New Life for Year Abroad Program

Divine Word College is breathing new life into a program that offers seminarians the opportunity to spend two semesters studying abroad while immersed in another culture. Plans are being finalized for an updated Year Abroad program to begin June 2014, through an agreement with Christ the King Mission Seminary in Quezon City, Philippines.

Christ the King, the SVD college seminary in the Philippines, has approximately 275 seminarians from nearly 20 orders and dioceses, primarily from the Philippines, pursuing a degree in Philosophy.

“From the beginning of my presidency I have been thinking that it would be good if at least some of our students had the opportunity for a cross-cultural experience in another country,” said Fr. Tim Lenchak, SVD, president of Divine Word College. “Our students certainly rub shoulders with other students as well as faculty and staff from other cultures and have contact with people in the area through their apostolic ministries. But that’s not the same as study, work, or ministry in another culture or country.”

This concept is not new to DWC. The college began a year-abroad program in 1974. Until 2007, the program sent students to many countries, including the Philippines, Mexico, Argentina, Jamaica, Vietnam, Thailand and Korea. But the vast majority of the students spent their year abroad at Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan. In fact, DWC graduates Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD, provincial of the Chicago Province, and Fr. Mark Weber, SVD, general secretary for formation and education for the SVD General Administration in Rome, were among the first three students in the program. They spent a year at Nanzan, during the 1974 - ’75 academic year.

In the beginning, the idea was for the program to be a “junior” year abroad. But there was a problem, according to Fr. Ken Anich, SVD, who supervised the previous program for many years, and made a trip to Christ the King last summer to firm up details of the new program.

“It was never really a junior year abroad, it was more about language learning, which essentially added a year to their academics,” Fr. Ken said.
A Word from the President:

Fr. Tim Lenchak, SVD

What's the difference between a bowl of salad and a bowl of vegetable soup? The ingredients may be the same, but they are quite different. This difference comes from the process of cooking. Cooking vegetables together changes them from salad to soup. Having different vegetables in a salad can influence the overall taste. A salad with onions or tomatoes is not the same as one without, yet the onions and tomatoes won't necessarily change the taste of the carrots or celery. But in a soup, the flavors blend with one another, and each of the vegetables contributes something to the taste of the broth.

Here at Divine Word College our ideal is not simply a community where people of different cultures or nationalities can co-exist side by side with one another—a “multicultural” community. Rather we hope to build a community in which individuals from different cultures can interact with one another and mutually enrich one another—an “intercultural” community. In other words, we want to create a soup and not just a salad. As future missionaries, our students not only need to be comfortable in other cultures but they must also be capable of presenting the gospel message in a meaningful way to the people of those cultures.

May God bless our efforts to create a tasty bowl of soup!

For instance, students studied Japanese at Nanzan University but did little else to advance their pursuit of a degree. Because English is the primary language at Christ the King, the DWC students will simply join its academic program, particularly the study of philosophy. “It's like they are taking two semesters here at DWC.”

The path to a degree at the Filipino college is different, according to Dr. Mathew Kanjirathinkal, academic dean at DWC.

“It's not like it is here, where students can pick and choose their courses. Christ the King has only one degree program, Philosophy,” he said. “Each class level has a specific set of courses, so students know exactly what courses they will take each year.”

That arrangement makes it easier for DWC, because the college will know which courses taught at Christ the King equate to DWC courses and count toward the student’s DWC degree. When he returns in the fall, he can go right back into his DWC program.

Rich in Experiences

This new Year Abroad program will expose our DWC seminarians to a wide range of experiences beyond food, social mores and the way people interact. For instance, the school year in the Philippines starts in early June, not August. That means our students will finish at Divine Word in early May and have only two weeks off before flying to the Philippines to begin their junior year.

School life will also be a change. Christ the King is run primarily by Filipino SVDs who operate their college on a more traditional and structured, Philippine educational and formational model. Their school day might be an eye-opener.

“They have morning prayers at 6 a.m. and Mass is at 6:20 a.m. every day,” said Fr. Ken. But students will also have a two-hour siesta in the afternoon. “They have those hours off, so they begin classes a little earlier and end a little later. The evening meal is at 7 p.m.”

Seminarians there also live in an open dormitory area, not separate rooms, and they are expected to wear a uniform, which is basically a white shirt and black pants. “Our students are used to more freedom of choice than they will have there.”

One area of similarity will be in formation. “That will match pretty well. They have formation groups like we do and follow much the same procedure,” Fr. Anich said.

Though English is the primary language used at the college, there will still be some language differences. With seminarians coming from many parts of the Philippines,
Four members of the DWC Class of ‘12 professed First Vows on Aug. 10 in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Techny, Ill. A fifth seminarian, Viet Hoang, graduated from Edgewood College in Madison, Wis., but said that a Come-and-See visit to Divine Word College convinced him to join the SVD. Pictured above from left: Fr. Bill Seifert, SVD; Binh Nguyen; Trieu Cao; Charles Moat; Viet Hoang; Bau Nguyen; and Bro. Rodney Bowers, SVD. In back, Fr. Quang Duc Dinh, SVD, rector of the SVD Community at Techny, and Provincial, Fr. Thomas Ascheman, SVD.

Let the games begin! On Sunday, September 8, students and SVDs commemorated Family Feast, the annual celebration of the founding day of the society. For two hours in the afternoon—before the evening meal, where the students were served by SVDs, as is the tradition—everyone gathered on the athletic field, divided into groups and took part in a series of games, like the one to the right. Here students locked hands and were challenged to duck their heads and step through hula-hoops, passing them from one end to the other without letting go of each other.

Part of the fun at the School Picnic on August 21 was a scavenger hunt that challenged students to find different items around scenic Eagle Point Park in Dubuque or answer trivia questions about members of the DWC community. It proved to be quite competitive as teams spread out in all directions, finding items and quizzing faculty, staff and SVDs. In the process, old friends got reacquainted and new students got to meet new friends in a fun and relaxed way. Combined with raffles and a buffet dinner catered by the DWC Kitchen staff, the afternoon was a wonderful way to start the new school year.

Fr. Joe McDermott, SVD-Retired, has quite an eye for photography, and we like to share his work with you. Here, a trumpeter swan flashes its wings on the edge of a pond, south of Dubuque. Nearby, it’s little ones were floating on the pond, enjoying a day on the water with mom.

On Saturday, September 7, more than 35 Divine Word College students, staff and SVDs combed a two-mile stretch of Highway 20 east of campus, picking up debris as part of the Iowa Department of Transportation's Adopt-a-Highway program. Dividing into groups, they filled four, extra-large bags with trash that no longer litters the roadway near the college. September 7 was also the day that Pope Francis asked the world to pray for peace in Syria, so some carried signs encouraging passersby to, “Pray for Peace.”
DWC Librarian Chairs State Commission

Dan Boice, librarian at Divine Word College, has been named chair of the Iowa Commission of Libraries. The commission is a governor-appointed governing board for Iowa Library Services (IaLS). It is responsible for seeing that IaLS fulfills its mission to advocate for Iowa libraries and promote excellence and innovation in library services to provide access to information for all Iowans.

“I'm excited. The commission is a really good group, geographically diverse, gender balanced and the members come from a wide variety of occupations,” Boice said. He noted that years of spending cuts have been halted by the governor and the legislature, but the state's library system is still operating at 1987 funding levels. “That will be one of the big challenges going forward.”

Boice was appointed to fill an unexpired term on the commission by Governor Vilsack, in 2006. Reappointed twice to four-year terms, his current term expires April 30, 2015. He is also the chair of the Iowa Library Association’s (ILA) Strategic Planning Committee and has served the ILA in many other positions. Recently, Boice was appointed to the Carnegie-Stout Public Library Board of Directors in Dubuque. A native of Western Michigan, he has earned master's degrees in history and library science from the University of Michigan. Boice has been the librarian at Divine Word College since 1996.

“Mr. Boice's appointment by the governor to the commission and being named as its chair speak well for his excellent service to the library community in Iowa,” said Mathew Kanjirathinkal, academic dean at Divine Word College. “Divine Word College certainly considers it an honor that its librarian is recognized as a leader statewide.”

Salvation of the Rich


The Lazarus parable appears to condemn the rich man to torments in hell for no other reason than his wealth and to reward poor Lazarus with bliss for no other reason than his poverty. In the seven “money lover” parables in Luke, Jesus tells the rich and powerful to repent from unrestrained amassing of wealth and to demonstrate repentance by assisting the poor with food, clothing, shelter and medical assistance.

“These parables show that Jesus is deeply concerned for the rich and for their salvation,” Fr. John said. “They need to share their wealth with others and not simply through token charitable donations.” Today, some preach that wealth, success and good health are signs of divine blessing while poverty, failure and illness are signs of divine punishment. “The rich man in the Lazarus parable also assumed that his wealth and fine clothing were signs of divine blessing and he would automatically enter into heaven,” Fr. John said. “This parable demonstrates that this is not necessarily true, and is contingent upon their proper use of wealth and proper social relations.”

Distinguished Summer Visitors

Divine Word College welcomed two SVDs this summer who have faced significant challenges in their work as Divine Word Missionaries.

Archbishop John Barwa, SVD, oversees a region of East-Central India that is still healing after minority Christians were persecuted by Hindu fundamentalists. Fr. Jose Boeing, SVD, regional superior for the Amazon and chairman of the executive committee for the SVD PANAM Zone, fights for the rights of indigenous people against those seeking to exploit the rich natural resources of the Amazon.

Know Your Faith
Archbishop Barwa has a message to fundamentalists—seek deeper understanding of your faith beyond a selective and narrow perception. Fundamentalists can be found in all major religions. He saw the tragic impact of Hindu fundamentalists in the Kandhamal District of India four years ago.

“They massacred 93 persons and randomly burned and destroyed around 6000 houses and more than 350 churches, convents and institutions,” he said. Sixty-thousand people fled into the forests to escape the carnage.

Archbishop Barwa visited DWC in June, after ordaining five SVD priests at Techny. He and DWC President Fr. Tim Lenchak, SVD, have been friends since their days studying in Rome, in the early 1990s. Of the 11 million people in his archdiocese, about 140,000 are Christians. Half of those are Catholic. The majority population is Hindu. Among the poorest are the Dalits—“Untouchables” in the old caste system—and Tribals, who are the indigenous people of India. Missionaries, like the SVDs, work with these groups. Some among the Dalits converted to Christianity.

Traditionally, Hindus are very tolerant and accepting of people of different faiths, but as with other religions, fundamentalist factions have developed.

Tensions erupted in late 2007 when fundamentalists incited Tribals against the Christians. Several days of destruction ensued, but the worst came in August 2008, when a Hindu religious leader was murdered. Maoist guerrillas claimed responsibility but Christians were blamed. Rioting broke out. Finally, in October, the rioting Tribals realized that they had been used. “They say that they are sorry, that they never realized what they were doing,” Archbishop Barwa said.

“Big companies come to the Amazon for mineral rights cut the trees and want to build big hydroelectric dams,” he said. “I help the people to protect their rights.”

Fr. Jose came to Divine Word College for a special program, which offers its ESL resources to SVDs south of the border and creates an opportunity for cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

His home parish is in Santarem, in the state of Para, one of the oldest cities in the Brazilian Amazon. To visit the 35 priests in his region—each priest serving 50 to 60 mission stations—he often goes 1600 kilometers up the river by boat, otherwise traveling by bus or airplane to visit confreres and the people.

Born in Manoel Ribas in 1961, Fr. Jose was ordained in 1990 and assigned to the Amazon Region. He later earned a law degree from the University Tapajos with the goal of educating indigenous people about their rights.

“Sometimes they don’t have a school, or medicine. It is the responsibility for the president and the government to help the people,” he said. “So my job is teaching the people about their rights.”

Those rights also pertain to the land. For many years, large international companies have cut down trees in the rainforest to plant crops. Others seek to mine minerals or construct hydroelectric dams. Such projects drastically impact the people, who may sign over their rights, unaware of the effect on their lives and the eco-system.

“So, I help the indigenous people and fisherman as well as migrant peasants who come to Amazonia - Brazil, I work for strong human rights defense,” Fr. Jose said.

But for eight weeks this summer, all he had to do was concentrate on improving his English-speaking skills.

“For me, the college has a good program for English,” he said. “And I am very happy because I have time for study.”
many will also speak Tagalog, the official language of the Philippines. There are also more than 120 other languages spoken on the country’s many islands. This might come into play as the DWC seminarians do ministry during—or after—the school year. “Since they finish in March, they would have an option for a two-month ministry experience, living and staying with one of our parishes in the Philippines,” Fr. Ken said. “They can get an even deeper immersion into another culture.”

Ultimately, this program offers DWC seminarians a tremendous educational and cultural experience on multiple levels, while delivering a taste of missionary life in another culture. “When our students come back to DWC, they will share their experiences and insights with our students and faculty,” Fr. Tim said. “At the same time I believe that the presence of our students will benefit Christ the King Mission Seminary as well as the Filipino SVD seminarians there.”

He Brought out the Best in People

Twenty years have passed since he left this world, yet the memory of Fr. Thang Tran, SVD, remains vivid among those whose lives he touched. “Thang was so easy going and he related so well with people, they just felt so comfortable around him,” said Sr. Theresa Marie Tran, SCC, spiritual director and Theology instructor at DWC. “There was no guile in him.”

A vocation director, Fr. Thang left DWC on December 16, 1993, for New Orleans to meet with prospective students and to visit his family. Early the next morning, his car crashed into a guard rail near Winona, Mississippi. He was killed instantly.

Born in Vietnam, in 1962, he fled with his family in 1975 and came to the U.S. After high school, he attended DWC and graduated in 1984. During his training at CTU, he went to Brazil for two years for his Cross-cultural Training Program (CTP). Ordained at Techny on March 16, 1991, he was assigned as a vocation director. “Thang was a natural vocation director, because of his goodness,” said Sr. Theresa Marie, who knew Fr. Thang since they were in training for religious life in Chicago.

Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD, assistant dean of students at DWC, remembers when Fr. Thang Tran visited him at his home in California, in early 1993. “He came with his t-shirt and jeans, and was a very casual kind of a guy, very gentle and cheerful, and that’s what attracted me,” said Fr. Hoang, who enrolled in DWC that August. “He is one of the major reasons I am here today.”

Fr. Hoang later chose Fr. Tran to be his spiritual director, but they met only a few times before the fatal trip to New Orleans. “His death was a total shock,” Fr. Hoang said. “I just talked to him the day he left, everyone just casually saying, ‘Have a good trip. See you in the new semester, in January.’ So no one expected that.” His loss touched many lives, many of whom are directly connected to DWC, including current dean of students, Fr. Bang Tran, SVD; former dean of students, Fr. Khien Luu, SVD; Fr. Quang Duc Dinh, SVD, rector of the SVD Community at Techny; and Sr. Maria Nguyen, OSB, member of the DWC Board of Trustees.

“We all were drawn to the joy within him, his joy of being a priest and minister for the people,” Fr. Hoang said. “He had something in him that brought out the best in people.”

Fr. Thang Tran, SVD
Fr. Ken Anich Celebrates 40th Jubilee

The Divine Word College community had a lot to celebrate on Sunday, September 8—Family Feast, the Founding Day of the SVD, and Fr. Ken Anich’s 40 years in the priesthood.

“We have to be sacrament for God’s Word, not simply in what we say, but how we live our lives,” said Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD, who gave the homily at Mass that morning. “Today, we have a beautiful witness of that mission, Fr. Ken Anich.”

Born in Wisconsin, he attended the minor seminary at East Troy before enrolling in DWC, where he graduated in 1969. He was ordained in 1973. His first love was always music, but he was asked to take up counseling to fill a role at East Troy. He went on to assume leadership roles in counseling organizations at the state, regional and national level. While on sabbatical in Rome in 1987, he was asked to be a counselor at Christ the King College, Philippines. Returning to the U.S, he taught while studying for his doctorate at the University of Northern Arizona. In 1993, he returned to Divine Word to become academic dean, and has since taught classes, been a formator and rejuvenated the student lounge, the Pour House.

Perhaps his greatest joy has been remaining in contact with the many students he has taught and guided during their time at DWC.

“Up to now, more than 85 students who have studied with him or had him as a formator have become SVDs, including Fr. Bob Kisala, vice-superior general of the Society of the Divine Word,” Fr. Thang said. “Fr. Ken, thank you very much for all you have done for us, but especially, thank you for being a sacrament of God’s love for the world.”

Response to a Need of Our Female Students

Divine Word continues to enjoy the benefits of strong enrollment and a diversified student body, which include the positive impact of our religious sisters. Growing pains have to be expected.

We have one exercise room on campus. It’s in the men’s locker room, is very small and equipped only as a weight room. This was fine in 1964 when the building was constructed and our students were all male, but today nearly one-third of our students are women.

We plan to substantially expand the exercise area and update its equipment for use by men and women. To do this we will re-configure the men’s and women’s locker rooms, which are also in need of a facelift. The project will cost an estimated $100,000.

Please consider increasing your gift this year, and direct the increase to the exercise room project. Our aim is to raise the funds this year, in time for the work to start next summer.

Each year, you and nearly 6,000 other benefactors support the college financially, helping to assure we provide the best education possible for our future missionary priests, sisters, brothers and lay ministers. We are grateful for your loyal generosity, which provides support for our annual budgeted expenses for scholarships, faculty salaries, facilities maintenance and much more.

From time to time, we need to take on larger-scale facilities repair or improvement projects that go beyond our usual expenditures. This project is one of those, and one that we simply must do. We could use your help.

Thank you for your support and prayers this school year.

The Legacy Society

We work every day to secure the long-term future of Divine Word College. In the spring of 2012, we launched the Legacy Society to honor those who have named the college as a beneficiary through a trust or bequest. By becoming a member of the Legacy Society, you can join with hundreds of individuals who, over the years, have helped to build a $20 million endowment to assure the future of the college. In the process, you can leave a personal legacy of generosity to an institution that is dedicated to helping the neediest of God’s children around the world.

For more information about the Legacy Society and giving through trusts, please contact Terry Sykora, at (563) 876-3353, ext. 278.
**Fans of the FAN Club Honored with Donaghey Award**

When their daughter Kelsey was in junior high school, a social studies teacher said students in her class could earn extra credit if they attended the Lunar New Year celebration at Divine Word College. For 13 years since, Dr. Joe and Sandy Jenkins have been dedicated supporters of the college.

On Sunday, September 29, DWC honored the Dubuque couple with the Donaghey Award for Outstanding Service.

“Joe and Sandy are wonderful examples of what it means to share one’s time and talent with Divine Word College and the community,” wrote Carol and Dennis Powers, who nominated them for the award, pointing to their involvement in the DWC FAN (Friends Across Nation) Club, providing a home for visiting students and support of cultural events. Besides Dr. Jenkins annual medical mission trips to Haiti, the Jenkins are strong supporters of their parish and charitable efforts including the fight against breast cancer. “They are very modest people and it would be hard for anyone to know the extent of their involvement, sharing themselves for the betterment of others.”

As an example, the Jenkins joined the FAN Club in 2001 and have remained connected to the students they've met, even after they've left DWC. For instance, Giang Nguyen, from Vietnam, and Rodlin Rodrigue, from Haiti, were their first students. In May, the Jenkins joined Giang, who just returned from his CTP experience in Mozambique, to see now-Fr. Rodlin ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago. In August, they met again, along with two of their current FAN Club students—Sr. Prunh Joseph Y, IMM, and Sr. Thoa Celine Y, IMM—to see another of their students, Trieu Cao, as he professed First Vows at Techny.

Following the celebration, the Jenkins received the letter notifying them that they were to receive the Donaghey Award. Sandy just had to laugh.

“We just had a great weekend and they want to give us an award!” she recalled. “Divine Word College is the best-kept secret in Dubuque County.”