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THE PRESIDENT *Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD*

Politics would benefit from more 'Iowa nice'

The reflection was published in the Dubuque Telegraph Herald on Sunday, October 19, 2020.

"Iowa Nice" is a label for the general friendliness and openness to strangers that one often encounters in the people of Iowa. Iowa nice is showing when the driver in an approaching pickup truck raises a finger off the steering wheel and gives a small salute as you pass by. Iowa nice is also on display when RAGBRAI pulls into town; the outpouring of good will is matched by the outpouring of lemonade with pie on the side.

There are also some darker sides to Iowa nice. We can be passive aggressive; our wide welcoming smiles can mask prejudicial and discriminatory behavior; we can bury hard problems instead of facing up to them. We are not perfect, and we know it; but in general, we are nice.

The current election campaigns have convinced me that the whole nation could benefit from some Iowa nice. The presidential debates underscored this need. As I watched some of the debate — I could not bear to watch the whole time — I was reminded of a crude sketch used to illustrate interreligious dialogue some years ago. The cartoon-like drawing showed three very enthusiastic people with giant heads. Then I noticed some details were very wrong for an illustration of dialogue: all three heads had tiny eyes, none had ears, but all had huge mouths that were talking at the same time! Is our political environment these days like that? Everyone talking? No one listening? Are our eyes closed to oncoming disaster?

Some years ago, there was a long-running, half-hour political show called The McLaughlin Group. For 34 years, until 2016, John McLaughlin, the moderator, would introduce an issue, and then encourage four panelists to discuss. At about 15 minutes into the program, the cross talk made it hard to discern anything other than growing anger. From 1997 until 2020, Chris Matthews hosted Hardball, a politics and opinion program that often relied on the same techniques: cross talk, raised voices and provocation.



About the same time, from 1991 to 2018, the Jerry Springer Show presented controversial social issues that mostly resulted in shouting, fights and cheers from a rabid audience. Sad.

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A major goal of higher education is to help students grow in critical thinking. Some basic ingredients of critical thinking are: listening to others, considering their ideas and showing civility and respect. Some politicians do exhibit the skills necessary to debate the issues of their time with respect. Face Off, a radio show that aired five times a week from 1986 to 1993, featured Democratic Sen. Ted Kennedy, of Massachusetts, engaging Republican Sen. Bob Dole, of Kansas, or Republican Sen. Alan Simpson, of Wyoming, in brief two-minute debates. They were always interesting, informative, clever and often funny. The recordings of the programs are still available online (<https://tinyurl.com/yxft5wda>). Listen to a few of the mini-debates; notice how they encourage you to think critically.

Iowa nice emphasizes openness and friendliness to strangers and to opponents. It discourages demonizing and interrupting people. That is a good start as we approach Election Day and whatever follows. Archbishop Michael Jackels, of Dubuque, frequently suggests two additional indicators of sound thinking and critical decision-making. He asks, "Am I acting for the common good; focusing on we, you and ours, not on I, me and mine? Am I inspired by the readiness to serve, sacrifice, even suffer for the benefit of others?"

Archbishop Jackels attended the University of Nebraska, and some people say there is such a thing as Nebraska nice. Maybe they are right; but still, I figure that Hawkeye corn is nicer than Cornhusker corn! What do you think?

FEDERAL ELECTIONS

Every year, following the guidance of Federal law, I publish a brief reflection on the US Constitution. This year, I want to mention a few items regarding the upcoming election day. On November 3, the citizens of the United States will vote in elections for the President, the Vice-President, one-third of the Senators and all of the members of the House of Representatives. Individual states will also hold elections for state officials at the same time, some electing Governors and members of their state legislatures.



The US Constitution, as ratified in 1788, contemplated a direct, popular election only for the members of the US House of Representatives. Many later amendments to the Constitution have changed our election procedures.

- In 1870, the 15th Amendment guaranteed the vote to Black people and to former slaves.
- It wasn't until 1913 that the Constitution was amended to have direct elections for the two senators from each of the States. Before that, the senators were selected by the State legislatures!
- In 1920, the 19th Amendment extended the vote to women. Before that, only men were allowed to vote.
- In 1971, the 26th Amendment extended the right to vote to all citizens eighteen years of age or older. Before that, the right to vote was given only to those who were 21 years of age or older.

It still surprises most US citizens that the direct election of the President of the United States is NOT contemplated in the Constitution. Instead, each State legislature has the right to appoint Electors for the office of President and Vice President. In practice, the State legislatures have enacted laws to hold popular elections to indicate which Electors should be appointed.

A message to all US citizens: **VOTE!**

DWC COVID-19 Dashboard

	Number of Tests	Tested Positive	Number Self-Isolated	Number Quarantined	Number Recovered
Before Sept. 15	~200	9	9	~15	9
Sept. 15 - 21	14	0	0	4	0
Sept. 22-28	20	0	0	1	0
Sept. 29 - Oct. 5	15	0	0	2	0
Oct. 5 - 12	20	1	1	4	0
Oct. 13-19	33	1	2	12	2

DWC CHAPLAIN

Rev. Sonny DeClass, SVD

Mission Sunday

This past Sunday we had a joyful and meaningful celebration of Mission Sunday. The liturgy was wonderful with beautiful dances and singing, both live and prerecorded. I am sure we all were inspired to renew our commitment to be missionaries and to support other missionaries around the world.

I was really grateful for all the work. On behalf of the Liturgy Committee, I would like to express my gratitude to those who have contributed so much in the preparation for the liturgy yesterday. Thank you, Fr. Thang and Fr. Tom, for being the presider and the homilist. Thank you also all the liturgists: the server, readers, cantors and musicians, dancers, and flag bearers. Thank you also for the sacristans and those who helped to decorate the chapel. Thank you Vuong and Khoa for putting all the information on the screen for us to follow.

And I also would like to especially thank Dr. Evelyn Dias for playing and putting together the pre-recorded program. We really enjoyed our creativity.

May God continue to bless our community and inspire us with the spirit of mission.



Click link for more Mission Sunday photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/hdB4EH5NpqTbmQdm9>

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Fr. John Szukalski, SVD

ASSESSMENT: CONTEXT QUESTION #2

The DWC Assessment Academy Team collaborated on responding to four context questions designed to provide other Academy participating cohort institutions and facilitators with information about DWC and its assessment practices to date ahead of the actual Roundtable event. Our team's response to context question #2 appears below, with subsequent responses appearing over the next few weeks.

Summarize what your institution has done in the past related to the assessment of student learning and what are current assessment initiatives? (100-200 words).

Divine Word College has a long-established commitment to assessment of student learning. DWC has employed more than twenty assessment tools at the program and the institutional level over recent years. With hindsight, these efforts have admittedly appeared more compartmentalized than comprehensive.

In AY 2016-2017, DWC undertook a systematic review of assessment tools and assessment in general. This included the establishment of a new Office for Institutional Effectiveness empowered to assist with the collection and analysis of data, and the provision of recommendations based on those data. One result was the realization that the then-current Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were ineffective. A new set of five Core Competencies and associated ILOs derived directly from DWC's Mission Statement were approved and implemented in 2019: Critical Thinking Acuity, Communication Effectiveness, Intercultural Competence, Social & Global Responsibility, and Missionary Discipleship. An initial attempt was made to perform course mapping, with some limited success. A five-year cycle of program reviews was re-instituted with three programs having already undergone the self-study, external review, and implementation of action steps to improve program effectiveness.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION DEAN OF STUDENTS

Fr. Long Phi Nguyen, SVD

Mission Sunday Appreciation

On behalf of the Formation and Student Life Committee, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the students, Kitchen staff, SVD community, and the Liturgy Committee for the excellent work you put into making our Mission Sunday celebration very meaningful. You have all played your part very well. Individually and collectively you can be proud of yourselves for a Mission Sunday well celebrated. So thank you and pray that may God bless us and grant us grace to respond generously to the Lord's invitation as indicated the theme of this year's Mission Sunday: **"HERE I AM, SEND ME."**



Click [HERE](#) for more Mission Sunday Photos

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMISSIONS

Mr. Len Uhal

Come and See Weekend

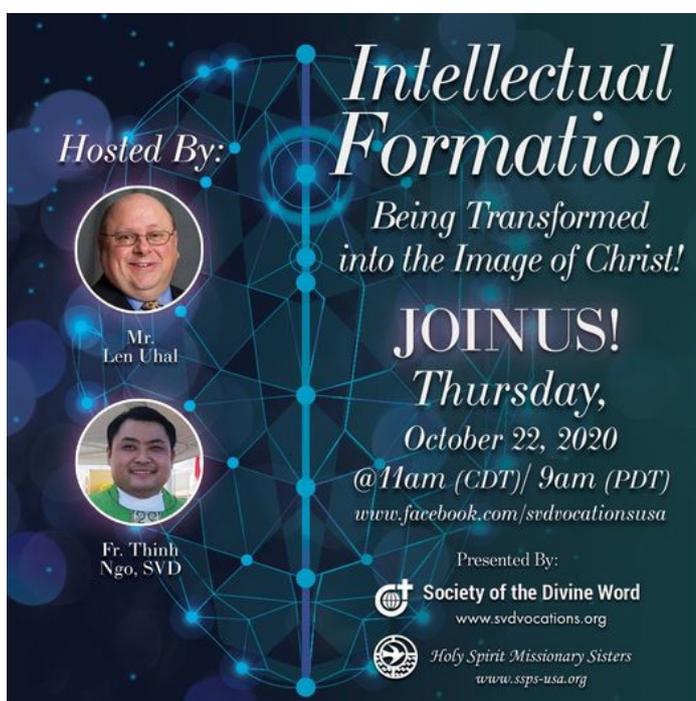
Thank you for the entire DWC community for helping host the three Come and See visitors this past weekend. The word from them is that they really enjoyed their visit. I heard they gave a wonderful performance at the Mission Sunday celebration—I'm sorry I missed it!

Despite all the COVID precautions, it seems like the visit went very well. If anyone has any feedback about the visitors, especially as your thoughts may relate to COVID restrictions, please feel welcome to email me at luhal@dwci.edu with your thoughts, comments and suggestions.

The Admissions Office is contemplating hosting visitors again later this semester.

Weekly Facebook Vocation Program

As reminder to all: Be sure to watch the weekly SSpS and SVD Vocation Offices' programs on Facebook. Every Thursday at 11:00 AM, the vocation offices post a program on Facebook; and sometimes, the program is live! The video recordings are posted on the [SVD Vocation Office Facebook Page](#) and you can view all of them for the last seven months at any time. At present, we are in the middle of a five-part series on the facets of religious formation – this week is Part Three: Intellectual Formation.



The poster features a dark blue background with a glowing network of lines and dots. On the left, two circular portraits are shown: the top one is of Mr. Len Uhal, and the bottom one is of Fr. Thinh Ngo, SVD. The text on the right reads: 'Intellectual Formation' in a large, white, serif font, followed by 'Being Transformed into the Image of Christ!' in a smaller, white, italicized font. Below this, it says 'JOIN US!' in large, white, bold letters, followed by 'Thursday, October 22, 2020 @ 11am (CDT) / 9am (PDT)' and the Facebook link 'www.facebook.com/svdvocationsusa'. At the bottom right, it lists the presenters: 'Presented By: Society of the Divine Word www.svdvocations.org' and 'Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters www.ssp-susa.org'.

Where are they now?

Fr. Anthony returned to California this week after hosting our visitors this past weekend. Fr. Emilio is also in California and is participating this week in the Western Province online retreat. Fr. Thinh, Fr. Adam and Len are on campus this week. Fr. Francis is in Illinois and plans to live at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Wheeling for a few months. He will call St. Joseph "home base" for a while as he promotes vocations in the Midwest this fall and winter.



- October 27** **Faculty Senate**
- October 28-30** **HLC Assessment Academy Virtual Roundtable**
- November 3** **Department Meetings (DTP, DIS)**
- November 4-6** **Registration Spring 2021 Semester (UG)**