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Birthday Corner

November
23 Evelyn Dias

THE PRESIDENT *Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD*

Laudato Si

“Laudato si’,” (Praise be to you) are the first words of Pope Francis 2015 encyclical letter on *Care for our Common Home*. The Pope cited the first words of the Canticle of Creation of St. Francis of Assisi, “Laudato si’, mi’ Signore...”

“Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with coloured flowers and herbs.”

In his message to the world, Pope Francis sets out the context of his concerns in bold fashion:



LAUDATO SI' MOVEMENT

formerly Global Catholic Climate Movement

“This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her.”

Recently, Fr. Paul Budi, the SVD Superior General wrote to Divine Word Missionaries around the world urging us to participate in the Laudato Si’ Movement, a seven year journey of implementing seven goals outlined in the encyclical letter. They are:

- Response to the Cry of the Earth
- Response to the Cry of the Poor
- Ecological Economics
- Adoption of a Simple Lifestyle
- Ecological Education
- Ecological Spirituality
- Community Engagement and Participatory Action



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As we approach each goal, we can especially keep in mind a variety of responses, including especially, prayer, education, action and advocacy.

This request from Father General Budi comes at a time when meetings both International and very local are unfolding.

COP26, the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Scotland from October 31– November 12, 2021, continues a series of international meetings stretching back to 1995. The results of the meeting in Scotland hold out some hope, but the agreed actions seem far from sufficient to respond to the crisis. Many groups are organizing to advocate stronger commitments at next year’s gathering in Egypt.

On the local level, representatives from Divine Word College will participate in a meeting on Thursday November 18 to organize the Dubuque Colleges Sustainability Coalition. The organizers at the University of Dubuque hope to have representatives from all seven institutions of higher learning located in Dubuque County.

In preparing for the meeting, I have been thinking about some of the major steps DWC has taken to be kinder to our Mother Earth. My list so far:

- Interior windows added to reduce heat loss, 1980’s.
- LED Lighting to reduce electricity consumption, 2019.
- New Roof on main building with increased insulation, 2020.
- Megan Hall renovations help increase insulation, 2021.
- Highway clean up, annually.
- Recycling Bins for bottles, cans, cardboard and batteries.
- Keeping our own property clean and beautiful.

What else can we do – what changes in our lifestyle would help?

DWC COVID-19 Dashboard

	Number of Tests	Tested Positive	Number Self-Isolated	Number Recovered	Vaccination Completed	Booster
2020-2021	913	50	50	50	129	0
August 1- Sept. 4	231	0	0	0	4	0
Sept. 5 - Oct. 2	78	0	0	0	2	0
Oct. 3 - 30	105	0	0	0	0	12
Oct. 31 - Nov. 6	21	1	1	0	0	1
Nov. 7 - 13	30	0	1	0	0	2



The number of COVID-19 infections in Dubuque County continues to rise rapidly. The CDC rates the level of community transmission as HIGH. A member of our own DWC staff has contracted a breakthrough COVID-19 infection and is completing a 10-day isolation to avoid sharing it with others. This is the first case of infection we have detected at DWC this semester.

<https://www.cityofdubuque.org/1649/Coronavirus-COVID-19-Pandemic>

The Board of Administration reviewed DWC policies regarding COVID-19 safety at its November 12 meeting. A full description of the updated policies is attached in the DWC COVID-19 Guidance Bulletin #35. Two of the most important items are:

- A booster shot for those who are fully vaccinated is highly recommended, especially before leaving for Christmas vacation!
- Those who are not yet vaccinated should complete a COVID-19 test once every week. This is a change from the previous practice of once every two weeks, and follows the best practices advocated by the CDC.

HELP!

The cute little turkey that was on display in the DWC library has gone MISSING!

We think he's hiding to escape being served as Thanksgiving dinner. Follow along on the [DWC Facebook page](#) beginning Saturday, November 20 to see where he's been spotted and find out if you can identify where he is on campus!



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Fr. John Szukalski, SVD

Annual Faculty Performance Evaluations: Self-Evaluation And Planning Goals Due 1 December 2021

In accord with the Divine Word College Policy Handbook (09.01), all undergraduate and ESL faculty are reminded that self-evaluations and annual planning goals are due to the respective Chair/Director by Wednesday 1 December 2021. The annual faculty evaluation/planning requirement does not apply to adjunct faculty, but is required for SVD faculty members who taught any course in the Spring 2021 or Fall 2021 Semesters. The goals of Annual Faculty Evaluations are to:

- Ensure that the College cultivates a faculty of outstanding quality, dedicated to excellence in teaching, professional engagement, and service;
- Foster a collegial environment among undergraduate and ESL faculty members and the administration to further the Mission of the College;
- Recognize faculty members' accomplishments;
- Encourage faculty members' continued professional development in the areas of effective teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and generous service;
- Assure equitable salary increases based on performance, and opportunities for eventual promotions in rank, and;
- Provide a just and positive approach for accountability and planning. (09.01.01)

Faculty Self-Evaluation: Provide a narrative self-evaluation addressing performance goals from previous year's Annual Plan (if applicable) and actual performance in each area of teaching effectiveness, professional engagement, and service (see 09.01.04)

Faculty Annual Plan: Provide specific performance goals related to teaching effectiveness, professional engagement, and service for the following academic year (see 09.01.05)

Faculty performance evaluation is standard practice within institutions of higher education, and as such, is a practice affirmed by the DWC Board of Trustees. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) expresses this professional expectation in their Criteria for Accreditation: "Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures." (HLC Core Component 3.C item 4)

Classroom Care – A Reminder

Most DWC classrooms now have fresh carpet, paint, window treatments, and technology to provide for a more comfortable and efficient learning environment. The renovations required spending a significant amount of money. As a reminder, please do not remove any chairs, desks, or equipment from classrooms; also, do not store or eat food in any classroom. Let us respect our building and one another by taking good care of our classrooms!

Classroom furnishings and equipment are provided for instructional use. Individuals may not remove any furnishings or equipment without prior approval from the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Students shall not use the computer, internet, and audio/visual equipment that is reserved for instructional use only. Food is not allowed in any classroom. Beverages such as water, tea, and coffee are permitted while exercising caution against spillage. (DWC Policy Handbook 10.08)

The Charitable Sisterhood: A Mystery Comedy

All ESL and Undergraduate students are invited to attend a Christmas play entitled “The Charitable Sisterhood: A Mystery Comedy” at 7:30 p.m. on Friday 3 December 2021 at the Bell Tower Theater in Dubuque. Ms. Jill Heitzman, DWC Assistant Professor of Music, is one of the actors in this theatrical production:

Christmas is only three weeks away, and the ladies of the Charitable Sisterhood are preparing for the annual Christmas Spectacular...but they are having trouble focusing because there is a criminal on the loose—someone has stolen the baby Jesus from the nativity scene! The fun does not let up until the hilarious climax, which will leave you filled with the very best spirit of the Christmas season.

Sign up on the student bulletin board before Friday 19 November if interested in attending.



What is “closing the loop” in assessment?

According to Allen (2004), “closing the loop” describes a part in the assessment process where “faculty discuss assessment results, reach conclusions about their meaning, determine implications for change, and implement them (p. 166)”. In other words, “closing the loop” refers to the part in the assessment cycle that can be viewed as the end, but also the beginning because this is where faculty examine the collected data to make data-driven and based recommendations that will then be used to suggest and implement curricular or program changes that then influence the first parts of an assessment cycle again! Assessment results and data are “recycled” back into program improvement.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION DEAN OF STUDENTS

Fr. Long Phi Nguyen, SVD

Culture Week Celebration

In Rwanda language, “Murakoze” means “Thank You.” Let us say “Murakoze” to Fr. Jean D’Amour, Fr. Felix, and Fr. Telesphore for sharing their cultural heritage, traditions, faith, and values with the community. It is certain that we all feel connected and inspired to hear their stories and culture. Murakoze!

SVD Advent Recollection

On Saturday, November 20, all the SVD and SSpS members will begin their annual Advent Recollection day in the chapel of Mother of Asia, beginning at 8:30 am until noon. Please keep all the SVD and SSpS members in your prayers.

- Members of the VSA will celebrate a feast of Vietnamese Martyrs on Saturday afternoon, November 20. There will be a Eucharistic celebration at 4:00 pm in the main chapel, commemorating the life and faith of 117 Vietnamese Martyrs who suffered and sacrificed their lives for their faith in Christ. After Mass, there will be a farewell party with its members in the Student Lounge.
- Members of the ACSA will have an end-of-semester party on Sunday afternoon, November 21. The gym will be closed for this event from 3:00 pm until 6:00 pm.

SVD Formation Night

Instead of having formation meetings, all SVD candidates will gather to celebrate SVD Formation Night with all SVD and SSps members on Tuesday, November 23. It begins with the Thanksgiving Eucharist in the chapel of Mother of Asia at 8:00 am. In the evening, there will be a meeting at 7:30 pm in the main chapel. On this special occasion, Fr. Truong Le, SVD, currently working in Thailand, will share his missionary experience through ZOOM. Social will follow immediately after

CULTURE OF RWANDA

The culture of Rwanda is very diversified, and it has been a unified state since pre-colonial times, unlike many countries in Africa. It includes the population of Rwanda and Kinyarwanda-speaking people in the neighboring states particularly Uganda and Congo. Rwandans are very pleased when visitors try to speak their mother tongue (Kinyarwanda). Speaking a few words like 'amakuru' (how are you?) or 'Muraho' (How have you been doing), Yezu akuzwe (Praised be Jesus) gets them excited.



- In Rwandan culture, you will find that people are a very conservative society; most people dress modestly, especially women.
- Most Rwandan people are Christian, and the most popular denomination is the Roman Catholic Church.
- In Rwanda, marriage is considered the most basic social institution. The pressure to marry and have children is quite high. One of the most important moments in Rwandese culture is the birth of a child. The culture dictates that a large ceremony is held to celebrate the birth and select a name.
- Music, dance and drama play a great role in the traditions of Rwandan people. Performances range from demonstrations of bravery and excellence, to humorous dance styles and lyrics, to artistry based in traditional agricultural roots.
- For Rwandans, cattle are a very significant symbol, and cows are the best wealth a person can ever possess. Land, money, wealth can't be compared to cows.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMISSIONS *Mr. Len Uhal*

National Vocation Awareness Week

Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week last week. It was wonderful to have many visitors come to the 3rd floor for a short visit. For all those who registered to win a prize in our drawing, here's the moment you've been waiting for—the winners are:

Prize

Hoodie Sweatshirt
Long-Sleeved T-Shirt
Short-Sleeved T-Shirt
Water Bottle
Hat

Students

Sr. Xuan Nguyen, OP
Sr. Magdalene Formilack, SST
Sr. Hilda Alonyo, LSMIG
Peterson Forestal
Antz-Carly Cadet

Faculty/Staff/SVDs

Fr. Bill Shea, SVD
Fr. Stephen Nguyen, SVD
Sandy Wilgenbusch
Jessica Young
Fr. John Szukalski, SVD

Congratulations to all our winners! Stop by the vocation office to claim your prize! And don't forget to continue to pray for religious and priestly vocations.

Come and See Visitor

The vocation office will host a Come and See visitor this week. **Andrew Thanh-Quang Nguyen** from Seattle, Washington, will arrive later tonight on November 16 and stay with us on campus until Monday, November 26. We pray for Andrew during his visit that his time in our community will help him further discern how God is calling him.

National Catholic Youth Conference

[NCYC](#) is a biennial event that usually draws nearly 23,000 youth (high school-aged students) to Indianapolis, Indiana, for a faith-filled event. However, due to COVID, the number this year will be about half and a virtual participation option was added. Please click on the link to learn more. Frs. Think, Emilio, and Adam, along with Sr. Aprilia and Len Uhal, will staff a booth in the exhibit area, known as "The Village," to share with students, parents and youth ministers more about the Divine Word Missionaries, the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and Divine Word College. Please keep those traveling and participating in NCYC in your prayers this week.



WHERE



Sr. Tram Nguyen IHM

Sr. Tram Nguyen IHM graduated summa cum laude from DWC in 2015 with bachelor degrees in Theology & Mission, and in Intercultural Studies. Currently she is completing her doctoral studies in Educational Leadership at St. John’s University in Queens, New York. She hopes to graduate in May 2022.



About her years at DWC she wrote:


“I felt at home when I was at DWC. I was supported by SVD community, professors and staff. I started my journey to higher education from there. Therefore, I am confident to tell everyone that being a student at DWC is a privilege. Indeed, it was a fantastic place to study, practice my Faith as a religious sister, strengthen my understanding of the work of missionaries, and learn more deeply about living in harmony with a diverse group of people. I am proud of DWC and hope our college continues to develop spiritually and academically.”



Tam “Tommy” Pham

Tam “Tommy” Pham attended Divine Word College in 1992-1994. After two years, he enrolled at the University of Divine Mercy in Detroit and earned his bachelor’s degree. Tommy went on to the Theologate in Chicago in 1999 to study theology, and after a year, he entered the novitiate program. During the 30-day retreat, Tommy realized that God was calling him to follow a different road. Tommy left the novitiate but never severed the ties with the people who became like family – the SVD community.

In the years that followed, Tommy got married, had two children, earned his MBA, and took a job in accounting. After 14 years, he needed a fresh start and opened Pho Tam restaurant in Chicago. With some volunteer help from his SVD classmates at the Theologate and DWC, Pho Tam became quite successful. Now one day each month, the men in the novitiate program volunteer to prepare meals at Pho Tam for the homeless. Many years ago, when he left the SVD community, Tommy wondered if there would be something that he could do. There was! Tommy considers the free meals as a fantastic way to give back to the community and to continue to build an unbreakable bond with his “SVD brothers.”



Divine Word College

COVID-19 Guidance (#35)

November 16, 2021

Divine Word College, in coordination with state and local public health experts, is closely monitoring reports and recommendations from national and regional health departments regarding COVID-19. Updates will be provided through email, the LOG and on the bulletin boards.

FACEMASKS – As the weather turns cooler and people stay indoors:

The use of facemasks is mandatory:

- in the chapel always,
- in the college generally when off-campus students, employees, or visitors are present.

Facemasks are not required

- in the dining room (unvaccinated persons should not eat in the dining room)
- after 5pm (when off campus persons are not present)
- on weekends (when off campus persons are not present)
- when out of doors.

In many of the above situations, facemasks might still be a good idea. They help to limit the spread of colds and flu in addition to COVID-19 virus.

VACCINATION or WEEKLY TESTING – Similar to policies promoted by OSHA – the Occupational Safety and Health Administration:

- **All students and all on-campus residents must be vaccinated** for COVID-19. (Exceptions can be considered for medical or religious reasons. The Board of Administration will decide requests for exemption.)
- **All off-campus employees are strongly urged to be vaccinated** for COVID-19.
- **Those who are not vaccinated** should test for COVID-19 infection **each week**.
- Off-campus faculty & staff should report their vaccination status and/or test results to Mr. Steve Winger.
- All others, including students and SVDs, should report to Fr. Long Phi Nguyen.

BOOSTER SHOTS – **The College strongly recommends** that everyone in the DWC Community receive appropriate COVID-19 booster shots. Everyone who works at DWC, attends classes here, or lives on campus is qualified to receive a booster after two to six months (depending on the vaccine) after completing their initial vaccination. Information on where to get a booster shot is available at:

<https://www.dubuquecountyiowa.gov/567/COVID-19-Vaccinations>

PAID TIME OFF – Vaccinations help to protect the entire DWC community from COVID-19. For this reason, the use of PTO, vacation days, and unpaid days will not be needed in some situations.

Vaccinated employees will NOT be required to use PTO, vacation, or unpaid days:

- when isolating due to breakthrough infections, or
- when taking time to get a booster shot and recovery time if needed, or
- when helping members of their household to get a vaccination or booster.

Faculty must still file forms to assure integrity of course instruction. Staff may be asked to work flex hours and/or work from home.

Unvaccinated employees WILL BE required to use PTO, vacation or unpaid days in the case of:

- isolation required because of a COVID-19 infection
- quarantine required because of close exposure to someone with a COVID-19 infection.

Faculty must still file forms to assure integrity of course instruction.

Unvaccinated employees will NOT BE required to use PTO, vacation or unpaid days for

- isolation or quarantine after approved medical exemption from vaccination, or
- taking time to get vaccinated themselves and if necessary, recover from side-effects, or
- helping members of the household to get a vaccination or booster.

TESTING – At the beginning of the January semester, all members of the DWC community (students, faculty, staff, SVD residents) will be required to:

- take a *BinaxNow* rapid antigen test (or a similar test) as a fast screen for COVID-19 infections.
- take a saliva PCR test to be assured that they are not carrying the COVID-19 virus.
- report vaccinations and test results to Mr. Steve Winger or Fr. Long Phi Nguyen.

Anyone testing positive in the rapid antigen test or in the PCR test should begin a 10-day period of isolation. If the PCR test returns negative, isolation can be discontinued.

Random testing will continue in the January semester.

Fr. Tom Ascherman SVD
President