Capitulars are also expected to elect the Superior General and the Vice Superior General.

► The fourth week (July 9-14) is the last week of the 2018 GC. The election process continues until such time that a General Admonitor and the rest of the General Councilors are elected. This week is also marked by discussions in plenum and zones of pertinent issues like future directions, processes and action plans in PRMs in the context of the zones. The Chapter Statement will also be formulated and presented to the Capitulars for its approval.

► The capitulars and staff of the 2018 GC will have a private audience with Pope Francis on Friday, June 22. The whole Chapter Body will proceed to Rome from Centro Ad Gentes to have the privilege of a private audience with Pope Francis.

► There will be two separate days set for recollection for the 2018 GC participants. The first recollection will be on Tuesday, June 19, the second day of the first week of the Chapter. The theme of the recollection is “Discernment from the Founding Generation to Today” coupled with life sharing and personal experiences of the work of the Spirit in life discernment. The recollection will be facilitated by Fr. Jürgen Ommerborn of AJSC Steyl and Sr. Maria Cristina Avalos, SSpS, General Councilor, Rome.

The second recollection falls in the second week of the 2018 GC, on Friday, June 29 with the theme “Leadership for Transformation in Today’s Intercultural World.” As in the previous recollection there will be personal sharing of experiences in leadership. The facilitator of the recollection will be Sr. Patricia Murray IBVM, Executive Secretary of UISG.

► The three Sundays preceding the closing of the 2018 GC will be devoted to some activities like visits and outings, intended for the 2018 GC participants and the staff. Currently, a program of events is being lined up.

► The Chapter process allows the Capitulars different times and occasions to meet as Zones, at

an intrazonal level, and in the plenum. During the Chapter two official languages will be used, namely English and Spanish. Outside of the official Chapter

activities, the Chapter delegates will also have plenty of time to share, renew acquaintances and socialize.

## Chapter Matters

### Working paper

The working paper is deemed as the main document that will be used for discussion during the Chapter. In the elaboration of the working paper, attention was paid to three statements previously asked from the PRMs: a statement on the content of renewal and transformation, a statement on the process of renewal done at local level, and a statement on a process that could be institutionalized for continuing renewal and transformation.

The Working Paper has three parts following the structure of the Second Guide: the first part deals with the experience of love of Christ, the grace of the love of Christ for us along with our love for him are the very source of our being missionaries (The Love of Christ Impels Us), the second part emphasizes the discernment which is vital in knowing the will of God for us (Rooted in the Word), the third part deals with the commitment that we make focusing on our mission ad intra and ad extra aspects (Committed to His Mission).

The goal of the document is to further animate us in renewing and deepening our vocation and commitment as religious missionaries. Each of these parts come with questions for reflection and sharing

and also calls for commitments. One of the objectives of this working paper is to help us venture into new ways of living our spirituality and our mission.

### Yellow book

The SVD Mission 2018 or traditionally known as Yellow Book presents the reports of the PRMs based on a report guide sent to them in July 2016. The report includes the local and ecclesial setting of the PRMs, statistics of the ministries and the number of personnel based on the Catalogus January 1st update. There are updated reports to show how each PRM has progressed since the last General Chapter based on the Congregational Directions, and what each PRM had achieved and has yet to accomplish according to its action plan.

The editorial team was faithful to the report that was submitted, but also took liberty in editing the texts according to the format that is presented in this book. All these reports were sent to all the PRM superiors for their review and correction. This book is available in English and Spanish and only in the electronic format. The book can be downloaded on [www.svdcuria.org](http://www.svdcuria.org) and [www.witword.org](http://www.witword.org). We believe that this book is not just a report, but a guide to our confreres, especially to our formandi.

## An overview of the I-XVII General Chapter from 1884-2012

By Fr. Andrzej Miotk SVD  
SVD Historian



If this 18th General Chapter is to pass into history and eventually turn out to have a charismatic significance with a new promising step forward into the future of the Society, this needs time for serious discernment. This short historical overview of 17 General Chapters of the Society in its 143 years of existence intends to throw some light at the rich capitular experiences of the bygone times. This history reveals the ongoing efforts to follow faithfully the original charism of the Society and accordingly to give the right responses to the respective challenges of each new time.

The following is a bird's eye view of all 17 chapters, covering a 128 (1884-2012) year period and considering some important aspects such as times, places, numbers, leaders and ideas.

### 1. Times

#### 1.1 Length of the Chapters

At first glance, one can be totally surprised to learn that the first three chapters in the Founder's lifetime dragged out for so long. The first General Chapter (10. Dec. 1884-12. Apr. 1886) lasted

18 months with several interruptions on account of the Founder's travel to Vienna (twice), Paris (once), and finally to Rome for four months. During the second General Chapter (03. Nov. 1890-27 Apr. 1891), the actual deliberations only lasted for 41 days. The third General Chapter (29 Sept. 1897-04 May 1898)



lasted seven months with an interruption of five weeks at the turn of the year. This chapter carries the record of 160 sessions over the course of 179 working days. The length of these first three chapters was essentially conditioned by the small number of participants and the tedious work of composing and revising the Constitutions. The considerable duration of each of the first three General Chapters afforded Fr. Arnold Janssen the necessary time to work intensely on the Constitutions and to make the necessary consultations.

The fourth General Chapter (03 Nov. 1909-15 Jan. 1910) was much shorter, lasting 70 days, with a two-week Christmas break and ending on the first Anniversary of the Founder's Death. Its smooth running was largely due to Fr. Nicholas Blum's withdrawal of a proposal for a two-month break that would have allowed for a closer scrutiny of the Constitutions with the aid of a jurist. Since then, all the following General Chapters concluded within two months except for the 9th Extraordinary General Chapter, a renewal chapter after Vatican II (8 Nov. 1967-22 Jan. 1968). The 6th General Chapter (26 Sept.-14 Oct. 1932), lasted only 19 days with 28 sessions. This was the shortest General Chapter. The General Chapters held until 1982 were held between the months of September and May. During the 12th chapter (4 Oct.-24 Nov. 1982), it was resolved that the subsequent chapters will be held during the months of June-July to make possible the usual August-December Tertiate course. These last Chapters lasted in an average of five weeks.

## 1.2 Chapter Intervals/Extraordinary Chapters

The preparatory draft for the first General Chapter stated that a General Chapter was to be held when there were seven clerics in perpetual vows and that the subsequent General Chapters should take place every ten years. During the first General Chapter it was decided that the General Chapters were to be convoked every seven years by the Superior General. The third General Chapter (1897-1898) reiterated the seven-year term for the convocation of a General Chapter. Thus, the next General Chapter was to be held in 1905. But there was already consideration to extend the term to 10 years due to the travel expenses. Then, on 2 May 1905 following the temporary Papal approval of our Constitutions the interval period between Chapters was changed to 12 years, so consequently the next Chapter was eventually held in 1910. However, the Founder's death speeded the convocation of the General Chapter for 1909. This practice of twelve year interval was enforced until 1967. Despite clear interval rules for General Chapters, there were four extraordinary General Chapters namely: death of Janssen in 1909, death Blum in 1919 and death of Grosse-Kappenberg in 1957 and in 1967-1968, for

the purpose of revising the Constitutions due to the renewal asked for by Vatican II (*Ecclesiae Sanctae*, 3).

After the Founder's death, the fourth extraordinary General Chapter elected Fr. Nicholas Blum, age 52, as the successor of Fr. Janssen. Fr. Fritz Bornemann noted in his writings that the choice was for someone known for his order, punctuality, a quick work tempo and efficiency. The fifth General Chapter held in 1920 also occurred in extraordinary circumstances, the demise of Fr. Blum. On 31 September 1920, the capitulars elected to the helm of the Society a "man of prayer", Fr. William Gier, the same age as his predecessor. Similarly, the eighth General Chapter in 1958 was accelerated by the death of Fr. Alois Grosse-Kappenberg. This time the newly elected successor was Fr. Johannes Schütte, at forty five years the youngest Superior General ever. Fr. Schütte was also the first Superior General with 'hands on' missionary experience in China and the first Superior General who had not personally known the Founder. Later, there were two other historically significant elections. At the extraordinary General Chapter of 1967, the first non-German, Fr. John Musinsky, was elected as Superior General. The 49 year old American of Slovak origin presided over the Society insightfully and effectively during the most difficult and delicate post-conciliar time. Then, at the beginning of second millennium (26 June 2000), Fr. Antonio Pernia, a Filipino, became the first non-Western Superior General in the Society at the age of 51.

## 2. Places

### 2.1 Locations

Across the history of the 17 General Chapters, the chapters took place in five different locations. Advancing chronologically, the first five chapters from 1885 to 1920 were held at our Mother House in Steyl. The second General Chapter distinguished itself as a "traveling chapter", since it opened on 3 November 1890 in the third and newest house of the Society, St. Gabriel near Vienna. Fr. Johann Janssen, the rector of St. Gabriel was an important capitular at this first session. The final session of the said General Chapter took place in Steyl (19-27 Apr. 1891). The sixth General Chapter was the first of the three General Chapters held from 1932-1958 and staged at the new Roman College in Rome. The 9th General Chapter, the first post-conciliar extraordinary chapter, was held in Nemi, about 30 km southeast of Rome. Nemi is located in the beautiful surroundings of the Alban Hills and overlooks the volcanic crater of a lake of the same name. As many as eight times, from 1967 to 2012, the General Chapters were hosted in the SVD International Formation Center in Nemi with one exception. The organizers of the last 2006 chapter, on account of the 150 announced capitulars, moved the

16th General Chapter to the Salesian Center on Via della Pisana 1111 in Rome.

## **2.2 Conditions of some locations**

During the seventh General Chapter held in Rome, which began on September 22, 1947 and lasted until October 21, 1947, the chapter hall was located in the present library on the ground floor of the Generalate wing. The living conditions for the 66 capitulars were precarious for several reasons. Accommodating this number of capitulars proved extremely difficult for the Roman College. As a result, every available space was used. Sleeping rooms were set up behind cabinets in the hallway and in the adjoining rooms. Movable beds were set up in the two sacristies. They were removed during the day.

With no more beds available, ten chapter members had to sleep on mattresses on the floor during the cool days of October. At the General Chapter held in Rome in 1958, the 'house master' Fr. Guntern, managed to accommodate all 72 capitulars in the college. The newly constructed annex was not yet habitable.

## **3. Representations of Capitulars**

### **3.1 Representations of Capitulars**

Among the 264 capitulars of the first eight General Chapters from 1884-1958, 197 capitulars (74.2%) were Germans whereas 67 capitulars (25.8%) were from other countries of birth. In the 9th to the 17th General Chapters (1967-2012), among the total of 1,108 capitulars, 209 (18.8%) were Germans whereas 899 capitulars (81.2%) were from other countries of birth. The striking and notable change of representations of the capitulars mirrors the structural changes happening in the Society, mainly the democratic election of more delegates and the general increase of members because of the new provinces, regions and missions. Considering the total of 1,372 capitulars in all the past 17 General Chapters, some notable representations by countries of birth are as follows: Germans-409, North Americans-151, Indians-98, Dutchmen-82, Indonesians-77, Poles-65, Filipinos-61, Argentineans- 52 and Brazilians-43.

As for the ages, the youngest participant of General Chapters was Bro. Victor Hirsch from Argentina who took part in the General Chapter of 2000 at the age of 29. By contrast the oldest ever capitular was Fr. Robert Pung, who took part in the chapter of 2006 at the age of 90.

### **3.2 Capitulars' Number of Participations**

The absolute record goes to the former Superior General, Fr. John Musinsky, who attended seven General Chapters, followed by former Superiors General Fr. Heinrich Barlage, Fr. Heinrich Heekeren and Vice-general, Fr. Konrad Keler who attended six General Chapters. Following closely with five

General Chapters are Frs. Antonio Pernia, Werner Prawdzik, Robert Pung, Adolf von Spreti and Antoon Verschuur. There are fifteen confreres who participated in four General Chapters and 65 in three General Chapters.

## **4. Leaders**

### **4.1 Superiors General**

Some of the most exciting moments during the chapters were elections of the new Superiors General and their councils. The General Chapters also determined the evolution of leadership in the Society. During the first General Chapter, on 12 March 1885, Fr. Arnold Janssen, at the age of 49, was elected the first Superior General for life. He was the driving force of the Society. At the third General Chapter, as Fr. Blum notably observed, Fr. Arnold Janssen, the oldest capitular (60 yrs. old), kept the reins of the General Chapter firmly in his hands for the last time "with an independence and firmness that no one will ever be able to equal". The third General Chapter, at the Founder's motion, fixed the term of the Superior General again for a lifetime with 7 pro out of 11 (shortly limited to 7 years 1891-1897) and introduced the possibility to appoint Vicarius Generalis with the right of succession in the event of General's incapacitation. After the Founder's death the 12 year term of office of the Superior General was enforced until 1967. The 9th General Chapter fixed the duration of office of the Superior General for 10 years by a vote 91 to 12. Thus, Superior General Fr. Schütte, after nine years as Superior General, placed his office at the disposal of the 9th General Chapter. After brief experimentation, the 12th General Chapter in 1982 restored the 12-year term for Superior General, and that of General Councilors to six years. The last reform came about during the 15th General Chapter in 2000 which resolved ad-experimentum a six-year term of office of the Superior General with the possibility of first re-election on an absolute majority vote, and second and last re-election on a two-thirds majority vote by the third ballot. The 16th General Chapter in 2006 adopted it definitively.

### **4.2 General Councilors**

In governing the Society Fr. Arnold Janssen was initially assisted by two councilors (Fr. Johann Janssen and Fr. Hermann Wegener), and since 1891 by four councilors and the following chapter 1897-98 introduce at least 4 General Councilors for 7 years. Added to the first council were Frs. John Holthausen and Nicholas Blum. Fr. Hermann Wegener was the only one rewarded with the title of general councilor for life. He was general councilor for 35 years (1885-1920).

The size of the general council remained unchanged until 1967 when the number of councilors

was increased to six with a five-year term. The youngest general councilor is still Fr. Johann Janssen who became a councilor at the age of 32 in 1885. At the other end of the spectrum, the oldest councilor was Fr. Leopold Pfad who became a councilor at the age of 66 when he replaced Fr. Lange in 1939. The first non-German confrere elected to the General Council was the Dutch Fr. Franz de Lange in 1932.

### 5. Ideas

The importance of the General Chapters can be measured by the guiding ideas of the different sessions, the debates and the new directions that to this date have influenced the directions, development and good maintenance of the Society. Following is a description of the more relevant ideas and issues taken up in each of the 17 General Chapters.

The 1st General Chapter (10 Dec.1884-12 Apr.1886) can be called constitutional since it developed a new rule and fixed the fundamental pattern of the SVD spirituality. In this way it concluded a period of experimentation and gave the young Congregation its basic constitutional imprint. The weightiest decision was made in the first session on 15 December 1884 when the capitulars unanimously agreed on adopting religious vows; otherwise SVDs would have continued as secular priests.

The 2nd General Chapter (03 Nov.1890-27 Apr.1891) unanimously decided to establish a missionary congregation of women to be called The Servants of the Holy Spirit and revised the SVD 'September Rule' in order to standardize it as a common rule for both clerics and Brothers. The September Rule had been approved earlier on 12 May 1886 and was written in Latin.

The 3rd General Chapter (29 Sept. 1897-04 May 1898) apart from the definitive formulation of the rule, centralized the Society's administration so that the Superior General would appoint provincials and their councilors and all newly ordained priests were under his complete jurisdiction. All personnel and property of the Society were to be controlled by the Generalate with the Superior General competent to transfer property and confreres from one province to another.

The 4th General Chapter (03 Nov. 1909-15 Jan. 1910) with the death of the Founder, gave the newly orphaned Society his successor in the person of Fr. Nicholas Blum. He guaranteed the continuation of the work and the spirit of the Founder. It also ended a period of experimentation and unrest and gave a feeling of stability by forming the beginnings of tradition.

The 5th General Chapter (25 Sept.-25 Nov. 1920) focused on the Constitutions, which needed to be adjusted to the new Code of Canon Law, promulgated

in 1917. It also addressed the spiritual growth of the Society, undertook an interpretative approach to the Founder's legacy and strove to keep alive both his spirit and the spirit of the Church.

The 6th General Chapter (26 Sept.-14 Oct. 1932) dealt with internal matters of religious and missionary life, stressing the importance of discipline and simplicity. Moreover, it discussed the importance of education to meet the needs of our special missionary vocation.

The 7th General Chapter (22 Sept.-21 Oct.1947) vigorously pursued unity in the Society, since many members came from opposite sides of the past decade's political divisions. It worked to improve its family and missionary spirit. The chapter also directed the General Council to make every effort towards the beatification of Frs. Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz and to improve communication among confreres by launching the in-house magazine called *Arnoldus Inter Se Filii*, currently called *Arnoldus Nota*, in both German and English editions.

The 8th General Chapter (17 Mar.-23 Apr. 1958) addressed the tension between the traditional religiously oriented missionary work and the more dynamic approach. This resulted in a revised approach to missionary work which focused on mission as the determining force pervading everything. The Chapter favored a moderate internationalization and declared itself in favor of modern means and methods.

The 9th General Chapter (8 Nov.1967-22 Jan.1968) occurred in a time of profound changes brought about by Vatican II. The chapter began a long process of renewal that would span four General Chapters and which would finally conclude with the 12th General Chapter in 1982. The final result of this critical chapter was the publication of the revised Constitutions in 1983. The chapter encouraged a decentralization of power, systematic planning and the principle of subsidiarity. It also abolished the no-smoking rule and confirmed full membership of Brothers in the Society.

The 10th General Chapter (2 Nov.-20. Dec. 1972) was one of spiritual renewal in a time of turbulence in both the Church and civil society. The chapter concerned itself not so much with the Constitutions, but rather with the renewal and adaptation of the Society. It emphasized that our missionary involvement includes evangelization and human development according to the local and regional situations. Our members should adapt themselves to the local cultures and use the local language. All our activities should present the Society as unmistakably missionary, stressing its oneness. Our formation programs should be directed by teams of well-prepared men.

The 11th General Chapter (4 Oct.-26 Nov.1977)



revised parts 3 and 4 of the Constitutions, that is, the sections on formation and government. The entire chapter came to be called the 'Brothers' chapter' since a separate commission of Brothers addressed the 'Brother question' and their formation so strongly. The chapter entrusted to the Generalate the implementation of six priorities namely: the formation and promotion of genuine community on the various levels of our SVD family; the exact definition and revival of the specific missionary charism of the Society; a deliberate and greater involvement in the media; solidarity with the poor and oppressed; pastoral care of vocations and formation of prospective members and the issues of Brothers.

The 12th General Chapter (4 Oct.-24 Nov. 1982) ended the period of renewal called for by Vatican II. The great achievement of this General Chapter was the final revision of the Constitutions, which were finally adopted after an *ad experimentum* period. The new Constitutions had a different profile than the previous ones. In the spirit of post-conciliar reform, they have a Trinitarian approach with greater theological, biblical and spiritual emphasis whereas the earlier Constitutions were canonical and legally oriented, with many detailed prescriptions. The chapter asked for a more determined commitment to the promotion of justice and peace in solidarity with the poor (preferential option for the poor).

The 13th General Chapter (4 June-20 July 1988) summoned confreres to work out more adequate responses to the new situations of our missionary work, ethnic minorities, the poor, and marginalized. The key word to describe a new spiritual and missionary model adopted by that chapter was "passing over". The capitulars produced three major documents: on SVD missionary activity, missionary spirituality and missionary formation. The chapter declared the Bible apostolate as a new priority of the Society and proposed the establishment of the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Center at Steyl.

The 14th General Chapter (6 June-16 July 1994) dealt with mission at the service of communion. It also discussed the issue of the Society as a community. The chapter heralded establishment of the so-called zones of Africa- Madagascar, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Pan America, more or less spontaneously formed from the collaboration of geographically neighboring provinces.

The 15th General Chapter (5 June-14 July 2000) dealt with the call to prophetic dialogue. It presented three key concepts to stimulate our missionary thoughts and practice: Witness to the Reign of God, Prophetic Dialogue and Characteristic Dimensions. The term Prophetic Dialogue was born in the deli-

berations of the Chapter and was directed for implementation in four dimensions: with people who have no faith community and faith-seekers; with people who are poor and marginalized; with people of different cultures; and with people of different religious traditions and secular ideologies.

The 16th General Chapter (4 June-8 July 2006) aimed at renewing our religious-missionary life, from the perspective of prophetic dialogue, by focusing on five areas: spirituality, community, leadership, finances and formation. The chapter accepted as its starting point the statement of the 15th General Chapter with its focus on our witness to God's Reign.

The 17th General Chapter (17 June-15 July 2012) The 17th General Chapter completed the trilogy of Prophetic Dialogue by focusing on interculturality. The Intercultural dialogue as our permanent commitment is both an essential element of SVD charism and permanent responsibility and we are called to build a genuine intercultural community and to develop intercultural competency at the service of mission. This chapter worked out an action plan for the congregational directions of the Society for the next six years. It accepted ten Congregational Directions of action *ad extra*: Primary and New Evangelization, Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue, Promotion of the Culture of Life, Family and Youth, Education and Research, Indigenous and Ethnic Communities, Migration, Reconciliation and Peace Building, Social Justice and Poverty Eradication, Integrity of Creation. The capitulars laid out five Congregational Directions for our community life *ad intra*: Spirituality, Community, Leadership, Finances, Formation.

### Conclusion

The Irish playwright Bernard Shaw once said: "We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future. Nevertheless, the understanding of our past may make us wiser to respond better to the challenges of the imminent future". The General Chapters offer privileged moments of listening to the Spirit and of experiencing the whole of the Society. In the reality, it is a celebration of paschal and salvific event with a significance that goes far beyond the institution itself (Statutes for Chapters, #105). Hopefully this overview encourages you to enter into a more insightful discussion and sharing as we all prepare ourselves for the 18th General Chapter this coming June 17, 2018 at Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi. We may wish ourselves that this General Chapter will be a new and more profound manifestation of God to us in the Society and can rekindle our hearts to be more committed to our mission.



## An SVD Voice from Latin America

By Fr. Edenio Valle, SVD  
BRC



*If some capitulars asked me which clue I would give to the 18th Chapter, my answer would be short: Help our Congregation to be an "outgoing Congregation".*

I have great hope for the coming XVIII General Chapter of our Congregation. May this General Chapter be a further step so that we, Divine Word Missionaries, may assume in the Church and in the world, in a lucid, merciful and evangelical way, the missionary task entrusted to us at the beginning of this century.

Besides looking towards the ad extra and ad intra, it may be equally useful to follow a clue that was already pointed out by medieval theologians. This clue considers it indispensable, especially in the conjunctures of insecurity, to have a view of reality "*retro et ante oculata*" that is, capable of looking at events "back and forth". This would be the most apt method to consider the "now" of each concrete situation that calls for evangelical discernment.

1. Following this method, I think that the capitulars of 2018 should keep in mind the structural changes that the Church and our Congregation have lived in this last half century. An article published in *Verbum* (2012, vol. 53, fasc. 2) points to two indicators that affect the current worldwide SVD panorama. One of them is the heavy casualties of departures that had their apex in the 70's and 80's. Although the post-Council years brought us a burst of new wind they also brought many departures from the Congregation. In the Pan-American Zone, for example, countries such as Brazil, the United States and Argentina have experienced the exit of, respectively, 52%, 43% and 36% of their members in final vows. Something similar, but more attenuated, occurred in the powerful and prosperous European Zone. In the ASPAC and AFRAM zones, however, that period was one of permanent vocational flourishing. In these two Zones our novitiates and houses of formation continue to receive a large number of candidates every year.

This general framework of the Congregation will decisively influence at least the next 10 years of the SVD, in case this tendency continues also in the future. According to the data in *Catalogus* 2018, the next generation of SVDs will continue to come - and increasingly! - from the formerly called "third world". Of the 1198 scholastics and novices, currently in our formation houses, 960 are in the ASPAC Zone, 98 in the Pan-American Zone, 83 in the European Zone

and 75 in the AFRAM Zone. So, 1,033 of them do not come from Europe, the former seedbed of vocations.

It is enough to consider these figures to conclude, without a shadow of a doubt, that in the decade of 2020 to 2030 the SVD will depend substantially on vocations from the Provinces that were called "mission lands" prior to the Council. With this, the rich heritage received from Saint Arnold will be entrusted by Divine Providence to the hands of our brothers and sisters from cultures and traditions distinct from the typically Catholic and European traditions from which the SVD missionaries came until about the 60's. This is a "sign of the times" for us SVDs. Actually, not only for us, but for the whole Church. Will it follow the same trend? I do not know. I leave to the capitulars the task of drawing conclusions from this epochal turn. They will surely consult closely on the itinerary already carried out by the Chapters that took place between the years of 1988 and 2012. This is where they can find firm foundations - a treasure - from which they can draw elements that question us prophetically (*nova*) and ancient elements (*vetera*) which we cannot renounce because they are essential to our Arnoldus missionary charism.

2. For me, the theme-axis of the XVIII General Chapter [Rooted in the Word, committed to his mission], read in the light of 2 Cor 5:14, is fundamental for any and all groups that follow "the Way" of the discipleship of Jesus (Acts 9: 3). And this applies both to the Pauline communities and to those whom St. Arnold and St. Joseph Freinademetz dreamed for the first SVDs sent to China, Africa, and the Americas. It applies also to the General Chapters that I lived as an adult SVD (those held between 1958 and 2012). The circumstances of these different moments in the life and history of the Congregation cover the last 60 years of our history. They are characterized not by stability, but by continuous changes and challenges. Although in a relatively short time span, all these chapters refer to situations marked by secularization, globalization, cultural and religious pluralism, irreligiousness, the Western-cut Christianity, communication, etc. But our biggest commitment is to the poor. This is a background that the Chapter needs to keep in mind.

3. The preparatory commission that prepared the Second Guide for Communal Reflection has made an objective and lucid effort to insert into the themes of the XVIII Chapter almost all of the elements that have been our concerns in the preceding Chapters. Of course, this is not the place to play in each of these

many and complex “points of reflection” that the text presents in numbers 1, 2, and 3. All the more, I imagine that the Provinces, Regions and Missions must have sent to the Generalate an immense number of suggestions ad intra and ad extra. These suggestions should have included items of great wealth such as “passing over”, “the four characteristic dimensions”, and that of “four-fold prophetic dialogue”, which have become the guiding thread of our spirituality and our identity and presence in the Church, the people of God scattered throughout the four quadrants of the earth (Mt 28, 19-20).

What I want with these lines is to emphasize a “sign of the times” that will certainly have repercussion and

perhaps mark this 18th General Chapter. I speak of the surprising course that Pope Francis is impressing on the evangelizing Church, in line with what he and my generation dreamed in the years of our youth, living in a Catholic world marked by poverty and injustice. If some capitulars asked me which clue I would give to the 18th Chapter, my answer would be short: help our Congregation to be an “outgoing Congregation”, as the Pope who came from Latin America urges us. Remove from the old and new treasure of our previous General Chapters the elements with which we SVD will attend to the appeals of the man of God whom Providence placed at the head of the Church.

## Yes! The Family is still good news for today!

Fr. Heinz Kulüke and the Leadership Team

**The family is generally considered to be the human’s “cradle of life and love” and for us Christians, also the “cradle of faith”.**

“Does the family continue to be good news for today’s world?” asked Pope Francis in his Letter of Convocation for the World Meeting of Families (WMOF). This meeting, which takes place in Dublin, Ireland from 21-26 August 2018, should reaffirm an answer, and the Pope himself answered the question above with a resounding “Yes!” The Family is still good news for today! This is the message of the Church that shall go to the whole world and reach out to every family, even before the WMOF begins.

After the two Synods of Bishops on Family in 2014 and 2015 and the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “*Amoris Laetitia* (AL) - The Joy of Love” in 2016, the WMOF is another significant event in the life of the Church, highlighting the importance of family in today’s changing world. Since one of the aims of our SVD mission is to become closer to God and people, the WMOF could offer us an excellent opportunity to reflect on this theme and take a closer look at our Family and Youth apostolates.

“Does the family continue to be good news for today’s world?” Even though a survey has not been done on this issue, we may still assume that there are many people who would have difficulties to answer this question affirmatively. Although the family is generally considered to be the human’s “cradle of life and

love” and for us Christians, also the “cradle of faith,” the experiences of many family members fall short of this conviction. There is indeed a broad spectrum of various challenges the families of today are facing. The aim of these lines is not to enumerate them all. However, some of them may help us be more aware of these family realities.



(CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano)

Ruth is an employee of the Mission Procure at St. Gabriel’s, Austria. Once she was visiting a project sponsored by this mission procure and run by one of our confreres. It was in a very remote location, where there were no roads, only footpaths. During her meeting with the local group of women, something happened that she has never

forgotten. As she was conversing with the women, a child came to her. Ruth bowed down and took him in her arms. But what happened next shocked her. The mother of the child came to her and said: “Take my child with you. It will have better chances in life!” The otherwise very eloquent Ruth became speechless. On the one side, she admired this heroic offer of a mother, who was willing to be separated from her child to prepare a better future for him. On the other side, she knew that the best thing for this small child was to stay with his mother. This experience impressed her profoundly and she was very much affected, realizing the troubles many families are going through, espe-

cially those living in extreme poverty.

Another example is related to a migrant family. Over a million migrants and refugees came to Europe in 2015. Among them was a family from Syria that came to Austria. This family was offered accommodation in one of the empty parish houses. The three children ages 11, 8 and 3 years were able to integrate quite well in an elementary school and a kindergarten. It seemed that everything would go well for the family since they already found their new home. What happened just recently? At the beginning of March 2018, this family was picked up by the immigration police and deported to a refugee camp in Croatia, with the reason that this was the country they entered when they reached the boundaries of the European Union. This caused a significant uproar among many parishioners. "I cannot put up with the fact that we treat people like that!" said the parish priest and tried to do everything he could to get the family back. All of his attempts – as well as those of his parishioners and friends – failed. When the old Latin axiom, "Summum ius, summa iniuria" (the Rigorous law is often rigorous injustice) comes true, humanity suffers. This is a definite sign that the suffering and uncertainty of many refugee families still motivates many people of good will to be of help through their courageous and selfless personal engagement and social advocacy. Situations like this show that powerlessness is not only a part of the refugee experience but could also be experienced by those who reach out to them.

Looking at family life globally, we see that the current global inequality in the distribution of essential goods and services affects many families, especially those who feel abandoned and forgotten by the "powerful" of this world. There are already countries where there are restaurants for pet dogs and cats. On the other hand, approximately 3.1 million children die from hunger each year. There are countries with hospitals for pets, whereas in some places hundreds of millions of children still lack sufficient access to health care. One of the young missionaries to Europe shared that the probability of meeting an old lady with two pets on the streets of a European city is much higher than that of meeting a young mother with two kids. What do these images say about the priorities of today's society, about the sense of global justice and solidarity, about the vision of family and understanding of the future, which is not possible without children?

The 17th General Chapter was also aware of these challenges and addressed them in two Congregational Directions (CD). The CD 12 states: "Constitution 109 urges us to devote much care to family and youth. Across the world, we are witnessing trans-

formations in the family structure due to migration and broader cultural changes. Domestic violence, especially against women and children, and the often precarious situation of the elderly are of particular concern. In their search for meaning in life, the young generation is being challenged particularly by the expansion of the Information Communication Technology (ICT), substance abuse and exposure to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These present new pastoral challenges in our mission." And CD 13 is tasking us: "Provinces/regions/missions (PRM) shall design a plan to improve and diversify family ministry, with a particular focus on the youth and the elderly."

The response of our PRM was very positive. With some exceptions, almost all PRM chose "Family and Youth" as one of their priorities and developed concrete action plans. Now, on the occasion of the WMOF, we may try to recommit ourselves to this apostolate and refocus our action plans. Maybe the themes of Seven Catecheses, which serves as a preparation for the WMOF, could offer us some inspiration in updating our action plans. The catecheses are the following: Catechesis 1 "today's families; Catechesis 2, families in the light of the God's Word; Catechesis 3, God's great dream (for each family); Catechesis 4, the great dream for everyone; Catechesis 5, the culture of life; Catechesis 6, the culture of hope; and Catechesis 7, the culture of joy."

The WMOF reaffirms the Pope's answer: "Yes!, The family is still Good News for today!". We should feel that we are also a part of this affirmation.

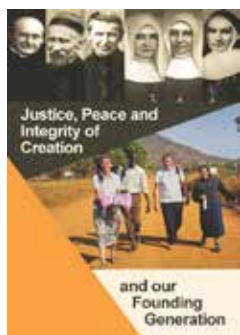
A powerful impulse for our renewed engagement in the apostolate with families could come from our Trinitarian spirituality. In his exhortation "The Joy of Love" Pope Francis speaks several times on marriage and the family as the "living icon" of the Most Holy Trinity. As the family, through marriage, comes together in mutual self-giving, communion, and love, it reflects the mystery of the Holy Trinity and immerses itself in "the mystery from which all true love flows" (AL, 63).

"Does the family continue to be good news for today's world?" is what Pope Francis asks each one of us. Can we answer this question positively? If yes, then we may ask ourselves: What can we do as Divine Word Missionaries? What can each one of us personally do, so that family will still be good news for today? Which spirituality, which initiatives, action plans, will help us to be closer to our families, to accompany and strengthen families? This is undoubtedly a task on which we can work together with our lay partners since the majority of them have families, an indispensable part of their daily life. Maybe some of them are already waiting for this collaboration.



## Generalate News

## JPIC Publication



A booklet entitled *Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation and Our Founding Generation*, a collaborative publication of the SVD and SSps Generalate, has recently been released for distribution. The booklet has two major objectives: First, it seeks to introduce the readers to the historical and social context of the Founding Generation; and

second, it studies the way our Founding Generation, as represented mainly by the Founder, Saint Arnold Janssen, responded in word and deed to that social context.

From its very beginning the Arnoldus Family has been facing and responding to the serious social problems of the times. In this tradition, we have continued working on social issues. Living in the present world, where people are suffering from so many different and complex social problems, we felt that our response needed to be embedded more than ever in JPIC.

We hope that this booklet will be read by as many Sisters and confreres as possible, as well as by our lay partners. Most importantly, we hope this booklet will be used in the initial formation of our members. It is crucial for the Arnoldus Family to understand that our present concern for JPIC has its roots not only in the needs of our present time, but also as a spiritual legacy from our Founding Generation.

The booklet is available both in English and Spanish on [svdcuria.org](http://svdcuria.org) and [witword.org](http://witword.org).

--- Daisuke Narui, SVD

## Visit to Indo-Leste Subzone



*A meeting in West Papua.*

*Fr. Daisuke Narui, the Generalate JPIC Coordinator, shares about his visit to the Indo Leste Subzone. This is what he recounted:*

I had an opportunity to visit Indo-Leste Subzone, mainly Jakarta, West Papua, Timor Leste and Atambua. Apart from visiting confreres, there were two specific objectives for this visit, one was to meet with religious and organizations working in/for West

Papua, and learn about their commitment to human rights violation issues. The other objective was to participate in the VIVAT Indonesia board meeting in Dili and to learn more about their work.

In West Papua, in the far eastern part of Indonesia, the indigenous people for decades have been suffering from terrible human rights violations. Their lands were grabbed by investors and their forests have been destroyed. Palm oil plantations and mines also contaminated their environment. The public services such as education and medical care are very limited in the areas where the indigenous people live. The intimidation and torture of the human rights defenders, perpetrated by the police, still continue.

The SVDs have been working in West Papua and continue to accompany the difficult journey of the people. From this year on, they started periodical seminars on JPIC together with the SSps. This will strengthen their missionary commitment in West Papua, and deepen their collaboration with VIVAT Indonesia at the national and international levels.

--- Daisuke Narui, SVD

## SVD Bishops from Chile

Bishop Carlos Pellegrin, SVD, of the Diocese of Chillan and Bishop Jorge Patricio Vega, SVD, of the Prelature of Illapel stayed in the Collegio and met with confreres. They were among the 31 active Chilean bishops who met with Pope Francis last May 14-17, 2018.

## Archbishop of Tokyo

The Archbishop of Tokyo, Tarcisius Isao Kikuchi, SVD was in Rome during the third week of May for a meeting of Caritas International. He visited the Collegio del Verbo Divino and met with our confreres. This is the first visit of Archbishop Kikuchi after he was officially installed as Archbishop of Tokyo on December 16, 2017.

## Father General's activities

Father Superior General Heinz Kulüke will be participating in separate meetings of the Union of General Superiors in Rome. These encounters are held separately on May 18, May 21 and May 23-25. From May 27 until June 4, aside from his other official and personal commitments, Father General will be visiting our retired and sick confreres in St. Wendel in Germany.

## Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi ready for the Chapter

The staff of Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi is all set to receive the 132 capitulars and staff of the 18th General Chapter. The long range planning and preparation and subsequent meetings assure a fluid flow of the activities and programs related to the Chapter. A number of delegates are seeing the renovated Centro Ad Gentes for the first time.



### 2019 Programs at Centro Ad Gentes

We would like to announce the schedule of programs planned for the year 2019 at the Centro Ad Gentes in Nemi. The schedule is as follows:

11 February to 10 April 2019 SVD

Formators' Course in Spanish-Portuguese Venue: Nemi, Oies, Steyl. For Confreres Starting in formation ministry or being prepared for formation and vocation ministry.

17 June to 30 July 2019

SVD Third Age Course in Spanish-Portuguese Venue: Nemi, Steyl. For Senior Confreres over 65 years old.

06 August to 29 November 2019

Tertiate Renewal Program in English Venue: Steyl, Oies, Nemi. For Confreres 40 to 60 years of age, a minimum of 10 years after Perpetual Vows (Const. 519.1); also for non-SVDs, religious or diocesan clergy.

20 August to 03 October 2019

SVD Third Age Course in English Venue: Steyl, Nemi. For Senior Confreres over 65 years old.

### An afternoon of camaraderie

The Faculty of Missiology of Pontificia Universita Gregoriana in Rome (PUG) and their students spent an afternoon of camaraderie in Collegio del Verbo Divino on May 21. The students, who came mostly from different religious congregations and institutions, celebrated the end of the school year with their diffe-



rent professors. The gathering started with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist followed by formalities of welcome and a looking through the past school year in a spirit of gratitude. After the meal some students offered cultural presentations defining the intercultural aspect of the Department of Missiology of PUG. The Rector of Collegio del Verbo Divino, Father Nicolás Espinósa, officially welcomed the participants. The four SVD students of Missiology of PUG received and hospitably entertained the guests.

### Request for Confreres' ID Photos

All Provincial/Regional/Mission Superiors have been requested by the Generalate Administration to gather **updated ID photos** (about 500 KB or higher resolution) of all their members to update the photo archives of SVDs worldwide. The PRM Superiors were asked to send in jpg files of these ID photos (svdphotoarchive@gmail.com) or they could bring them along to the General Chapter. The Generalate Administration looks forward to receiving full and positive cooperation with this request.

## Africa Madagascar Zone

### Uganda (SSD):

## An Update from the Refugee Settlements



The SVD and SSpS working in refugee camps in Uganda.

Fr. Joseph Kallanchira SVD, the AFRAM Zonal Coordinator, shares updates from the refugee settlements in Uganda where some confreres are working. Here is the account of Fr. Kallanchira.

### Trauma-healing sessions

« ...The grim-faced young man, in military fatigues wielding the gun, shouting insults at my friend standing only a few meters next to me, pulled the trigger at point blank, killing him instantly... I was scared to death, my knees going weak... would it be my turn next?... I saw the end of my life too in a few seconds, there... », Nelson sighed heavily, as he paused, his hands shaking and his jaws quivering.

Later, it was the turn of Miriam: « ... We were some ten of us huddled together above our luggage racks on the top of the old minibus transporting us to the Ugandan border... a few kilometers to our destination we were stopped by heavily armed men in military uniforms : «Eh, you, all of you, come down», one of them yelled at us.... “Where are you going? Why are you leaving your country? It’s no good for you here? What is wrong with you people?” They hurled at us a hundred and one questions at once! ... they made us kneel down in a line... then they pointed us out, three girls and two

boys, to stand up in front of them all, and to take off our clothes... we were forced to do it at their pointed guns in our direction... we felt terribly humiliated.. we were sobbing, others on their knees were pleading for us to be spared from further harm... we pleaded with them for the last ounce of dignity left to us by clutching on to our under garments... one of them barked at us: Do you want to live or die? I said take off all your clothes and now"! ... Oh, God take pity on us; oh, Mother Earth swallow us alive, we cried... the five of us stood there stark naked, only hoping we would somehow survive even this terrible ordeal...," she choked recalling her own terrifying experiences filled with fear and shame, amidst uncontrollable tears flowing down her cheeks, to the deep chagrin of all of us in the group, listening to her empathetically in the settlement chapel.

These are but two summary eye-witness accounts sharing what hundreds and hundreds of South Sudanese refugees went through almost two years ago even as they fled their homes and home towns to the relative security of the neighboring Ugandan borders. There were ordeals of rape and murder, assault and humiliation, fraud and misinformation, not to speak of hunger and thirst, the frustrating fatigue of a fugitive people. Presently, they are all survivors each in his/her own manner, juggling to make both ends meet on a daily basis, at the same time coping with life's uncertainties, longing eagerly for that day "when we can all go home" - occasionally yet, you hear of someone committing suicide because it's all way too much to handle!

We (a combined team of SVD-SSpS) were conducting yet another two-day trauma-healing session with the Senior High School youth a few days ago in one of the twenty nine chapels where we normally accompany pastorally the South Sudanese refugees in their north-western Ugandan settlements.

Our confreres and the four SSpS are doing their best to accompany this trauma stricken population pastorally since the end of 2016. The local Ordinary of Arua has provided us housing facilities at the Lodonga Minor Basilica Campus (built up by the erstwhile Comboni missionaries) from where we are able to move out in three major directions of the settlements where we attend to people around the 29 chapels that they have built for themselves with make-shift materials. Celebrating the Word and the sacraments, providing educational and health assistance to children, youth as well as mothers, catechists and choirs, organizing different useful Lay formation programs including trauma healing sessions, etc. have all become very much part of any given week here. Of course, UNHCR, several other NGOs and the Ugandan government agencies are organizing life in general for the few hundred thousand refugees living in different zones of the settlements.

### The SVD Team for Uganda

On May 1, 2018 Fr. Lawrence Llona, SVD returned to Uganda from the Philippines after a period of recuperation from a road accident after his arrival in the country last July 2017. Fr. Francis Naduviledathu, SVD, the Mission Superior celebrated the silver jubilee of his priestly ordination on May 3 in his home province. Fr. Clemensius Romy Suri Roja is currently in Nairobi, Kenya brushing up his English for three months. Fathers Andrzej Marek Dzida and Wojciech Pawlowski are about to complete their two-year Arabic language studies in Egypt soon. These confreres are expected to join the community in Lodonga towards the end of July.

With six confreres (five priests and one Brother), we should possibly be ready to accept the offer of the local bishop to assume responsibility for a local rural parish as well - a parish which can serve us as another platform for more proximity and better pastoral services, including continued trauma healing exercises, for the South Sudanese refugees. Since the Holy Week, Fr. Kallanchira joined Bro. Vinsentius Knaofmone, SVD in the refugee settlement.

--- Fr. Joseph Kallanchira, SVD

### Monrovia, Liberia (GHA):

#### A new mission in Monrovia

A new SVD mission opened in Immaculate Conception Parish, Pipe Line, Monrovia. The Provincial Council appointed Fr. Louis Awoudja, SVD along with another confrere yet to be ordained to join him in October 2018. Bro. Wisdom Agbovi, originally appointed to Zwedru, is in Monrovia until the other confrere arrives. A contract was signed on January 28th with Archbishop Lewis Zeigler of the Archdiocese of Monrovia. The Monrovia mission is under the patronage of the first SVD missionary, St. Joseph Freinademetz. On the same day, during the Holy Mass officiated by Archbishop Zeigler, Fr. Awoudja was officially presented as the new parish priest of the Immaculate Conception Parish.

--- Fr. Joseph Mazur, SVD

### Simanjiro (KEN):

#### The blessing of a church building

May 13, 2018 was the occasion of the conferring of the Sacrament of Confirmation and the blessing of the church building of the outstation of Loiborsiret belonging to Simanjiro parish. These events were presided by the new Archbishop of Arusha, Bishop Isaac Amani Massawe. These two occasions brought together people of all walks of life from the area including some prominent people who hold important positions in the government and in the society.

Considering the conditions in which the people live there, no one would easily believe that this Church has





*The Church built by the contributions of the people themselves.*

been built by the contributions of the people themselves, the majority of whom are nomadic pastoralists. The Catholic Church has been present in this area for the last 50 years yet the evangelization is still regarded as primary. During the last 16 years of the presence of the SVDs, many steps have been made toward the growth of the faith. The biggest challenges are illiteracy and poverty.

It was a wonderful experience. We congratulate the people of Simanjiro and especially our confreres Fr. Michael Shaji, SVD and Fr. Albert Fuchs, SVD who have been working tirelessly in this mission. The SVD missionaries run two parishes that cover an area of 200 Sq./Km. The population consists mostly of the Maasai people and so the area is called the Maasai Steppe.

--- Fr. Lawrence Muthee, SVD

### **Archdiocese of Arusha (KEN):**

#### **The avocado fruit and the concept of mission**



*Our confreres savoring the avocado fruit.*

A group of confreres from Argentina, Kenya, Ghana, Philippines, and Indonesia gathered for lunch with the visiting provincial of KEN, Fr. Anthony Amissah. During the meal avocado or “parachichi” as it is called in Swahili were served. All had a slice of the fruit and each was eating it in his own way. It is after seeing this that the Provincial remembered how he had once used the example of how people eat avocado, to demonstrate how different the cultures can be, yet they work together as one people.

Avocado is a fruit that can be found in many corners of the world. It is known for its healthy fats and other nutrients. It has many uses. Some of them include: manufacturing of cosmetics, making soap and eating as a fruit or even cooked. Different cultures eat the avoca-

do in different ways. Here in Tanzania, people eat avocado either directly as a fruit or they eat it with bread. In Kenya, people add salt to it and eat as a fruit or with “Githeri”, a Kenyan traditional meal of maize. In Spain, they put honey on it and scoop it with a spoon while in Ghana they mix it with chili and make a hot paste that can be either put in food or applied on bread. In the Philippines they add some sugar and milk on it while in Argentina they add vinegar. Some mix the avocado with eggs and a little flour and make a pancake. How do you eat avocado?

The avocado fruit reminded us that our mission remains the same but each one of us contributes something different just as the avocado remains avocado no matter how it is eaten by different people from different parts of the world. We are missionaries from all over the world and our spirit of interculturality has enabled us to work together for the kingdom of God here in the Kenya-Tanzania province.

--- Fr. Lawrence Muthee, SVD

### **Chad Republic (TCD):**

#### **My experience at the diocesan minor seminary of Donia**



*Fr. Christophe Kossivi Sekle, SVD (first row, third from left) with the seminarians.*

Our confrere, Fr. Christophe Kossivi Sekle, SVD shares his experience as a formator of the Diocesan Seminary of Donia. He follows the trail of several SVDs who have worked in this seminary since 2008. The SVD confreres who have worked here over the years have been mainly involved in spiritual direction, formation, and administrative work.

The minor seminary of Donia is a local institution of the Catholic Church in Chad. It is located in the south of the country and has been in existence since 1954. It has formed, for the most part, the local clergy and has educated some other public servants of the country. This year, we have 122 minor seminarians, whose ages range from 10 to 17. These young men come from a number of parishes of principally two dioceses, Gore and Doba.

At the moment, we are approaching the end of our school year. Soon, the seminarians will take their leave for the summer break. Most of them will return to their villages, hopefully in time to assist their families with field work. Having worked here for a year now, I have a

mixed feeling of joy and worries. I am joyful because I have lived with a generation of young boys who are enthusiastic about being formed and being molded with the hope of becoming priests and religious one day. Such enthusiasm and desire have been evident on their faces and their smiles.

That I would say, in and of itself, is already a countercultural witness and adhesion to the faith at its best. Countercultural because it goes against the current mentality of Chadians in particular and of Africans in general that dictates a real man must “give” children and must build for himself a large family. In that sense, celibacy in the consecrated life renders one somewhat less of a man. It is a question of cultural identity against the choice of the priesthood that these young men are facing. On top of that, they are still very young and face strong pressure and expectations from their extended families whenever they are home. Their parents and relatives expect them to get married and to have children. It is an enormous challenge these young men have to overcome. Surely, not all will succeed.

As for me, I am convinced that this minor seminary plays a vital role, not only for the Catholic Church in Chad, but also for many religious and missionary con-

gregations like the SVDs. I personally think that the minor seminary is a great environment, in which our integral and holistic education serves as “*bonne terre*” or a nursery for these seeds to take root and grow. However, having seen the economic situation of the country and the local condition of the area of this seminary, my worries for the future endeavors of this institute remain. In fact, the financing of this institute depends largely (up to and above 80%) on outside benefactors. Our two local dioceses hardly meet the other 20% to complete the annual budget. In addition, the living and studying accommodations of this institute are thoroughly inadequate, old and lacking regular maintenance. One good example is our 48-year-old generator (1974). This old machine sometimes takes a few weeks of vacation, leaving us all in the dark without power or water.

Despite all, this seminary remains a loving nursery where I have the chance to cultivate and joyfully water these seeds of the priesthood and religious life. I am confident that certain seeds of this nursery will grow and bear great fruits for the Chadian society, for the dioceses, for the church, perhaps for the SVDs, and above all for the glory of God.

--- Fr. Christophe Kossivi Sekle, SVD

## Asia Pacific Zone

### Papua New Guinea

#### Assembly of the Bishops of Oceania in PNG



The SVD bishops at the Assembly were Archbishop Douglas Young, SVD of Mount Hagen and Bishop Josef Roszynski, SVD of Wewak.

The Federation of the Catholic Bishops of Conferences of Oceania (FCBCO) consists of the four Conferences of: 1. Australia (ACBC), 2. New Zealand (NZCBC), 3. Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (CBC-PNGSI), and 4. Episcopal Conference of the Pacific (17 other small countries and dioceses of the Pacific- CEPAC). The Bishops, Apostolic Nuncios and General Secretaries of these four Conferences assemble together every four years. This year the Assembly was held 11-17 April 2018 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Eighty one participants, including seventy five bishops, participated in this six-day Assembly.

The theme of the Assembly was: “Caring for our common home of Oceania, a sea of possibilities”. The

invited speakers gave input and held discussions on: Climate Change, Deep Sea Mining, Refugees and West Papuans, Youth, Faith and Vocational discernment. The special guest of honor of the Assembly was Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State to Pope Francis. Besides his keynote address to the assembly participants, he also met with the Governor General, the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, the Laity and the Religious.

During the Assembly, the bishops were able to join the Sunday Eucharist in 14 parishes of Port Moresby. They were very happy to see the strong and vibrant faith of the people integrating their culture. They also visited the major seminary, some schools and other places of interest. The participants were very positive in their comments about the whole assembly and their experience in PNG.

The SVD bishops who participated at the Assembly were Archbishop Douglas Young, SVD of Mount Hagen and Bishop Josef Roszynski, SVD of Wewak. Fr. Victor Roche, SVD, the Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands was the Executive Secretary of the Assembly.

--- Fr. Victor Roche, SVD

## INM

### Programs offered at Ishvani Kendra

Ishvani Kendra is a national Institute of Missiology and Communications. Fr. Engelbert Zeitler, a German SVD missionary, founded this Institute at Pune in 1976. The vision of the Institute is to animate persons in light of the Word of God and to translate the



Word into meaningful propositions and viable models of action in the contemporary world. The facilities at the Center include accommodation, lecture hall, conference hall, chapel and library. Professional sound recording and video editing facilities are available at our Communication Department.

► *Jubilarians' Special Renewal in Religious Missionary Life (July 30-August 18)*

The course is envisaged to help the participants relax, refresh, rejuvenate, update, and recommit to the evangelizing mission. It is open to all those who are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of their religious profession or priestly ordination. Content: Reflecting together about the Time of Grace; Religious life today; Emerging trends in mission; Missionary spirituality; Sharing of experiences; Psycho-spiritual growth and integration; Midlife transition and recommitment to consecrated life.

► *Caring for Creation: A Retreat on Holistic Living (August 27-September 2)*

Restoring the sanctity of creation and living to promote the culture of life is a call that is ever real.

► *Transformative Leadership in Mission (September 4-September 22)*

The course is open to all who are interested to enhance their leadership skills. Content: The person of the Leader; Developing Leadership skills through value Shift; Facilitating leadership in religious communities; Conflict and stress management; Effective leadership and communication skills; Emotional Intelligence and Leadership; Leading like Jesus.

### Cebu City (PHS):

#### USC College of Law shines



*The USCCL Mooting Team Team*

The University of San Carlos College of Law (USCCL) Mooting Team dominated in the recently concluded 2018 Price Media Law Moot Court Competition held in Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom from April 9-13, 2018. The team faced off against the defending champion, Singapore Management University, in the championship round. The Finals Bench was composed of five (5) international judges, including sitting judges of the European Court of Human Rights and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Other members of the judging panel were

from the Justice of the Court of Appeal of Ghana and a retired judge of the English High Court.

This is the 11th year of the competition, with teams from different universities around the world competing in seven regional rounds (South Asia, Asia-Pacific, South East Europe, North East Europe, the Americas, the Middle East, South Africa, and Afghanistan) before meeting in Oxford University for the International Rounds of the competition. The USCCL Mooting Team is a back-to-back Asia-Pacific Champion and the only Philippine representative in the international rounds.

--- USC Website

### Cebu City (PHS):

#### 2017 Bar Examinations

The steady stream of exceptional law students (topnotchers) in the storied history of the University of San Carlos (USC) in Cebu continues. Although it didn't clinch the top spot as it did last year, three USC law students got into the top ten of the 2017 Bar Examinations. Christianne Mae Balili placed second with a rating of 90.80, just a few points behind the highest score of 91.05 percent garnered by Mark John Simondo of the University of St. La Salle in Bacolod City. The two other law students clinched the fourth and seventh spots.

In the 2016 Bar exam, USC graduate Karen Mae Calam clinched the top spot and became the first law graduate from Cebu to ever secure the number one place in what has been considered the toughest licensure examinations in the country and the most glorified.

*Inquirer.net*

### PNG

#### Work of missionaries acknowledged

The history and legacy of Catholic missionary congregations who founded the Divine Word University, starting initially as the Divine Word High School in 1968, was on display at the Open Day on Sunday 6th May, 2018. The display of the work of the missionaries and their profiles were an eye-opener for visitors and also members of the University community.

The University's Mission and Identity directorate, headed by Professor Father Philip Gibbs SVD, put up the displays of the work of the missionaries in DWU. Professor Gibbs is also Vice President, Research and Higher Degrees. The booth of Mission and Identity Directorate also featured profiles of all the missionaries that served as headmasters and presidents of the former Divine Word High School (1968-78), Divine Word Institute (1979-1995) and Divine Word University (1996-2015) respectively.

The founding Headmaster of Divine Word High School was an American priest, the late Fr. Kenneth Feehan, SVD. Fr. Feehan was also the founding president

of Divine Word Institute (DWI) after the high school transitioned into an Institute in 1979. The first two academic programs introduced in 1979 were Communication Arts (Journalism) and Business Studies, program choices that trace back to the work of the founder of the SVD, St. Arnold Janssen. The pioneering work of Fr. Feehan is acknowledged in the University with one of the male student dormitories named as "Feehan Hall".

*www.dwu.ac.pg*

### **Bujha Daiya (INC):**

#### **Blessing and Inauguration of Bujha Mission**

The blessing and inauguration of the renovated Chapel and newly constructed presbytery at Bujha was held on April 5, 2018 in the presence of Most Rev. Devprasad Ganawa SVD, bishop of Udaipur. The SVD took up the Bujha mission from the Jesuits, separating from the parish of Vijay Nagar of the Archdiocese of Gandhinagar. This is a vibrant mission with good response from the people and a great potential for our future activities in the area. Fr. Albinus Kujur, SVD is doing wonderful work establishing initial contacts and carrying out surveys and socio-developmental projects for the empowerment of women and children in the locality.

--- INC Newsletter

### **Tagaytay City (PHC):**

#### **25 years of SVD Postulancy**

The SVD Postulancy will mark its 25th year of existence on August 22, 2018 in Tagaytay. The current Postulancy Director, Fr. Alan Bondoc SVD, is inviting all those who underwent the program - SVDs and XVDs - to join the celebration. More information on the celebration will follow.

--- PHC Website

### **Sydney (AUS):**

#### **Vietnamese Chaplains from across Australia gather**



Vietnamese Chaplains from across Australia came together in Sydney recently to discuss their ministry and to consider how Vietnamese Catholic communities can contribute their experience of faith life in Australia to the 2020 Plenary Council. Fr. Joseph Vu SVD, who is Chaplain to the Vietnamese

community in Brisbane Archdiocese, says the chaplains gather every year to share with one another their activities, to listen and learn from each other, and to plan for the future. Fr. Joseph says the Vietnamese Catholic communities are also committed to being a part of the local church and the 2020 Plenary Council is seen as a big opportunity to share in the life of the church at all levels.

This year they were joined by a visiting Vietnamese bishop, Bishop Emmanuel Hong Son Nguyen from the Diocese of Ba Ria. The chaplains were able to share the success of their Assumption Day appeal which raised money to help build the La Vang Centre shrine – a shrine to Our Lady in Vietnam. A major focus of the meeting was the organization of a big Marian Day gathering in Sydney from October 5-7, where all the Vietnamese communities are invited to send representatives to gather together for workshops and prayer.

--- Website AUS

### **Ubbog, Abra (PHN):**

#### **A celebration with the SVD Friends**

On January 29, 2018, the SVD Friends Abra Chapter celebrated in the District House, SVD Ubbog, Bangued, Abra, where Fr. Romulo Fajardo, the Provincial of PHN celebrated the Mass along with some SVD confreres. This feast was celebrated immediately after the National Bible Week celebration of the country (January 22-28) and National Bible Sunday (January 28).

This Year's theme for the Bible Week was, "The Bible is the Foundation for righteous leadership and living." The celebration included Family Bible Encounter, making Biblical Posters, Biblical slogans, Biblical Essays, Biblical spoken poetry, distribution of Bibles, visiting the elderly and the sick, and many more. May our Saints continue to inspire us to move on in the Light of the Word.

--- Newsletter of SVD Lay Partners

## European Zone

## Fatima (POR):

## Fatima Jovem 2018



Testimony, music concerts, prayer and the Eucharist! A little of everything. This was the global dynamic that marked this year's "Fatima Jovem." This Youth

Encounter, promoted by the National Youth Ministry, was held under the motto "Be the Lord's Servant, be it done unto me according to your will," intending to prepare young people for World Youth Day 2019 in Panama.

Held at the Shrine of Fatima, from 5 to 6 May 2018, approximately 1250 young people from various dioceses of the country participated in the "Fatima Jovem." The SVD Youth and Vocation Ministry participated in the event. Some speakers and their presentations enlightened and urged young people towards self-validation and growth of the human person, along with the capacity to love what is essential to life.

*www.verbodivino.pt*

## Varone (ITA):

## Gruppo Dialogo on intercultural activities

The season of the intercultural activities of Scrutare Orizzonti of the Gruppo Dialogo continues. Their sixth activity was held on May 7, 2018, at 20.30, at the Dialogue Hall of the Divine Word Missionaries of Varone. Their invited speaker was Grégoire Ahongbonon, called "the angel of the madmen of Africa," on the theme "The beauty of redemption." He gave testimony as the founder of an association that tries to convince the family and the village to remove the chains from the people considered possessed by demons or evil spirits, opposed to that tradition of isolating and making the alleged sufferers live like animals. Often this is simply about people with epilepsy - particularly strong in Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Ghana.

The gathering opened with a piece of music from Africa. Mr. Gregoire, a native of Benin, is well known for his works and foundations that include reception and treatment centers, medical consultations centers, and reintegration and training centers in four countries. The evening closed with African music followed by refreshments. We congratulate the organizers for again offering to the community of Varone and elsewhere a journey to appreciate noteworthy causes like the work of Mr. Gregoire.

*www.missionariverbiti.it*

## Münster (GER):

## SVD life and work presented at National Catholic Congress

For three days, from May 10 to 13, 2018, the Arnoldus Family presented its life and work at the German Catholic Congress held in Münster. This bi-annual national gathering of Catholics is a century-old tradition. The SVD and SSps had their booths along with the dioceses, other congregations, and Catholic organizations. The theme of this year's event was "Search for Peace."

Hundreds of visitors enjoyed the exciting program in the SVD booth. Fr. Vaclav Mucha, SVD was the chief organizer of the SVD presence. Some 60 persons - confreres, employees, SVD friends and partners, representatives of Steyler Bank, Steylmedien and Youth Missions Volunteers (MaZ) - helped inform the guests about the goals, programs, and ministries of the SVD. The event also provided an opportunity for advertising the SVD mission magazines.

But the Arnoldus Family was also active outside their booths. On the day the missionary religious congregations organized the Lauds under the motto "I am a mission," Sr. Michaela Leifgen SSps, contributed a psalm she had written. The morning prayers were held in a church called Überwasserkirche where, incidentally, St. Arnold celebrated his first Mass after his ordination in 1861.

*www.steyler.eu*

## SWI

## SVD joins "Monastery Fair"



*The SVD presented its mission magazines, calendars, and books.*

Already for the thirteenth time, the "Monastery Fair" took place in the Swiss town of Gosau. The SVD was again present with a booth. While the classic "monasteries" were present with food, the SVD presented its mission magazines, calendars, and books as well as some other products such as hanging angels for the car. A chart in the booth explained who the Divine Word Missionaries are

and how they work around the world.

The SVD participation was carried out with active support from the Association of SVD Friends in Switzerland (Steyler Freundeskreis), spearheaded by Mr. Philipp Hautle and Mr. Simon Sigg from the board of the Association. The Publications Director Mr. Heinz Jeck and Fr. Matthias Helms, SVD from the Swiss Mission Procure represented the province administration. Fr. Marcel Frei, SVD represented the SVD community



in the Marienburg in Rheineck. The Fair was a welcome occasion for numerous contacts with benefactors, subscribers of our magazines and people who know the SVD.

*www.steyler.eu*

### **Oies (ITA):**

#### **A pilgrimage to Oies of University Pastoral students**



*Pastoral students in a pilgrimage to Oies.*

From May 17 to 20, eighteen students from various universities who regularly attend the University Pastoral Center (UPeCe) in Bratislava made their pilgrimage to Oies. Fr. Stanislav Krajňák SVD, who is in charge of the Center, guided the group. The participants were heartily welcomed in the house where St. Freinademetz was born and grew up. They learned personally about the life and mission of our first missionary to China. Many of them were in Oies for the first time, and the beautiful nature and the unique surroundings captivated them. They climbed the hill of Santa Croce, where as a child and young man Joseph Freinademetz used to walk with his father every Sunday to church. They also joined the local community for the Taizé prayers held in the Chapel of Freinademetz's birth house.

### **Pan American Zone**

#### **Aracaju, Sergipe (BRN):**

#### **SVD lay associates committed to the Church**



*SVD lay associates committed to the Church*

Every year students from UPeCe and SVD priests visit Oies to pray to St. Joseph Freinademetz, the patron saint of the University Pastoral Center in Bratislava since its beginning in 1997. Daily, hundreds of young people come to this Center to participate in Masses and activities to build mutual relationships and to experience spiritual growth.

--- Fr. Martin Štefanec, SVD

#### **Brno, Czech Republic (SLO):**

#### **Vietnamese Christian Community gathering**



On May 1, 2018, the memorial of St. Joseph, the Patron Saint of the workers, there was a meeting of the Vietnamese Christian community living in Brno, in the Czech Republic. This Vietnamese community in Brno and its surroundings is led by Fr. Joseph Khang Thanh Dao, SVD.

The celebration began with a procession of the statue of Saint Joseph. The procession was done in a creative atmosphere with the beautifully decorated statue accompanied by flags. During the procession the three hundred Vietnamese participants including their children sang songs in their native language. SVD seminarians from Vietnam, currently in Slovakia, also attended the ceremony. There is also a Vietnamese community in Prague entrusted to our confrere, Fr. Jan Hung Thé Nguyen SVD.

--- Fr. Milan Toman SVD

From April 20-22 lay representatives from SVD parishes and some SVDs gathered for a meeting held in Aracaju, Sergipe. The forty-three participants, among them ten SVDs, met together to strengthen cooperation and good relations among those involved in the parishes. The theme chosen for the occasion was "The SVD charism at the service of the Church in cooperation with the lay people." Since it was also the Year of the Laity, the meeting was inspired by the Document #105 of Conferencia Nacional Dos Bispos Do Brasil (CNBB) which focuses on Lay Christian men and women in the Church and Society.

The gathering included sharing, prayer sessions, and biblical reflections among others. The symbols of the light and salt were used to reinforce the role of the laity in the Church. The different parishes of the Subzone Brazil also discussed and planned for the coming Lay Congress to be held in Santa Isabel, Espirito Santo in



July 2019. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist highlighted the event. The participants returned to their home parishes motivated and inspired by the SVD charism and their role as lay men and women in their local Christian communities.

--- Bro. Alfonso Berger

### Juquiá-SP (BRC):

#### Reflection on SVD spirituality and the role of the Laity

A meeting of the lay SVD associates of the parishes of Litoral District was held on April 21, 2018, in Juquiá-SP, in the Novitiate House. This meeting had already been planned since last year and had been reinforced at the first meeting of the district that was attended by the laity in Iguape-SP earlier this year. For this meeting the representatives were led by the couple Nelson Tysky and Irani who came from São Paulo. They presented the theme "SVD Spirituality and the Vocation to Holiness of the People of God." Nelson and Irani led the participants to deepen their reflection on their work within their communities and society as "salt of the earth and light of the world." Some of the points of Document 105 of the CNBB on the challenges of the world now, as well as the vocation and role of the laity, were raised in the group discussion. The meeting ended with a mission sending and a lunch prepared by the novices.

<http://www.verbodivino.org.br>

### São Paulo (BRC):

#### A deep-seated experience with the poor



*I admire the women who cook for those in need.*

Frater Akizou Gerard Kamina, SVD has begun his Cross-Cultural Training Program in Brazil. Born and raised in Togo, West Africa, Akizou professed vows with the Society of the Divine Word in 2015. Next year, he will return to Catholic Theological Union in Chicago to complete his seminary studies. He shares the following:

Though I focused on language learning during my first months in Brazil, I decided to also do pastoral work at Nossa Senhora da Aparecida (Our Lady of Aparecida) parish in São Paulo. My first pastoral experience was with our homeless brothers and sisters. Every Thursday, my fellow volunteers and I served meals to them. Before each meal, we prayed together to show solidarity in struggles and to rely on God's assistance. Through prayer, we all asked God to provide

for our future ministry and mission.

I admire the women who cook for those in need. They are devoted and committed. I also admire the recipients, the people who are homeless. I admire their ability to show up with high spirits. We share an hour of happy time. The goal is not so much to cook for those without homes but to build a community with them.

We eat the same meal. We engage in discussion. They share their difficulties and joys with us. We feel that they are part of our lives, and we are part of their lives. We celebrate together. For instance, I celebrated my birthday with them. We shared Christmas with each other. We are one family under God.

The shelter serves about 60 people of various ages, including children. I was stunned the first time I met four homeless children. It was a challenging experience for me because it was the first time in my entire life that I had seen children who were homeless. After this encounter, I always made sure to take good care of these children. In addition to offering meals to them, we now offer haircuts to those who want them. Our services to these homeless people are ways to make them feel dignified and included in society.

This experience has allowed me to reflect on a question that was asked of Jesus: "Who is my neighbor?" (Lk 10:29) By serving and being with my homeless brothers and sisters, I came to realize that every human being—without distinction of color, race and social class—is a reflection of God's love; therefore, each person should be loved unconditionally.

<https://svdchicago.wordpress.com>

### Chicago (USC):

#### The first pastor of two historic parishes

On April 22, 2018 members of St. Elizabeth and St. Anselm, the oldest African-American parishes in Chicago, gathered for the installation of Fr. Robert Kelly, SVD as the first pastor of both longstanding parishes. Participants from both parishes, as well as about 30 members of Fr. Kelly's family and numerous Chicago Province members attended the Mass and luncheon. Chicago archdiocesan priest Martin T. Marren of St. Emeric represented Bishop Joseph Perry while Parish Council Presidents Virginia Cook and William Higgenbottom formally introduced Father Kelly as the new pastor of the two parishes during the Mass. Fr. Quang Duc Dinh, the Provincial of USC, was present for the occasion. Divine Word Missionaries have served at St. Elizabeth since 1924 and St. Anselm since 1932.

--- USC Province Newsletter

### USW

#### Promoting the SVD with banners

The hanging and retractable (stand up) banners of our founders have been distributed to all the parishes as follow up on the USW parish profile.

The hanging banners are of the Founder Saint Arnold Janssen and our first missionary Saint Joseph Freinademetz. One of the standup banners gives necessary information about the society like our famous and proper name, the number of members, and the number of countries we are ministering, as well as the names of the three provinces in the United States. The second stand up banner gives information about the three religious orders founded by Saint Arnold Janssen.

There are also bookmarks with the quarter hour prayer and the invocation prayer of our saints. They are in English and Spanish. There are also the pictures of the founders (28×25 inches) for framing. These are ready for distribution to the parishes administered by the SVDs. The Vietnamese Charitable Association (VCA) and its benefactors sponsored the banners, bookmarks, and pictures of the founders.

--- USW Newsletter

### Panama (CAM):

#### Proclaiming the Word of God



#### -- at home and away from home

*The Ramirez couple from Panama is active as SVD lay associates in Panama. The following is one of their stories as active lay associates.*

We, my wife (Rubiela Ramirez) and I, are chosen as delegates to proclaim the Word of God here in Panama. It could be sharing the Good News with the less fortunate kids down the street or spreading the Word in a town a couple of hours away from home! During the Holy Week, we visited a small mission town with only 500 humble and straightforward inhabitants. To my surprise, the whole community was waiting for our arrival. We felt the presence of God in the families that welcomed us, in our visits to many homes, in the Way of the Cross and Holy Rosary processions. I had the opportunity to give the inhabitants a reflection on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

We are proclaiming the story of God's saving grace in our lives. We take communion to the sick and the dying. We have already formed five prayer groups. As family catechetical trainers, we plan to travel to Nicaragua and Mexico, to exchange ideas with our Mission-

ary brothers and sisters and to work with new zeal to spread the mission of Christ!

--- Newsletter of SVD Lay Partners

### Encarnación (PAR):

#### Laicos Verbitas

During Lent, the Lay Missionaries of the SVD Parish of San Roque, Encarnación, Paraguay, organized a charity campaign to help the SVD and diocesan seminarians. On March 17th, Laicos Verbitas went on to Asunción to deliver the donations and share a beautiful day with the seminarians. The seminarians were happy and grateful to receive the support from the parish community. The Laicos Verbitas are thankful for the collaboration of the parishioners. They assured us that their group will continue to support and accompany more vocations with their prayers and material support.

--- Newsletter of SVD Lay Partners

### Techny (USC):

#### Cultural Orientation Workshop (COW)

This year is the 22nd edition of the COW since its inception in 1996, and there are fourteen participants. Over 300 members of the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and Divine Word Missionaries in North America, which include Canada, the U.S., and the Caribbean, have gone through this program. This number consists of those who arrive for their missions and the students who come for higher studies in the U.S.

The COW topics are about people, money, and customs which are essential elements of any culture. Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD sets the tone for the COW by talking about how the process of a cultural orientation takes place in general, more specifically in the American context. Then Fr. Roger Schroeder and Sr. Mary Miller, SSps share how mindfulness of sexuality and gender role become significant factors in one's attitude moving from one's own culture to another new and different one. Sr. Judy SSps and Fr. Sam Cunningham, SVD take these topics to a more practical context by looking closely at how ordinary Americans deal with sexuality and gender relationships in everyday life.

Being aware of the legal issues and sexual abuse policy is an absolute requirement for every COW participant. Sr. Betty Tranel, SSps, Fr. Adam MacDonald, SVD, and Fr. Mark Weber, SVD have been excellent in handling this topic. Since the Church in America has gone through a significant demographic change in the last decades, it has been an exciting topic of discussion. Fr. Steve Bevans, SVD graciously shares his expertise and experience in this regard. Then, to make it more contextual to our SVD and SSps mission in the U.S., Bro. Rodney Bowers, SVD presents a brief history of the role of Brothers in the SVD history in North America and how we became involved in the African-



American Apostolate, alongside the presentation of the history and mission of SSps by Sr. Priscilla Burke, SSps.

Overall, the COW has been instrumental in preparing our newly arrived sisters and brothers for their missions. It implements well the mission statement of the Chicago Province to welcome and introduce our members for their ministries. The one-week program of COW concludes when Fr. Edward Peklo, SVD puts the whole COW process into a spiritual perspective through his presentation entitled "Life-giving Pass-over."

--- Fr. Lukas Batmomolin, SVD  
Superior Delegatus



The participants and organizers of the 2017 COW.

## OUR DEPARTED

### SVD

| Name                            | Province | + Date-Death | Age | Vows | Year of Orders |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------------|-----|------|----------------|
| Fr. Akueson, Jean-Pierre Adote  | NEB      | 10.05.2018   | 38  | 11   | 06             |
| Fr. Lando, Modestus             | HUN      | 14.05.2018   | 44  | 23   | 16             |
| Bro. Hegarty, Patrick <Columba> | USC      | 28.05.2018   | 97  | 71   | **             |

### SSps

| Rel. Name & Family Name             | Prov./ Reg | +Date-Death | Age | Year in Vows |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-------------|-----|--------------|
| Sr. Pacia, Tamiko Kanamori          | JAP        | 28.04.2018  | 89  | 60           |
| Sr. Cyrila, Gabriela Šoltésová      | SLO        | 09.05.2018  | 92  | 46           |
| Sr. Regis, Hedwig Maria Niklas      | GER        | 10.05.2018  | 73  | 50           |
| Sr. Theodore, Hedwig Angela Lampe   | GER        | 18.05.2018  | 86  | 60           |
| Sr. Efigenia, Nélida Olivia Sterzer | ARN        | 21.05.2018  | 76  | 55           |
| Sr. Lucrecia, Francisca Puerta      | ARS        | 21.05.2018  | 94  | 67           |

## OBITUARIES

### Fr. Jean-Pierre Adote Akueson (NEB) 10.05.2018; 80-06-07-11-12



Jean-Pierre Adote Akueson was born on February 22, 1980, in Lomé, Togo. He is the second of a family of four children of Alphonse Kpakpo Akueson and Rosaline Adjoavi kokoe Tanja. Jean-Pierre was only eight years when his dear mother died. Due to his mother's death

he was entrusted to the care of an aunt. When she too died, Jean-Pierre was welcomed in another closely related family. The children in that family became for him like his true brothers and sisters. One of them, Jeanette was exceptionally close to him and was a true sister to him till the last minute of his life. Once she asked Jean-Pierre: "What played a decisive role in your choice for the religious life and the priesthood? Jean-Pierre responded, "At the time that I was a university student, I stayed with a Muslim friend. Very early, every morning, he went for prayer. One day I asked myself what do God and faith really mean to me? Then and there I decided, when my friend would leave for prayer, to go and attend Mass. With the passing of time my resolve to enter the seminary was strengthened."

In September 2003, together with nine other young men, Jean-Pierre started his study of Philosophy in the SVD Seminary in Kegue-Lomé, Togo. He was spontaneous in his relations with others and very much liked by young people. During his studies of philosophy he showed already a great interest in catechesis. He enjoyed preparing young people for first communion and confirmation. He began his Novitiate in Nkwatia Kwahu (Ghana) on July 14, 2006. On July 20, 2007, he professed his first vows. He did his theological studies in the Common Formation Center in Tamale, Ghana and professed his final vows on August 15, 2011. On September 8, 2012, he was ordained a priest at the parish of the Holy Martyrs of Uganda in Lomé by his Excellency Denis Komivi Amuzudzakpa. In December of the same year Jean-Pierre set foot on Dutch soil and joined the SVD Missionary Life Group in Nieuwegein, near the city of Utrecht.

The language-learning and the inculturation process were not easy for him. An experienced private language teacher and two dedicated language buddies helped him to make continuous progress. It made him very happy to be given the opportunity to be chaplain of the French speaking community in Amsterdam and to assist in The Hague. He also gave attention to the Filipino Catholic communities at Lelystad and Haarlem. He had

a liking and gift for catechesis, especially the preparation for first communion and confirmation caused him great joy.

Fr. Jean-Pierre was a good listener and easily approachable. He helped people facing their personal problems and was many times called in to help solving family conflicts. He touched the lives of many. His daily reflection on the scripture reading of the day, which he sent via WhatsApp and Facebook, were highly appreciated. In 2015 he participated in a six-month supervised introductory pastoral program in the Ludgerus Parish in Utrecht. Towards the end of 2017 he was about to be appointed to a part-time pastoral task in a Dutch parish. He was a very active member of the provincial JPIC commission and of the Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Antenne. Nationally, he played a leading role in a special working group called "Colored Religious Life". By many he was considered the man of the future.

However, at the beginning of 2018 Jean-Pierre was diagnosed with stomach cancer; it spread to the liver and the lungs. For some time he was lovingly cared for by his sister Jeanette and her husband in Paris. When his situation became critical he came to the Mission House in Teteringen where he died in the early morning of May 10, 2018, Ascension Day. The funeral service, on the day before Pentecost, was a true Pentecost happening. An estimated 400 people from many nations, cultures and languages had come for the farewell ceremony. Fr. Pierrot Mazono SVD, from the Democratic Republic Congo, and Fr. Edmund Owusu SVD, from Ghana, presided at the Mass, with at least fifteen priests from Africa and other nations concelebrating.

For one hour and a half people had, while singing and praying, the opportunity to bid a personal farewell to Jean-Pierre. The concelebrated funeral Mass lasted for another one hour and a half with an inspiring homily by Fr. Mazono. At the grave Fr. Herman Wijten, SVD characterized Jean-Pierre as the missionary who had started to harvest but who was above all a missionary who had abundantly sowed seeds in the minds and hearts of people. We the recipients of these seeds have now the task to let these seeds sprout and let them come to full life. Fr. Jean-Pierre passes his mission on to us and to all whose life he touched.

#### **Fr. Modestus Lando (HUN)**

**13.05.2018; 74-93-95-01-02**



Modestus Lando was born on June 16, 1974 in Orong, belonging to the diocese of Ruteng, Indonesia of Abul Kasimirus and Katarina Din. He completed his high school at Pius XII Minor seminary in Kisol of western Flores. He entered the Novitiate in Nenuk on August 1, 1993 and two years later, on August 2, 1995 he pro-

fessed his first vows in Nenuk. He did his theological studies in Ledalero. He professed his final vows in Ledalero on August 15, 2001. He was ordained a priest on July 18, 2002 in Ranga.

When Fr. Lando arrived in Hungary he did his language studies and was eventually assigned in 2003 as a member of the Budapest District. Later he worked in the parishes of Csehimindszenti from 2005-2006 and in Letenye belonging to Szombathely diocese from 2007-2008. He also worked in Hajós of the Kalocsa-Kecskemét diocese from 2008-2010 as the administrator of the parish. From 2011 to 2016 he worked in Köröm parish of Eger diocese as the parish priest and also as the JPIC coordinator of the HUN Province serving in the gypsy ministry.

For the last two years Fr. Lando was stationed in St. Emeric mission house, Kőszeg as the assistant director of the Divine Word Centre. He died of heart attack in Kőszeg at St. Emeric mission house in the evening hours of 13th May 2018. On May 24th Fr. Modestus Lando was buried in Kőszeg Cemetery. May his soul rest in peace.

#### **Fr. Fernando Villanueva (ECU)**

**27.04.2018; 40-59-61-66-67**



Fernando Villanueva was born on October 29, 1940 in Esnoz, belonging to the diocese of Pamplona Spain, of Fernando Villanueva and Hemenegilda Cilveti. He first entered the SVD seminary in Estella on September 11, 1952. He began his novitiate in Estella on September 8, 1959 and two years later he professed his first vows in Dueñas. On September 29, 1966 he professed his final vows in Cizur Menor. He was ordained a priest on February 5, 1967 in Cizur Menor.

For part of 1967 Fr. Villanueva was in Rome to take up some studies and in 1968 he was in Congo for almost a year; he then returned for pastoral work in the Province of Spain (ESP). Between 1973 and 1982 he was in Colombia and subsequently he was assigned to the Province of Ecuador (ECU). From 1983-1989 he was appointed the Provincial of ECU for two terms. In 1990 he was transferred to ESP and for the next three years he offered his pastoral services there. In 1993 he was transferred back to ECU and remained in this province until he breathed his last.

So many who knew Fr. Villanueva, religious and laity, testify that he was a man in love with God, his priesthood, the mission, especially the poorest, and in love with his community of brothers of the Missionaries of the Divine Word. He continued to assume roles of leadership in the province as Provincial Councilor (1995-2001), Vice Provincial (1998-2001, 2005-2007)



and District Superior of Litoral District (2000-2004). He worked in several parishes in Guasmo, in Esmeralda, in Muisne, among others. He also dedicated his time and talents in Centro Misionero in Quito.

Fr. Villanueva was a helpful, generous, available and affectionate brother to all the sisters and brothers around him. He served the Church in Latin America for 45 years. So enamored was he of the mission that, on his bed of pain, he said: "I am satisfied with the mission in Ecuador over these 41 years. Thank you all. We must remain united in the testimony, continue to evangelize and do good until heaven." He was an exemplary and helpful missionary always willing to assist others in

whatever was needed. He was very gifted with intellectual abilities and knew how to take advantage of them to serve the Congregation in different responsibilities. He was a community man, leader and prudent counselor, visionary and passionate director. His breadth of knowledge and depth of thought has been a blessing for the whole Church, and especially for the Congregation.

Fr. Villanueva was a man of prayer, which never changed, especially in his last painful times. In his last illness, which lasted several years, he was always led by a faith open to the service that obedience indicated. Thank you, Fr. Fernando, for your witness of life and faith.

## APPOINTMENTS AND TRANSFERS

### APPOINTMENTS

|            |                              |                                    |     |
|------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----|
| 01.05.2018 | Fr. Eko Yuliantoro, Antonius | IDJ oecon Mission Office Indonesia | aft |
| 08.05.2018 | Bro. Kanarski, Wictor        | PNG adm/prov                       | aft |
| 08.05.2018 | Fr. Durero, Joseph           | PNG cons/prov                      | aft |
| 25.05.2018 | Fr. Cellan, Narciso          | KEN/PHS                            | aft |

### TRANSFERS

|            |                               |                        |
|------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 16.04.2018 | Fr. Malek, Roman              | GER/POL for retirement |
| 04.05.2018 | Fr. Sequiera, Melvine Baptist | INC/INM                |
| 08.05.2018 | Fr. Mazur, Jozef              | GHA/POL                |
| 18.05.2018 | Fr. Monteiro, Vilson          | COL/BRS                |
| 22.05.2018 | Bro. Smolinski, Przemyslaw    | BRN/POL                |
| 25.05.2018 | Fr. Cellan, Narciso           | KEN/PHS                |

## A Guide to follow the development of the XVIII General Chapter on the Internet

The General Coordinator of Communications, Fr. Modeste Munimi SVD, informs us about the sources on the Internet where we can follow the development of the XVIII General Chapter that begins on June 17, 2018.

Being informed of the events puts us in the spirit and direction of this General Chapter and we accompany this important event with our prayers.

**Facebook page:** - witnessing to the word - SVD 18th general chapter(<https://www.facebook.com/Witnessing-to-the-Word-SVD-18th-General-Chapter-1410060179296645/>)

**Twitter:** @witwordsvd (<https://twitter.com/witwordsvd>)

**Blog:** [www.svdgenchap2018.com](http://www.svdgenchap2018.com)

**Web:** [www.svdcuria.org](http://www.svdcuria.org)

**YouTube:** Communications Svd



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