

# The lasting impact of my SVD education

By Alumnus Leo Chinelly

*Divine Word Missionaries have been a major influence in my life – theologically, spiritually and personally.*

I have been encouraged along the way by the missionaries who I came to love and admire. In high school, I studied at Girard, Pennsylvania, Conesus, New York and St. Mark's Diocesan Seminary in Erie, Pennsylvania. After graduation, I attended Divine Word College from 1972 to 1975 and graduated with a bachelor's in sociology.

When I returned home to Rochester, New York, I took a social work job at Hillside Children's Center. Forty-seven years ago, I married my wife, Rosemary. We have three children, six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. After seven years in social work, I took a new job working

for the Village of Macedon as a municipal worker and stayed for two decades.

I had the opportunity to work for the Diocese of Rochester and was drawn to pastoral work. I studied at St. Bernard's Institute and earned a master's degree. I took a job with three parish churches that were coming together as one and retired in 2014 from this rewarding work.

My brother SVDs continue to affect my life, as they did when I was a part of their loving family. This is the power of Christ in me. Sure, it started in the cradle with baptism and with my

parents who instilled the gift of faith in me. But I am also sure that with my final breath, Jesus commands my destiny. So, I stand with Christ and my brother SVDs until He calls me home.

My consistent support of DWC has remained because of all the great gifts, memories, academic growth and most of all the friendships. When I reflect on those years, my mind meditates on the Holy Spirit's presence at DWC. In my thankfulness, I want as many as possible to receive that same nourishment. My eight years in SVD seminaries have helped nurture my true self and my heart in the past and present. I hope that it has and will for all other alumni, too.



## You make it possible!

At the beginning of each new school year, it usually takes a few weeks to meet all the new students and learn their names. Some names are easy to remember and others are more challenging.

Recently at lunch, I introduced myself to the students who came to sit with me. I shared with them the best part about working at Divine Word College – meeting people from all over the world. Sitting with me were people from five countries – Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam – and me from the U.S. After the person from Vietnam left, another from Congo took his place. I doubt there are many places in the world, other than maybe the United Nations, where you could have lunch with people from seven different countries.

That's one of the things that makes Divine Word College so special. And it's because of you that this daily lunch occurrence can even happen.

Divine Word College is truly a melting pot of cultures, which helps students learn about parts of the world they are not familiar with. When they move on to their next ministry, this knowledge will help them fit in with their new community. Without your donations, the students you read about in our newsletter would not be at Divine Word. You make it possible for them to be here! Donations to Divine Word are very important for the long-term success of the college and our students. Leo Chinelly is a 1975 graduate of Divine Word. He shares his story with you in this newsletter and why he and his wife have chosen to donate to the college annually. I hope you consider doing the same.

Thanksgiving Day will be here soon. I am thankful for you and all you do to help our students with their education. You do indeed make it possible. Have a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas!



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