

the DWOC World

Educating Tomorrow's Missionaries



WHAT'S INSIDE



What is mission animation?

Growing with God

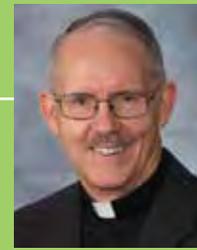
It's true that Divine Word College students have a lot to learn during their time in Epworth, but some of their most important lessons happen outside a traditional classroom. That's because students are assigned to formation groups that help them develop personally and spiritually during their time here. Each group is guided by a formation director who helps students develop a charter at the beginning of the school year. This document outlines the activities that they'll do together throughout the year, like roadside clean-up events or praying in front of the blessed sacrament. The program is designed to enable students to become healthy, well-rounded people who are capable of making mature decisions regarding their vocations. The program focuses on five areas: human formation, spiritual formation, intellectual formation, intercultural community living formation and missionary ministry formation. Pictured above is the Colossians formation group with their formation director, Fr. Raymond Akumbilim, SVD.

— FROM THE PRESIDENT —

SHARING MISSION

High school can be stressful. While many students are rather desperate to find a place to “fit in,” many are trying to be more self-reliant. I recall a story told by Fr. Mark Link SJ. There was a new freshman girl walking in the hallway between classes. She saw a sophomore girl having trouble taping a large poster to the wall. The younger girl offered to help, thinking she might also find a friend. The sophomore snapped, “I don’t need help!” The freshman shrugged her shoulders, walked away sad, and sat down. What a difference compared to Jesus’ ministry. One of the first things Jesus did after his baptism in the Jordan was to call Andrew and John to follow him. Andrew called his brother, Simon Peter, to join the group. Then Jesus called Philip, and Philip called his friend Nathanael. Back in Galilee, Jesus called James and Matthew. Not long after, Jesus called 12 of his followers to share more closely in his mission. Jesus does not say, I don’t need help. Rather, he asked them to go to the town of Galilee to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. It is startling that the man who walked on water, raised people from the dead, healed the sick, and fed thousands would ask for help. Some missionaries make the mistake of the sophomore girl in the story. They take everything into their own hands – building chapels without help from the people, taking control of every committee and even arranging the flowers! Wiser missionaries follow Jesus’ example. They take every opportunity to invite people to share in the work, and in the sorrows and celebrations of the community. That is mission animation – giving people the encouragement they need to go out and share good news with others. Do you wonder how the story of the two high school students concluded? Ten minutes after the sophomore student said she didn’t need help, the freshman student walked by the sign. Ironically, it announced “Working together, we can do anything!” Jesus has a better idea. He shares his life and ministry with us in both word and deed. We can do the same with others.

Fr. Tom



Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

Moving forward in formation

Recently, several SVD candidates who studied at DWC took the next steps in their formation journeys.

Following graduation from DWC in May, Hoang Huy Nguyen and Quoc Dinh Nguyen joined the year-long novitiate program in Techny, Illinois this summer. They’ll spend time praying, learning about the Society of the Divine Word and continuing their discernment over the next 12 months. Having completed their own novitiate year, six other DWC graduates professed vows as Divine Word Missionaries on July 30. Hoang Duy Khanh (John) Do, Wisno Elie, Tuan Hoang Nguyen, Truong An Duc (John) Nguyen, Friday Onoja and Tung Cao Vu will continue their educations and their religious formation for the priesthood at the Divine Word Theologate and Catholic Theological Union.

“I felt called to be here after professing my First Vows. It was a great experience for me, and it gave me a sense of certainty with joy and the assurance that my life is in God’s hands,” Friday said. On Sept. 17, three men professed their perpetual vows as Divine Word Missionaries and were then ordained as deacons on Oct. 2: Edwan (Manie) Manuel, Quang Ngoc Pham and Jorge Humberto Zetino-Salazar. Please keep all of the SVD candidates in your prayers as they courageously respond to God’s call and consider where He’s asking them to serve. Please also pray for our formators who walk this path alongside the candidates, guiding and accompanying them on their journeys. “I believe that with God on our side, we will reach the shore,” Friday said. “Let us continue to pray with and for one another.”



Left to right: Jorge Humberto Zetino-Salazar, Quang Ngoc Pham and Edwan (Manie) Manuel during their perpetual vow celebration. Provincial Fr. Quang Duc Dinh, SVD, far right, presided.



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





Bob Kramer

Like **BOB KRAMER**, you can help Divine Word students

Bob Kramer, from New Hampton, Iowa, first knew about Divine Word College when he came to Epworth for a Mass servers' retreat. He was just in the eighth grade.

The retreat was only three days but from time to time, Bob, now 62 and recently retired, still thinks about what he learned at Divine Word that weekend.

"Being a new teenager at that time, I hadn't really thought about religious life. But during the weekend my eyes were really opened to the possibilities," he said.

Through high school and beyond, Bob wondered if being a priest or a brother was what he was called to be. But in the

end, even with strong encouragement from his grandmother, he decided it wasn't.

For nearly 30 years Bob has been a Divine Word College donor. Like many others, he thinks he received a letter asking for a donation. He recalled his eighth-grade retreat and the great experience he had.

Bob was also friends with Fr. John Harpel, SVD, who was the chaplain at the hospital in New Hampton. Because of those connections, Bob decided Divine Word would be a good place to support. And he has done so ever since.

Those connections are also the reason Bob has remembered the college in his estate plans.

"I never married, so I want to be able to help others," he said. "I know that my donations will help continue the education of Divine Word College students and I think that's important."

We are grateful to Bob and all of you who have remembered Divine Word College with a gift in your estate. Your generosity will make a difference for future Divine Word students!

*For more information about leaving a gift in your will to Divine Word College, please contact Mark Singsank at **563-876-0097** or **singsank@dwci.edu***

You make it happen!



Mark Singsank,
Development Office

As Catholics, we are called to minister to, or serve others, in whatever way best fits our abilities. When St. Paul wrote to the Romans, he encouraged them to use the gifts God had given them.

"Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each of us exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion to the faith; if service, in serving; if one is a teacher, in teaching; if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one leads, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." (Romans 12:6-8)

One of the important parts of a Divine Word College student's education is their time spent in ministry. In this edition of our newsletter you will read about the variety of ministries students participate in around the Epworth area. You will also read about all the many countries our students are from. 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 would not be at Divine Word. You make it possible for them to be here!

Gifts in your will to Divine Word are very important for the long-term success of the college and our students. Bob Kramer shares his story with you in this newsletter and why he has chosen to remember the college. 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 happen.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas!



Omar Picon Gonzalez, Sr. An Thuy Thi Ngo, LHC-QN, Sr. Van Hong Thi Nguyen, MQP and Hung Cong Nguyen working at the garage sale and raising money.

MISSION ANIMATION

Divine Word Missionaries use a term that may seem a little abstract – “mission animation.” It’s one of the religious order’s four characteristic dimensions or guiding principles.

So just what does it mean and how does it apply to students at Divine Word College? Mission animation is the act of stirring a response from others or “animating” them to get involved in the Church and in mission work.

Here at Divine Word College, mission animation is achieved in a number of ways.

Students volunteer their time and talents at nursing homes, a community meal site, an immigration center and multicultural parishes. Their active participation in these programs is an example to those they serve, as well as the people who they work with. Their actions

can inspire others to look for ways that they, too, can be of service.

What is mission animation?

Encouraging others to get involved or “animated” to actively participate in the Church and mission activities.

One such example is the annual garage sale the college holds each fall to raise money for a mission. This year, the Student Senate organized the event. They sold clothing, furniture, food items and home furnishings that were donated or no longer used at the college. The event gave them a chance to interact with people in the community. It also raised more than \$5,000 to support Ukrainian refugees in various countries where Divine Word

Missionaries are serving.



for Ukrainian refugees in between classes.

“Through the garage sale, we hope to become witnesses of God’s love through the act of charity and self-giving for our brothers and sisters who are in dire need of support,” said Student Senate President Omar Picon Gonzalez. “Through the example of the giving, we hope our students encourage others to make great use of their talents in spreading not only the word of God but also spreading God’s love.”

One student, Fr. Laurensius Luliyon Huller, SVD, experienced mission animation while serving in Mozambique from 2006 to 2021. There was no church where he worked. The people there were accustomed to missionaries giving them things but he said it was important to him that the community help to fund and construct the building where they would worship, so they would continue to maintain it long after he and the other missionaries left.

“I told them, if you don’t have money, give your time to work on the construction,” he said.

It took six years to fund and build it, but the community now has a church that they can be very proud of because it is theirs.

“When active, through the guidance under the Holy Spirit, one can make a difference in communities all around the world,” Omar said. “It is crucial to inspire others because the people are what makes up the church. Only through participation can we continue moving forward.”

POLISHING THE ART OF PREACHING

Practicing mission animation

It’s important that DWC students learn to preach effectively. It takes time and repetition to develop a style of public speaking that can captivate an audience.

DWC President Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD is the formation director for a group of 18 students who are ordained priests from eight different countries. Most of them are at DWC to study English. He works with them several times a week to refine their public speaking skills. They recite prayers and readings out loud.

“Even native English speakers have to slow down for public address,” Fr. Tom said. “It really takes practice – lungs, lips, throat and tongue all need to slow down together. Like tennis or football, your body doesn’t play well just by thinking about the game. It takes **PRACTICE.**”

The college also offers a class called Public Witness Reflection Skills. This course focuses on proclaiming liturgical readings, leading prayer and learning the practical skills of preaching. In short, it teaches students to share their faith in public spaces.

Students practice the skills they learn in class by giving presentations. Whether they are native English speakers or learning the language, all students benefit from public speaking lessons.

And everyone who listens to them in the future will benefit, too!

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



Thinking globally, riding locally

The first-ever virtual Divine Word College Cycle Challenge had participants riding their bikes and logging miles online throughout the month of September. Together, they raised more than \$16,600 to help cover educational expenses for students at Divine Word College. The top rider was alumnus Fulton Martin who rode 640 miles. Pictured above is Fr. Matheus Ro, SVD, a member of the college's Board of Trustees and DWC alumnus who was also a registered rider. Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to this new fundraiser!



Picnic in the park

New students had a chance to start adjusting to life in Iowa by attending the Opening School Picnic in August. The DWC community gathered at Swiss Valley Park just days before classes started to catch up, get familiar with new faces, play games and enjoy traditional American picnic foods! The annual event lets students and staff mingle in a relaxed environment. It also provides new students a chance to start acclimating to a new culture and way of life.



Golf and good times

The 8th annual Divine Word College Benefit Golf Outing in July raised \$11,700 to help cover educational expenses for students. It was an impressive turnout with 72 golfers trying their hand at winning the \$25,000 hole-in-one prize. No one managed to take it home but mark your calendars because there's always next year! The 2023 Golf Outing will be held on July 21. Thanks to all who helped make this event a huge success!



Family, feast and fun

Each year, students at DWC celebrate a special occasion called Family Feast. The official date is Sept. 8, the day that St. Arnold Janssen founded The Society of the Divine Word. It's a time to celebrate the members of Janssen's spiritual family and acknowledge milestone anniversaries for SVDs at the school. Students started the day with a prayer service in the chapel before heading outside for games and crafts. The day ended with a liturgy and formal banquet.

LEAVING FAMILY TO ANSWER THE CALL

Five years ago, I was moving away from my hometown for the first time to study at the University of California in Berkeley.

By: Joseph Simbre

I remember how when my family dropped me off in my new college dorm, the van was blocking the traffic. However, we were too busy crying, hugging and saying our goodbyes to move out of the way. As difficult as it was for me to leave my family, it was a necessary step for me to grow. But it was hard to be without them, and I felt alone for a long time as it was difficult to find people who I felt at home with.

God has a way of meeting us during some of our most difficult times, especially through His faithful people. One Sunday morning in college, I was approached after Mass by a student named Ting who greeted me and invited me to a small group bible sharing. Although I was hesitant at first, I decided to go. Ting eventually brought the group some beat-up bibles to discuss a short passage. Although I had a busy academic schedule, I found myself going week after week. It was not long before we all grew to be brothers. We prayed together, played together, and led other student ministries together. I felt that Christ was there in our friendship and I felt full of life. I realized then that this was something special, and I wanted this for the rest of my life. At the time, I thought that the closest thing to what I was experiencing

with my brothers at college was religious life. And so, I spoke to my uncle, Fr. Nico Sengson, SVD and got connected to my vocation director Fr. Adam MacDonald, SVD. With their encouragement and help,

many years later I found myself here at DWC discerning a vocation to religious life.

I remember how hard it was when I told my family that I wanted to leave California and attend DWC in Iowa. I knew that this was God's call because when I took this decision to prayer, I felt at peace. But while my heart feels at peace with the decision, it also pains my heart to be away from my

family members who have been my whole life. I'm giving up homecooked dishes and time with my brother and sister. I worry now because the more I continue down this path, the more I won't be able to be there for my family. Sometimes, it is hard to trust in God, but I have to leave my family in His hands and trust that He will take care of them. It is hard for me, too, because I miss being with my family so much. However, God blessed me with a loving community at DWC. I pray that God will bless my family and take care of them and that I will continue to have faith in God as I follow His call here at DWC.



Joseph Simbre at DWC's Lunar New Year celebration



DWC MISSION



One heart, many faces

It's been said that the world comes together at Divine Word College and the fall 2022 student body certainly exemplifies that notion. The 106 students enrolled come from 20 different countries.

Among them are SVD candidates and Divine Word Missionaries who are already in vows. There are also priests and seminarians from various dioceses and other religious orders. Women account for just over half of the enrolled students. Most of them are religious sisters and they represent 16 different religious congregations from around the world.

DWC STUDENT CITIZENSHIP

Benin	Cameroon
China	Democratic Republic of Congo
El Salvador	Haiti
Indonesia	Kenya
Korea	Mexico
Mozambique	Myanmar
Nigeria	Papua New Guinea
Philippines	Rwanda
Togo	Uganda
United States	Vietnam

Language program granted specialized accreditation



An ESL class taught by senior instructor Daniel Gheorghe (right)



This fall, the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program at Divine Word College was granted specialized accreditation by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) for the maximum initial period of five years. The grant of CEA accreditation is certification that the college's ESL program meets the highest professional standards in the field. DWC Associate Professor of ESL Dr. Mark Garton served as the Accreditation Coordinator. He worked closely with Dr. Seo Hyun Park, Director of the Intensive English Language

Institute, and Fr. John Szukalski, SVD, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs, to provide leadership on this multi-year effort. In addition, many of the college's ESL instructional faculty were involved in the planning and implementation of ESL program improvements, and contributed to the successful self-study and site visit.

"By taking part in the ESL program at Divine Word College, students are linguistically ready for higher education in the United States," said Dr. Seo Hyun. Sr. Nhi Thao Thi Nguyen, LHC-GV is from Vietnam and entered Divine Word College in August 2020 to learn English. She completed the ESL program in May 2021 and is currently enrolled in Divine Word's undergraduate program pursuing a bachelor's degree.

"The thing I liked most was that I was so shy to speak English in the beginning, but taking ESL classes enabled me to find confidence that had been hidden inside myself for a long time. I received a lot of encouragement from my professors. They are so friendly and their teaching methods are very effective. I am so grateful to them," she said. When Sr. Nhi returns to Vietnam, she plans to teach English to the religious sisters in her congregation, as well as people in her community who are poor and in need. She also hopes to serve as an interpreter for her congregation when dealing with international issues and people from other cultures.