

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

Give a gift TODAY! @www.svdmissions.org

**Or use the enclosed envelope at the center of this magazine.
PLEASE add your name, address and GIFT CODE to the form.**

May the Lord accept this sacrifice for the praise and the glory of his name...

Mass Intentions

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

Accept my Mass offering of:

Individual Mass \$10
Triduum of Masses \$30
Novena of Masses \$90

Mass Intention:

Living Deceased

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



**Give the
precious
gift of faith**

Divine Word Missionaries
gladly celebrate Masses
YOU request!

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

Ask about prearranged Masses to be offered at a later time.

Call toll free 800-275-0626

or visit our website at:

www.svdmissions.org

Divine Word

Missionaries Magazine

Mission Updates from around the World

www.svdmissions.org

Fall 2016



Excerpts from the MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 50th WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY Communication and Mercy: A Fruitful Encounter

The Holy Year of Mercy invites all of us to reflect on the relationship between communication and mercy. The Church, in union with Christ, the living incarnation of the Father of Mercies, is called to practice mercy as the distinctive trait of all that she is and does. What we say and how we say it, our every word and gesture, ought to express God's compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all. Love, by its nature, is communication; it leads to openness and sharing. If our hearts and actions are inspired by charity, by divine love, then our communication will be touched by God's own power. . . .

Communication has the power to build bridges, to enable encounter and inclusion, and thus to enrich society. How beautiful it is when people select their words and actions with care, in the effort to avoid misunderstandings, to heal wounded memories and to build peace and harmony.



Words can build bridges between individuals and within families, social groups and peoples. This is possible both in the material world and the digital world. Our words and actions should be such as to help us all escape the vicious circles of condemnation and vengeance which continue to ensnare individuals and nations, encouraging expressions of hatred. . . .

Our political and diplomatic language would do well to be inspired by mercy, which never loses hope. I ask those with institutional and political responsibility, and those charged with forming public opinion, to remain especially attentive to the way they speak of those who think or act differently or those who may have made mistakes. . . .

. . . I would like to encourage everyone to see society not as a forum where strangers compete and try to come out on top, but above all as a home or a family, where the door is always open and where everyone feels welcome.

For this to happen, we must first listen. Communicating means sharing, and sharing demands listening and acceptance. Listening is much more than simply hearing. Hearing is about receiving information, while listening is about communication, and calls for closeness. Listening allows us to get things right, and not simply to be passive onlookers, users or consumers. Listening also means being able to share questions and doubts, to journey side by side, to banish all claims to absolute power and to put our abilities and gifts at the service of the common good.

Listening is never easy. Many times it is easier to play deaf. Listening means paying attention, wanting to understand, to value, to respect and to ponder what the other person says. It involves a sort of martyrdom or self-sacrifice, as we try to imitate Moses before the burning bush: we have to remove our sandals when standing on the "holy ground" of our encounter with the one who speaks to me (cf. Ex. 3:5). Knowing how to listen is an immense grace, it is a gift which we need to ask for and then make every effort to practice.

Emails, text messages, social networks and chats can also be fully human forms of communication. It is not technology which determines whether or not communication is authentic, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal. Social networks can facilitate relationships and promote the good of society, but they can also lead to further polarization and division between individuals and groups. The digital world is a public square, a meeting-place where we can either encourage or demean one another, engage in a meaningful discussion or unfair attacks. **I pray that this Jubilee Year, "may open us to even more fervent dialogue so that we might know and understand one another better; and that it may eliminate every form of closed-mindedness and disrespect, and drive out every form of violence and discrimination"**

(*Misericordiae Vultus*, 23). The internet can help us to be better citizens. Access to digital networks entails a responsibility for our neighbor whom we do not see but who is nonetheless real and has a dignity which must be respected. The internet can be used wisely to build a society which is healthy and open to sharing.

Communication, wherever and however it takes place, has opened up broader horizons for many people. This is a gift of God which involves a great responsibility. I like to refer to this power of communication as "closeness." The encounter between communication and mercy will be fruitful to the degree that it generates a closeness which cares, comforts, heals, accompanies and celebrates. In a broken, fragmented and polarized world, to communicate with mercy means to help create a healthy, free and fraternal closeness between the children of God and all our brothers and sisters in the one human family.

From the Vatican, 24 January 2016
Francis



DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

Caught between the Times

Ruth Steiner



A Life Worth Living

Felix Roche SVD



One morning one of our field workers, Mr. Bhaskar, sat in my office with tears rolling down his cheeks, unable to speak about what he had just seen.

A Jamaican “Field of Dreams”

Bernard Spitzley SVD



Eight Years without a Priest

Eric Ankamah SVD

14



The crowd was ecstatic. There was cheering and dancing. Little children threw flowers at me, and people reached out for a handshake as I made my way to the welcome arch.

Return to Vietnam

Stanley Uroda SVD

16

Vietnam is one of the places in the world where vocations to the priesthood and religious life are still abundant.

The Depth and Breadth of the Corporal Works of Mercy

Daisuke Narui SVD

18

Corporal Works of Mercy: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to welcome the stranger, to heal the sick, to visit the imprisoned, and to bury the dead.



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. LIX No. 4 Fall 2016 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

A Maasai man, Korduni Qumundri, stands in profile, looking towards the right. He is wearing a vibrant red shuka (a traditional Maasai wrap) and holding a wooden staff. He is surrounded by a large herd of goats, some white and some brown. The background shows a thatched-roof structure and sparse trees under a clear sky.

Caught Between the Times

Ruth Steiner

Korduni Qumundri is a tribal elder of the Maasai. He is the proud owner of over five hundred goats and several hundred cattle. He stands gracefully on the porch of the parish house in Simanjiro, Tanzania, while one of his sons lounges in the hammock and plays with a phone.



Modernity arrived in Maasai country long ago, although ancient traditions still shape the everyday life of the people. They are a pastoral people, tending and following their flocks. The social status of a man is measured by the number and health of his cattle. Therefore, he is immediately ready to medicate an animal if it is sick.

The next morning, we set off to visit three families. Traveling in a sturdy, four-wheel-drive SUV, we cut across the savannah in a straight line as a huge cloud of dust billowed up in the vehicle's wake. It is the dry season and the sparse grass is withered. Again and again we see herds of cattle and goats watched over by young shepherds.

The area is completely overgrazed and water is very scarce. Not so long ago, there were large numbers of

gazelles, giraffes, and lions, and there was a rich diversity of other wildlife. But humans and wild animals are being gradually forced to move closer and closer together.

Now, fields are being laid out and fenced. The number of domestic animals is increasing steadily. In addition, the climate is changing and the droughts are not only more frequent, but longer.

We bring the SUV to a stop beside a typical corral made of sticks. It is empty. Each day, the Maasai herders lead their animals many miles across the savannah in search of sufficient food and water.

We are welcomed by the head of the household and led into a mud hut.



The entire family gathers, including the children, all crowded into the windowless room. Father Shaji Areeparampil SVD, a forty-three-year-old Divine Word Missionary priest from India, stands in the doorway and intones a series of prayers of blessing. Everyone present responds with devotion. At the end of this little liturgy, the missionary, accompanied by all participants, walks through the compound and sprinkles all the people, huts, and animal enclosures with holy water.

Since 2014, Fr. Shaji has been pastor of this parish, which has twenty-two outstations spread out over a vast area. Each day he visits two to four families, so that eventually he will get to know all the people. He writes down everyone's name and also keeps a record of who is baptized.

The family slaughtered a goat for us and roasted the meat early that



morning according to Maasai custom, without salt or any other spices. The meat is now tough, cold, and covered with flies. Tea is served in tin cups. I wanted to experience the everyday life of the missionaries and even insisted that they afford me no special treatment. Nevertheless, I now find myself asking Fr. Shaji how I am going to survive this “feast.” Grinning, he encourages me to just dig in and enjoy it. I manage to choke down a couple of bites.

I am astonished at how important prayer and blessings are for these people. The Maasai find the Christian faith very attractive, since many of the biblical parables correspond so closely to the everyday experience of this pastoral people. Even the situation of women in Maasai society is gradually improving because of the Christian insistence that women have equal value and dignity before God.

Around four o'clock in the afternoon, we arrive at the *boma* (family compound) of Korduni Qumundri. It is a settlement straight out of a picture book. A high fence surrounds the circular huts, which are arranged around the outside of a large corral. The perimeter of the corral is made up of a circle of tightly woven thorn bushes. A group of women and children is waiting for us.

Fr. Shaji sees Maria standing with a group of children. He introduces me to the seventeen-year-old, who is holding an infant in her arms and putting a pair of bright green, plastic sandals on its tiny feet. Today was market day, and Maria had bought the sandals as a gift for her daughter. I am surprised! I had asked to interview a child, and suddenly I am faced with a young woman who is already a mother.



With Fr. Shaji translating, she said: "No, I haven't been given to any man yet." Her everyday life is nothing special. She gets up at five o'clock in the morning, prepares tea, then goes out into the savannah to collect firewood. Then she leads the donkey to the nearest watering hole, which is two and a half miles away. She proudly tells me that she already knows how to build a hut. Building the round, and occasionally square, mud houses is women's work. "Did you go to school?" I ask. "Yes," she said. "I was allowed to go to school for seven years, and I liked it very much."

Although she is usually reserved, Maria smiles shyly. After a while, I coax her out of her shyness by asking her to show me one of the typical games that Maasai children play, which turns out to be similar to our game of jacks. She collects a few stones and places them in a shallow depression. Then she throws a stone into the air, snatches one from the ground, and catches the first one again, ending up with two stones in her hand. All the children laugh with delight at my clumsy attempts to imitate her.

The day is coming to an end, and the setting sun bathes the village in a warm, yellow light. Suddenly, all the inhabitants of the boma are busy. Women and children take their places around the outside of the animal enclosure. The shepherds are coming home with the herd. Boys with long sticks run out to surround the cattle and goats and drive them into the enclosure. Among the Maasai, every newborn, whether girl or boy, is presented with a goat or a calf by his or her father. So everyone is watching with great attention to be sure that his or her own animal has come back safely again.

Just at this moment, a young man in his early twenties comes up to me. Curious, he asks me what I think is the greatest deficiency of his country. I look over the countless emaciated, malnourished goats and cattle as my nose and my throat burn from the cloud of dust we have been inhaling. "Water," I say. "Access to water is obviously a tremendous problem." Divine Word Missionaries, who were my hosts, had told



me that up until the beginning of the 2000s, it had rained regularly at least once a month in Arusha, the capital city. Now the life-giving rain often does not fall for six months or more. "What do you suggest that we do?" the young man asks me almost slyly. At this moment, I realize that I had better not give him a know-it-all, European response to his question.

Thus, I am not going to tell him: Sell off most of your herds, which are seriously overgrazing the savannah and perish miserably during times of drought. I am also not going to say to him that they should be digging wells or promoting modern vocational training for their young people so that herding goats or cows is not their only choice in life.

So I look him in the eye and tell him that I am only here for three days, but he grew up here. If anyone knows his country inside and out, it is him, not me, and that it will be he and his people who will have to find solutions to the problems of their country.

So often, when I visit our missions in areas where the modern is slowly but surely overwhelming traditional life, I notice that people expect simple solutions, and of course financial aid, from me, a European. But there are no patent solutions!

On the last day of my visit, Korduni accompanies us to a distant outstation, about a two-hour drive from Simanjiro. There, thirty-five women and men will be baptized. Among them is an elderly man.

Translated by Father David Streit SVD

A few days earlier, one of his many daughters had died while giving birth to her first child. She was, in a sense, a victim of the ambiguous position between modernity and tradition in which the Maasai find themselves.

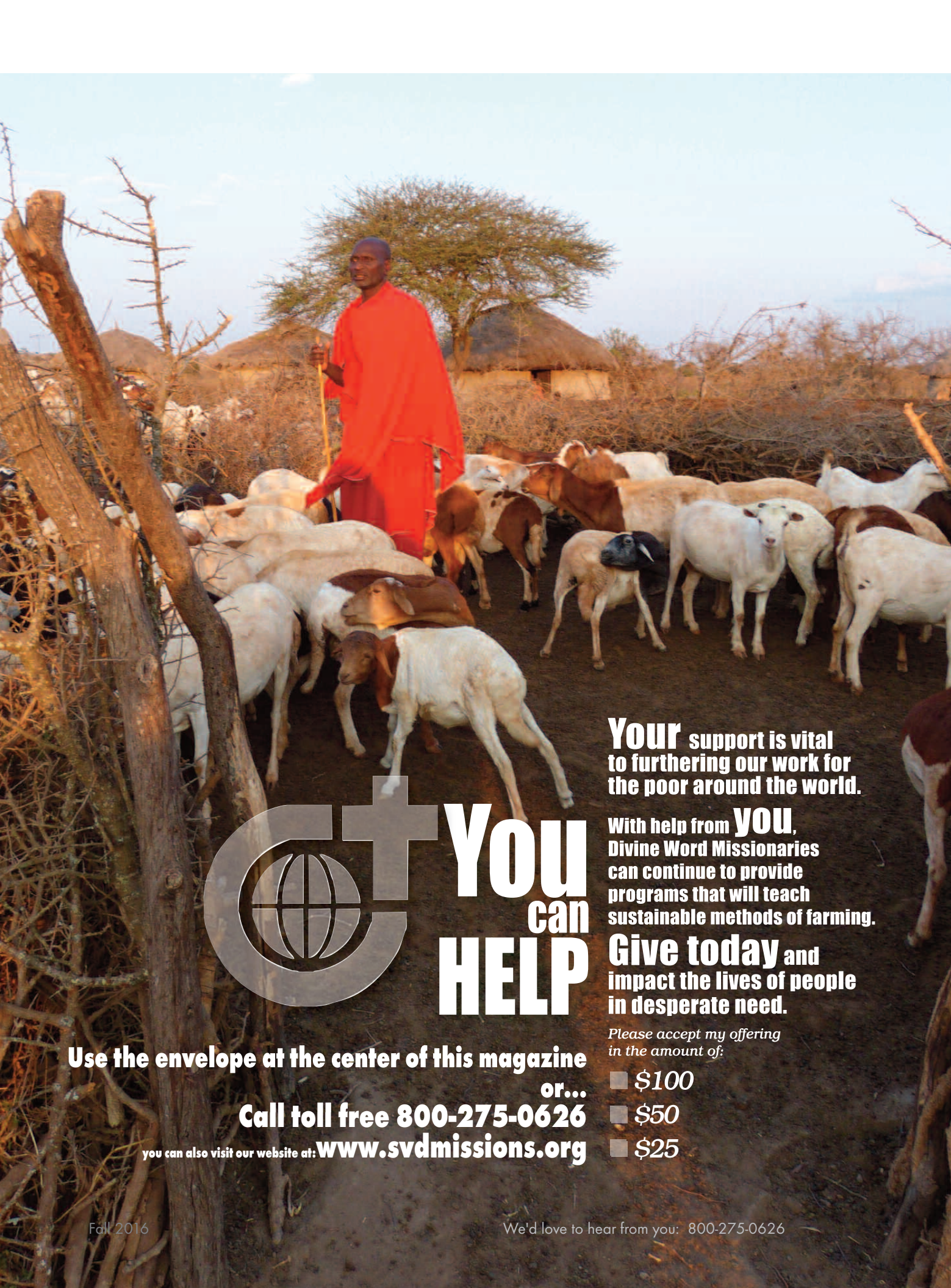
As a young girl, she had been taught by nuns in Arusha, Tanzania's capital. Leaving school, her father wanted to marry her off, but she would not accede to his wishes and was cast out. She bitterly missed the warmth and ties of her extended family and could not bear life in the city where she had fled. So she returned home, bowed to the wishes of her father, was married, got pregnant, and died.

It was touching as Fr. Shaji poured water over the bowed head of the old man and spoke the words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Due to his advanced age, the old man had not been required to undergo the

many months of preparation for the sacrament. He was able to be baptized and accept the longed for forgiveness of God.

Late in the afternoon, Fr. Shaji, Korduni, and I return to the parish house in Simanjiro. The Maasai leader smiles at my excitement as I spot a group of stately giraffes along the side of the road. Shortly afterward, he takes leave of us and disappears into the deepening night. Modernity is meeting the ancient traditions of the Maasai way of life, and I hope fervently that Korduni and the Maasai people can make the challenging passage and help lead Tanzania into the future.





Your support is vital to furthering our work for the poor around the world.

With help from **you**, Divine Word Missionaries can continue to provide programs that will teach sustainable methods of farming.

Give today and impact the lives of people in desperate need.

Please accept my offering in the amount of:

- \$100
- \$50
- \$25

Use the envelope at the center of this magazine or...

Call toll free 800-275-0626

you can also visit our website at: www.svdmissions.org



A Life Worth Living

Felix Roche SVD

One morning one of our field workers, Mr. Bhaskar, sat in my office with tears rolling down his cheeks, unable to speak about what he had just seen. I gradually coaxed the horrifying story from him.

Mr. Bhaskar had been riding his motorcycle through a nearby village when it began to drizzle. He parked his motorcycle beneath a tree and rested beside a hut to wait for the rain to stop. Suddenly, he heard dogs barking inside the hut. Mr. Bhaskar went inside and was terrified to see a dog licking blood oozing from the legs of a sleeping toddler. The child, who was alone in the hut, awoke and started to cry. Mr. Bhaskar chased the dogs away and called to some people nearby. He asked them to watch the child while he reported the incident to me.

Disturbed by Mr. Bhaskar's story, I hurried to the hut and arrived at the same time as the child's parents. The father told me that his son's name was Malothu and that he was eighteen months old. That morning, as



The Jeevodaya Social Center helps people with sight and hearing impairments. Those with movement impairments are assisted with artificial limbs and walking aids. Educational help, medical aid, and socioeconomic support are also part of the care given at the Jeevodaya Social Center. The center covers the total cost of travel, food, accommodations, and medications for patients.

Give today

We may not be able to cure disabilities one hundred percent, but we try our best to give the disabled a life worth living.

Please accept my offering in the amount of:

\$100 \$50 \$25

they usually did, the parents left Malothu sleeping in the hut while they worked on their farm, thinking the child would be safe because they could see the hut from their field. After a while, they looked up and saw that their hut was on fire! They rushed to the hut to save Malothu, but his lower legs and feet were badly burned. Unable to go to the hospital, they used folk remedies to treat the boy's wounds.

I took Malothu to the hospital. The doctors treated his burns, but years later, the accident left the boy disabled. As time passed and Malothu continued to grow, the burn damage to the bones of his feet caused discomfort when he walked. Five years after the fire, Malothu's condition had become so acute that he was in severe pain, and his feet were raw and bleeding. I took Malothu to the hospital again. The orthopedic surgeon amputated much of his damaged feet. Afterward, Malothu was given walking aids and special shoes.

From the terrible day I first met Malothu until now, the Jeevodaya Social Center in Pregnapur, India, has looked after his education and health care. I am happy to report that Malothu is doing well in his secondary school studies. This incident is only one among hundreds that I have handled as director of the center.





As a Divine Word Missionary priest for thirty-three years, I have tried to integrate gospel values into my work and to proclaim the love of neighbor more by example than direct preaching. I have brought social awareness to the rural poor in the state of Andhra Pradesh and in adjoining states in south-east India by staging street plays and cultural shows. These shows addressed a range of social evils. I have also focused on the economic well-being of the people by starting and promoting organizations such as self-help groups for women, farmers' co-operatives, and youth associations. These groups, many successful to this day, have helped to bring economic empowerment to the poor and to women in particular.

But it is to disabled people that I devote much of my attention. Life is a gift given to us all. Yet those of us unafflicted by disability may fail to realize the full worth of our life. The disabled also receive the gift of life, but many receive it with birth defects caused by pollution that is a product of man's interference with nature. Some disabled people are bedridden for life, while others are sight or hearing impaired. There are people with cerebral palsy and some with mental disorders that have no treatment. Mental disabilities are often more difficult to handle than physical disabilities.

We who enjoy the gift of life more fully have the obligation to reach out to these less privileged ones and make their life a little better, more pleasant and lively. The disabled have a right to live decently, and it is our duty to

make it possible to the extent that we can. We must act as Good Samaritans because we are partially responsible for this phenomenon of disability. We share in the pollution that leads to so many birth defects. We have contributed to the discrimination and stigma faced by people with disabilities.

Christian love and Christ's teachings demand that we offer a new lease on life to the disabled. The Jeevodaya Social Center offers services to them. People with sight or hearing impairments are brought for corrective surgeries. Others, such as Malothu, with movement impairments are given artificial limbs and walking aids. Disabled people who meet certain criteria receive educational help, medical aid, and socioeconomic support. Others who need greater care than we can provide are accompanied by one of our workers to a government hospital or private nursing home. The center bears the total cost of their travel, food, accommodations, and medications.

We may not be able to cure disabilities one hundred percent, but we try our best to give the disabled a life worth living. It is God who heals. We are only his instruments as we minister to the disabled. Service to these less privileged sisters and brothers is a real satisfaction that no wealth on earth can match.



Article rewritten by Jeffrey Westhoff
Edited by Carolyn Schmit



**"... Bring love, humanity and faith to other countries."
Pope Francis**

Students, patients and communities around the world are waiting for teachers, doctors, nurses and other professionals for education, healthcare and support.

Together, we are doing something about it.

Join with the two oldest lay-mission sending programs in the United States and serve with Lay Mission-Helpers and Mission Doctors Association in Africa and Latin America.



www.LayMissionHelpers.org
program@laymissionhelpers.org
213.368.1873



www.MissionDoctors.org
info@missiondoctors.org
213.368.1872



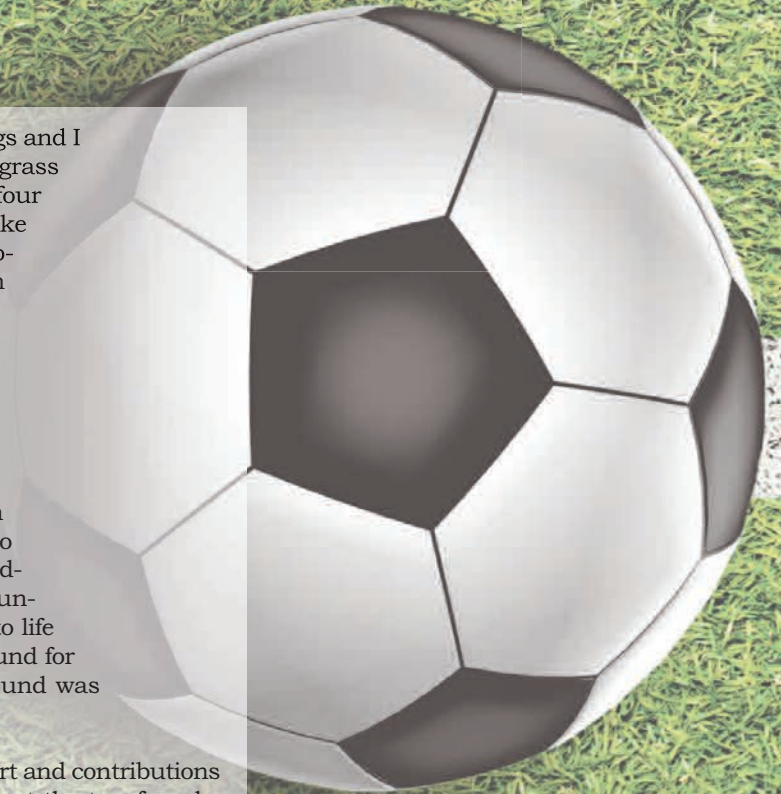
A Jamaican "Field of Dreams"

Bernard Spitzley SVD

As a boy growing up on a farm, my siblings and I had a huge lawn to play on, and green grass surrounded our home. We often placed four blocks of wood in the alfalfa field to make our baseball diamond. These fond memories are a far cry from the conditions in which the children of the inner-city parish of Holy Rosary in Kingston, Jamaica, have to live. There is no grass, and if they want to play football (American soccer), they arrange stones in the middle of a seldom-traveled road to make goal posts.

An abandoned field across the street from the church was formerly the site of two boarding houses for young boys. The buildings were torn down years ago, but the foundations remained and an old tree clung to life nearby. The area became a dumping ground for people in the neighborhood, but the ground was ideal for a baseball field.

In February 2016, with community support and contributions from local businesses, we began to tear out the two foundations, removed the tree and stump, and took load after load of rocks and rubbish to the city dump. It took three years to clear the debris and put an end to the field being used as the local dump for the community.





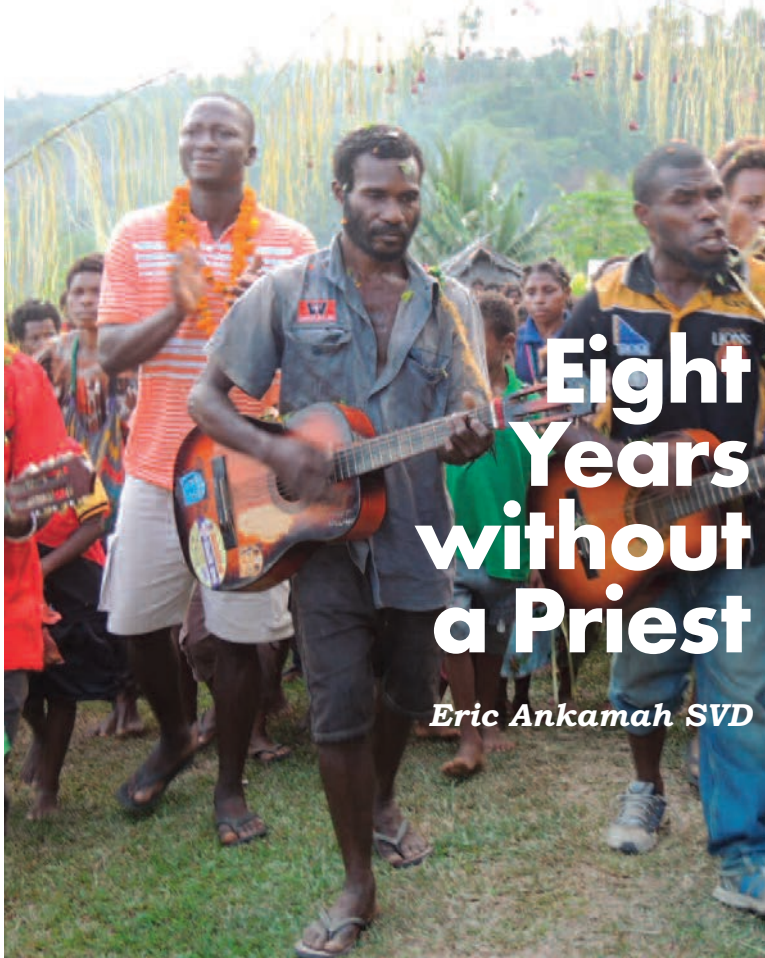
Next we had the field graded. This transformed the forty-by-ninety-foot lot into a level playing field. During this process, the grader hit a cap covering an old, stoned sewer pit. This was not part of our plan. In fact, it became a major setback to our timeline and our completion date. We had no choice but to tear out the top portion of the pit and fill it in.



Once completed, we returned to our plan of planting grass seed. Using a homemade drill of plywood with six rakes bolted together and weighed down with rocks, we tilled the soil and planted the seeds. We had six hundred school children plus the parishioners praying for rain. When our prayers are answered, we celebrate that nature blesses our efforts! When not, then we haul water in the back of the SUV. I drive a six-foot, homemade water dispenser that sprinkles water from a nearby pool.



Next we want to build bleachers, where fans can watch the games, and to install a permanent water system so that the field will become a lasting reality. Already we are in negotiations with the police and participate in a crime prevention program, which encourages the youth to play football. Holy Rosary parish has a team in the tournament, currently played on an abandoned, asphalt basketball court. With time and God's grace, we hope that this community football tournament will call home the Holy Rosary field of dreams!



Eight Years without a Priest

Eric Ankamah SVD

The crowd was ecstatic. There was cheering and dancing. Little children threw flowers at me, and people reached out for a handshake as I made my way to the welcome arch. This was the jubilant mood the day I arrived at Sacred Heart of Jesus parish in Ulupu in the Diocese of Wewak, Papua New Guinea. At the welcome arch, I was adorned with a garland and shook hands with some of the leaders. Then, there was a procession with singing and dancing. The parish is one of forty-six parishes in the diocese. Like other parishes, Sacred Heart of Jesus parish had been without a resident parish priest for the past eight years.

I arrived in Ulupu on October 17, 2015. The installation Mass was held the following day, which was Mission Sunday. I presided over the Eucharistic celebration. Concelebrating with me was Father Adam Sroka SVD, who represented Divine Word Missionaries of the Wewak District, and Father Cornelius Amil, dean of the Maprik deanery, representing Bishop Jozef Roszynski SVD, bishop of Diocese of Wewak. Fathers Adam and Cornelius presented the keys of the church and the tabernacle to me to signify that I assumed the responsibility of the parish as its new parish priest.



Sacred Heart parish has three outstations: Saint John, *Sia bilong Pita* (Chair of Peter), and Holy Cross. The parish also has a primary school and a health center. A visiting priest came to Ulupu for Eucharistic celebrations only at Christmas, Easter, the parish feast day, and the celebration of the sacraments like baptism and marriage. Otherwise, the people gathered for Sunday celebrations in the absence of a priest, during which they heard the Word of God proclaimed in the Liturgy of the Word and received Holy Communion. The administration of the parish rested on the shoulders of the dedicated, tireless catechist, Ambrose Klasimbi.



I celebrate Mass daily in Ulupu now, and attendance is very high. The older parishioners rejoice that they can participate in the Eucharistic celebration and receive the Body and Blood of Christ. People who drifted from actively practicing their Catholic faith because of the absence of priest are returning. We have prepared and received a number of them back to the faith community. There are many more people receiving religious instruction so they, too, can return to the Catholic faith this year. During the first weeks I was in Ulupu, I sat in the confessional for hours because the people had not had the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation for a long time. Many people have requested baptism for their children, and couples are asking for the sacrament of matrimony. We will begin preparation for these sacraments this year.

I learned that a priest seldom visited the outstation mission stations over the past eight years. The children are especially fascinated by my presence. Many of the children in the outstations have never been to Mass. When I am in the confessional, the children peep in at me sometimes and giggle quietly when I raise my hands to give absolution to a penitent.

As parish priest, I have made education my top priority because less than ten percent of the population completes a tenth grade education. Care of the sick and formation of youth are also at the heart of my ministry. I hope to build a multipurpose parish hall for religious education classes, workshops, and other training opportunities.

The parishioners in Ulupu and in the three mission stations have a deep, lively faith that is enriching, life-giving, and full of hope. They share it with each other and with me. Through them, I have experienced a renewal of my own faith, and I am reenergized in my missionary vocation. I never stop thanking God for bringing us all together. May he continue to bestow his abundant gifts on us!



**An important way you can help
Divine Word Missionaries
plan for the future...**
www.svdmissions.org/seminarians

You can scan the code on the right
with your cell phone,
and it will take you there directly!



Help fund seminarian studies:

- 1 month of study \$45
- months of study \$125
- months of study \$250
- year of study \$500
- 4 years of study \$2,000



Return to Vietnam

Stanley Uroda SVD



Father Stan playing a party game



Postulants bring me a Christmas gift

Vietnam is one of the places in the world where vocations to the priesthood and religious life are still abundant. A long history of keeping the faith under difficult circumstances has nurtured a high regard for those who dedicate their lives within the Church. Applications to diocesan seminaries and men's and women's religious congregations exceed the capacity of these groups to receive and prepare them for service to God's people.

Divine Word Missionaries is among those blessed with many eager candidates for religious and missionary life. I had the privilege of visiting Vietnam in 1993 and returned again eighteen months ago to help in the education of novices in Nha Trang, a midsize, coastal city known for its beautiful beaches. Our novitiate at Nha Trang welcomes young men who have graduated from college. Some have been part of a Divine Word Missionary prenovitiate program. Others are seeking their first encounter with religious formation. A few days of tests, background references, personal chats, and observation by our formation personnel provides the basis for selecting the most promising candidates. This past year we began with twenty candidates in the first year and thirty candidates in the second year.

My particular role is to serve as a volunteer English language teacher. Two lay teachers concentrate on grammar, and I focus on listening and speaking skills. The novices also study philosophy, Scripture, theology, music, and Vietnamese literature. All this is preparation for the formation and studies which follow.

Courtyard of the main house in Nha Trang



As a missionary community, it is extremely important for our Vietnamese candidates to know a language with broad currency around the world. For now at least, English is chief among them. Besides that, the various other languages needed to serve in different Divine Word Missionary provinces are commonly taught in English. In many provinces, to show up without the knowledge and use of English is a serious hindrance to making the transitions all missionaries are challenged to make.

It has been a privilege for me to contribute in some measure to the improvement of English language skills among our novices. I believe they will be far better equipped to enter and embrace new cultures as they go for cross-cultural training programs or first assignments as Divine Word Missionaries. My biggest shortcoming as a language instructor and missionary has been my own limited ability to learn the basics of the Vietnamese language. So I am not a particularly good example for them in that area. All the same, they are happy to have me come back for the 2016/2017 school/formation year.

If I keep this up long enough, even my sixty-eight-year-old brain may eventually cooperate so I can understand and speak at least the simple things in Vietnamese. It is a real challenge, but one that is far outweighed by the blessings of a supportive community, appreciative students, and the conviction that my efforts could make my future confreres from Vietnam happier, more effective Divine Word Missionaries.

If you would like to make a generous gift to Divine Word Missionaries but you do not have disposable income at this time... consider a charitable bequest.

REMEMBER US 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, please contact us:

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

to feed the
hungry, to give
drink to the
thirsty,

The Depth and Breadth of the Corporal Works of Mercy

Daisuke Narui SVD



Father Reynaldo Roman Diaz SVD coordinates with the parishes that host refugees.

Since December 8, 2015, we have been celebrating and living the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. As this special year comes to a close on November 20, 2016, we reflect again on its message. “Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God” (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 1). Jesus exemplified in his life the corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to welcome the stranger, to heal the sick, to visit the imprisoned, and to bury the dead. Since Jesus revealed the Father’s mercy to people, Christian communities have been witnessing the Father’s mercy in different cultures, times, and places.



A parish volunteer family welcomes refugees to their home as they cook and enjoy pizza together

Do you remember the moments when YOU were the recipient of such mercy? Please take a moment and try to remember how, what, and from whom you received it. I am sure you can remember many moments and the reasons why you remember them. I am quite sure it is not because of the amount or kind of service you received, but because of the love, respect, sincerity, companionship, openness, and other dimensions of human relationship that you experienced. I think this is the essence of witnessing and implementing the challenge of Jesus: “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk. 6:36).

Divine Word Missionaries, from the time of our foundation, have committed to the corporal works of mercy. Our founder, Saint Arnold Janssen, introduced the custom of sending teams of missionaries to the houses of the poor to distribute whatever was needed and get to know their daily situation. And now, after 140 years of existence as a missionary congregation, we are committed and working to carry out the seven corporal works of mercy in many parts of the world.

Often, the acts of providing and receiving service create a strange, “dependent” relationship in which people are “providers” and “receivers.” These two sides form a relationship that remains and continues. Such a dependent situation makes it more difficult for people who already find it hard to be self-sufficient. In *Misericordiae Vultus*, Pope Francis refers to the text of Is. 61:1-2, which says “to proclaim liberty to those bound by new forms of slavery



to clothe the naked,



in modern society, to restore sight to those who can see no more because they are caught up in themselves, to restore dignity to all those from whom it has been robbed” (16). What is important is the liberation and restoration of people who are in need, and providing service is a process for that. Again, it is critical to have a mutual and respectful relationship to avoid a situation of dependency. Also, it is quite important to encourage people to have hope for the future, and this is more related to the spiritual works of mercy.



As missionaries, we often say we work for the poor, the needy, the refugee, and so on. People have their own name, history, culture, hopes, and many other specific details related to their unique lives. We should address people by their name. We need to understand their backgrounds and respect their sense of hope. We can provide a broad range of help, but often their needs do not match the kinds of assistance we offer. We need to be flexible, always respecting their hopes and their decisions and choices.



One day, the Good Samaritan reached out to a man who was attacked by robbers (Lk. 10:25–37). What do you think would have happened if the Good Samaritan had found ten people dying on the road when he traveled? In such a case, he would need other Good Samaritans to also reach out. And this is the reality that faces us daily in our current world. We need more Good Samaritans! But as the Pope says in *Misericordiae Vultus*, certainly we can share the value of mercy together, work together, and respect each other (23).

“Consequently, wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident. . . . wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy” (12). The task to carry out the corporal works of mercy is not given only to specific missionaries or people. It is the work of every believer.

Constitution 112 of the religious rule of Divine Word Missionaries states: “The poor have a privileged place in the gospel.” It is for us a reminder of the call of Pope Francis during the Jubilee Year of Mercy, “And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the gospel where the poor have a special experience of God’s mercy” (MV 15). Our superior general, Father Heinz Kulüke SVD, often says, “It is not only the poor who need us, but we also need the poor to experience God’s mercy.” Let us continue working together to witness to the merciful Father.

to
welcome
the
stranger,

AUTHORS

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.

Felix Roche SVD is from Fahir, India. He professed first vows in 1975 and was ordained in 1982. Until 1989, he served in parish ministry and was active in social work. Since 1990, Father Felix has been assigned to social work. He has focused on empowering people of all ages through consciousness raising activities, self-help initiatives, and cooperatives. Since 2011, Fr. Felix has been the director of Jeevodaya Social Center in Pregnapur, India.

Daisuke Narui SVD was born in Nagoya, Japan. He professed first vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 1995 and was ordained a priest in 2001. In November 2012, Father Daisuke was appointed the Generalate coordinator for justice, peace, and integrity of creation. He collaborates with Divine Word Missionaries in provinces and regions throughout the world to ensure that promoting peace, caring for the poor and marginalized, the earth, and all of creation are integral parts of their ministries and activities.

Bernard Spitzley SVD is from Westphalia, Michigan. Brother Bernie professed first vows in 1975 and worked for many years in formation. Since August 1999, he has worked in Jamaica building houses with Food for the Poor. In August 2012, Bro. Bernie was assigned to Holy Rosary parish in Kingston, where he serves as administrator.

Eric Ankamah SVD is from Accra, Ghana. He began his studies and formation at St. Augustine Major Seminary in Tamale, Ghana, in 2003. Eric entered the Divine Word Missionary novitiate in 2006 and professed first vows in 2007 at Nkwatia, Ghana. He went to Papua New Guinea in 2008 to continue his theological studies at the Catholic Theological Institute in Bomana-Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. In May 2012, he professed perpetual vows in Bomana and was ordained to the priesthood in 2013 in Accra, Ghana. Father Eric returned to Papua New Guinea for his mission assignment. Currently, Fr. Eric is pastor of Sacred Heart of Jesus parish in Ulupu, Papua New Guinea.

Stanley Uroda SVD is originally from Detroit, Michigan. He professed first vows in 1971 and was ordained at Perrysburg, Ohio, in 1974. His first assignment was to Ghana, where he served for seven years. He returned to the United States to serve in formation and administration, including six years as vice provincial and six years as provincial of the Chicago Province. After caring for parishes in West Virginia for three years, he was rector of Divine Word Theologate in Chicago from 2005 to 2014. Currently, Father Stan is residing with the Divine Word Missionary community in Nha Trang, Vietnam, and teaching English language classes for the students in formation.



STAY
IN
TOUCH



Fall 2016

Visit us at:
www.annuitysvd.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

We'd love to hear from you: 800-275-0626

21