

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.”

- St. Francis

the DWWC World

Fall 2017

Educating Tomorrow's Missionaries



Did You Know?

The English as a Second Language (ESL) program at Divine Word College is now recognized nationally. The Intensive English Language Institute, which coordinates the program, has become a member of EnglishUSA, the largest professional association of intensive English programs in the United States. Being accepted into a network of approximately 500 similarly accredited organizations shows that the DWC program is in line with professional standards and elevates its status to a national level.

Toward a “Catholic” Catholic Church

Standing before the assembly in the Main Chapel after being inaugurated the ninth president of Divine Word College on October 6, Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD, drew laughter by relating to a passage in the Gospel of John (1:46), where Nathanael said to Philip, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

“People can be excused if they ask a similar question—‘Can anything good come from Epworth?’ Fr. Tom said, referring to DWC. “Philip’s response to his friend is like the response that I give now, ‘Come and see!’”

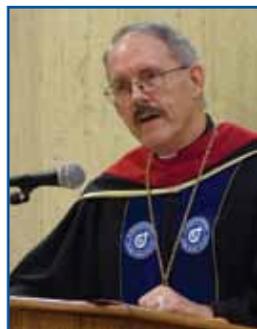
To prove his point, Fr. Tom explored three things he finds amazing about Divine Word College.

One is its rich cultural, religious and racial diversity, which makes it so unique. The second is the spiritual nature of the college, providing an inviting place to fall into life-long love with God. The third is the “catholic” or “universal” nature of the college.

“Students, faculty and staff gather here from remarkably different life experiences, bringing

their joys and sorrows along,” Fr. Tom said. Their sharing, learning and accepting of what each has to offer helps DWC contribute toward a truly “catholic” Catholic Church.

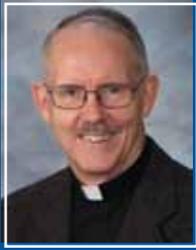
In some ways, that point reflects Fr. Tom’s life. Born in 1954 in St. Paul, Minnesota, by age six, young Tom felt the call to religious life while discovering a natural appreciation for those from different cultures. Those twin revelations led him through a wide-ranging missionary career that took him from teaching in Washington, D.C., to parish work in the barrios of Mexico, to the highest levels of the Society of the Divine Word in this country and in Rome.



Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

His family moved through four states in his youth as his father pursued higher education. At Ohio State University, the family stayed in the married students apartments where Fr. Tom befriended children from many different countries. When the family settled in Des Moines, he attended Catholic school and later made his first trip to Divine Word College. He enrolled in 1972 and he took advantage of opportunities to connect with people from other

A Word from the President:



Fr. Tom
Ascherman, SVD

“Educating Tomorrow’s Missionaries” is the slogan spelled out in big, bold letters at the entrance to Divine Word College Seminary.

The flags at the front entrance and the art along the corridors show a world-wide missionary presence here on our little speck of earth. Even more, the faces of our students and the sounds of their voices portray the world’s amazing diversity. Sometimes the voice and the face seem to match, but often enough a Texas twang emerges from a smiling Asian face, or the Midwestern inflection of Wisconsin bursts forth from an African grin.

During a recent visit, Fr. Bob Mertes, SVD, mentioned the long-running joke that SVD stands for: Send Vun (one) Dollar. Although, he says, anyone who visits DWC would know that “SVD really stands for So Very Diverse!”

In our diversity, and in many other ways, we do educate tomorrow’s missionaries; but the best way to do that, is by living a missionary life today. As St. John Paul II always insisted, “the future starts today, not tomorrow.”

So maybe we could make a little adjustment to our slogan, “Educating Tomorrow’s Missionaries – TODAY!”

Fr. Tom

countries, being one of the first to study abroad at Nanzan University in Japan and, as one of the late-Bro. Pat Hogan’s volunteers, helping teach English to the first Vietnamese students to arrive at DWC shortly after the fall of Saigon.

Graduating from DWC in 1976 and professing First Vows in 1977, he attended Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. After two years in Mexico as part of the Cross-cultural Training Program, he completed his theology studies and was ordained in 1982. During the next decade, he taught at DWC and the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. while pursuing his doctorate in Religion and Cultures. During that time, he also served as the SVD Interprovince Coordinator for Justice and Peace for the North American Provinces. In 1991, he returned to Mexico as an associate pastor

of a huge parish near Mexico City and as a university lecturer in missiology, evangelization, philosophy and pastoral theology.

In 1994, he traveled to Rome to serve the general administration of the SVD as mission secretary, which took him all over the world, connecting with Divine Word Missionaries in fifty countries. Returning to the U.S. after twelve years, he went on to become provincial of the Chicago Province and now president of Divine Word College. Standing in the Main Chapel, Fr. Tom concluded his inaugural address with a fundamental message connecting all who sat before him to DWC’s role in achieving a “catholic” Catholic Church. “All of us have a share in Jesus’ mission,” he said. “So we can confidently affirm, something good is coming from Epworth!”

Pool Side Ministry

Father Mathew Jacoby would be proud of these guys. The former college librarian—who decades ago taught many an area youth how to swim in the DWC pool—would have given high marks to three young men who stepped up last winter. At the time, the list of workstudy students who could be lifeguards at the pool was blank. “That meant the college community couldn’t use the pool and it wouldn’t be open to the general public,” said Sandy Wilgenbusch, who does the pool scheduling. “We had to hire two certified lifeguards so the pool could be used.”



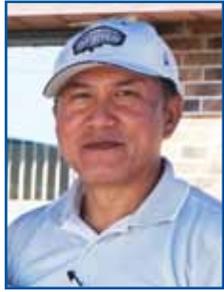
DWC student lifeguards Tomerot Lambert, Aquilino Perez and Thinh Nguyen”

Early in the second semester, the message went out to DWC students asking for volunteers to undergo a three-day, lifeguard certification course at the Dubuque YMCA in March. Tomerot Lambert, Thinh Nguyen and Aquilino Perez stepped up. “Aside from being useful to the surrounding community, a lot of people here at the college enjoyed swimming,” Aquilino said. “So, why not step up and do something about it?”

“This is a way to serve our students and we could serve other people who come for family swimming,” Thinh said. “In that way we can do ministry.” Tomerot also said that being trained as a lifeguard would be an opportunity for personal growth. “I’ve never done it, so that intrigued me,” he said. “And I would also be trained in CPR, so I could be there to help people in emergency situations.”

For Aquilino, his decision to become a lifeguard has actually been life changing. He had never been particularly active prior to taking the certification course. Today, after losing 40 lbs., increasing his physical activity and improving his nutrition, he’s a new young man. “Once I realized I could push past my physical limitations, well, what about mental ones, emotional ones? What about school, what about social relationships?” he said. “That’s what it’s done for me.”

“Ad Extra” in a Garage Sale



Carrying out their work of educating missionaries inside Divine Word College, the SVD priests and brothers here wanted to find a way to connect more directly with people outside the college to benefit the poor. They found it through a garage-sale fundraiser for a DWC graduate on mission in a desperate area of South America.

“We want to rekindle the missionary spirit of ‘ad extra,’ which means ‘to the outside,’” said Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD, rector of the college SVD community. “We are entrusted here with responsibilities as formator, teacher or administrator, and sometimes we can become so absorbed in our work that we lose touch with the true original love that inspired us to join the SVD. That is to journey with the poor and oppressed.”

After a review, they chose the SVD mission in Bahia Negra, located in one of the poorest and most isolated areas of Paraguay. Fr. Stephen Lan Luong, SVD, a 2004 graduate of DWC and newly ordained, was assigned with two other SVDs to take over the mission in March 2016.

They found a dilapidated church and rectory in a hot and arid climate, with people who were in desperate circumstances. Every day has been a struggle. Among their efforts to ease the people’s pain, the three SVDs established a soup kitchen to feed 150 poor children a good meal each Sunday. “Every time they cook for the kids it costs \$150,” Fr. Thang said. “So, our goal was to provide funds to sustain that soup kitchen for about a half year and maybe a little bit more, between \$4000 and \$5000.”

With donations, clothes and other sale items from the DWC community—including decorations, desks, bookcases and other furniture that had long been held in storage in the lower levels of the college—along with delicious food prepared and sold by Lucy Kissane and students, the college raised more than \$5,500. “On behalf of the children in Paraguay I would like to thank you,” Fr. Thang stated in an email to the college community. “You have helped not only to feed the poor children in Paraguay but also inspired and animated our community to witness to the missionary spirit which is the essence of who we are as Christians.”

Divine Word Missionaries are “on mission” wherever they are. With their vow of obedience, they go where assigned to best support the work of the Society of the Divine Word. Some may work among the poorest of the poor in the most impoverished places in the world; others work to support them as well as the global mission of the SVD. Those at Divine Word College do their part by helping to educate the missionaries who will sustain the society into the future. In this case, however, they blended the two by going—“ad extra.”



Fr. Lan Luong, SVD, a graduate of DWC, with some of the children at the SVD mission at Bahia Negra, Paraguay.



Children line up for the hearty meal served by Fr. Lan and the other SVDs.



Fr. Khoa Nguyen, SVD, browses through items with some customers.



Fr. Bill Shea, SVD, takes a break with Lucy Kissane, who drove with her husband Joe from Indiana to help with the garage sale by preparing delicious Vietnamese food including 1000 egg rolls, which sold out almost immediately.

Challenges of Being International



Len Uhal

Eighty-percent of DWC's enrollment is international students, and each of them needs to navigate the intricacies of international travel. Guiding them are Len Uhal, vice-president for admissions and Carolyn Waechter, international student advisor.

"In a perfect world, they could get a visa in a month," Uhal said of the document that lets a person into a country, but it often takes much longer.



Carolyn Waechter

The college primarily deals with the F-1 Student visa, a temporary, non-immigrant visa. But before applying, the student first needs to be accepted at DWC, which proves they have a reason for their stay. Once done, Waechter notifies the U.S. Department

of Homeland Security that the student has been accepted, then sends the student a packet of immigration forms.

"Next the student files a visa application online with the U.S. Department of State, pays a fee and schedules an interview

with an immigration official at the U.S. consulate in his or her country," she said.

The interview is the most stressful part. Some are denied a visa up to four times before they are approved, paying fees each time. A sticking point is that they need to prove that they plan to return to their country. "That's one of the bigger reasons why they are denied," Waechter said. "Some don't have bank accounts or own property, anything that ties them to home."

Once approved, visas are good only for a period of time, from months to a few years, during which they can visit their home country. But students often study longer than that, so with their visa they receive a document stamped "DS" for "Duration of Status," which means as long as they are a full-time student, they can apply to renew it.

"Each semester, we notify the Department of Homeland Security that each student is enrolled here full time," Waechter, said. "So they can stay until they finish their education." This is just the beginning. During their stay they may travel to another country, need to stay longer, or even decide to apply for citizenship—all of which require additional federal approvals. It's all part of being international.

Rest In Peace - Brother Pat Hogan, SVD

Two men stopped by DWC last summer, their first return since the 1970s. Dominic Dien Nguyen and Father Thomas Khue were among the sixteen Vietnamese seminarians who came here in 1975 after the fall of Saigon. Dominic had gone into engineering, Thomas the priesthood. Both were now traveling to the funeral of a man who had a tremendous impact on their lives. Bro. Pat Hogan, SVD, who taught them English while laying the foundation of the college's ESL program, passed away on June 5, at Techny. "We are very grateful to him, he was not only a teacher and mentor, but also a good friend," Fr. Thomas said.



Brother Pat Hogan, SVD

Bro. Pat was at DWC for eight of the 60 years he spent in a stellar brotherhood career. Professing First Vows in 1957, he began in the finance office at Nanzan University in Japan, then joined five other SVDs to

re-establish Fu Jen University in Taiwan after its original site in Beijing was closed by the Chinese communists. Then he alternately taught English in Taiwan and took college courses in the U.S. Earning a master's degree in linguistics in 1975, he was assigned to DWC. A few months later, the Vietnamese arrived.



Dominic Dien Nguyen (l) and Fr. Thomas Khue (r) attended DWC with Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD, (c) now president of the college.

"The college made us feel like a family and Bro. Pat was our parents," Dominic said. "The very first winter, we went out in the snow, and the next day we got sick, so he took us out to buy winter jackets. I'll never forget that." Bro. Pat returned to Fu Jen University in 1983. In 1999 he came back to the U.S., first to be director of Techny Towers International Conference Center and later rector at Bordentown. He returned to Techny in 2015 to receive medical care until he passed away.

"We're going to miss him tremendously," Fr. Thomas said.

Responding to Hurricane Need

The Divine Word College community quickly pulled together an effort to raise nearly \$3000 to ease the pain for SVD parishes devastated by hurricanes in August and September.

“Mother Nature is showing her fury in Texas and in the Caribbean,” wrote Fr. Quang Duc Dinh, provincial of the Chicago Province, in his appeal for support.

“Thanks be to God that all our priests and Brothers are safe. We cannot say the same for our buildings—churches, rectories and schools—or the homes of our parishioners and neighbors.”

Many parishioners are poor, live in sub-standard housing with no insurance, and look to the SVD for help. The entire DWC community—students, faculty and staff as well as local residents and others—responded.

The collections of two Sunday Masses drew significant increases over the usual contributions. Others added their support to a donation box. The students and SVDs added still more. One of the more innovative ideas was to reduce the food prepared by the kitchen for two noon meals, resulting in a combined savings of \$600. In all, \$2,881.31 went to the province to help those in need.

“Thank you very much for your generous donations to the relief fund for those affected by the hurricanes,” Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD, rector at DWC, wrote in an email to the college community. “It says a lot about who we are.”

Living the Words of St. Arnold

Saint Arnold Janssen, founder of the Society of the Divine Word, once wrote, “It is not lengthy prayers, but generous deeds, that touch God’s heart.”

As you read in this newsletter, the students, SVD and employees of Divine Word College have been busy raising money for people in need in this country and other parts of the world. They are living the words of St. Arnold by doing generous deeds.

Just as we ask you for your support, we ask ourselves as well – how can we help those who are hungry or afflicted?

It was great to see our students so excited to help with the garage sale to help a DWC graduate and his SVD mission in Paraguay, and to join in the effort to aid hurricane victims. One day they may be in a situation where their parishioners are hungry or have lost their homes due to a natural disaster. Perhaps they will remember this experience in the future and be able to develop a successful solution.

Your ongoing support of our students helps them prepare for situations where they will be called upon to be leaders in times of crisis. Thank you for believing in them and in the mission of Divine Word College. You make our mission possible!



Mark Singsank,
Associate Development
Director



SUCCESS!

at the Third Annual
Divine Word College
Benefit Golf Outing!

\$7000

was raised for the DWC Student Scholarship Fund
at the July 21 event at Timberline!

To the nearly 60 golfers and all of our generous sponsors.

THANK YOU!!

Mark your calendars!
Friday, July 20, 2018.
Our goal is to have 72 golfers and
raise **\$10,000** next year!

To everyone who participated and supported this
event, this success is because of **YOU!**

DWC Photo Gallery

On August 5, in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at Techny, Illinois, five young men who attended Divine Word College professed their First Vows as members of the Society of the Divine Word: (l-r) An Nguyen, Hoang “John-John” Nguyen, Quang Pham, Quynh Cao and Edwan “Manie” Manuel. They have since moved out after a year at the SVD Novitiate at Techny. Today, they live at the SVD Theologate in Chicago and study at Catholic Theological Union, as they prepare for the priesthood.



It's better to give than receive, even if it's a lemon. Clinching plastic spoons between their teeth, Manuel Murillo passes a lemon to teammate Roger Kyaw Thu during one of many relay races and games at the annual Family Feast celebration on September 8. Family Feast is celebrated by Divine Word Missionaries around the world on that date, which marks the birth of the Blessed Virgin. The day was chosen by St. Arnold Janssen to found his missionary order, the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), in 1875.

6 Come and get it!! Members of the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth along with their leaders and support persons fill the dining room during their annual convention, held this year at DWC from June 29 – July 2. The four days were filled with prayer, faith sharing and inspirational presentations that encouraged the youth to celebrate their faith. In the lower right corner with her usual smile is one of their leaders, Sr. Maria Nguyen, OSB, a long-time member of the DWC Board of Trustees and the 2016 recipient of the Donaghey Award for Outstanding Service.



Sr. Dieu Nguyen, LHC, ducked after Fr. Gabriel Lee, SVD, crushed her pitch, sending it into an empty outfield on a sunny Tuesday, June 27. The two along with more than 30 other students were taking part in the summer ESL program. The lesson that day was cultural—learning about American baseball—prior to a field trip to the Field of Dreams in nearby Dyersville and a semi-pro baseball game in Cedar Rapids.

Things were looking up on Monday, August 21. Groups of students, faculty and staff gathered at different points around campus to witness a piece of cosmic history. Sharing welding masks and specialized goggles, each had a chance to watch as the moon gradually moved across the path of the sun, blackened it out, then just as slowly, moved away. Though not in the 70-mile wide path of the country that experienced the total eclipse, the college community still had a chance to break away from the daily routine for a shared experience—a truly astronomical event.



The World is Our Parish



Fr. Sonny DeClass, SVD, bracketed by Frater Pedro Saveia, SVD, (l) and Frater Joao Pinda Neto, SVD.

Wherever Divine Word Missionaries go, they may very well meet someone they knew on the other side of the world. Father Sonny DeClass, SVD, chaplain at DWC, traveled to Chicago last summer to pick up two young men he knew in Angola.

Three years later, he traveled to the capital city of Luanda to become an assistant pastor as well as a formator at an SVD house where 20-30 seminarians, including Joao and Pedro, lived while attending minor seminary. On Sundays, they were acolytes as he celebrated sometimes three very large masses. The largest drew 5000 people, too many for the chapel, so mass was celebrated outside.

“Fr. Sonny was a good man when I lived with him, very humble,” Joao said. “Many people in Angola like him.”



Fr. Sonny (c) with Frt. Pedro and Frt. Joao at Techny.

“Fr. Sonny, do you remember? The world is our parish!” said Frater Joao Pinda Neto, SVD, referring to an often-repeated SVD saying. Joao and Frater Pedro Saveia, SVD, were heading to DWC to study English.

Joao and Pedro graduated in 2012 and Fr. Sonny departed for DWC the next year. Then, this past summer, came the news that two Angolan seminarians were coming to DWC and that old SVD saying rang true.

“When I saw him I was very happy because I miss him,” Pedro said. “He was a good example. I learn many things about his life.” Born in Indonesia, Fr. Sonny joined the SVD and traveled to DWC in 1999, also to study English. Completing his studies in Chicago, he was ordained in 2005. In 2008, he was assigned to a large mission in northeastern Angola—40 communities, the farthest of which was 150 kilometers from his base and took eight to nine hours to reach over rugged dirt roads by car.

“I think it is certainly joyful to meet those who I met before,” Fr. Sonny said. “People I knew as young seminarians, now they are part of me as my brothers.”

Getting Real in Guadalajara

Two DWC seminarians spent two months last summer in Mexico, studying Spanish while experiencing life in-community and in another culture. Both returned with life-changing experiences.

“After I came back, I took some time to think about it and wow, I can speak some Spanish, not fluently, but enough to express myself,” he said. “I did all this in two months. Imagine if I was there for a year.”

Returning, both young men said their call to religious life is even stronger.

“Yes, I can do this,” Brian said. “I really want to continue on with the SVD.”

Senior Brian Junkes and sophomore Tomerot Lambert left for Guadalajara on May 20. Staying at an SVD house, they took the equivalent of two semesters of Spanish at a Jesuit university. Their days began and ended with community prayer sandwiched around meals, classes, studying, cleaning duties, sports and time to explore the area before spending their last two weeks touring Mexico City.

Tomerot’s easy-going nature saw the trip as a vacation blended with spiritual discernment. His laid-back approach didn’t always sit well with that of his more studious colleague. Praying constantly, Tomerot sought the presence of God, hoping for guidance. Then it came through the revelation that God’s presence could be found in his fellow seminarian.

“Through this enlightenment, I realized that I want to be more serious,” Tomerot said, “and I sense that I really do want to be an SVD priest.”

Junkes saw the trip as a test of his ability to learn. Born with a speech-language learning disability, he wanted to find out if he could be a missionary in a country where he would have to learn another language.

“Something beautiful happened and I was able to respect Brian and what he wanted to do with his life,” Tomerot said. “I could see him as a gift to me, to help me understand myself and what I want to do in the future.”



Tomerot and Brian at a scenic zoo in Guadalajara.



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

DWC Honors Jeff and Janet Mozena

Their connections to Divine Word College go back decades, but during the last two, their relationship became a commitment. For their consistent involvement and support, Divine Word College honors Jeff and Janet Mozena with the 2017 Donaghey Award for Outstanding Service.

“Jeff and Janet have been exemplary role models and super supporters of DWC,” said Nan Peck, long-time college counselor, now retired, who nominated them for the award. “They have a long history of service to DWC.” Established in 1999, the award honors the late Fr. John Donaghey, SVD, who dedicated much of his life to the college.

In 1996, the Mozenas were among the first to join the Community Relations Council (CRC) and its Friends Across Nation’s (FAN) Club. They have actively raised funds for the college and Jeff served on the board of trustees for 15 years.

“Janet and I are humbled by the recognition,” said Jeff, who is president of Premier Bank in Dubuque, which is another consistent supporter of the college. “Our small gifts in service and donations in no way compare to the commitment of the

DWC community in its missionary training and in service.” Before spending 37 years as a teacher in the Dubuque Community School District, Janet remembers growing up in nearby Centralia where her parents counted several Divine Word priests and brothers among their friends. Through his family, Jeff knew former DWC president Fr. Mike Hutchins, SVD, as well as former public relations director Roger Maiers.



Janet and Jeff Mozena

A year after the couple joined the CRC and FAN Club, Fr. Mike invited Jeff to be on the board of trustees. The board’s pivotal accomplishment during his time was to address declining enrollment by expanding the college mission statement, which Jeff strongly supported. Their connection to Divine Word College stretches back several decades, but since 1996, the Mozenas dedication to the college has been significant.

“We received more from the college than we gave,” Janet said. “I think we truly received the greater benefits.”