

The world comes together at DWC

12 countries represented

"As an instructor, you feel in a small way that you are contributing to mission work."

*Sandy Reno,
Director Intensive English Language Institute*

Roll call this semester at Divine Word College is like a meeting of the United Nations!

Argentina? Here. Brazil? Here. China? Here. Columbia? Here. Cuba? Here. Haiti? Here. Indonesia? Mexico? Poland? Sudan? United States? Vietnam? All here!

Can you imagine being in a classroom where each of your fellow students comes from a different country, speaks a different language and has different customs? This fall we have an exceptionally varied group of students from 12 different countries coming together at Divine Word College. Added to our usual mix of seminarian students are SVD fraters, Brothers and priests, Holy Spirit Sisters and Society of Catholic Life (ICM) Sisters.

Building on our mission of training future missionaries, this diversity enriches the learning environment at DWC and enhances our academic program. Students can interact in the classroom, sharing their cultures and learning from one another while providing different perspectives.

Sounds good in theory – how do our students and teachers respond?

"My Level 3 ESL class has seven students from six different countries," says Sandy Reno, Assistant Professor and Director of the Intensive English Language Institute. "It's very cool how they all cooperate with each other, showing sincere care and interest in their respective cultures." Reno adds, "As an instructor, there is a nice sense of accomplishment when you see the language ability of not only seminarians improving – who will go on to study in the college – but also the SVD fraters, Brothers and priests and the Sisters who will very soon continue ministry somewhere. You feel in a small way that you are contributing to mission work."

Thin Duc Tran, a DWC sophomore, used to isolate himself from people who are from different countries. As a native of Vietnam, he says, "I was afraid of feeling shame if I spoke or answered wrong." Today, Tran feels differently. "I find that everyone accepts me and helps me. Now, whenever I go to class, I become active in answering questions and involved in class activity." Tran adds that the SVDs who are studying at the college are role models for him because "they do everything (work-study, community service and academics) to the best of their abilities."

One of these SVD role models is ESL student Fr. Paul (Qian) Zhou, SVD, who comes to the college from mainland China, where he is involved in pastoral, biblical and parish ministry. Zhou stresses the importance of listening as a communication skill.

"Being here is a positive educational experience," he says. "We have come from different backgrounds to learn. Each of us has a strong desire to learn about each other, and we are asking questions of each other and listening." Coming from a culture where listening is valued more than speaking, Zhou feels that "we are all in this new situation together, and this makes it easier to share and encourage one another. We want everyone to smile!"

A freshman from Sudan, Joseph Okello is happy to be here as a student at DWC, a place he calls "a peaceful and cooperative society where I hope to find my vocation." He has his own positive impressions to share. "The SVDs, students, Sisters, Fraters and Brothers are the real seeds of the Society of the Divine Word – the future missionaries," Okello says.

"Being with them and interacting together is important because we achieve cohesiveness as one body in the SVD."



Sandy Reno



(continued on page 2)

Dear Alumni and Friends,

In mid-October several SVD and DWC alumni gathered at the College for a weekend of renewal and fun. Folks arrived in the Dubuque area on Friday evening, toured the area on Saturday afternoon, and joined in the Eucharist and a special dinner on Saturday evening. Some were able to stay over for the annual DWC Mission Sunday celebration. Like alumni gatherings held throughout the year at other SVD locations, this one was a reminder of the strong bonds we continue to share with many former SVD members and candidates. Those bonds now extend to their spouses and family members.

At a surface level, the face of our alumni reunions is that of a person we once were. It is an Anglo and African American face. It represents those generations of German, Polish, Irish, and Italian ethnics so readily attracted by the ideals of religious missionary life and priesthood. It represents those generations of African Americans so determined to take their full place in the life of the Church and its ministries. It is a face that, in its enthusiasm for the universal mission of the Church, reflects the vision of St. Arnold Janssen and the courage of St. Joseph Freinadamez.

Our more recent alumni bring a new face, an Asian face. They are the generation who began arriving in the mid-1970s. They are the generation that in many ways has transformed the SVD here in the U.S. We might even say they are the generation that gave the SVD a new “lease on life” here in the U.S. Vietnamese alumni have helped the SVD in the U.S. maintain numerical strength. More importantly, they have opened the SVD to new values, spirituality, and community lifestyle. Like the face of our earlier generations of alumni, this new Asian face also radiates a love for the SVD missionary ideal and an eagerness to serve in some of our most challenging missions.

We thank God for enriching our SVD community across the generations and through a diversity of cultures. We continue to believe that God has entrusted an important mission to all of us, members, alumni and friends, all who share in the desire to witness to God’s love in a troubled world. We pray for openness to God’s transforming grace, a readiness to embrace the necessary changes that offer new life.

God bless.

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World
comes
together

Teachers,
students,
role models

And just who is the student and who is the teacher in this diverse learning environment?

Larry Udry, Assistant Professor in the ESL Institute, finds this multicultural classroom setting both enriching and stimulating. “In one combined Level 4 / Level 5 ESL class,” says Udry, “I have five Sisters from two different religious orders, one SVD priest and seminarians from a variety of ethnic groups. With such diversity, I can step back and let the class become less ‘teacher-oriented’ – enabling the students to express themselves.” Udry adds that lively disagreements between students provide enlightened interaction and surprising insights. “In this expressive environment, I can be challenged,” says Udry, “and that can be both thought-provoking and rewarding.”



Larry Udry

Sr. Graciella Castro, SSpS, and Sr. Carolina Giay, SSpS, both from Argentina, are students in Udry’s class. Castro is excited about this semester’s unique diversity. “So many cultures and languages enrich our classes in as many different ways,” she says. A self-described perfectionist, Castro explains, “I expect a lot from myself. Because speaking English is harder for me than writing it, the new students are role models for me! Their confidence helps me not to be afraid when I speak.” When asked whether she is a role model for others, Castro is humble. “I was new here once,” she offers, “and maybe I can help those who are new now, and encourage them.”

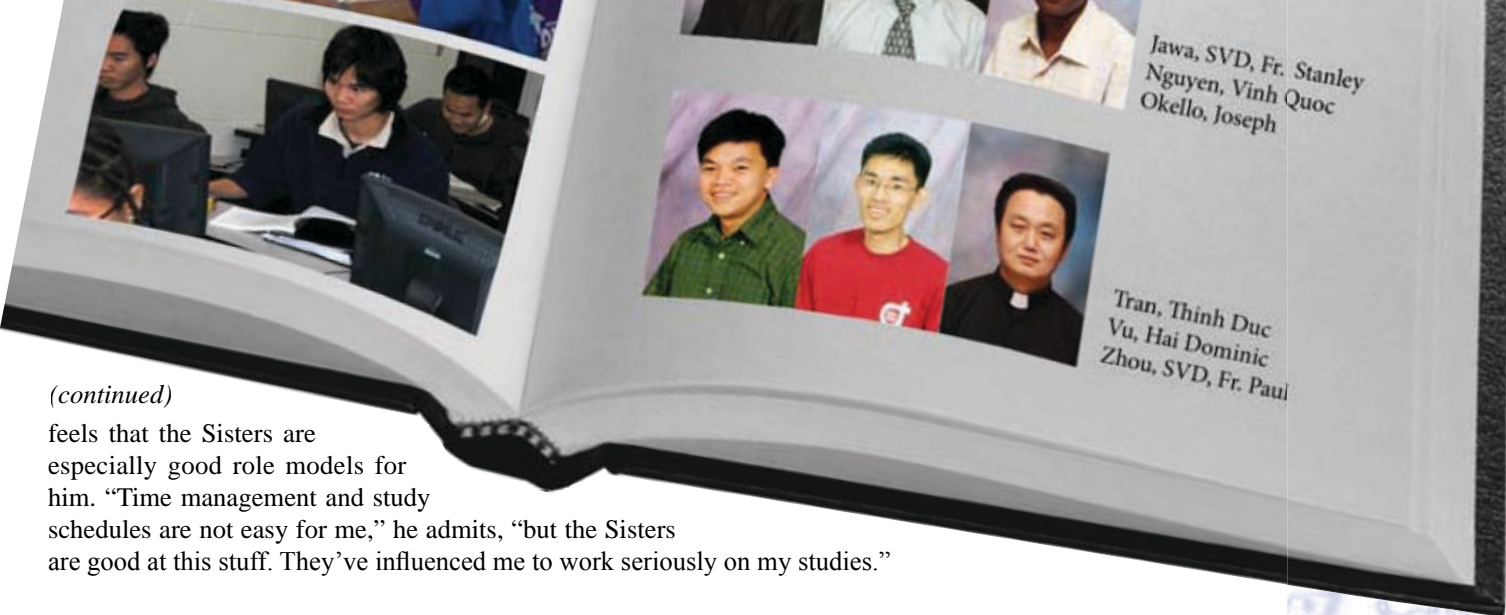
“The differences here at DWC are challenges in communication with one another,” says Giay. Enthusiastic about her studies, she adds, “The variety of accents and the various levels of learning give me the opportunity to listen carefully and be ready to help others too. This is wonderful!” Giay feels that efforts are as important as results. “I appreciate each small effort of my classmates in order to improve our skills in learning English. I value each step we take, no matter how small it is.” Her studies at Divine Word College play an important role in her vocation. “Not only does diversity enrich my learning process,” Giay says, “but also my own vocational process as a missionary. We are following Jesus, and like Him, growing in faith and passing over beyond the cultural boundaries.”

Vinh Quoc Nguyen, an ESL student from Vietnam, is also in Udry’s class. “Many of the ESL students are Fraters, Sisters, Brothers and priests, so I’ve learned a lot from their experiences, which will be useful to me in my future life as a missionary. Therefore, I haven’t been missing any classes and I am glad to have them as my classmates.” Nguyen



Rev. Michael
Hutchins, SVD

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feels that the Sisters are especially good role models for him. “Time management and study schedules are not easy for me,” he admits, “but the Sisters are good at this stuff. They’ve influenced me to work seriously on my studies.”

Expanding our academic program at Divine Word College fosters the formation of our seminarians, dynamic classroom participation, improved study habits and a welcoming environment of student interaction.

Fr. Orlando Abreu, SVD, feels very positive about his education in diversity. “This coexistence with students of other cultures helps me in my missionary vocation,” he says. “I say this because the missionary spirit is the ability to engage, participate and live with cultural diversity. Being here is a grace from God for me.” Abreu, who is from Brazil, believes his presence as a role model for the seminary students is important. “When they see us as SVDs doing work-study, participating in liturgy, ministry and community activities – they realize how much we are involved in SVD spirituality. I hope that my being here encourages others to continue their vocational journeys.”

“I learn much from the new students, even the younger ones – everyone has something unique to offer,” says Hai Dominic Vu. Originally from Vietnam, Vu is a junior and has been at DWC since 2005. He would like to become a priest and care for orphaned children in 3rd world countries. He shares his own unique spin on being a student in a multicultural environment: “Diversity can also result in misunderstandings and it is important to turn that negative into a positive. This forces me to be better, to try harder and to reach out to new students.” Vu is especially impressed with the example of the Sisters who are students at the college. “Their faith is strong,” he says, “and they are wise, with a deep understanding of God. They are role models for me, helping me to practice a better faith.”

Fr. Stanley Jawa, SVD, comes to DWC from Indonesia, and feels that diversity is “one of the very best gifts, emphasizing the SVD motto of *One Heart, Many Faces*. It gives me appreciation of other cultures and customs.” Jawa believes that a sense of responsibility is key in being a role model for seminarians. “As an SVD member, I should have extra time to be a brother for others.” He is eager to share another positive experience in diversity that he encountered. In December of 2004, after the huge earthquake and tsunami that took place in Indonesia, killing many people, Jawa was one of the Catholic volunteers offering aid. In a country that is predominantly Muslim, Jawa relates: “They welcomed me and I helped them in everything they needed. Appreciation for others is the most beautiful thing that we must have.”

Here at Divine Word College, our differences become our greatest strengths.

New and old friends gathered at Divine Word College on October 17-18 for the SVD Alumni Association’s annual reunion. The guest of honor was DWC President, Rev. Michael Hutchins, SVD.

Born in Maquoketa, Iowa, Fr. Hutchins graduated from Divine Word College in 1971. He joined the Society of the Divine Word in 1972 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1975. After education ministry in Los Angeles and the Philippines, he returned to his alma mater in 1993 as the seventh president of Divine Word College. As DWC’s longest-serving president, Hutchins continues to minister in this position and is also teaching a course this semester, *Images of the Priest in Literature*.

Reunion guests enjoyed a riverboat cruise and a visit to the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium on Saturday. The day ended with a tour of Divine Word College followed by mass and a dinner honoring Hutchins. Mission Sunday activities completed the reunion agenda.

Rev. Michael
Hutchins, SVD,
honored
at Epworth
alumni reunion



Mr. Mark Singsank
VP for Development

For the past nine years, the Divine Word College Annual Appeal has played an instrumental role in our seminary renovations. The library, classrooms, hallways, restrooms and several other areas now look new again, thanks to our many generous friends who have financially supported the Annual Appeal.

Since it began in 2000, DWC has raised more than \$700,000 for projects undertaken each year. The current Annual Appeal will complete the replacement of old dorm room furniture and finish the construction of a handicap-accessible restroom located near the front entrance of the college.

Thank you to everyone who has sent gifts in support of our 2008 Annual Appeal. We greatly appreciate your belief in the mission of Divine Word College. If you have never been here, remember you are always welcome to stop in and visit!

Divine Word College has been honored as the recipient of two grants in the past six months. A grant of \$2,500 was awarded by the Alliant Energy Foundation for the DWC Cultural Events Program, which offers a variety of art, lectures and entertainment for our students and all area residents.

The college has also been awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Dubuque Racing Association, helping to complete the handicap-accessible restroom now open for use.

Divine Word College is privileged to be supported by the Alliant Energy Foundation and the Dubuque Racing Association. Their help greatly assists us in fulfilling our mission.

Have you remembered Divine Word College in your estate plans? All bequests to Divine Word College help with scholarship support for our seminarians. If you would like more information about making a planned gift to Divine Word College, please contact Mark Singsank at 563-876-3353 or singsank@dwci.edu

Memorial and tribute gifts offer an opportunity to honor a relative, friend or business associate for any special occasion: birthday, anniversary, promotion or a particular accomplishment. The memorial gift also provides a thoughtful and appropriate way to express timely sympathy and future remembrance. You may send memorial gifts to Divine Word College, P.O. Box 380, Epworth, Iowa, 52045-0380.

Memorials have recently been received in honor of:

John Anich
Daryl Barklow
Regina Burr

Helen Deckert
Adele M. O'Brien
Frances O'Herron

Randy and Dennis Reynolds
Edmund Schmidt

Eddie Schmidt
Jean E. Thines

If you haven't visited our new website yet, check out www.dwci.edu and www.svdvocations.org to see what you've been missing!

Scrolling pictures depict scenes of Divine Word College, with our seminarians and SVDs at work, study, prayer and play. You'll also see Divine Word Missionaries ministering in different settings all around the world. Video interviews of our students will be available in various locations on our website, giving our visitors timely, personal insight into the lives of our students as they discern their vocations.

Browse the site to find out details about academic and seminary life at Divine Word College. Check out the events and news section for the latest updates. View the vocation site and read new stories each week about SVD priests, Brothers, theologate students, novices and seminarians – men in various stages of development in their journey as Divine Word Missionaries. Share in their hopes, dreams, lives and stories – all on our Divine Word College vocation website.

Grants
awarded
to College

Memorials

Explore
our new
website

ICM Sisters
enhance
student
diversity

God's missionaries have many different faces and backgrounds! As fall heralds the return of Divine Word College students, we have some new feminine faces in the classroom this year – three Sisters from Vietnam. Here as part of an academic extension program, Srs. Nga Kieu Le, Phuong Kim Thi Nguyen and Hong Quy Vuong Nguyen are members of the Catholic ICM Society of Apostolic Life. ICM stands for "Incarnation – Consecration – Mission." These words represent the spirit of the Society and its fundamental doctrine founded on the mystery of the Incarnation: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Composed of Sisters only, members of the ICM Society follow Jesus' simple way of life, embracing love and service to others. Founded in 1949 in North Vietnam, the Society aims to combine spirituality (the Word) with apostolic ministry (the flesh) by serving the poor, uneducated and marginalized people in Vietnam. By 1969, the



L-R: Sr. Phuong Thi Kim Nguyen, Sr. Nga Kieu Le and Sr. Hong Vuong Quy Nguyen

ICM Society had some 300 Sisters in missionary work. With the fall of Saigon in 1975, it lost nearly all its houses and members. But today, ICM Sisters have recreated their structure and apostolic service through 33 years of hard religious work, despite laboring under the confines of the Communist government. Continuing their mission of service to the poor, the ICM Sisters open kindergartens for children; maintain houses for the aged, poor and homeless; perform pastoral work in parishes; and promote human development in remote areas of their native country.

"Their presence here will make our school more dynamic and enhance the spirit of everybody," says Fr. Khien Luu, SVD and Dean of Students at Divine Word College. "Their demonstrations of prayer, simple lifestyle and seriousness in studies will set good examples for the other students as they continue to discern their vocations in the religious life."

Sr. Nga has already professed her perpetual vows. Srs. Phuong and Hong are currently in temporary vows. After learning English in our Intensive English Language Institute (ESL), these three Sisters would like to continue their studies at Divine Word College, earning their bachelor's degrees in either Theology or Cross-Cultural Studies. "It would help them tremendously when they return to their native land," says Luu. "The Sisters feel fortunate to be a part of the DWC community and are impressed with our hospitality and the service of the SVD members," he adds.

Divine Word College is beginning to feel like an extended family, a home away from home, for our new ICM Sisters. They like the school environment, the quiet beauty of nature all around them here in Epworth and the spirit of everyone in the school.

Please join our college community in giving a warm Midwestern welcome to the ICM missionary Sisters studying at Divine Word College!

Brother Rodney Bowers graduated from Divine Word College in 1983. After professing his final vows in 1990, he was assigned to DWC, where he spent nearly twenty years teaching theology classes and working in the formation program. He also served as Associate Dean at the College for eleven years and completed two terms as Rector. In the summer of 2008, he was assigned to Techny as the new Director of Novices.

With Bro. Rodney around, Divine Word College was truly a "home away from home" for the students. "I wore a lot of hats during my time at DWC," he laughs. From the smallest details to the largest, he helped to keep the college community humming along. On leaving the place that has been home to him for nearly 20 years, Bowers says, "It's very hard to leave. Divine Word College will always have a special place in my heart." Looking ahead to his new role at Techny, he adds, "I never thought I'd be selected. I am humbled, excited and looking forward to walking with the novices on their spiritual journeys."

DWC President, Rev. Michael Hutchins, SVD, says, "On behalf of the whole College community, I wish to express a strong word of appreciation for all Bro. Rodney has contributed here at Divine Word College. He has served generously in multiple roles. He took on big and small challenges. He involved himself in any task that was for the good of the community and the College. We wish him God's blessings as he begins his new assignment... All the best, Bro. Rodney!"



Bro. Rodney
Bowers, SVD,
begins new
ministry as
Director of
Novices



Divine Word College

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Divine Word College offers some unique and exciting fall events to share with the tri-state area.

As fall settles in, who doesn't love to curl up under a soft, cozy quilt? The DWC community displays their favorite family quilts in "*Made with Love – Quilts that Warm our Hearts,*" opening on **November 19** in the *Weyland Art Gallery*. The exhibit runs through January 16 and can be seen M – F from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tours can also be scheduled by calling **563-876-3353**.

Book lovers will appreciate the next event on our Arts Alive agenda – a lecture series appearance by **Patricia Hampl**, McKnight Distinguished Professor at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. An award-winning author of many books, articles and poetry, Hampl is the recipient of six fellowships and received her MFA in poetry from the University of Iowa Writers Workshop. With a powerful sense of commemoration, Hampl's expressive lyrical prose reflects her faith and heritage and will "unlock a door to the reader's life." Don't miss this special literary presentation at Divine Word College on **Thursday, November 20 at 7:00 p.m.** – a great opportunity to "*meet the author!*"



Patricia Hampl

Wrap up the month of November by sharing in a stunning, world-class presentation by **Tsukasa Taiko**, one of the leading Japanese drumming groups in the Chicago area. Their performance at Divine Word College on **Friday, November 21, at 7:00 p.m.** will thrill the entire family. Mark your calendar for this memorable night of entertainment dedicated to fostering an awareness of Japanese American culture.

All events are free of charge and open to the public. For more information call **Public Relations** at **563-876-3353**. Brighten the month of November by sharing in the unique cultural events at Divine Word College!

Join in
our Fall
Cultural
Events