

A SHARED TABLE, *A Shared Mission*

The Kissanes and the SVD Family

Dr. Joseph and Lucy Kissane of Indiana aren't just supporters of Divine Word College — they're like family. For more than three decades, they've been an indispensable part of the SVD community.

Each year in October when it's time for the annual Mission Sunday celebration, Lucy is the first person in the kitchen and the last one to leave it. She doesn't just prepare her own dish (something delicious and traditional like egg rolls or chapchae) — she helps everyone else with theirs, always lending a hand.

"In many ways, she is the shared mother of our SVD family," said Associate Director for Development Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD.

Her connection to the Society of the Divine Word first started in 1988 when she was working for Fr. Peter Hung, SVD at the Pastoral Center for St. Thomas of Canterbury in uptown Chicago. One Sunday, Fr. Peter asked Lucy if she would cook dinner for eight Vietnamese Divine Word Missionaries from the Theologate in Chicago.

The eight dinner guests arrived after Mass as planned.

"It's often expected that the host, especially a woman, should cook, serve guests, and clean



Dr. Joseph and Lucy Kissane

up after meals,” Lucy recalled. “I was doing what I thought was my duty. But just as I turned to collect the dishes, two of them got up to help, and two others started washing. I was shocked! I’d never seen anything like that. I asked them to leave the dirty dishes for me but they kept going. Their humility and way of living left a lasting impression on me.”

From that day on, Lucy said her fondness for the SVDs only grew. She joined them for meals and social nights almost every week. “I felt like part of their religious family,” she said. And eventually, she brought someone else into it.

Two years later, when Lucy married Dr. Joseph in 1990, it was only natural that he also become a part of the SVD family. A chiropractor by profession, Dr. Joseph often volunteered his services to SVD members in need — offering adjustments, wellness advice, and heartfelt friendship.

As true family members, the couple genuinely cares for everyone connected to the SVD community. Their involvement goes far beyond simply attending events — they help host them.

Through the years, Lucy helped prepare the food for parties after milestones like the profession of first and final vows and priestly ordinations. The SVDs consider the Kissanes’ help a gift; Lucy, in turn, sees it as a privilege to be part of such special moments.

“Thirty-seven wonderful years experiencing the love

and prayers from the SVD family! We shared many good memories at Christmas Eve celebrations, parties and gatherings at our house,” she said. “This is all part of the blessing and privilege for both of us to be part of the SVD family.”

Fr. Thang says their support has made a lasting impact.

“Practically, we feel deeply supported by them — they are people we trust and confide in, especially when we need someone outside the SVD community. They have courageously challenged us when needed and enriched our lives with honest, practical suggestions that benefit everyone,” he said. “Symbolically, they embody the possibility and beauty of laity-religious collaboration. Their example reassures us that this kind of partnership is both possible and deeply rewarding.”

Their devotion has even become a source of joy and humor among the SVDs. Last year, when the couple celebrated their 34th wedding anniversary at the Theologate, Fr. Peter De, SVD asked Dr. Joseph, “What has impressed you the most in the 34 years you’ve been married to Lucy?”

“Lucy introduced me to the SVDs,” Dr. Joseph replied with a smile, “and I made the final vows right away.” His words drew laughter and affectionate nods — an inside joke that reflects just how deeply he’s become part of the family.

We are deeply grateful to Dr. Joseph and Lucy Kissane for their unwavering support, generous spirit, and the love they’ve poured into the SVD mission for more than 30 years.

“Thirty-seven wonderful years experiencing the love and prayers from the SVD family!”

Lucy Kissane and Fr. Bill Shea, SVD, share smiles and serve up their famous chicken kabobs with students Kim Hoa Pham (left) and Thi Van Nguyen (right) at the annual Mission Sunday celebration.

