Vocation promotion with the SVD and vou

Years ago, Divine Word Missionary priests and Brothers frequently visited Catholic elementary schools around the country speaking about missionary vocations to boys as young as eleven.

The young men were invited to pray about a possible calling to religious life. At that time, Divine Word Missionaries in the U.S. operated a number of high schools, also called minor seminaries, where these young men could visit for the weekend or attend a retreat. They got a glimpse into seminary formation and religious life.

Many times the relationships built in elementary school led young men to attend these high schools and begin seminary training in their early teens.

But times change. These SVD minor seminaries are a piece of history. Today men beginning to research a call to religious life can be in high school or even a college graduate.



Vocation recruiter, Rev. Trung Mai, SVD, explains the formation program to a prospective student at the Come and See weekend in April.

#### Invite and encourage

Len Uhal, SVD National Vocation Director, and his staff of recruiters reach out to men across the country with an invitation to religious missionary life. Uhal and

his staff believe that "The Holy Spirit still calls people to religious life. We need to find those people and invite and encourage them to consider a vocation."

Today, SVD vocation ministers use a parish based approach more than the Catholic school focus of years ago. Vocation ministers preach, direct retreats, make personal phone calls and visit with candidates in their homes.

"The young men who are contacting us now seem to be more informed about Divine Word Missionaries, diocesan priesthood and other religious orders," says Uhal who attended the SVD minor seminary in East Troy, Wis. in the early 80s. "Thanks to the Internet, we find that they do a lot of research and consider several options before entering into conversation with one community or another."

Websites and the Internet have become staples in vocation ministry. Uhal receives many contacts through his website at www.svdvocations.org.

Technology is just one of the tools Uhal and his staff use to seek out candidates. "Personal conversations continue to be one of the best ways we connect with candidates. We also use direct mail and advertising. We have booths at vocation fairs at high schools and colleges around the country. And we invite candidates to Come and See weekends where they can discern their vocation and get a feel for seminary life."

A recent Come and See visitor wrote, "I want to dearly thank you for the wonderful weekend I've recently participated in. It was well planned, lively, prayerful and a powerful



orchestrating the Come and See and providing something for everyone—which must truly be a challenge with such a diverse group investigating the college."

"I do want to say that this was a very key thing to do for my vocation. I have

(continued on page 2)

Len Uhal, National Vocation Director, joins students Frt. Ernani Valeriano and Mendie Nguyen in checking out the vocation website.

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### from the President



Rev. Michael **Hutchins, SVD** 

Ten Divine Word Missionaries will be ordained priests at our chapel in Techny, Ill., on Saturday, May 27, and one young Brother will profess perpetual vows later in the fall. Next year a similar number will be ordained priests. Ten of the eleven completing their preparations for ministry this year did some part of their studies and spiritual formation here at Divine Word College. Other graduates and former students will be ordained to the diocesan priesthood. We thank God for the gift of these men to the SVD, their local dioceses, and the universal Church.

In recent years our enrollment here at Divine Word College has declined. We understand clearly the relationship between our college enrollment and the number of men who will later profess vows and enter ministry. If our enrollment here is small, we cannot expect to see the relatively large number of final professions and ordinations that we are seeing presently. We are, therefore, putting much energy into evaluating and fortifying our vocation outreach program, in order to boost our enrollment.

The challenge of identifying and enrolling students well suited for our religious, missionary way of life is met in a number of ways. Most fundamentally we need the convincing witness of Divine Word Missionaries in all our communities and ministries. Young people are drawn to our way of life by the example of joyful, generous, dedicated missionaries. We need the effective outreach of our Vocation Office personnel who travel across the country meeting young people and sharing with them our missionary vision. We need your help, the help of our friends and benefactors, to encourage young people to think about the possibility of a religious, missionary vocation. We need your help to pray to the Holy Spirit that young people will recognize in religious, missionary service a significant way of living in God and for others.

The world needs prophets and peacemakers, reconcilers and spiritual leaders, missionaries to stand at the crossroads drawing all people into communion before God. We at Divine Word College are ready to do our part. Please pray that God will find us worthy of the task.

### Vocation promotion

(continued)

recently talked with my Spiritual Director, and I feel very secure and convicted in saying that God is in fact calling me to the religious life, and that it only remains for me to respond."

#### **Encouraging vocations the responsibility of all Catholics**

Promoting vocations is the mission of the SVD vocation staff. But they appreciate any help they can get. Everyone has a role to play: "The laity of the Church is entrusted with the responsibility of inviting young men and women to consider the different ways God may be calling them to live out their Baptismal call to a life of holiness and service," says Uhal. "Your encouragement might be just the thing a young person needs to follow a call he or she has been hearing."

What can you do? Uhal says that talking with young people about considering religious life is a great first step. Let them know you think they would make a good priest or religious. And pray for vocations. You'll find several prayers at www.svdvocations.org/prayer.html.

We all must do our part to foster vocations in the Church. God will continue to call men and women to service, but it is our job to invite and encourage them to listen and respond.

Note: If you know of a young man who visibly lives his faith and gives his time in service of others, he may be considering a religious vocation. You could help foster a vocation by sending us his name and address. He will receive a packet of information about the Society of the Divine Word and our worldwide missionary work. You can send names to Len Uhal at the address listed on page six of this newsletter or email it to dwm@mwci.net. Thank you for your help in our vocation work.

The DWC World is published three times each year by the Development Office at Divine Word College, Epworth, Iowa. Editor/ Designer: Sandy Wilgenbusch. Editorial Committee: Mr. Dan Boice, Mr. Mark Singsank, Ms. Sandy Nickel, Dr. Marilyn Taylor, Dr. Enrique Santamaria and Mr. Larry Udry. Phone 563-876-3057, ext. 302 Fax: 563-876-3407 Email: wilgenbu@dwci.edu.

Divine Word College recruits students from across the U.S. Each students has a story of how he came to learn about and choose Divine Word College. Phat Vu, now a junior, hails from Westminster, Calif. Phat was born in Vietnam and immigrated to the U.S. when he was twelve. Like many immigrants, he had problems in school. In addition to a new language and unfamiliar classroom dynamics, Phat had more challenges to face. Teased by American-born Vietnamese for not speaking English well enough, he was initially

Phat Vu, middle, explains the symbols of Lunar New Year to participants of a program at a local multi-cultural center.

discouraged from speaking English. However, Phat overcame this obstacle and graduated from middle school and high school.

Phat Vu first learned about Divine Word College at his home parish. Every third Friday, the Vietnamese Catholic Center in Westminster hosts a vocational fair. Phat was a junior in high school when he met Fr. Quang Dinh, SVD, former DWC Dean of Students. Phat remembers Fr. Quang walking toward him in a large room and introducing himself. Finding him very "persuasive and very honest" Phat decided to learn more about Divine Word College and the Society of the Divine Word.

All potential candidates go through a rigorous discernment process. For many, this begins with a visit to the college—a Come and See weekend—followed by application papers, submission of

records, a letter of admission, and finally enrollment in the college. In April 2001, Phat visited the college. The atmosphere of the school felt "open" and "not strict" as he had thought it would be. Glad that he came, Phat applied, was accepted, enrolled, and has been here since Fall 2001.

Now a junior, Phat reflects on his choice: He likes the flexibility of the place. Since Phat has been at DWC, he has been involved in campus sports as the Sports Coordinator. For summer work, he can apply to work at various SVD houses in the U.S.—a choice he likes. His first year, he worked in Bordentown, N. J. This summer he'll be near home, with a job in Riverside, Calif. In August, he'll head to Japan for the Year-Abroad program. Then, he'll return to Epworth for his senior year.

To Phat, thriving in a life at DWC involves balance. Typically, students who've chosen Divine Word College attend to two important priorities: spiritual life and academics. But Phat, feeling a third pull, adds "community." For him a grounding in community life shared with others who experience the same tensions and struggles provides a stability which makes all the difference as he continues the journey he started more than five years ago in Westminster when Fr. Quang Dinh reached out to shake his hand.

Three seminarians from the Diocese of Trenton, N. J.—Carlos Castilla and Roberto Padilla of Colombia, and Exal Velazquez of Mexico—received a warm welcome last March when they enrolled in the college's Intensive English Language Institute. The men are here preparing for their future ministry as diocesan priests.

The link to the college came through Fr. Miguel Virella, SVD, whom they met in Trenton. Learning from Carlos that he, Roberto and Exal needed a strong English program, Fr. Miguell encouraged them to seek permission to enroll at DWC. A native of Puerto Rico, Father Miguel had himself arrived in the U.S. knowing very little English, and had taken ESL classes in Epworth from 1984 to 1986.

In short, the seminarians joined the ESL learning community and settled into their new schedules of 18 hours of English per week. After eight weeks, Exal comments that he has gone from understanding "nothing" to acquiring "trust in (himself) to learn." Carlos appreciates "the hard work and support" of his teachers.

The story of Carlos, Roberto and Exal demonstrates how anyone can refer students to the college. While a vocation director works full time in recruitment, it is often an SVD, a current student, or an alumnus like Father Miguel who invites and encourages young men to consider DWC.



Roberto Padilla, Carlos Castilla and Exal Velasquez, seminarians from the Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey, recently enrolled in DWC's Intensive English Language Institute.

# It all started with a handshake

by Larry Udry, Assistant Professor ESL

Former student's invitation leads three to DWC

by Sandy Nickel, Assistant Professor ESL Meet Fr. Antonio Romo-Romo, SVD. Fr. Antonio is a 1998 graduate of Divine Word College. After his ordination in May 2005, he joined the vocation staff as a recruiter. We recently spoke with Fr. Antonio about his ministry.

#### What areas of the country do you cover and how much do you travel?

I am in charge of the southwest U.S.—California, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado. I also help with Hispanic candidates in other states.

I am always traveling—spending far more time away from my home base in Riverside, Calif. than I spend there. I try to be at a different parish and a different city each weekend.

#### What are some of your duties as a recruiter?

I contact candidates by phone or email. I visit and interview them and accompany them on their vocational journey as they strive to find God's will in their lives. I also visit parishes where I celebrate Mass or speak about missionary vocations. I also participate in vocation fairs or vocational retreats.

#### How do you find potential candidates?

Some candidates come to us through publications that promote vocations. Others find out about Divine Word Missionaries on the Internet. SVD priests and Brothers recommend candidates and I meet candidates during my travels.

#### Describe a typical day.

8:00 a.m.	Mass with the SVD	community in Riverside
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9:00 a.m. Write candidate reports, contact candidates by email

11:30 a.m. Drive to a nearby city to meet a candidate, have lunch and interview him

2:30 p.m. Drive back to Riverside

3:00 p.m. Contact candidates by phone

4:00 p.m. Exercise

5:15 p.m. Evening prayer

5:30 p.m. Dinner with SVD community 6:15–8:30 p.m. Contact candidates by phone

## He's a travelling man—

A day in the life of a vocation recruiter



One of the most important tasks DWC recruiter Fr. Antonio Romo-Romo has is to personally visit with prospective seminarians.

#### What else would you like readers to know about your ministry?

Being a Vocation Director is both a challenge and a gift. It is a challenge because I do not have stability; there is no continuity, except in traveling and moving from place to place. But it is also a wonderful ministry in many ways. It is an opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist with many different communities, to speak to different youth groups, to interact with people from different cultures and ways of life. But the most beautiful part of this ministry is to be allowed to be part of the journey each candidate is traveling as he strives to find where God is guiding him in his life. Being part of that journey is a constant reminder of how God works in mysterious ways and a reaffirmation to my own vocation.



The college held its 90th commencement exercises on Saturday, May 13. Four graduates received degrees in philosophy and three received degrees in cross-cultural studies. Two additional graduates were not able to attend the ceremony.

Four graduates will continue their formation at the SVD Novitiate in Techny, Ill. beginning in August. One is continuing his formation with another religious order. The two remaining graduates will pursue further education as they continue to discern their vocation.

The Class of 2006: Front row: Damian Harris, Giang Nguyen, Anthony Dai Bui and Valery Joseph Theagene. Middle: Tuyen Pham, Thanh-Tai Nguyen, Lamvien Nguyen. Back: Bro. John Wozniak, FSC, Academic Dean, Rev. Michael Hutchins, SVD, President, Fr. Mark Weber, SVD, Provinical

Class of 2006





Rev. James Heiar, SVD Associate Development Director for Planned Giving

As you learned earlier in this edition of *The DWC World*, several young men have recently graduated from Divine Word College and are moving on to their next destination in life. We wish them well and pray for their success.

All of our students owe a debt of gratitude to you, our benefactors, for supporting them on their journey to become members of the Society of the Divine Word. Without your support many could not afford to attend Divine Word College and the seminary would not be able to subsidize their education.

Because of contributions to our scholarship funds, all of our students receive some amount of scholarship support and many receive full tuition. Over the years, Divine Word has been blessed with generous benefactors who have remembered the college in their wills. Currently, all bequests to Divine Word College are placed in our endowment fund and many gifts are directed to specific scholarship funds, all of which help pay tuition, room and board

for our students.

We believe it is important for everyone to have a completed and valid will. Through careful planning, you can ensure that your possessions will be used for a worthy purpose. Whether that purpose is supporting your family or your favorite charity, it is satisfying to know that someone may benefit from your lifetime of hard work. Unfortunately, less than half of the individuals in the United States have a will at the time of their passing.

If you are interested in learning more about remembering Divine Word College in your will, please contact Mark Singsank at 563-876-3057 ext. 208 or me at 563-876-3057 ext. 248. Thank you for continuing to support our students.

Memorial and tribute gifts offer an opportunity to honor a relative, a friend or a business associate for any special occasion – birthday, anniversary, promotion or some particular accomplishment. The memorial gift also provides a thoughtful and appropriate way to express sympathy at the moment and remembrance in the future. 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:

Mary Catherine Coleman	Dorothy Cox	Harriet Hein	Vivian Mackey	Bernice Jeppesen Pier
Delbert Connolly	Helen Deckert	Ileen Hoeger	Richard McKay	Walter Spoerl
Joe & Tillie Carroll	Lois Gruel	Robert Kieffer	Loretta Pfab	Cyril Woerdehoff

#### **Divine Word College to Host European Trip**

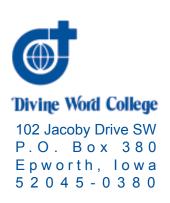
Father Mike Hutchins, SVD, Divine Word College president, will lead a once-in-a-lifetime tour to many sites significant in the history of the Society of the Divine Word sites in Europe. The tour will depart October 9 and return October 20, 2006.

A tentative itinerary includes:

- \* Sightseeing and overnight in Amsterdam
- \* Goch, Germany, and the home of Saint Arnold Janssen, founder of the Society
- \* Steyl, The Netherlands, where the Society was formed
- \* St. Augustin Seminary near Bonn, Germany
- \* Three nights in southern Germany with trips to Neuschwanstein Castle, Oberammergau and Salzburg
- \* Oies, Italy, home of Saint Joseph Freinademetz, first missionary to China
- \* A gondola ride in Venice
- \* Padua and Florence
- \* Sienna and Assisi
- \* Three nights in Rome Experience Vatican City, the Catacombs, the SVD World Headquarters and possibly see Pope Benedict XVI at a general papal audience

This exciting journey will place you in the footsteps of the founder and early missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word. As an alumnus, former student or friend of the Society, you will enjoy this trip and learn more about the Society. Cost of this unforgettable experience will be approximately \$3000, which includes air and land travel, overnight accommodations, entrance fees and at least one meal a day.

For more information contact Mark Singsank at Divine Word College by phone at 563-876-3057 ext. 208 or by email at singsank@dwci.edu



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*Dr. Ron Condon,* Assistant Professor of Philosophy, received the Charles Malin Excellence in Teaching Award during commencement excercises on May 13. Recipients for this award are nominated by the student body.

DWC students recently elected Student Senate officers for the 2006-2007 academic year. Newly elected officers are: *Hoa Nguyen* - President; *Jesus Mata Martinez* - Vice President; *Hau Quang Vu* - Secretary; *Huy Khanh Tran* - Treasurer.

ESL faculty member *Sandy Reno* has been named director of the Intensive English Language Institute beginning in the 2006-2007 academic year. Reno joined the DWC faculty in 1997.

The annual lecture series will feature two accomplished authors during the next academic year. Andrew Lam, writer for Pacific News Service and a regular commentator for National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," will speak on Thursday, October 26. Robert Olen Butler, author of the Pulitzer Prize winning short story collection, *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*, will speak on Thursday, March 22, 2007.

Representatives of the DWC student organization Seminarians for Life participated in a peaceful protest recently at an area clinic. The students prayed and held signs supporting respect for life.

Former DWC Trustee, *Bishop Terry Steib, SVD*, received an award from the National Catholic Education Association at their annual conference. Read the complete story by accessing the link on <a href="www.dwci.edu">www.dwci.edu</a>.

*Bro. Mike Decker, SVD*, accompanied 15 DWC students on a working spring break trip. The group traveled to SVD Southern Province headquarters in Bay St. Louis, Miss. and assisted in hurricane clean-up efforts. A complete story and photos is available at <a href="https://www2.dwci.edu/formation/springbreak06.html">www2.dwci.edu/formation/springbreak06.html</a>.

The 2006 Spring Brunch raised over \$24,000 for cultural arts and programs. The annual event is supported through the work of volunteers who serve on the Community Relations Council. Terry and Paula Friedman of Dubuque served as chairpersons of this year's event.

