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Birthday Corner:

NOVEMBER

26	Sr. Phuong Nguyen, CUM
30	Sr. Yicong Lou
30	Quang Tran



THE PRESIDENT

Fr. Tom Ascherman, SVD

Jesus Is In Our Boat

At present, DWC has 111 students enrolled. They are candidates or members of the SVD, the SSps and 45 other religious congregations and dioceses. All DWC students are encouraged to embrace a life of missionary service, here in North America and around the world. Following the COVID years (2020-2023), and even in the midst of complicated changes in immigration policy, the number of SVD and SSps students has been growing slowly. That is because many Arnoldus Family members follow Jesus' example and continue inviting young people to "come and see."

Fr. Simon Hoang SVD, the Rector of the Epworth SVD Community, wrote about his determination to keep inviting people to embrace a life of missionary-religious service, even when others may be discouraged. I am grateful for his continuing enthusiasm and initiative. I'm also glad to share his reflection with you.



Vocation Recruiting and Religious Life – It's Not a "Sinking Boat"

By Fr. Simon Hoang, SVD

During my Cross-Cultural Training Program (CTP) in Germany from 2002 to 2004, I had a conversation that remains with me to this day. With limited German, I asked one of our confreres why we don't invite young people to join us. He replied, "*Simon, warum wollen wir Menschen in ein sinkendes Schiff einladen?*" (Why do you want to invite people into a sinking boat?) "A sinking boat!" What a troubling, negative image of religious life to portray!

After 16 years of parish ministry in Memphis and Bolivia, I am currently in my third year of ministry at Divine Word College. I serve as a formator, instructor and spiritual director. I have come to understand that the "sinking boat" is

not sinking at all. It can submarine at times, but it's still moving forward.

The Divine Word College formation team works hard to invite and accommodate young people, both our own candidates and those from other religious communities, during their years of formation at the college. The formation ministry is meaningful and rewarding. Indeed, the boat is sailing forward, regardless of the stormy sea, since Jesus is in the boat.



My experiences with religious communities in the Dubuque area, such as the Presentation Sisters, Franciscan Sisters and BVM Sisters confirm that the positive energy and transformative spirit are alive and well. Their communities are aging and shrinking in number. Perhaps they are in a state of submarine, but their hearts remain open and expansive. Their missionary spirit is very much alive. They welcome younger Sisters from all over the world to live with them.

Thirty religious Sisters studying at Divine Word College live in these convents in Dubuque. These aging Sisters share their religious life and pass on their knowledge and wisdom to this younger generation of Sisters. What a sinking boat they navigate!

The Church and religious communities are no longer confined to being local, territorial, regional or national in scope. Religious life is no longer confined to being a member of a traditional religious community with its own special mission and charism. It is a broad, international, intercultural, mission-driven life worth sharing and being enriched by others.

Reflecting on the experiences of these older Sisters from the United States and the younger Sisters from different religious communities and countries who are welcomed into their convents, I ponder our own religious missionary community. We live in different houses, districts, or provinces. Each of our members

may be involved in different ministries or be at a different stage in their life journey. Our views of church, ministry, liturgy and community life may be different. We come from far and near. Our lives are shaped by vastly different experiences, cultures and backgrounds.

Nevertheless, we should all share the same vision and passion: to invite and accompany young people to share our religious life and mission, the life and mission of Christ. We should not limit ourselves to our own ministry, parish or district. Instead, we should extend our reach to others, far and near. Let us collaborate with the movement of the Spirit to invite and welcome young people including those who are discerning their vocation and those in our formation system into our lives and be enriched by their presence.

- Simon Thoi Hoang, SVD

Petition for the Religious Workforce Protection Act

Br. Rodney Bowers SVD, the Chicago Province director for Education and Immigration Services is inviting members of the DWC community to participate in a petition drive urging Congress to make changes in current immigration law affecting Religious Workers. The Bishops of the USA and many other religious groups are petitioning for these changes. Br. Rodney's description of the proposed changes and his request for participation follows below.

Petitions to Senator Grassley, Senator Ernst, and Representative Hinson are in the dining room. You are invited to add your name to each petition.

Note: all members of the community can sign the petition, both US citizens and non-citizens.

To Members of Divine Word College Community:

As you know immigration has become an important concern in this country. It is a complex and multifaceted set of issues. Many of these immigration issues impact our work as Divine Word Missionaries here in the United States.

Several Divine Word Missionaries in all three Provinces here in the United States hold a R-1 Religious Worker visa. Right now, the R-1 Religious Worker visa is only valid for 5 years. After this 5-year period, the person

needs to leave the country for 1 year. They can apply for another R-1 visa which takes time and money. This issue is affecting many other religious orders, dioceses, and religious organizations. There is a new Bill pending in the House of Representatives and the United States Senate which is entitled *The Religious Workforce Protection Act*. The Act is in Committee in both Chambers. We need the House and Senate to act on this legislation. Our immigration lawyers have approved of this action. The United States Catholic Bishops have encouraged the passage of this Bill.



Ashley Hinson

We are sending our **Representative Ashley Hinson (R)** and our two Senators **Joni Ernst (R)** and **Charles Grassley (R)** a petition asking that the House and Senate act on this legislation. We know that the U.S. Government is shutdown, but we wanted to make this issue known. Anyone can sign the petition. It is voluntarily.



Joni Ernst

The Petition we are asking you to sign says the following:



Chuck Grassley

First of all, we would like to sincerely thank you for your dedicated service to our country. May the Lord bless you as you continue to serve our state and our country. We share a common goal – each in our own way want to make the world a little better. The purpose of this petition is to urge the immediate passage of the *Religious Workforce Protection Act (S 1298)*.

The Society of the Divine Word is the largest Missionary Religious Order of priests and brothers in the Roman Catholic Church. Saint Arnold Janssen established our congregation in 1875. The Society of the Divine Word came to the United States in 1895. The Society of the Divine Word carefully follow the immigration requirements of the United States in order to bring Divine Word Missionary priests and brothers into this country to help serve the pastoral needs of its people. We use a variety of visas: the F-1 Student visa (for language and cultural learning), R-1 Religious Worker visa, the H-1B visa (which recently came under scrutiny of the Trump Administration), and the Legal Permanent Residence (LPR / Green Card). Over the years many Divine Word Missionaries who were visa-holders have become U.S. citizens. The Roman Catholic

Church in the United States is currently undergoing some major changes which will have an enormous impact on the future of American Catholic communities. There is an aging American-born Catholic ministerial priesthood and consecrated life in this country. Fewer American-born and naturalized citizens are entering Catholic seminaries and houses of formation. This trend is unlikely to change and will only continue to get worse as time goes on. Therefore, Divine Word Missionaries are increasingly dependent on international religious men and women and almost every diocese throughout the United States are facing a very similar situation.

The current R-1 Religious Worker visa has some very serious limitations. It can only be given for a total of five years. After five years, the Religious Worker must leave the United States for one year before they can apply for a new R-1 Religious Worker visa which will take additional time and will be costly.

The situation which I just outlined has created a very serious problem. It is difficult to find replacements if one is forced to leave the country because there are very few, if any, legal immigration options for the Catholic Church to pursue. While we recognize that there is a path to a green card from R-1 status, it is a long, involved process and currently has a lengthy backlog for an immigrant visa to become available. This makes long-term pastoral planning exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Ultimately, this hurts the People of God whom we try to serve in ministry. Some type of change in our current immigration policies is needed.

There is a bipartisan bill pending in the House of Representatives (H.R. 2672) and the United States Senate (S. 1298) called the *Religious Workforce Protection Act*. It was introduced in both the House of Representatives and the United States Senate in April of this year. It is our understanding that the Religious Workforce Protection Act is still pending in committee. The passage of the *Religious Workforce Protection Act* will give the various religious organizations like the Divine Word Missionaries who depend on priests, religious, and other ministers from other countries additional time in the United States so they can continue their important ministerial service to the people of this country. We are asking you to seriously look into this matter. More importantly, the House of Representative needs to act on the *Religious Workforce Protection Act (H.R. 2672)*. **PLEASE SIGN THE PETITIONS!**



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Joshua Young

Final Weeks of Classes

As we enter the final weeks of classes and celebrate Thanksgiving, I'd like to share this poem written by DWC student Sister Yvette Muyere Shey, SST. May it be a reminder of the impact faculty and staff have on our students.

Tribute to Teachers

*No teacher, no development,
No progress, no emergence spent.
I rejoice that you guide me each day,
Lighting my path in a purposeful way.
Each lesson you teach, I hold dear,
You awaken my dreams, calm my fear.
To strive, to reach, to boldly believe,
In the truth of the gifts I'm meant to achieve.*

*With gentle strength, you lift my eyes,
Planting seeds of thought that rise.
Seeds of wonder, seeds of flame,
Curiosity sparked, never the same.
To know how to rise and to lead,
Your wisdom sown like sacred seed.*

*I gaze upon this Earth so wide,
It's mountains, seas, and stars with pride.
The sky suspended, the moon's soft glow,*

*The rivers' dance, the winds that blow.
Then I turn to the creative human art,
Born from a teacher's loving heart.*

*Skyscrapers rising to the skies,
Airplanes soaring as dreams arise,
Ships that sail, machines that heal,
Inventions shaped by minds of steel
Doctors, pilots, preachers, too,
Bankers, lawyers, all came through you.*

*Where you have taught, the world has grown,
Emergencies sparked from seeds you've sown.
You birthed machines that think and learn,
Gave rise to minds that twist and turn.
Indeed, no wage can match your sacrifice,
Your calling is noble, pure, and wise.*

*I thank you for the work you do,
The world owes everything to you.
For teaching is the soul's bright flame,
A sacred, lifelong, fearless claim.
Through you, we learn to rise again,
To build, to heal, to lead, to train.*

*And high above, in Heaven's sight,
The Almighty Teacher sees your light.*

ASSESSMENT LOOP

Ms. Kimberly Burnett-Hackbarth

A prayer of Thanksgiving

We come before you with grateful hearts, thanking you for the countless blessings in our lives. Thank you for your love, guidance and protection.



We thank you for our Divine Word College community: for the dedicated faculty, supportive staff, and the inspiring students. May our shared mission continue to bind us together in service, wisdom, and love. In your loving name we pray. Amen.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION/DEAN OF STUDENTS

Fr. Tuan Hoang, SVD

Thanksgiving Break

The formation team wishes you all a Happy Thanksgiving. We give thanks for the many blessings and graces that God has given to us. We express our thanks and gratitude to all of you, for your hard work and dedication, for your contributions to the Divine Word College community, and for your response to God for your vocation.

Just a friendly reminder that for those who are leaving for Thanksgiving break to return to the college by Sunday, November 30, 2025. For those who are staying here, please use this time to fulfill your community service that is assigned to you. I will also post the community service for washing dishes this week. Also, please follow the schedule posted on the student bulletin board.



Advent Reconciliation

Soon, we will enter into the Season of Advent, a time to prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. To begin Advent, there will be an Advent Reconciliation on Monday, December 1, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. in the main chapel. As we know, reconciliation is a time where we come to the Lord to seek His pardon and mercy, and to strengthen our relationship with Him. I encourage everyone to use this time to reconcile with the Lord as we continue to wait for the coming of His Son.



Music Recitals

As we are in our final week of the academic semester, and heading to finals week, some of our students will be performing music recitals. There will be two days where we can enjoy their performances –

- Tuesday, December 2, 2025 at 1:00 pm in the gym – Piano Recital
- Thursday, December 4, 2025 at 1:00 pm in the gym – Guitar Recital

Our students have been working hard all semester to prepare for this recital. If you are free, please stop by the gym to enjoy the performances and show your support for our students.

Getting Exercise to Relieve Stress

We are just two weeks away from finals, and many of you are probably cramming for your papers and studying for your final exams. It is the time of the semester where you are feeling stressed, and perhaps losing sleep. There is a study that shows exercise is a good way to relieve some of your stress. “Regular exercise can increase self-confidence, improve your mood, help you relax, and lower symptoms of mild depression and anxiety” – (www.mayoclinic.org).

The sports department encourages all of you to use some time to exercise. Come to the gym after class hours to play badminton or pickleball, or the exercise room to lift weights or run on the treadmill. All are encouraged to do exercise during these final weeks of the semester.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATIONS

Steve Winger

DWC Handbook Policy Reminder

5.15 INCLEMENT WEATHER

Divine Word College rarely cancels class days due to inclement weather. It is the responsibility of each faculty member to decide whether road conditions for his/her area prevent travel to the College. Employees whose absence from work is due to inclement or adverse weather conditions shall have the option of

using vacation/PTO (personal) time or taking the absence without pay. The same procedures apply if an employee feels he/she must leave work early because of inclement or adverse weather conditions.

The employee shall inform his/her supervisor or the Vice President for Operations and Finance that he/she must leave work early because of the weather conditions. The employee shall have the same options as described above regarding pay for the absence.



Advent Lunch Update

The Advent Lunch originally scheduled for **Wednesday, December 3rd**, has been canceled. However, we will celebrate a **Mass for our December Graduates on Friday, December 5th, at 8:00 a.m.**, with a **farewell luncheon from 11:40 a.m. to 1:10 p.m.** to honor and say goodbye to our graduates, departing ESL students, and employees.



 Matthew Jacoby Library

opac.dwci.edu

Stay Connected Over Break: Library Resources Anytime, Anywhere

Heading off-campus for the holidays? Even if you're away from campus, you can still enjoy eBooks, articles, audiobooks, and movies through the library's online platforms.



Check Out Books Before You Leave

- The library's collection includes over **51,000 books**, with strengths in **religion, philosophy, history, and social sciences**.
- Use the **online catalog** at <https://opac.dwci.edu> to find what you need.
- If you can't find a title, submit a **purchase suggestion** or an **Interlibrary Loan request**—we'll do our best to get it for you.

Access Resources Anywhere

Even off-campus, you can still use the [library's digital collections](#):

- **JSTOR** – Scholarly articles, eBooks, and primary sources in humanities and social sciences
- **Project Muse** – Scholarly journals and eBooks humanities and social sciences
- **Digital Theological Library (DTL)** – Over 1.4 million book, 61,000 journals, and 119+ databases
- **Libby** – Listen to audiobooks or read eBooks on

your phone or tablet. Our shared collection now includes 10,000+ audiobooks and 14,000+ eBooks

- **Kanopy** – Stream movies and documentaries

Need Help? Library Support is Just a Click Away

Have questions about library resources, research help, or technology tools? Visit our [Library Support](#) center for quick guides, FAQs, and step-by-step instructions. Can't find what you're looking for in the Library Support Center? Use the **Tawk.to chat widget** on the library website for real-time assistance, or email ewinter@dwci.edu.

Campus Reads Discussion – Chapter 4: DEIJ

Thursday, Dec. 4 | 12 PM | Academic Resource Center | Led by Dr. Joshua Young

Everyone—students, faculty, staff, and SVDs—is encouraged to join! Bring your lunch and take part in a conversation about Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice on college campuses. No need to finish the chapter—just come ready to share your ideas for strengthening our community and fostering belonging!

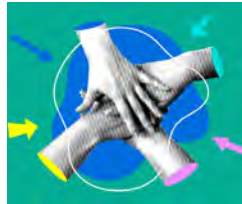


TECH TIP TUESDAYS

MICROSOFT 365 SERIES
BY LIZ WINTER

Scheduling Meetings with Microsoft Teams

DWC has built-in integration with Microsoft Teams, making it the easiest and most efficient way to schedule virtual meetings. Here's what you need to know:



Microsoft Teams: Your Go-To Virtual Meeting Tool

- In Outlook or Teams, click New Meeting and select Teams Meeting. A clickable link is automatically added for participants.
- Teams integrates seamlessly with Microsoft 365, so you can attach agendas, files, and notes right in the invite.
- Participants can join from the desktop app, web browser, or mobile app—no extra steps required.

Why Teams?

- Built-in integration with Outlook and Microsoft 365.
- Keeps collaboration in one place: chat, files, and meeting history.
- No need for extra plugins or downloads for internal users.



What about Zoom?

Zoom is helpful for external meetings or events where participants prefer Zoom's interface.

- It offers advanced video features like breakout rooms and webinars.

- To schedule, use the Zoom add-in for Outlook or Google Calendar.

Tip: For most internal meetings, stick with Teams for simplicity and integration. Use Zoom only when its unique features—like breakout rooms—are essential.

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



COMING SOON!

Thanksgiving Break Schedule 2025

“Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you” (1 Thes 5:18)

THURSDAY, November 27, 2025 **HAPPY THANKSGIVING!**

6:30 AM	Breakfast
11:00 AM	Thanksgiving Eucharist
Noon	Thanksgiving Lunch
5:30 PM	Supper – Self-Serve Dinner

FRIDAY, November 28, 2025

6:30 AM	Breakfast
8:00 AM	Eucharist
Noon	Lunch
5:30 PM	Supper

SATURDAY, November 29, 2025

8:00 AM	Eucharist
8:30 AM	Breakfast
Noon	Lunch
5:30 PM	Supper

SUNDAY, November 30, 2025

8:00 AM	Breakfast
10:00 AM	Eucharist
11:00 AM	Brunch
05:30 PM	Supper

No Vespers