

“To proclaim the Good News is the first and greatest act of love of neighbor.”

-St. Arnold Janssen SVD

the DWWC

World

Educating Tomorrow's Missionaries

Winter 2018



Did You Know?

You can now have a front-pew view of special Masses and other celebrations at Divine Word College by visiting our new Facebook page.

DWC is taking advantage of Facebook features like “live streaming” so our friends across the street and around the world can enjoy a taste of life as it is at Divine World College.

“Like” us and see. More details about the new DWC Facebook page in the article on Page 5!



Divine Word College

Author! Author!

Smiling with pride before a group of elementary students in Dubuque, Sisters Hilda Mpango, OSB, and Byal Y, IMM, read from the children's book they helped write. The two were part of last summer's ESL program where one of their classes focused on students working together to create the story for a book that had images but no words.

“We were hoping this curriculum would stir their excitement for writing,” said Sharon Sinton, a member of the ESL faculty. “Surveying them before and after the summer session, we saw an overall increase in confidence in their reading, writing, creativity and use of vocabulary.”

A primary goal of the ESL program at DWC is to prepare students for further studies, so the emphasis is on academic writing. That can be intimidating. But during a conference in the fall of 2016, Sinton and fellow ESL instructor Michelle Vargo came across “Write Brain,” an innovative program which offers books geared for different skill levels. Each book has its own artwork, but no text. The goal is to challenge

students to tap into their creativity as storytellers while expanding their vocabulary and use of the English language.

The two got approval to use the program as a pilot project last summer. Twenty-four students in three classes broke into six groups; each chose one of Write Brain's many “textless” books and got to work developing a plot, characters, a

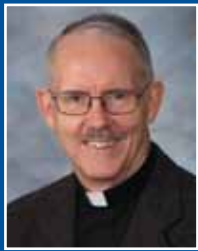
theme and message. Guided by each

book's pictures and aided by lists of adjectives, adverbs and hosts of suggested words for different uses—many of which they did not know, but were now exposed to—they got to work.



At the end of six weeks, they submitted their stories online and by the fall they were published authors. “My English has improved,” said Michelet Boncoeur. “By writing this book for children, it was very helpful because we needed to find the appropriate words to put in the book.” Working together was an invaluable experience for everyone, according to Sr. Norelly Rodriguez Manosalva, RCS. “This project was also very helpful for me, for how I can develop better my own ideas.”

A Word from the President:



Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

Missionary work involves daring to reach out to those who are different from us. That's what Jesus did. The gospels are full of stories about Jesus making friends with people that others found offensive. He talked with sinners and tax collectors, the lame and lepers, foreigners and prostitutes, the outcast and poor as well as the powerful and rich.

Jesus' example leads us Divine Word Missionaries to see our mission as engaging others in *prophetic dialogue*—a fancy phrase, but its meaning is down-to-earth. It's about looking for opportunities to *build friendships* with people who are poor or from a different culture or religious tradition, and especially those searching for a fuller relationship with God. That's what we try to teach at DWC.

Today, division is more common than such dialogue. We argue more than we discuss. We have to “dare to dialogue” with people we don't know or who seem different. If we can dialogue with people in our everyday life, we may eventually reach out to people who appear hostile, and in this way, change the world for the better. Go ahead, do what Jesus did. Reach out in dialogue. I dare you.

Fr. Tom

DWC-Emmaus Collaboration

The ESL program at Divine Word College is developing a mutually beneficial relationship with Emmaus Bible College in Dubuque. Emmaus students are helping tutor our ESL students, while Divine Word's professional ESL faculty is helping the Emmaus students develop as English language educators.

“Obviously, it's extra work for our faculty members, but they have been kind and generous enough to invite Emmaus students to their classes,” said Dr. Seo Hyun Park, director of the Intensive English Language Institute (IELI), which coordinates the ESL program at Divine Word. “For our students, these new tutors offer another chance to practice their English one-to-one and also hear different voices and accents.”

Shortly after arriving at DWC two years ago, Dr. Park looked for other English-language education programs in the area. She found that Emmaus offers its students a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificate program, but it had difficulty finding non-English speakers for its practice-teaching requirements. They had to create classes of English-speaking students pretending to be English-language learners.

“It's not the same thing, it was artificial,” said Michelle Witter, director of the Emmaus TESOL certificate program. “Now they have real-life challenges when they are tutoring or when they are teaching at Divine Word, and they can apply what we cover theoretically in our classes.”

For their TESOL certificate requirement, the Emmaus students must log at least eight hours tutoring students, observe two hours of classes and practice teach three hours under the supervision of a Divine Word ESL faculty member. This semester, 15 Emmaus students are involved in the program.

“Our students talk about the environment at Divine Word. It is so friendly, so very similar to the environment we have at Emmaus,” Witter said. “They feel at home when they are there and they feel like they are learning so much because it's a real experience.”

Though tutoring does benefit our students, Dr. Park acknowledges the extra effort of the ESL faculty, who can remember when they were learning to teach.

“They were delighted to help these prospective teachers,” she said. “All of us were in that ‘duckling’ stage at one time in the past, so we understand what they feel.”



In the DWC dining room, Lily Wanninger (r), a senior at Emmaus Bible College, gains valuable experience teaching English while ESL student, Sr. Duong Y, IMM, benefits from her skills as a tutor.

“The only language understood by people everywhere is the language of love.”

-St. Joseph Freinademetz SVD



Dr. Seo Hyun Park

Blessings of the Light Within

In a small town called Epworth, I have found for myself a world of many facets. Iowa, the land of corn, had to be one of the last places a Jersey boy like me would have planned to go to. Little did I know that there was a world full of cultures and smiles waiting to greet me. Students here traveled thousands of miles, bringing a light that rests inside of them—a light of wisdom and love, fostered in their homes and brought forth to foreign lands to aid the people who reside there. Though I did not realize it, I was one of who people that needed their light.

The familiarity of our own cultures brings us comfort, so we tend to shy away from new experiences. Personally, I had been a hermit. But, after being exposed to so many students from around the world, each with unique cultural experiences and views of the world, I have become more aware of who I am and who I want to become. No longer am I a victim of my own limited view of the world. Before I came here, I had heard of Haiti, Togo, Kenya, Colombia, Myanmar, Indonesia, and Vietnam, yet I had never paid much thought to how people

in those countries lived, loved and expressed themselves ... until now. With their smiles, their wisdom and heart-felt gestures, they have individually brought their own unique light to shine and share with me and everyone here in Epworth, Iowa.



Son "Sunny" Nguyen

Encompassed by their cultural festivities and by their songs, I can't help but fall in love with their joy. I want to learn more and I want to share more. From their cuisines—bringing alluring aromas from their homes, gathering hundreds to partake of what they called a "labor of love"—to the way they dance—each movement holding its own expression of life—they bring more than just smiles. They bring the spirit of their land and people. Here at Divine Word College I am learning that love, compassion, and wisdom are universal, but they come in many different forms and often through the blessed light of others.

SVD Fundraising Felt in Paraguay



A child of Bahia Negra

From poisonous spiders and snakes to arid spring-to-fall heat to crushing poverty made worse by a corrupt government, life is not easy for the people of Bahia Negra, Paraguay nor for the Divine Word Missionaries who share in their existence. But a

fundraising effort by SVDs at Divine Word College is offering some respite.

"I received \$8131.05 from the rector and the Epworth community," said Fr. Lan Tu Luong, SVD, a 2004 graduate of DWC, who is on mission in Bahia Negra with two other Divine Word missionaries. "We will use this gift to serve and feed the hungry children in giving witness of the Risen Lord among the poor and marginalized." It all began more than a year ago, when SVDs at DWC decided they wanted to go beyond their work preparing future missionaries for the church. Fr. Thang Hoang, rector of the college SVD community, said they wanted to help the poor more directly by going "ad extra" which means "to the outside." Last September, they held a four-day

garage sale with clothes and other donated items from the college community as well as many items that had long been stored in the lower levels of DWC. The goal was to raise \$4000 to \$5000 to support a soup kitchen in Bahia Negra, where the SVDs serve a nourishing meal to 150 children every Sunday.

The garage sale surpassed its goal. Combined with additional donations from a second fundraiser, the check sent far exceeded expectations. "We are very grateful for the help and support from our benefactors, in particular the Divine Word College community," said Fr. Lan. "Your generosity has helped and encouraged me to serve more faithfully and abundantly." The impoverished people of Bahia Negra are predominantly Chamacocos, indigenous people who can trace their connection to the land back five centuries. Facing discrimination by government authorities, their lands were taken away and sold to the wealthy, who now prevent them from hunting and fishing there. Today, the Chamacocos are considered the poorest of the poor in that country.

"We have used the funds to help such as building homes, provide clothing, and many other projects, besides the soup kitchen where we can serve the children as well as the elderly every Sunday," Fr. Lan said. "We thank God for the generosity of our benefactors who have helped us to serve the poor and the needy at this remote region."



Fr. Lan with some of his smallest parishioners.



The kitchen and dining hall at Bahia Negra.

DWC and Archdiocese: Partnership in Faith



Each March, students from area Catholic schools gather at DWC to learn about religious life from priests, sisters, brothers and deacons.



SVDs regularly help pastors by celebrating Mass at area parishes and nursing homes. Fr. Long Phi Nguyen, SVD, assisted by Deacon Jim Kean, recently celebrated the liturgy at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Epworth.



Seminarians Roger Kyaw Thu (l) and Boromeo Shwe Pyi Soe (r) join Fathers Luigi Htya Ruh and Ken Stecher in ministering to parishioners from Myanmar, at Sacred Heart parish in Waterloo. Fr. Stecher was the 2004 recipient of the DWC Matthew 25 Award.



Many of Dubuque's communities of religious sisters actively support the college and welcome DWC students. Here Quoc Nguyen and Lam Nguyen (c-r) visit with retired sisters at Mount St. Francis.

Since 1930, when Most Reverend Francis J. L. Beckman, STD, invited the Society of the Divine Word to establish a minor seminary on a site in Epworth, there has been a good working relationship between the SVD and the Archdiocese of Dubuque—a partnership in faith.

“We were invited as guests but now we are part of the whole community,” said Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD, rector of the Divine Word College SVD community. “We’re working for the same boss, same company, we just have different jobs.”



Most Reverend Michael Jackels, archbishop of Dubuque, addresses priests under his leadership at their annual convocation, which for the last seven years has been held at DWC.

Over time, the archdiocese and missionary order, each following the path of Our Lord, have found ways to work together.

Each weekend, SVD priests celebrate Mass at selected nursing homes and parishes. SVD priests and students travel as far as Cedar Rapids and Waterloo, as well as to parishes in the Diocese of Davenport, to minister to parishioners of Vietnamese and Myanmar heritage.

Vocation directors from the archdiocese, the college and area religious congregations formed DAVA (Dubuque Area Vocation Association) to promote religious life. Each March, DWC hosts DAVA's 6th Grade Vocation Day, inviting students from Catholic schools to learn about religious life from priests, brothers, sisters and deacons.

“Divine Word College offers such a welcoming, hospitable atmosphere,” said Sr. Rita Cameron, PBVM, former vocation director for her community. “Everyone welcomes us in a way that you feel like, ‘I’m glad I came.’”

For several years, the priests of the archdiocese have gathered at DWC for their annual convocation, spending time hearing presentations, renewing friendships and enjoying the opportunity to meet with Archbishop Michael Jackels. DWC has also enjoyed wonderful relationships with area congregations of women religious, who have supported the college and its students for many years. Meanwhile, students do ministry at nursing homes and soup kitchens.

Archdiocesan ministers and missionary educators—whether working together or apart—share a common goal as followers of Jesus, which Fr. Thang compares to a diamond.

“It has many facets and each is important,” he said. “The archdiocese may emphasize one facet and we another, but it’s all part of the same diamond.”

A Lot to “Like” about DWC’s NEW Facebook Page

Divine Word College is carving out a bigger presence on social media. DWC’s first Facebook page was a collaboration with the vocation office, blending spiritual messages and interaction with young men interested in religious life with the photos, videos and commentary that offered a peek into campus life. That has changed.

Since January 1, the original “Divine Word College” Facebook page— confusing because there are many Divine Word Colleges all over the world— is now “SVD Vocations,” and a new Facebook page, “Divine Word College – Epworth, Iowa” came into being. Sandy Wilgenbusch, director of public relations at DWC, engineered the transition.

“The SVD Vocations page has been left in the capable hands of Fr. Adam MacDonald, SVD, who is a vocation director and does a wonderful job posting inspirational messages and reaching out to potential SVD candidates,” she said. “Meanwhile, our new page allows us to open our doors wider and share more of the stories, images and activity at the college that most people would never see.”

Besides special events and such things as sports tournaments that bring out the competitive side of our formation groups, there is commentary from students, friends and alumni as well as photos and videos showing life at the college.

“In January, we live streamed the liturgical celebrations for Saint Josephine Bakhita and Lunar New Year,” Wilgenbusch said. “Going forward, people can see these celebrations live or they can watch the video later.”

What makes the page even more powerful is the way it brings people together. Friends of our students and SVDs can reconnect with them and share messages. In the process, our friends and benefactors get a better feel for the people involved in the college.

“I’ve had quite a few people post questions asking about this student or that SVD,” Wilgenbusch said. “Another nice thing is that students whose families live thousands of miles away, all over the world, can see what their students are experiencing, so the more student faces we show, the better.”



New look, "Divine World College - Epworth, Iowa."



Lunar New Year liturgy, live streamed as it happened on February 17.

If you are a Facebook fan, log in and “Like” Divine Word College – Epworth, Iowa. You can stay up on what’s happening at DWC!

Following on Facebook is as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. In Facebook, search for Divine Word College Seminary – Epworth, Iowa
2. Click “Like” below the large image.
3. Click on “Following” and choose “See First” to be sure to see every post!



DWC Photo Gallery

Relatives of the late artist Father Peter Weyland, SVD, traveled to DWC on January 22 to view two of his sculptures and visit the art gallery named in his honor. Bracketing Fr. Weyland's "Pieta" in the entrance to the college, (l-r) are Terri Weyland Henecke and her parents Beverly and Neil Weyland, all of Cedar Rapids. Neil is a nephew of the late artist. To the right of the sculpture are nephew David Weyland of Gilbertville, nieces Beth Swyers of Cedar Rapids and Beverly Culbert of Waterloo, along with Father Tom Ascheman, SVD, president of Divine Word College.



Raising in praise velvety-red Castilian roses, members of the Divine Word College community and guests celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Saturday, December 9. Commemorating the appearance of the Blessed Mother to Saint Juan Diego outside modern day Mexico City, it is one of the most sacred events in Hispanic culture. Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD, president of Divine Word College and former missionary to Mexico, presided and gave the homily at the Mass, which was followed by a banquet and celebration, sponsored by the DWC Chapter of the Association of Hispanic Americans (AHA).

Fr. Sam Cunningham, SVD, delivered the homily and presided at the Mass celebrating the feast of Saint Josephine Bahkita, on Saturday, February 10. During the banquet that followed, organizers from the DWC African-Caribbean Student Association related her story. Enslaved as a child in Sudan in the late 1800s and eventually taken to Italy, she was touched by God during a stay at a convent, won her freedom and joined that community. Much loved for her gentle nature, Pope John Paul II canonized St. Bahkita in 2000. Today, she is considered the patron saint of Sudan and victims of human trafficking.



Stepping out in the dining room, members of the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) show their traditional dance moves before enjoying an afternoon of food and games, all in celebration of Lunar New Year 2018, on Saturday, February 17. Prior to the banquet and entertainment, Fr. Dennis Callan, SVD, former superior of the SVD Korean Region, delivered the homily and presided at a festive Mass, which began with four students in two lion costumes performing a traditional lion dance. The lion is considered a sign of good luck for the coming New Year in the Vietnamese culture.

DWC students, Cruz Colunga (forefront), Eunhae Go (c) and Sr. Pamela Baluka, LSOSF, join tens of thousands of people taking part in the March for Life on Friday, January 19, in Washington, D.C. Boarding three buses sponsored by Dubuque County Right to Life, they left Dyersville two days earlier, arriving in Washington on Thursday. Attending Mass that evening and the following morning, they took part in the march and later visited many national monuments in the nation's capital. Departing Saturday evening, they arrived back home at noon that Sunday.



Third Time's the Charm

Brother Mike Decker, SVD, has been here before.



Bro. Mike Decker, SVD

The U.S. Navy veteran turned missionary brother is a certified medical caregiver and returns to his alma mater to be director of health and work in formation—for the second time. For the last nine years, Bro. Mike directed the Brother Formation Program for the Tri-Province, based at Techny, while working in formation at the Theologate.

Bro. Mike was born on New Year's Eve, 1955, in Cincinnati, Ohio. After high school, he joined the U.S. Navy and learned about the SVD while on leave in Rome. After his tour of duty, he enrolled in DWC, entered the brotherhood program and graduated in 1983. Receiving medical training and certified as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), he directed care in SVD retirement homes in the Philippines and the Southern Province. In 2003, he transferred to DWC for his first stint as director of health and as a formator. In 2007, he was called to Techny to take over brother-formation duties, which he did until earlier this year.

“It’s good to be back,” he said. “People say I look young for my age, but I tell them that I look younger because I’m with younger people.”



Bro. Mike at work in the DWC infirmary.

So Many Needed To Carry Out “Mission”

The church’s mission is never a one-person task. As part of the church’s identity, mission always needs the hands of many in carrying out Christ’s great commission, “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). Having carried out Our Lord’s directive over the past fifty years, Divine Word College has never been a project of one person, group or organization.



*Fr. Linh Pham, SVD,
Development Director*

Indeed, DWC does owe a debt of gratitude to the thousands of students who have studied in its lecture halls and classrooms and to the hundreds of faculty and staff who have labored over the years in the intellectual and character formation of its students.

But this missionary college in Epworth, Iowa also counts numerous financial donors, members of the Mass League, Presidential Club and the Divine Word College Club, as partners in its missionary endeavors.

Since its establishment in 1964, the partnerships in the church’s mission by the benefactors and donors of DWC have continued to reap concrete results.

Mission for those who share the aspirations and dreams of our students is embodied in the many opportunities for offering financial support to the missionary education and formation of the college, allowing members of different cultures and ethnic groups a once-in-a-lifetime chance at having a quality training and preparation for the church’s mission. In this sense, mission has been extended to all those who have made such concrete missionary tasks possible through their generous offering of prayers, Mass intentions, financial contributions and material donations to the college and its programs.

Since its establishment in 1964, the partnerships in the church’s mission by the benefactors and donors of DWC have continued to reap concrete results. This year is no exception as the Chicago Province of the Society of the Divine Word is preparing for the ordinations and mission-sending of five confreres, all of whom attended DWC. Three of them will travel to missionary destinations in South America, one will go to Thailand and one will stay in the U.S.

Although the journeys of these DWC alumni will certainly take them to different locales in the future, one common thread connects them to the same starting point—a sense of gratitude for God’s blessings received through the spiritual and material support of donors and friends of the institution where they received the initial nurturing of their vocations.

For each missionary sent into the field, there are countless missionaries and others laboring back home. This idea is as true now as it has always been in the 50-year history of Divine Word College.



For more information about Divine Word College, call 563-876-3353, email info@dwci.edu, or visit: www.dwci.edu

Honoring the Founding Generation

In January, DWC added focus to the feast days of the founder of the SVD, Saint Arnold Janssen, and one of its first missionaries, Saint Joseph Freinademetz, SVD. It follows an initiative to understand the charisma and spirituality of the founding generation of the SVD and the two associated communities of women religious—the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (SSpS) and the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters of Perpetual Adoration (SSpSAP).

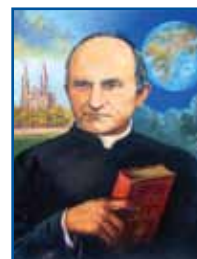
“We need to go back to the beginning to understand the passion and purpose that fired the founding generation to mission in their times and culture,” said Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS, a spiritual director at DWC and former member of the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Team, which was dedicated to this study. “Getting back to our roots gives us our purpose for being. It can generate the passion we need to be missionaries in the cultures to which we are sent.”

Saint Arnold established the Society of the Divine Word in 1875. Born in Goch, Germany and called to

the priesthood, he began as a math and science teacher. Driven by a dedication to the Sacred Heart and a desire to support foreign missions to spread the Gospel, at age 37 he founded the SVD in Steyl, Netherlands. As its ranks swelled, he sent missionaries around the world. Today, the SVD is one of the largest missionary orders in the Catholic Church.

Saint Joseph was one of the first two SVDs sent on mission. Ordained a diocesan priest in 1875, he joined the SVD three years later, heading to China in 1879, never to return to Europe or his home in the Tyrolian Alps. Developing a devotion to the Chinese and a love of their culture, to the detriment of his own health and safety, he consistently put his life at risk for the sake of his ministry. He died in China and was buried where he worked, in Shandong Province.

Each man has a motto. Do you know what they are?



Saint Arnold Janssen, SVD



Saint Joseph Freinademetz, SVD

Find the mottos on the Cover and Page 2.