

All 2019-2020 Novices hail from DWC

This summer, five young men embarked on the next phase of their religious formation as they entered the Divine Word Novitiate in Techny, Ill.

Kodjo David Emon, Huy Hoai Nguyen, Marc Declama, Ryan Agbim and Thong Tran each started their journey at Divine Word College. Now, they're spending a year together learning about the charism of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), discerning their call to missionary life and preparing to take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Novice Director and Former DWC President Fr. Tim Lenchak, SVD, says the novitiate year is unlike any other part of the formation process. The primary goal is to prepare the novices for vows by helping them to better know themselves, the SVD community and God.

The formation program at DWC prepares students for the next stage of their religious development.

"The pre-novitiate program helps to instill a sense of community in the incoming novices, since seniors in the program live in the same house, work together at chores, cook together, have Mass and prayer together, and start developing a



l-r, Bro. Mathew Zemel, SVD, Huy Hoai Nguyen, Thong Tran, Kodjo David Emon, Marc Declama, Ryan Agbim and Fr. Tim Lenchak, SVD.

sense of community," Fr. Tim said. Each day in the novitiate year, the men spend time in silence to reflect and listen to God. For the first half of the year, the emphasis is primarily on prayer, discernment and personal reflection. The second half of the year focuses more on their preparation to profess vows.

"This is a major decision that they're making," Fr. Tim said. "And they have to know their background, to know everything about themselves and to appreciate the gifts and talents they have, as well as the limitations."

Family Feast celebration feels like coming home



Origin of the celebration

When St. Arnold Janssen founded the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in 1875, it was common to celebrate the feast day of the saint for whom

each person was named. So the spiritual sons and daughters of Fr. Janssen celebrated the day of their founder on July 18, the feast day of St. Arnold.

In 1906, Janssen declared that in the future, the celebration of his name day would be replaced with something he called Family Feast — a single day to honor every member of the Arnold Janssen spiritual family. Today, the members of each of the three religious congregations he founded, the SVD, the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters, celebrate together on Sept. 8.

A college tradition

The annual Family Feast celebration at Divine Word College is filled with a mix of reverence and pure joy. It starts in the morning with a prayer service. Then students head outside to play games and unwind after a long week of classes. The teams are divided by formation groups, giving students a chance early in the school year to develop relationships and get to know one another.

In the afternoon, they gather for a liturgy followed by a formal banquet. Members of the SVD serve students during the meal as a reminder that Divine Word Missionaries dedicate their lives to serving others.

Homecoming — Mark your calendars!

DWC President Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD said Family Feast is a lot like homecoming for the SVD. Next year, we're excited to invite all alumni of SVD educational institutions to an

All-Alumni Reunion on Labor Day weekend 2020, coinciding with Family Feast.

