

Divine Word Missionaries
P.O. Box 6099
Techy, Illinois 60082-6099

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage

PAID
Divine Word
Missionaries

Get connected with the missions...

www.svdmissions.org



**Follow what we are
doing out there.**

*Get
connected with
the world!*

Divine Word

Missionaries Magazine

Mission Updates from around the World

Fall 2014



Get connected
with the
missions...

Divine Word
Missionaries



Divine Word
Follow
what we
are doing
out there.



Get
connected
with the
world!

www.svdmissions.org

From the Desk of Fr. Richie Vaz SVD

Fall, 2014

Dear Friends,

I hope you had a grace- and spirit-filled World Mission Day!

Each year, on this glorious day, we are invited to intensify our commitment to proclaim the Good News and invite others to join us in realizing Christ's mission.

On behalf of Divine Word Missionaries, I express my profound gratitude for your unreserved support through your prayers and generosity. You are partners with us in our worldwide mission that crosses the boundaries of culture, language, and economic or social status. The words of Jesus, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10), inspire and invigorate us to respond to the poor, impoverished, exploited, and marginalized people of society and to be the beacons of hope and light in their lives.

World Mission Sunday is a very appropriate occasion to share with you my story as a Divine Word Missionary. Since my first step into the Divine Word Missionary family on May 21, 1963, my journey has been challenging, nourishing, enthralling, and fostering. In November 1978, I began my missionary work in Madhupur among the dalits in the Diocese of Sambalpur in the state of Odisha, India. They are victims of exploitation and exclusion and are treated as untouchables. During my twenty-five years with the dalits, many embraced the Christian faith. I was instrumental in providing education and in offering them social and economic freedom through multiple developmental programs. As I look back on my life as a missionary in India, I know that I could not have done the things I did without you.

You are the lifeline to all our missionaries who continue to work miracles in the missions because of your support. We see a steep rise in requests for resources from our missionaries because of the growing number of people responding to God's message of salvation. While much has already been accomplished, still more remains to be done, especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Your support of the mission of the Church revitalizes the missionaries to respond to the challenges mission of Jesus brings to them. I ask that God bless you and reward you for your prayers and generosity.

As the busy holiday season approaches, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the brand new year of 2015, take a moment to say a prayer in thanks for all God's blessings. I will remember you in my prayers, thankful for your friendship and support.

Yours in the Divine Word,



Fr. Richie Vaz SVD
Mission Director



Contact me any time at: director@svdmissions.org

DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

Oh Uganda, Land of Beauty

Michael Blume SVD



Bringing Hope to Tayan

Antonius Eko Yuliantoro SVD



The eagerness of Tayan people to have a better life combined with the willingness of Divine Word Missionaries to support their dream was the impetus for the St. Francis Training Center in West Borneo.

MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS FOR WORLD MISSION DAY 2014



I urge each of you to recall, as if you were making an interior pilgrimage, that “first love” with which the Lord Jesus Christ warmed your heart, not for the sake of nostalgia but in order to persevere in joy. The Lord’s disciples persevere in joy when they sense his presence, do his will and share with others their faith, hope and evangelical charity.

A Very Lucky Guy Indeed

Daniel Bauer SVD



The whole point of being a missionary is to break the borders of the familiar and enter the life of another people.

A Cross, a Bible, a Rosary, a Smile

James Areechira SVD



In the village of Ambohitsara, people’s lives are hard. There are no roads, no permanent power supply, no supermarkets, and no quality medical care.

Austria Meets Madagascar

Ruth Steiner



The Least of Our Sisters

John Duah Prempeh SVD



Kayayei are Ghanaian women, and girls, who are paid nominal fees to carry heavy loads of wares on head pans from one place to another,

Divine Word Missionaries Mission Center • P.O. Box 6099 • Techny, Illinois 60082-6099
The Society of the Divine Word is an international Catholic missionary congregation with over 6,000 members from 70 countries.
They work in over 70 different lands on all the continents except Antarctica.

Website: WWW.SVDMISSIONS.ORG

DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES MAGAZINE, Vol. LVII No. 4 Fall 2014, issued quarterly

Divine Word Missionaries • Mission Center, Techny, Illinois 60082.

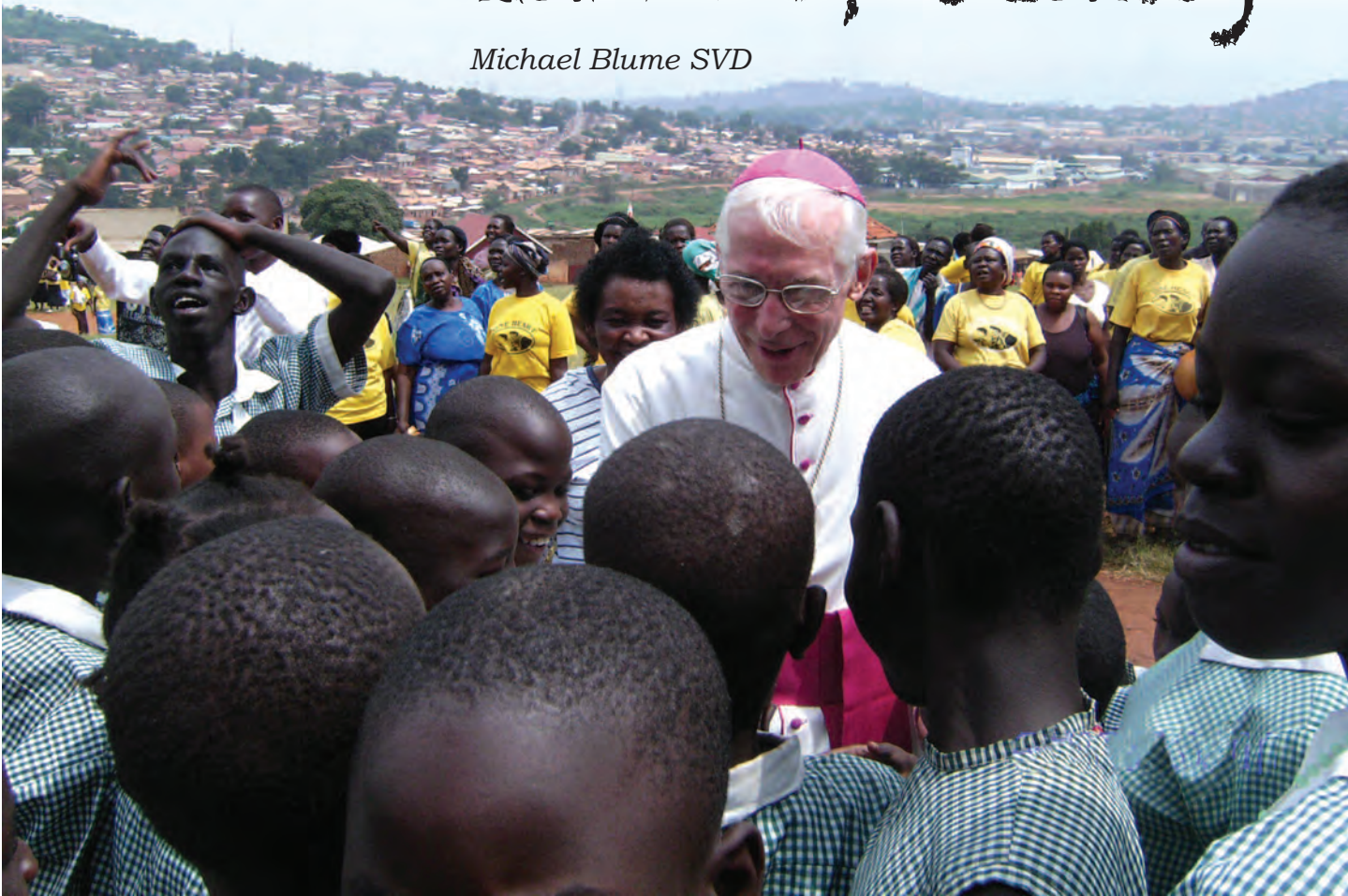
Subscription \$20.00 a year

Editorial Team: Carolyn Schmit • Bro. Dan Holman SVD • Carmelita J. Linden

Branch Office: Pittsburgh, PA

Oh Uganda, Land of Beauty

Michael Blume SVD

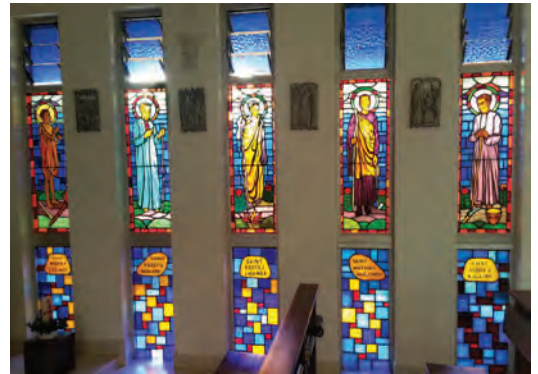


For now at least, I am the only Divine Word Missionary living and working in Uganda. On April 2, 2013, Pope Benedict XVI appointed me the apostolic nuncio (ambassador) to this east African country, after I held that office for over seven years in Benin and Togo.

Let me begin by describing something particular to the Church in Uganda. Its importance in Africa can be compared to the devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico and the Americas. What I refer to is the memory of the martyrs of Uganda, the twenty-two young Catholic men in the service of the King Mwanga. They died between December 1885 and May 1886. Some of their names are known even in the United States, such as Saints Charles Lwanga, Matthias Malumba, and Kizito. To these can be added two recently beatified young catechists from the north of the country, Blesseds Jildo Irwa and Daudi Okello, who died in October 1918. Together they give a powerful witness to the faith that once again confirms the ancient saying: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christians." Equally striking is the witness of



Chapel of Martyrs: Stained glass windows at the nunciature depicting five of the martyrs.



another twenty-two martyrs of the Anglican Communion, who died in the 1880s for the same reasons, principally, for resisting the advances of a ruler with a passion for power and young men. In 1964, at the canonization of the Catholics, Pope Paul VI explicitly praised the Anglican martyrs and even visited their shrine during the first trip of a pope to Africa in 1969. This is a unique grace, a rich “ecumenism of martyrdom” that continues to bear fruit today.

The annual pilgrimage for the martyrs’ feast on June 3 draws incredible numbers of people. The pilgrims come not only from Uganda but from neighboring countries and even from far off countries, such as



Anglican Shrine: Paul VI came to this place where the execution site is recreated.



the sixty people who flew in from Nigeria last June. Countless pilgrims travel long distances, often on foot, to arrive at the sanctuary of Namugongo, located north of the capital Kampala. Their sacrifices bear witness to an extraordinary faith that is a challenge for anyone from a more prosperous country.



Pilgrims: Picture of my meeting with one of the numerous groups of pilgrims that came to the celebration on foot. These came from the Archdiocese of Mbarara in the south of the country. The total length of their journey would be about one hundred and fifty miles.

What Pope Francis often repeats about mission on the “existential peripheries” of society becomes very important for Uganda as a whole, especially in the light of the missionary thrust of the last World Youth Day. Young people comprise over fifty percent of the population in Uganda, and one can sense the enthusiasm of the Catholics among them to evangelize and deepen their faith. Just recently, I celebrated Mass at the Uganda Martyrs Shrine for two groups, one from primary schools and, most recently, for youth of secondary school age. Here are the people with the energy and joy needed for bringing the gospel to their peers and to the nation as a whole! This is a sign of what Pope Benedict, during his visit to Africa, called “Africa a continent of hope.”

There are nineteen dioceses in Uganda. To come to know both the country and the Church, I have been visiting those dioceses. I have traveled to the south, north, and west. Many more places are in my schedule for later this year and next year. Such visits are usually joyful experiences of coming to know a living faith and, at the same time, of encouraging brothers and sisters, including my brother bishops, and of strengthening communion between the particular Churches and the Holy See.



Something unique to the Church in Uganda is its high Catholic population of about forty percent, an extraordinary percentage in comparison to other countries. Slightly less numerous are members of the Church of Uganda (Anglican Communion). Besides various evangelical and “independent Churches,” there is also a small number of Ugandans who belong to the Orthodox Church of Uganda. Muslims are around ten percent of the total population.

Every new country means another adventure, and coming to know a country takes time. My last assignment in Benin and Togo included frequent contacts with other Divine Word Missionaries there. Here in Uganda, my closest confreres are in Nairobi, Kenya, a fifty-minute plane ride away. A bit more distant are the confreres in South Sudan, whose superior was kind enough to pay me a visit during a recent trip to Kampala.

Lastly, a few geographical comparisons may be useful. Uganda is bigger and more populous than Benin and Togo combined. Its total surface is 91,136 square miles, and it has a population of about thirty-six million. Benin and Togo together occupy 64,779 square miles and have a combined population of about 16.8 million. The size means more miles to cover and longer times on the road. This is, however, part of the missionary life that continues whether the roads are good or not. What is important is that I am following our Lord, who leads the way, and that I invoke the Lord of the harvest to send laborers where they are needed.

Your Mass offering directly helps and supports our missionaries in their ministries.

Give the precious gift of faith

Divine Word Missionaries gladly celebrate Masses requested by YOU!



Ask about pre-arranged Masses to be offered at a later time.

**Call toll free
800-275-0626**

or visit our website at:

www.svdmissions.org

Mass Intentions

Please arrange for these Masses to be celebrated by Divine Word Missionaries.

Accept my Mass offering of:

- Individual Mass \$5
 Triduum of Masses \$15
 Novena of Masses \$45

Mass Intention:

Living Deceased

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The Summer 2013 issue of *Divine Word Missionaries Magazine* featured an article by Father Yuliantoro. He described the steady destruction of the equatorial rain forests of the Kalimantan region caused by logging activity.

To respond to the problems and needs of the people in that area, especially the youth, Divine Word Missionaries focused on education—vocational training, advocacy, self-reliance, agriculture, catechesis, and collaboration.

One year later, Fr. Yuliantoro writes about the progress that has been made.



Bringing Hope to Tayan

Antonius Eko Yuliantoro SVD

The eagerness of Tayan people to have a better life combined with the willingness of Divine Word Missionaries to support their dream was the impetus for the development of St. Francis Training Center in Tayan, Kalimantan (West Borneo). The dream became a reality with the dedication of the center on May 7, 2014. St. Francis of Assisi was chosen as the patron for the center because of his love for all of creation. At the training center, we want to model his example in what we do and teach and by our attentiveness to environmental issues.

The dedication on May 7 began with the celebration of the Eucharist. Fr. Felix Kadek Sunartha SVD, provincial of the Java Province of Divine Word Missionaries, was the presider. Mr. Agato Adan, the head of the District of Tayan Hilir, attended as representative of the government. There were also invited guests, donors, many local Catholics, and a number of priests and Brothers.

People are excited and welcome the presence of the training center, which is the only center of its kind in the district. When he spoke during the dedication ceremony, Mr. Agato Adan expressed his pride and happiness that St. Francis Training Center was established in this district. He said that he has been approached by various companies looking for people with computer skills, but that he could not provide them with workers from his district because no one was trained with the skills required. He said that St. Francis Training Center will help meet that need.

Students living in the surrounding area come to the center each day. At the dedication, we introduced six students who will stay in the dorm and take some courses. Their parents, who were present for the celebration, expressed their happiness





for their children. We hope to accommodate more students once we have a larger dorm.

Most of the students who come to St. Francis Training Center have not completed their formal education and many of them feel discouraged. They come with the hope that they can learn life skills and receive vocational training that prepares them to be independent and economically self-reliant. The students want to build a better life with a more secure future for themselves and others.

The courses we offer at St. Francis Training Center are open to anyone who wants to learn. There are computer courses which develop office skills. Students can also learn carpentry, printing, and automotive repair. When we began the project, we acquired thirty-four acres of land, added fish ponds, and planted trees. Students can gain agriculture and farm skills and learn about raising pigs, poultry, and fish.

We thank the benefactors of the Mission Center at Techny, Illinois, who helped with the construction St. Francis Training Center. The gifts from these generous benefactors provided for a building with classroom and administrative space, as well as a room where visiting teachers can stay. We remember Brother Dennis Newton SVD, who played an important role in the establishment of the center and offered his congratulations when he heard of its completion.

For the people of Tayan, there is optimism that a better future can be attained. They have dreams that can be realized. On their behalf and on behalf of students who will directly benefit from this project, I would like to express our thanks and gratitude.



A photograph of Pope Francis in white papal attire, including a zucchetto, leaning over a baby. He is placing his hand on the baby's forehead in a blessing gesture. The baby is wearing a white t-shirt with some text on it. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a crowd.

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY

MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS FOR WORLD MISSION DAY 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today vast numbers of people still do not know Jesus Christ. For this reason, the mission *ad gentes* [to the nations] continues to be most urgent. All the members of the Church are called to participate in this mission, for the Church is missionary by her very nature: she was born “to go forth.” World Mission Day is a privileged moment when the faithful of various continents engage in prayer and concrete gestures of solidarity in support of the young Churches in mission lands. It is a celebration of grace and joy. A celebration of grace, because the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, offers wisdom and strength to those who are obedient to his action. A celebration of joy, because Jesus Christ, the Father’s Son, sent to evangelize the world, supports and accompanies our missionary efforts. This joy of Jesus and missionary disciples leads me to propose a biblical icon, which we find in the Gospel of Luke (cf. 10:21-23).

1. The Evangelist tells us that the Lord sent the seventy-two disciples two by two into cities and villages to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was near, and to prepare people to meet Jesus. After carrying out this mission of preaching, the disciples returned full of joy: joy is a dominant theme of this first and unforgettable missionary experience. . . .

2. . . . Jesus cautioned them to rejoice not so much for the power they had received, but for the love they had received, “because your names are written in heaven” (Lk. 10:20). The disciples were given an experience of God’s love, but also the possibility of sharing that love. And this experience is a cause for gratitude and joy in the heart of Jesus. . . .

God has hidden this from those who are all too full of themselves and who claim to know everything already. They are blinded by their presumptuousness and they leave no room for God. One can easily think of some of Jesus’ contemporaries whom he repeatedly admonished, but the danger is one that always exists and concerns us too. The “little ones,” for their part, are the humble, the simple, the poor, the marginalized, those without voice, those weary and burdened, whom Jesus pronounced “blessed.” We readily think of Mary, Joseph, the fishermen of Galilee and the disciples whom Jesus called as he went preaching.

3. “Yes, Father, for such has been your gracious will” (Lk. 10:21). These words of Jesus must be understood as referring to his inner exultation. The word “gracious” describes the Father’s saving and benevolent plan for humanity. It was this divine graciousness that made Jesus rejoice, for the Father willed to love people with the same love that he has for his Son. Luke also alludes to the similar exultation of Mary: “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit exults in God my Savior” (Lk. 1:47). This is the Good News that leads to salvation. Mary, bearing in her womb Jesus, the evangelizer par excellence, met Elizabeth and rejoiced in the Holy Spirit as she sang her Magnificat. Jesus, seeing the success of his disciples’ mission and their resulting joy, rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and addressed his Father in prayer. In both cases, it is joy for the working of salvation, for the love with which the Father loves his Son comes down to us, and through the Holy Spirit fills us and grants us a share in the trinitarian life.

The Father is the source of joy. The Son is its manifestation, and the Holy Spirit its giver. Immediately after praising the Father, so the evangelist Matthew tells us, Jesus says: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy and my burden light" (Mt. 11:28-30). "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew" (Evangelii Gaudium, 1).

The Virgin Mary had a unique experience of this encounter with Jesus, and thus became *causa nostrae laetitiae* [cause of our joy]. The disciples, for their part, received the call to follow Jesus and to be sent by him to preach the Gospel (cf. Mk. 3:14), and so they were filled with joy. Why shouldn't we too enter this flood of joy?

4. "The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience" (Evangelii Gaudium, 2). Humanity greatly needs to lay hold of the salvation brought by Christ. His disciples are those who allow themselves to be seized ever more by the love of Jesus and marked by the fire of passion for the Kingdom of God and the proclamation of the joy of the Gospel. All the Lord's disciples are called to nurture the joy of evangelization. . . .

5. "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). World Mission Day is also an occasion to rekindle the desire and the moral obligation to take joyful part in the mission *ad gentes*. A monetary contribution on the part of individuals is the sign of a self-offering, first to the Lord and then to others; in this way a material offering can become a means for the evangelization of humanity built on love.

Dear brothers and sisters, on this World Mission Day my thoughts turn to all the local Churches. Let us not be robbed of the joy of evangelization! I invite you to immerse yourself in the joy of the Gospel and nurture a love that can light up your vocation and your mission. I urge each of you to recall, as if you were making an interior pilgrimage, that "first love" with which the Lord Jesus Christ warmed your heart, not for the sake of nostalgia but in order to persevere in joy. The Lord's disciples persevere in joy when they sense his presence, do his will and share with others their faith, hope and evangelical charity.

Let us pray through the intercession of Mary, the model of humble and joyful evangelization, that the Church may become a welcoming home, a mother for all peoples and the source of rebirth for our world.

From the Vatican, 8 June 2014, the Solemnity of Pentecost
FRANCIS

The Holy Father's message has been abridged. The full message may be viewed on the Vatican website. [ed.]
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/missions/documents/papa-francesco_20140608_giornata-missionaria2014.html

"God loves a cheerful giver"

-2 Cor. 9:7.


Take joyful part in the mission *ad gentes*. A monetary gift on your part is a sign of self-offering, first to the Lord and then to others; in this way your gift can become a means for the evangelization of humanity built on love.

Give a gift online...
www.svdmissions.org
Or mail your gift in the enclosed envelope.

...with Christ
joy is
constantly born
anew. —Evangelii Gaudium, 1

Photo credit: ANDREAS SOLARRO/AFP/Getty Images





Let us pray
through the
intercession of
Mary, the model of
humble and joyful
evangelization,
that the
Church may
become a
welcoming
home, a mother
for all peoples and
the source of
rebirth for our
world.

A Very Lucky Guy Indeed

Daniel Bauer SVD



I feel I am the luckiest guy on the planet because I am nearing thirty years of ministry at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei, Taiwan, and still going strong. About a year ago, I turned sixty-five years old. This somewhat humorous little fact prompts me to look over my shoulder now, not so much at individual moments or days or years, but at a natural flow of events that have made me who I am today, warts and all.

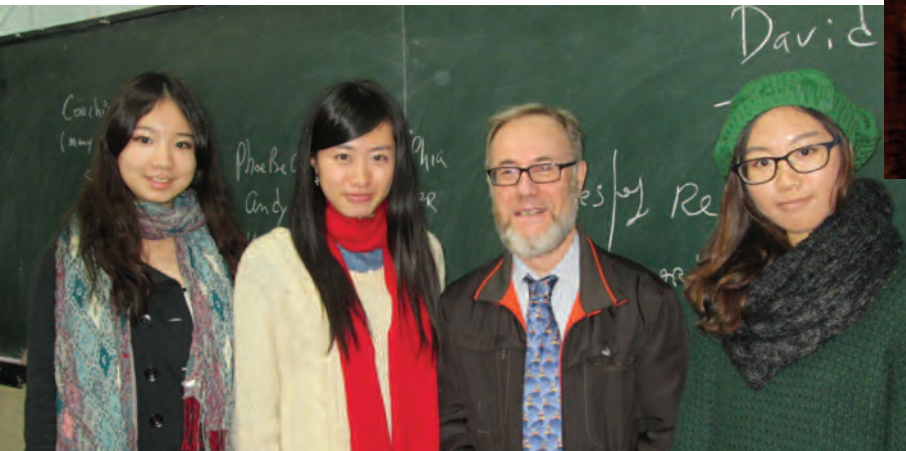
Like everybody else my age, the Second Vatican Council coincided with my high school years. Ah, the 1960s! Remember reading about those times, or living them?

In the first years that followed the council, some talked glibly about something called the “hyphenated priest.” Notions such as priest-doctor, priest-social worker, and priest-what-not were on people’s lips.



I have enjoyed nearly forty years now as a Divine Word Missionary priest, with twenty-eight of those years spent teaching in the English Department at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. Looking at my life from the outside, some would perhaps picture me as a hyphenated priest, a “priest-professor,” or something of that sort. But I am not so sure of the hyphen.

I feel it quite natural that my way to be a shen-fu, the word for “priest” in Mandarin Chinese, is primarily to be a teacher, an associate professor in the English Department at Fu Jen. At the same time, I believe that the best way of being a priest for my students is to be one of their teachers. I have no desire to separate the shen-fu (the priest) in me from the lao-shih (the teacher), or the lao-shih from the shen-fu. Although few of my students ever see me in an alb and chasuble, I am com-



pletely comfortable in my role on weekends at church, on the altar, in the confessional, or chatting with parishioners. My way of being a priest is somehow to be all of those roles at different moments, and yet, always, just being me, a very ordinary me, like every other Christian.

An indescribably rich cross-cultural experience that has accompanied me every day of life in Taiwan is the pursuit of Mandarin Chinese language. Some like to argue about the difficulty of mastering an Asian language. Is Korean harder than Japanese or Mandarin than Vietnamese? Those are useless questions for me. The whole point of being a Divine Word Missionary is to do our best to break the borders of the familiar and comfortable and enter the way and the life, as far as possible, of another people. Long ago

when I first arrived in Taiwan, Mandarin classes were the first of my steps in crossing over into Taiwanese, what some prefer to call Chinese culture and society.

Anyone in my shoes knows we foreigners never stop learning Mandarin. Every new day brings new words and greater fluency. Every new day brings a few goofs and embarrassing pratfalls, too.

What do I learn in life as a language student? The most lasting lesson is the value of patience. All becomes possible, it seems, if we throw enough work into it, enough time, enough patience. But as I say, the climb up the mountain of the Mandarin Chinese language just never ends.

Crossing over into a new language also teaches us the joy of surprises.

“Shock” however may be a more apt term for it than “surprise.”

It still half shocks me when students “get” my Mandarin and laugh at my jokes in class. I confess that the sense of amazement I feel at being understood in this language still gives me a little thrill. I am even more surprised (and grateful) when preaching flows more or less naturally. I know a mystery lives on here that is far bigger and more important than I am. That mystery, that great gift, is grasping that Jesus is not simply for those who speak English in our world. Jesus is alive and well in all cultures and all languages. This of course is very much a Divine Word Missionary value, deeply rooted in the mystery of the incarnation of Christ, and very much a part of our daily experience wherever our missions may be.



I have often told my students that even after almost thirty years in classrooms and activities with them, I still find them interesting people. I say this with complete sincerity. With equal sincerity, my young friends almost invariably look back at me as if I have carrots or turnips growing out of my ears. They may imagine that I am joking, but I am not.

Another lesson I have learned in my interactions with students and local colleagues is that people are people, no matter where we may find them, and people all have their ways of thinking, their own ways with emotions, their ways of responding to life. My students have always been and still are so much more than only students. My students have names. They have ups and downs in their family lives. My students have smiles and tears and stories of romance and self-discovery. They have their worries, their failures, and their dreams, too.

I wish I knew a better word than interesting to describe my young friends. My students are far more than only interesting for me, but they are certainly that, too.

Had I taught in the United States and not in Taiwan, would my students have seemed this way to me? Perhaps, but I will never know that. Deep inside, I suspect that one reason I have found intellectual curiosity and interest in them is because of the cultural differences between us. Mixing the American culture with the Taiwanese (and now we have students from China at Fu Jen, as well) has made all the difference in the world to me.

What I have said above about my life with students at Fu Jen University on the outskirts of Taipei I can more or less also say about my life with parishioners in the Archdiocese of Taipei.

For twenty-two years, I celebrated Sunday Mass, Christmas, and Holy Week services at a mission station in the historic village of She-tze, a few miles from downtown Taipei. For seven of those years, I shared those duties with my Polish confrere, Father Zbigniew Wesolowski SVD. For the past two years I have been serving weekends at Our Lady of the Assumption parish in Yong Ho, an upscale and densely populated niche on the far side of Taipei.

My years in parish life at She-tze and Yong Ho have literally showered me with care and support from faithful Catholics of all ages and backgrounds. Over nearly thirty years in Taiwan, it has been my privilege to listen and to counsel, to hear confessions, to preach, to baptize babies, bless and witness marriages, and to grieve with families at times of sadness and loss.

Whether I find myself in church situations and priestly robes in the formal sense of the word, or in casual clothing on campus in classes, meetings, or student activities, I am simply who I am, a Catholic who happens also to be a priest, a shen-fu, a Divine Word Missionary.

In this “place” and in these “roles,” I am indeed a very lucky guy.

No cell is
so isolated
that it can
keep
the Lord
out.

—Pope Francis

A Cross, a Bible, a Rosary, a Smile



James Areechira SVD

Inviting the homeless to breakfast . . . kissing a disfigured man . . . hugging a disabled child . . . washing the feet of inmates on Holy Thursday . . . Do these phrases make you think of Pope Francis?

One example of Pope Francis' care for the poor did not get much attention in world newscasts. He contributed to an appeal by Cardinal Joseph Zen of Hong Kong to provide festive moon cakes to all prisoners in Hong Kong. Moon cakes are a traditional treat during the mid-autumn festival, and the inmates who received them were reminded that someone still cares about them. I have been a prison chaplain in Hong Kong for nearly twenty years and, like Pope Francis, I understand the importance of seemingly small gestures of kindness.

It was not easy when I began my ministry. In the beginning, it was difficult and I was rather discouraged. Some days the prisoners did not show any interest in my ministry and some of the guards were not very cooperative. But I continued to visit the prisons. Gradually, I gained the trust and respect of inmates and guards alike.

I spend most of my time just listening and talking to the inmates. I also distribute crosses, rosaries, and Bibles if an inmate requests them.

In the Hong Kong prisons, I have met prisoners from all over the world. Many have been caught up in drug offenses or gang activities and have no family members in Hong Kong.

Last year, the Hong Kong Correctional Services presented me with the Outstanding NGO Volunteer Award. The commissioner of correctional services, Mr. Sin Yat-kin, made the presentation at the City University of Hong Kong.

A small moon cake, a simple cross, a welcoming smile, or an attentive ear has little cost, but great value.



Austria Meets Madagascar

Ruth Steiner and her colleague, Theresa Sacher, are responsible for mission awareness, public relations, and fundraising at the Mission Office St. Gabriel of Divine Word Missionaries in Austria. In order to make the needs of the missionaries and the people more widely known, Ruth and Theresa traveled to Madagascar from April 16–27, 2013.

Madagascar is one of the poorest countries of the world, and Divine Word Missionaries have been serving there since 1994.

Ruth Steiner



Austria meets Madagascar. The peaceful scene was deceptive.

Picturesque villages lie along the banks of the four-hundred-mile-long Pangalanes Canal, which runs parallel to the Indian Ocean along the east side of the island of Madagascar. Overloaded transport boats and narrow dugout canoes, some connected to makeshift catamarans, met us on our way to the village of Ambohitsara. We were in luck. On the way we met an Italian doctor who lent us her boat enabling us to reach our destination more quickly. Instead of ten hours, our journey would now only be five hours more. In spite of this, the villagers waited for over an hour to be able to receive us with songs and dances.



In the village of Ambohitsara, people's lives are hard. There are no roads, no permanent power supply, no supermarkets, and no quality medical care. Just as in the "good old days," everything is done by hand and the few officials that exist write their reports on old typewriters. Qualified personnel are lacking. In the health center, the only nurse on duty changes every few months and there are no qualified teachers in the schools.

One constant source of development and social assistance is the Church. Three Divine



Word Missionaries work in the Pangalana parish: Fathers Rikhardus Jemali, Cyprien Mambu, and Mikael Yudosukmono. The parish church is in the village of Ambohitsara and there are nine outstations with sixty-three settlements. The missionaries regularly travel on foot or by boat to visit the Christian communities. Thirty percent of the population is Christian.

Everyday life is shaped by animist customs and taboos. The ban on eating pork in this area is the lesser evil. That twins are considered a bad omen and abandoned after birth, on the other hand, is clearly cruel and inhuman from a Christian viewpoint. Missionaries work to educate families, provide them with food and persuade them to keep their children. A shift in awareness is slowly taking place. In spite of the progress, parents of twins are still not allowed to enter the community house where the “kings” (a king is head of a large family) hold their meetings and some animist rituals take place. However, thank God, the children are not ostracized and they are accepted in society and treated like any others.

The day has been eye-opening. It is dark shortly after 6 p.m. and at dinner we discussed with Fr. Rikhardus, Fr. Cyprien, and Fr. Mikael the difficult situation in Madagascar, which we have come to learn is one of the poorest countries in the world. We found one of their statements to be very moving: “What I love most is visiting the people in their villages.” The simple life, the hardships, and the privations do not prevent these men from proclaiming God’s love through word and deed.





The Least of Our Sisters

John Duah Prempeh SVD

The kayayei are Ghanaian women, and even young girls, who are paid nominal fees to carry heavy loads of wares on head pans from one place to another, usually in the market areas of busy cities.

Many of the women migrate to big cities in search of new opportunities, perhaps better employment or further education. Failing to find these opportunities, they are left little choice but to take employment as kayayei. Many sleep in front of shops, on verandas, or on the pavement outside transportation terminals.

Without a good job and without a safe place to live, many kayayei fall victim to both natural and manmade hazards. Extreme temperatures, lack of shelter from the rain, mosquitos, and poor sanitation lead to seri-



ous health issues. They are also victims of robbery and rape.

The merchants for whom they work often take advantage of the kayayei by not paying them for their service and verbally abusing them. Government agents have been known to assault them when they are unable to pay the required tax to work in the markets.

In the hope of improving the lives of the kayayei, I researched their plight for my doctoral degree from Academia Alfonsiana in Rome. My dissertation is titled "Abuse of Dignity and Labor: The Case of the Kayayei in Modern Day Ghana." Upon my return to Ghana, I will work to improve the lives of these least of my sisters.



PLEASE Remember Divine Word Missionaries in your Will

When you are preparing your Will or estate plan, please consider including Divine Word Missionaries.

Through your legacy gift, you will help Divine Word Missionaries continue the Church's missionary work you so generously supported during your life.

Our legal title is:

**Divine Word Missionaries, Inc.
P.O. Box 6099
Techny, IL 60082**

You may plan a specific bequest. For example:

**"I bequeath the amount of \$ ___
to Divine Word Missionaries,
a nonprofit corporation located
in Techny, Illinois."**

You may designate a more general bequest.
For example:

**"I bequeath ___% of my estate
to Divine Word Missionaries,
a nonprofit corporation
located in Techny, Illinois."**

A residual bequest directs that Divine Word Missionaries will receive all (or a specified portion) of your assets remaining after funeral costs, medical expenses, specific bequests, and administrative costs have been paid.

You may also discuss with your legal or tax advisor other options in your estate planning, for example using life insurance, retirement plans, and other financial resources to benefit the charities you have supported during your lifetime. If you would like to discuss your estate planning with us, please contact us:

**Divine Word Missionaries
P.O. Box 6099 • Techny, IL 60082
800-275-0626**

Visit us at:
www.annuitiesvd.org

E-mail us at:
annuity@uscsvd.org

Divine Word
GIFT ANNUITY
(SVD Funds, Inc.)
since 1904

Trusted Name

The Society of the Divine Word started the Charitable Gift Annuity Program in 1904 and our annuity program has grown steadily over the past century.

Unwavering Commitment to Our Mission and Our Annuitants

Society of the Divine Word is one the largest Catholic religious missionary congregations with 6,000 priests and brothers serving God and God's people in 70 countries around the world.

Conservative Fiscal Policy

We follow a conservative investment policy. That's why we can proudly say for the past 100 years we have never missed an annuity payment!

Call toll free: 1-800-461-3064

For a personalized analysis, mail this coupon to:
Rev. Dariusz Garbaciak, SVD
Divine Word Gift Annuity (SVD Funds, Inc.)
P.O. Box 6067 • 1985 Waukegan Road
Techy, IL 60082-6067



Name (Please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

In the amount of: \$5,000 \$10,000 or _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Date of birth _____ Date of birth of joint annuitant _____

DWM2015

Christmas is on the way... and so is our Christmas gift to you!

Coming soon to your mailbox...

Wrap presents for family and friends in our Christmas wrapping paper. Use it to remind you of **God's greatest gift—** to all people around the world this holy season—the **Christ Child** whose birth unites us all in **his love.**

Not on our list?
Or want more paper?
Call us at: 800 275 0626

It's our way of thanking you!

AUTHORS

John Duah Prempeh SVD is originally from Konongo, Ghana. He entered Divine Word Missionaries in 1989 and was ordained a priest in 1995. Father Duah Prempeh recently completed a doctoral degree in moral theology in Rome.

Michael Blume SVD was born in South Bend, Indiana. He professed his first vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 1969 and was ordained at Techny in 1972. He received his first mission appointment to Ghana, where he served as a seminary professor and provincial of the Ghana Province of Divine Word Missionaries. From 1990 to 1994, he served as secretary general to our superior general in Rome. Then in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI appointed him as apostolic nuncio to Togo and Benin, and he was ordained a bishop in St. Peter's Basilica on September 30 that year. In February 2014, Archbishop Blume was transferred from Togo and Benin when he was named the apostolic nuncio to Uganda.

James Areechira SVD is from Kallara, India. He became a Divine Word Missionary in 1985. He professed final vows in 1992 and was ordained in 1993. He is currently working in Hong Kong and serves as a prison chaplain.

Antonius Eko Yullantoro SVD is from Muntilan, on the island of Java, Indonesia. He professed first vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 1987 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1994. He is the local superior of the community in Surabaya and a member of the provincial leadership team.

Dan Bauer SVD is originally from Toledo, Ohio. He became a Divine Word Missionary in 1970 and was ordained in 1974. He holds a master of divinity degree from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, a master's in philosophy from De Paul University, Chicago, and a doctorate in comparative literature from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In 1977, Father Bauer began teaching at Fu Jen Catholic University Taipei, Taiwan, and in September 2014 will begin his thirtieth year of teaching there.

Ruth Steiner is from Vienna, Austria, and studied at the University of Vienna. She is married and has two daughters. Since 1999, she has worked in public relations and fundraising at Divine Word Missionaries' Mission Office St. Gabriel in Maria Enzersdorf, Austria.



Beautiful Bracelets

Handmade by Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters in Asia

The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and Divine Word Missionaries were both founded by Saint Arnold Janssen and are both international communities dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel of God's love.



GIVE a Gift of \$21.50

and as our gift to YOU we will send a hand-made cloisonne bead and cross bracelet.

Colors vary, quantities limited.

To give a gift TODAY—VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.svdmissions.org

and click the DONATE NOW button.

or use the enclosed envelope to send a check or make a credit card donation.