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## THE PRESIDENT

Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

## Hearts Awakened

Last Saturday, DWC held our annual celebration of St. Josephine Bakhita. She was born free in Sudan, but at a very young age she was kidnapped, sold into slavery, tortured and abused. She was taken to Italy, freed from slavery, experienced a profound closeness to God the Father, asked for Baptism, and eventually joined the Canossian Sisters. For more than fifty years she worked at a school in northern Italy, welcoming the students as they entered, and blessed them on their way home. She became a sister to all the people. She died in 1947 and was canonized in 2000. St. John Paul II proclaimed her as our “universal sister.”

Our College celebration had a rather complicated theme: “Healing Wounds and Building True Peace and Justice by a Culture of Encounter”. The Gospel reading (Mt 25:1-13) recounted Jesus’ story of the wise and foolish virgins! How do you put all that together? **Deacon Arnold Formbi, SVD** was on hand to present the homily. It was truly a marvel!

## Homily by Deacon Arnold Formbi, SVD

**Stay Awake.** My friends, our theme today names something every one of us longs for: a world where people are seen, where dignity is honored, where wounds are met with compassion. And into that longing, Jesus gives us a parable of wise and foolish virgins. His conclusion is simple and direct: "Stay awake." I don't think he's talking about our eyes; he's talking about the heart.

I once had a classmate. He was brilliant, thoughtful, kind. But every day, somewhere in the middle of class, he would start to nod off. One day I asked him, "Are you bored?" He said, "No ... I'm just tired. I work late. I'm far from home.



Deacon Arnold Formbi, SVD

## Birthday Corner:

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I'm trying to keep up. Sometimes my body just can't do it." And it struck me: he wasn't sleeping because he didn't care; he was sleeping because he was carrying too much.



A lot of us have hearts like that. A sleepy heart isn't a bad heart. It's a tired heart. A heart overwhelmed by stress, or loneliness, or pressure, or wounds no one sees. A heart that slowly shuts down because it's been carrying more than it can hold.

**Awake and Sleepy Virgins.** This is exactly what Jesus is talking about in today's Gospel. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is not about being perfect or flawlessly prepared. It's about attentiveness of heart. The wise virgins aren't better people, they are simply awake. Their lamps stay lit because their hearts remain open, expectant, ready to recognize God when He draws near. The foolish virgins aren't wicked. They're just unawake. Their lamps go out because their hearts have grown tired, distracted, overwhelmed, the way our hearts do when life becomes too heavy.

Jesus is telling us that the real danger is not failure, not imperfection, not weakness. The real danger is a heart that has fallen asleep, a heart that no longer notices God's presence, no longer sees the people around it, no longer expects grace to break in. So, when Jesus says, "Stay awake," He is inviting us to keep the lamp of the heart burning, to stay open, attentive, ready for encounter.

**Bakhita's Experience.** St. Josephine Bakhita's early life could have put her heart to sleep forever. Trauma does that. Displacement does that. Being far from home does that. But something in her stayed awake, awake to hope, awake to dignity, awake to the possibility that God had not forgotten her. And when she finally encountered people who saw her, people who treated her with gentleness, who spoke her name with respect, who looked at her with the eyes of Christ, her heart woke up fully.

That is how her healing began. Not with a miracle, but with an encounter. Her life reminds us that love is not always met with gratitude. Kindness is not always understood. Forgiveness is not always returned. And yet, the Christian heart loves anyway.

**Love Anyway.** There is a prayer often associated with Mother Teresa that captures this so simply. It says that people may misunderstand you, accuse you, forget the good you do, or fail to appreciate your efforts but choose goodness anyway. Choose mercy anyway. Choose love anyway.

In the end, it is not about how others respond. It is about who God calls you to be. A sleepy heart waits for perfect conditions. An awake heart loves anyway.



Healing wounds begins when someone is seen. Peace begins when someone is welcomed. Justice begins when someone's dignity is honored. A culture of encounter is simply this: hearts that refuse to fall asleep. Hearts that stay awake to God, awake to one another, awake to the stories, cultures, and struggles of the people around us.



**Is Your Heart Sleepy?** So today, let me ask you: Where is your heart sleepy? Where is it tired or overwhelmed? Where do you need God to rekindle the flame?

And also: Who around you might be carrying more than you know? Who needs you to notice them, to welcome them, to help their heart wake up again?

The God who kept Bakhita's lamp burning in the darkest night is the same God who keeps ours burning too. And through us, He builds a world where peace and justice are not distant dreams, but encounters, real, human, holy encounters, one person at a time.

*Click the link below to watch the entire Mass and hear the rest of the homily: [https://www.youtube.com/live/HKeJc\\_YM0?si=KONF8WMzzM5tQVs1](https://www.youtube.com/live/HKeJc_YM0?si=KONF8WMzzM5tQVs1)*

*Arnold Formbi SVD, from Ghana, was ordained a deacon in October 2025 and looks forward to ordination to the priesthood in May. Later, he will be working in the German Province. This is one of his first homilies - he will surely be an exceptional preacher as the years move along.*



## VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**Dr. Joshua Young**

### Open Pathway Chosen for Accreditation Cycle

The Board of Administration, upon endorsement by the Faculty Senate, voted to pursue the [Open Pathway](#) offered by the Higher Learning Commission. Additionally, the Board, also endorsed by the Faculty Senate, voted to complete a Student Success Initiative instead of the virtual mid cycle review that other institutions may take. This means the College will be developing two significant quality initiative projects over the next few years. At the Presidential Forum today, faculty and staff discussed the process moving forward and began discussing potential topics to focus on for the College's Student Quality Initiative. Over

the next few months, details on how members of the College community can contribute will be shared. Everyone is encouraged to engage in this opportunity!

As part of the College's efforts to understand vocation and missionary service, research is currently being conducted on missionary formation and higher education. The survey asks how successful Catholic colleges and universities are at forming missionaries and what improvements can be made. The survey is for **EVERYONE THAT CONSIDERS THEMSELVES MISSIONARIES!** Please encourage your fellow missionaries to take the survey by sharing the link with them after you have completed the survey. Please help us reach over 1,000 missionaries! **Here is the link:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2D86N2W>

# ASSESSMENT LOOP

**Ms. Kimberly Burnett-Hackbarth**

### Rounds 2 of 4 : Faculty Evaluations of Fall 2025 Collection (Assessed Spring 2026)

A few simple reminders of some important assessment details as we begin **Round 2** of 4 this week!

ROUND 2 OF EVALUATIONS			
Instructor	Assignment/Class	Faculty Evaluator	Assessed PLOs
Mr. Mike Mason	THM 223 New Testament Final Paper	Round 2: B. Boro Nama	CORE #5
Dr. Jason Reed	PHI 445 Metaphysics Final Paper	Round 2: J. Cherny	CF-PTH #3

#### 1. Dates for Assessment Rounds:

**Round 1:** January 26 to January 30

**Round 2:** February 2 to February 6

**Round 3:** February 9 to February 13

**Round 4:** February 16 to February 20

#### 2. Evaluation Periods:

Open from Monday 8:00 A.M. to the following Monday 8:00 A.M.

**3. The login link for OAP is as follows:** <https://www.watermarkinsights.com/client-resources/signon/>

#### 3. Watermark Support Contacts:

[support@watermarkinsights.com](mailto:support@watermarkinsights.com)

Customer Service Hotline: **1-800-311-5656**

Please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions or concerns **Ext. 274**. Good luck to you all, and thank you so much for your continued efforts!



## VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION/DEAN OF STUDENTS

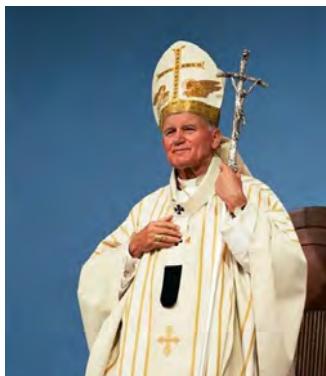
**Fr. Tuan Hoang, SVD**

### World Day for Consecrated Life

This week, we join the Church to celebrate the World Day for Consecrated Life. The National Vocation Religious Conference shares this message:

*"In 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted a day for women and men in consecrated life. This global celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd. This Feast is also known as Candlemas Day; the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples."*

Pope Saint John Paul II instituted this week to inspire us living the consecrated life to carry the light of Christ to the world. We congratulate all religious in our Divine Word College community, and may we keep one another in our daily prayers.



### Conference for Men and Women Religious in Temporary Vows – Leadership Skills

Next Wednesday, February 11, 2026, Sr. Carol Welp, SSpS will be doing a conference for the men and women religious in temporary vows, and diocesan seminarians. The conference will be on *Leadership Skills*. Leadership skills are important for seminarians and religious because in the future, this will benefit them to lead and guide the church or community fostering the spiritual growth of the people of God. It is required for men and women religious in temporary vows and diocesan seminarians to be at this conference. It is also open to anyone else who

is interested in this conference for their ongoing formation. The conference will begin at 5:15 pm in room 107.

### Community Service/Work Study

Just a friendly reminder to do your assigned community service and/or work study. Remember that those who are living on campus are required to do 5 hours of community service each week.



Divine Word College has guests visiting the college daily, and it is important to keep the place clean and organized. There are some places that need attention. Please do your community service daily, and make it a habit.

### Super Bowl LX

This Sunday, February 8, 2026, the Student Senate and the SVD Community will sponsor a Super Bowl party in the Pour House. We are down to two final teams competing for the Super Bowl Championship this year – Seattle Seahawks versus New England Patriots. The game will begin at 5:30 pm. Dinner will not be served in the dining room this Sunday. The Student Senate will work with the kitchen staff to provide food, snacks, and drinks for all of us to enjoy.

On Thursday, February 5, 2026 and Friday, February 6, 2026, the Student Senate will begin selling Super Bowl Squares during lunch. Each square costs \$1.00. Buy a square or two with the hope of winning big prizes.





## VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATIONS

Steve Winger

### IT Support for Faculty, Staff, SVDs, and Students

Brad Florence, our one person IT Department, is available to help everyone on campus—faculty, staff, SVD members, and students—with technology issues. Whether you're teaching, studying, completing office work, or supporting ministry and community life, Brad is your first point of contact for tech support.

#### Common issues Brad can assist with:

- Classroom technology problems (projectors, podium computers, sound, adapters, cables)
- Trouble logging into email, Populi, Wi-Fi, or other campus systems
- Password resets
- Slow, frozen, or malfunctioning computers or laptops

- Printer and copier issues
- Wi-Fi dropping or not connecting in offices, student rooms, or common areas
- Software not opening, crashing, or needing updates
- Help with Zoom, Teams, and other video conferencing tools
- Questions about suspicious emails or online safety
- Issues accessing shared drives (faculty/staff/ SVD)

Brad manages all IT requests for the entire campus community, so contacting him early helps prevent disruptions to classes, office work, and student assignments.

He can be reached at **Ext. 285**.



*help is  
available!*