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THE PRESIDENT

Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

What Is Prophetic About Dialogue?

Dialogue is prophetic when it points the way to the Kingdom of God, insists on radical inclusion, and gives public witness to deepening bonds of solidarity.

Dialogue for the Kingdom. Missionary service today focuses on dialogue for the Kingdom. Jesus sent out his early disciples, two by two, with these instructions:

"Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'" (Luke 10:8-9)

Of course, dialogue can take many forms. It can exist among thieves, but such conversation would likely be one of conspiracy. Dialogue can occur among politicians, though often it is little more than a discussion about power. Dialogue can also be had among church people, but if it does not hold Jesus' instructions at heart, it risks becoming little more than a contest of one-upmanship.

Missionaries, along with all Christians, are called to give witness with their lives that God's Kingdom is near. That is the core of Jesus' prophesy.

Dialogue of Radical Inclusion.

A distinctive element in missionary dialogue is its focus on universality and diversity. From the time of St. Paul, missionaries have insisted that the Kingdom is open to *everyone* and that *differences* are not merely tolerated but welcome. In 2000, the SVD General Chapter affirmed:



"From the time of our Founder we have always felt called to share in the mission of Jesus 'to proclaim the Kingdom of God's love' (Prologue to SVD Constitutions). In our call to pass over to other cultures and in our charism of internationality, *the particular contribution that we are called to make in witnessing to the Reign of God is to highlight its universal inclusiveness and its openness to diversity.* Indeed our SVD identity is rooted in this call to bear witness to God's love precisely in situations where its inclusive embrace is not recognized and where its openness to the rich diversity of peoples is not appreciated." (2000 General Chapter, # 48)

Dialogue Itself as a Public Sign.

Fundamentally, prophetic dialogue is the work of the Holy Spirit drawing us together in solidarity. As people take notice, the encounters themselves become prophetic signs.



Ideally, missionaries do not enter dialogue with a know-it-all attitude. Rather, they approach encounters with people of other faith traditions, with the poor and marginalized, with people of other cultures and with faith-seekers as occasions of fascination and hope. For those called to prophetic dialogue, differences are not threats—they are invitations.

When such dialogue matures beyond the private sphere, it becomes a public witness to the power of the Holy Spirit, gathering all of humanity to unity. Drawn together in the Spirit of oneness, formed by the Word of God, and welcomed by the Creator of all peoples, we come to the deep realization that we all belong to one another.

In dialogue, we foster solidarity, respect and love. As we journey together with our dialogue partners, we uncover the depths of our shared humanity, grow in mutual regard for one another, and receive and extend an invitation to deep friendship. Such mature dialogue itself becomes a *prophetic sign*—a foretaste of humanity's future in God.

Dangerous Work. When SVDs gathered for the 2000 General Chapter, they were clear-eyed about both the long-term promise and the short-term risks of prophetic dialogue.

"It has become clear that prophetic witness to the Gospel necessarily brings with it the opposition of the powerful and the oppressors, be they of the Left or the Right. Religious missionaries are called to be unconditionally on the side of the oppressed, to be martyrs (i.e., witnesses) to the radical following of Jesus in the living out of his concrete options in our own contexts." (2000 General Chapter, #28)

Prophetic Dialogue at DWC. Is there any prophetic dialogue at DWC? Truth be told, I find it everywhere I look.

Recently, I walked into the dining room to fetch a cup of coffee and was surprised to see seven tables where ESL students were being coached by conversation partners from Emmaus Bible College, from among the archdiocesan college seminarians, and from friends here in Epworth. A couple of SVD Brothers were also lending a hand. The students came from Vietnam, Haiti, and China.

I am continually amazed and encouraged by the courage of students who immerse themselves in learning a new language—and equally impressed by the patience and generosity of instructors, tutors, and members of the DWC community. Many friendships and bonds of mutual appreciation have been born in our dining room.

Later in the week, I had the opportunity to talk with Sr. Precious and Sr. Charity from Zimbabwe. Their home language is Shona, and I was delighted to learn that Shona has no word for *stranger!* The instinct of the Shona people, when meeting someone new, is not to focus on difference but to seek what unites.

St. Josef Freinademetz, SVD expressed the same truth in his own way: "The language that all people understand is LOVE."

And that, indeed, is the most prophetic thing about prophetic dialogue.



From Puerto Rico to Newark – Prophetic Dialogue for a DWC Alumnus

For Fr. Miguel Virella, SVD, the seeds of his vocation were planted early. Growing up in Puerto Rico as the oldest of five children, faith was part of the fabric of daily life—especially through his grandparents. “My grandparents were the main influence in my religious upbringing and faith,” he said. “That’s where everything started—with them.”

As a boy, he was already drawn to the priesthood, often pretending to celebrate Mass for his siblings and friends by distributing crackers as the Eucharist. But as he grew older, that dream faded to the background—until a transformative experience at age 17 reignited it. Through the charismatic movement at his parish, he felt a powerful encounter with God. “It was not only about going to church or following the expectations of religion,” he said. “It was really from the heart.”

Having spent several summers working in restaurants in Newark, New Jersey, where his uncles were chefs, Fr. Miguel was already familiar with life in the mainland United States. Those visits, along with the renewed faith he found in the youth group, eventually led him to enter formation with a religious community called the Servites. In 1984, he enrolled at Divine Word College in Epworth, Iowa to refine his English and take some early undergraduate courses.

At DWC, he found a place that felt like home. Those two years not only strengthened his English and philosophy skills but also immersed him in a welcoming community. He was deeply moved by the diversity, the warmth of the SVD family, and mentors who showed him genuine care. He still remembers their encouragement when he struggled with discernment. “Those are things you keep in your mind—that there is a connection,” he said. “They cared.”

Ordained a Divine Word Missionary Priest in 1996, Fr. Miguel has spent his priesthood serving in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey—working primarily with immigrant and low-income communities. “That’s our charism—working with the poor,” he said. “People who may be limited materially, but who are full of love and who really dedicate themselves to the community.”

In his early years of ministry, he served in several culturally diverse parishes, often celebrating Mass in both Spanish and English. He spent 23 years in one parish that later merged with others under his leadership. Guiding these communities through transition required patience, compassion, and a focus on unity, healing, and shared mission. “The building was in bad condition,” he recalled. “One Wednesday, they told us, ‘You have to move.’ So we called everybody and said ‘Next Sunday Mass is going to be in the other church.’ We traveled like the people of Israel. Everybody came. No problem, no fights. We just went.”



Fr. Miguel Virella, SVD

Over the years, he has guided parishes through transitions and growth, always focused on helping people strengthen their faith and live it more deeply. “It gives me the most joy to see the community have a personal relationship with God,” he said. “It’s not only about coming to church and doing things right—it’s about having a personal relationship with God.”

Today, Fr. Miguel continues to serve in New Jersey, ministering to both Hispanic and Irish parishioners. He remains passionate about lay formation, leading Bible classes and workshops that help people understand their faith more deeply and share it with others. “That’s part of our charism and mission,” he said. “We do a lot of formation for the laity—to help them do ministry outside of the parish.” Now nearly three decades into ministry, Fr. Miguel continues to find meaning in walking with others on their faith journeys. “Sometimes through the people, I learn more about myself, and through the people, I also see God,” he reflected.

Fr. Miguel still recalls a conversation with a spiritual director during his formation with the Servites that left a lasting impact. The director asked why he wanted to remain on the path to the priesthood. “I think of Moses, who didn’t know exactly where he was going, but he believed. I would like to journey the same way—until my hair is white,” he remembers telling him. “I love it. I wouldn’t change it for anything. I’m very happy being an SVD priest.”



VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION/DEAN OF STUDENTS
Fr. Tuan Hoang, SVD

Dean’s Forum

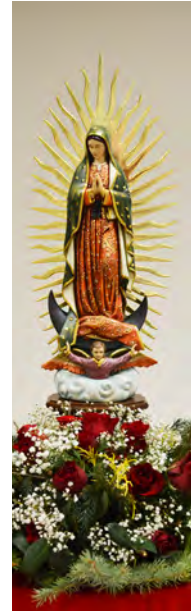
This **Thursday, November 6, 2025**, there will be the Dean’s Forum. This will be the final one for the semester before we are off to our Christmas vacation. Dean’s Forum is a time for the deans, formators, and students to raise up their concerns about formation and student life matters. The forum will be held in room 107 at 1:00 P.M. As always, all students are required to come to the forum. Please be there on time.

Queen of the Americas Celebration

Saturday, November 15, 2025, the Asian American Hispanic Association (AAHA) will be organizing the Queen of the Americas celebration at Divine Word College. The Blessed Virgin Mary is central to the faith of all Catholics around the world. Many countries are devoted to Mary because of her apparitions to believers when they experienced difficulties and in times of need. The Queen of the Americas is celebrated to honor and give thanks to the Blessed Virgin Mary in all of the Americas (North America, Central America, and South America). To prepare ourselves for the celebration, there are a couple of things I want to remind you:



- Mass will begin at 3:00 P.M. in the main chapel, followed by a banquet in the main dining room. All students are required to attend this celebration, so please do not make any plans for November 15, 2025.
- To prepare ourselves for the liturgy, there will be liturgy preparation on **Thursday, November 13, 2025** at 1:00 P.M. in the main chapel. All students are required to attend.
- Please come to the celebration in semi-formal, traditional, or religious attire.



Conference for Men and Women Religious in Temporary Vows - Discernment

On **Wednesday, November 12, 2025**, Fr. Simon Thoi Hoang, SVD will be giving a conference for the men and women religious in temporary vows, and diocesan seminarians. The conference will be on *Discernment*.

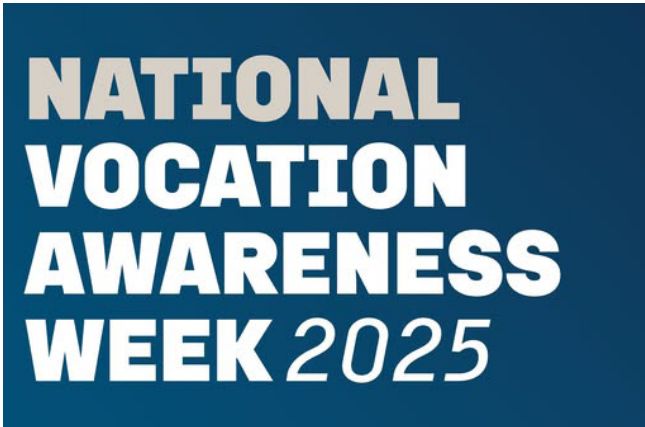
Discernment is important for priests and religious because God is always calling us. All of our lives, priest and religious entrust their lives to the will of God in their ministries and services to the Church, and certainly discernment comes in handy.

The conference is required for men and women religious in temporary vows and diocesan seminarians to attend. It is also open to anyone else who wants to come for their ongoing formation. The conference will begin at 5:15 P.M. in room 107.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMISSIONS

Len Uhal



National Vocation Awareness Week, November 2-8

This week we celebrate [National Vocation Awareness Week](#) (November 2-8). You can click on the link to learn more about the celebration. Hopefully you've noticed the sign on the front drive and the "table tents"

in the dining room with fun facts about vocations and religious life. *Tomorrow, Wednesday, November 5 will be "Treat Day" for everyone!* The vocation office is treating all students, staff, faculty and SVDs to a drink and a snack. That's right – visit the Pour House for a drink and a snack courtesy of the vocation office! Finally, on Friday, we'll have our annual raffle! Be sure to be at lunch on Friday to register for some Divine Word College swag! You could win a hoodie or a t-shirt or a hat! Watch for instructions on how to register. There will be separate prizes for students and faculty/staff/SVDs. Everyone who registers could be a winner!

And remember, please pray for vocations—pray for other young people who are discerning God's call in their lives...pray for the adults and mentors who accompany them on their journey...pray for all men and women in formation now (here and around the world)...pray for all those who serve as brothers, sisters, priests, deacons and lay ecclesial ministers.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATIONS

Steve Winger

Fire Safety Awareness

Divine Word College will be conducting a fire drill in the coming weeks. Please be prepared to evacuate quickly and safely following the procedures outlined below. Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes, exits, and assembly points. This knowledge is critical during a real emergency.

5.08.02 Policy Handbook on Fire:



When the fire alarm goes off leave the building immediately through the nearest exit! Walk fast, do not run!



Proceed to the soccer field. Students should gather by your formation groups. Employees (faculty and non-faculty) should gather together. SVD members should gather together.



Stay on the field until the fire department gives the "all-clear" signal. If you are unable to return to the main building, proceed to Megan Hall. If you reside at Megan Hall and are unable to return to the building, proceed to the main building.



Contact persons are assigned to each formation group. They are to inform the fire department if someone is



missing in their group. No one but the Fire Department is to go back into the building to look for someone who is missing. Beware of emergency equipment that will come on campus.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

When the fire alarm sounds, you should receive a text message indicating that we are conducting a fire drill. If you do not get a “fire drill” text message, please see Kimberly after the drill is over. Once the fire alarm goes off, move quickly to the parking lot near the

soccer field. **DO NOT RUN! DO NOT LOOK FOR FRIENDS.** Get out of the building. Once you are at the soccer field you should break into groups (please stay in your group so we can do roll call) as follows:

If you are a student, you should gather by formation groups. Fr. Tuan will take roll. Employees should gather together. Jeffrey Puccio will take roll. SVD should gather together. Fr. Simon will take roll. Once the fire alarm has stopped sounding and roll has been taken you will be released to return to the building. **Please do not return to the building until you have released by your group leader.**



Thank You – All Souls Mass and Brunch

Dear Friends,

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make our All Souls Mass and Brunch such a meaningful and grace-filled gathering. It was a special day as we welcomed our benefactors and those who came to remember their loved ones who had passed away during the past year. Together, we shared prayer, remembrance, and fellowship—a true celebration of faith and community.

On behalf of the Development Office, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the staff of the **Development Office** and our **Housekeeping Team** for their tireless efforts in preparing and organizing the event. My sincere thanks also go to our **students**, who

generously offered their time and energy in so many ways—from setup and serving to welcoming guests.

I am especially grateful that our **SVD priests, brothers, and students** took time to sit and share conversations with our benefactors during the brunch. These moments of presence and hospitality truly reflect the spirit of the Divine Word Missionaries.

As we continue to remember our beloved departed, may we also cherish the living bonds of gratitude and community that unite us.

“Gratitude is the memory of the heart.”
– Saint Mary Euphrasia

With deep appreciation,
Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD
Associate Development Director



 Matthew Jacoby Library

opac.dwci.edu

New Quiet Hour & Rest Resources

Starting this week, the library will observe a **Quiet Hour** every weekday from **12:30–1:30 P.M.**, Monday through Friday. This is a dedicated time for rest, reflection, or quiet study.

Lights & Environment

During **Quiet Hour**, the main lights will be dimmed to create a calm and focused atmosphere. Each individual study desk is equipped with a desk lamp for personal lighting. Additionally, portable lamps are available for use as needed.

New Rest Resources

This week the library will add **four sleeping mats** to the mezzanine area near the bean bag chairs. These are available for short naps or quiet relaxation.



To help keep the space clean and comfortable for everyone:

- Please bring a blanket or sheet to place over the mat or couch before use.
- Washable covers have been ordered for both the mats and couches to help reduce the spread of germs.

We hope these additions make the library a more welcoming and restorative space for all.

Research Assistance – End-of-Semester Support

Working on final papers or projects? The library is here to help! Explore our top research databases:

- **JSTOR** – Scholarly articles across the humanities, social sciences, and more.

- **Project MUSE** – Peer-reviewed journals and books in history, theology, and cultural studies.
- **Digital Theological Library 2 (DTL2)** – More than just theology! DTL2 includes resources in philosophy, psychology, sociology, and much more — all curated for academic research.

Need personalized help?

Set up a one-on-one research assistance appointment with the Library Director for guidance on:

- Finding credible sources
- Narrowing your topic
- Citation help
- Using databases effectively

Appointments are available in person or via Microsoft Teams. Email ewinter@dwci.edu or visit the library to schedule.



TECH TIP TUESDAYS

MICROSOFT 365 SERIES
BY LIZ WINTER

Desktop vs. Online Apps – What’s the Difference?

Most of us are used to opening Word, Outlook, or Excel from our desktop. But did you know that every Microsoft 365 app also has an online version you can access from any browser? Just go to <https://www.office.com/> and **Sign In** using your dwci.edu email address and password.

Here’s a quick guide to help you decide when to use the **desktop version** and when the **online version** might be more convenient.



Desktop Version: Pros & Cons

 **Pros:**

- Full features and advanced tools (especially in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint)
- Works offline
- Familiar interface for long-time users
- Better for large or complex files

 **Cons:**

- Requires installation and updates
- Tied to one device
- Files may be saved locally unless synced with OneDrive

Online Version: Pros & Cons

 **Pros:**

- Accessible from any device with internet (including your smart phone or tablet)
- Auto-saves to OneDrive
- Great for collaboration (real-time editing)
- No installation needed

 **Cons:**

- Fewer advanced features
- Requires internet connection
- May feel different from desktop layout

Quick Tip:

If you're working on a shared document or switching between devices, try using the **online version**. For formatting-heavy tasks or offline work, stick with the **desktop version**.

You can always open a document in one and switch to the other — just look for the **“Open in Desktop App”** button in the online version!

KEEP AN EYE OPEN
FOR MORE **TECH TIPS**



COMING SOON!