

# A Message from Fr. Thang

The reorganization of the Divine Word Alumni Association has gone well since we began in January. In six months, we have created a new structure made up of six regions and are actively recruiting two or three coordinators for each region. We are using social media to reach out to all former students of SVD educational institutions, and we held our first regional gathering in May. Not a bad start!

The most exciting thing is what we can accomplish as an alumni association. We are asking our alumni to remember their school days and what it meant to live for a time with the SVD and be missionary to others. The Divine Word Alumni Association can help rekindle that missionary spirit in three ways.

**Participate in the mission of the SVD**, by promoting vocations, sponsoring missionary experiences, helping to promote and live the Catholic faith with an intercultural

perspective and by praying for and supporting missionaries around the world.

**Reach out in fellowship to all alumni of SVD schools**, by sponsoring regional gatherings, golf outings, fundraisers, etc.

**Offer opportunities for spiritual renewal**, by conducting recollections, workshops, conferences and retreats.

The reorganization will not affect any local reunions or other events, but it is hoped the goals will be included in all alumni events. What we hope to do is to enhance them and rekindle in all our hearts God's call for us to be missionary. As SVDs are also alumni, lay alumni are also missionaries.



*Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD,  
Director - Divine Word  
Alumni Association*

## First Regional Alumni Event

It was more than a reunion of classmates. It was a glimpse at the future of the Divine Word Alumni Association.

On May 4, approximately twenty-five former students of SVD schools in the upper Midwest met at Divine Word College for the first gathering of the Midwest Region, one of six regions in the association's new structure. For a few hours, they gathered in faith, learned about the association's new direction, honored its past director and heard missionary experiences of two alumni—an SVD and a layman.

"For our first effort, things went well," said Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD, director of

the Divine Word Alumni Association. "It was wonderful to come together in this way and, for a few hours, rekindle the sense of being missionary."

The event began at 4 pm as Fr. Thang explained the association's goals and regional reorganization. Then it was on to a special Mass, presided by Fr. Thang with another alum, Deacon Bill Mauss of Dubuque, providing the homily. Dinner in the dining room featured three presentations.

Former alumni association director Mike Cousins, along with his wife Kathy, received a beautiful statuette of the Holy Family in honor of their

work leading the alumni association for eleven years. Father Long Phi Nguyen, SVD, assistant dean of students at DWC, recounted his six years on mission in Chile. Another alum, Art Roche—recipient of the DWC Matthew 25 Award—shared his charitable work among the Marshallese in Dubuque.

The dinner wrapped up by introducing the latest members of the Divine Word Alumni Association—the graduates in the DWC Class of 2019.

"It is a beginning. Now I look forward to similar gatherings in the other regions," Fr. Thang said. "May God bless the missionary spirit in all of us."

