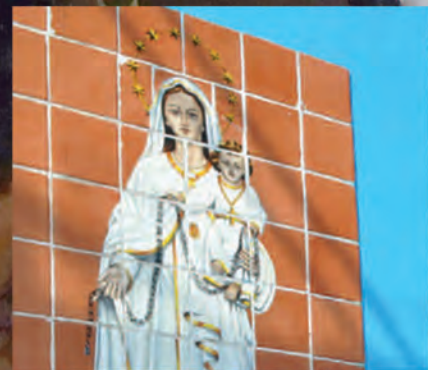


# Divine Word

**Missionaries Magazine**

Mission Updates from around the World

Spring 2013





*Please  
join us in  
prayer...*

Divine Word Missionaries join the universal Church in welcoming and praying for Pope Francis, a religious missionary who has demonstrated his love and commitment to the poor.

Over thirty Divine Word Missionaries serve in the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, where Pope Francis served as archbishop. Buenos Aires is also the headquarters of the southern province of Divine Word Missionaries in Argentina.

## Editorial

**No man can be called friendless who has God and the companionship of good books.**

(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

St. Paul Major Seminary in Ledalero, Indonesia, is the largest of all the Divine Word Missionary seminaries. Approximately 1,200 seminarians are educated there, including our seminarians and seminarians from local dioceses. Providing a quality education and religious formation program to our seminarians is a responsibility that we take very seriously. One very practical way in which you can help us is to buy a book for the seminary library.

The faculty at St. Paul's has created on Amazon.com a "wish list" of books the seminary would like to have in their library. We would be very grateful if you would browse their wish list and purchase one or more books for the seminary library.

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When your book arrives at the Mission Center, we will send it to the library at St. Paul Seminary and, **if you have provided us with your name and address, we will happily acknowledge your gift.**

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Your gift of a book will benefit seminarians for years to come. Thank you so much.

Bro. Dennis Newton SVD

Mission Director

Contact me any time; my e-mail address is:

**[director@svdmissions.org](mailto:director@svdmissions.org)**

# DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

## Volunteers Hear Their Names Called a Thousand Times a Day

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## ¡Bienvenido a Ecuador! Welcome to Ecuador!

That is how Magdalena Mendrek, Agnieszka Laskowska, Monika Kiermasch... arriving at the airport are welcomed by Father Jan Koczy SVD, a Divine Word Missionary and founder of the St. Joseph Freinademetz SVD-Fu Shenfu Foundation in Ventanas, Ecuador.

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Because of this problem, I became a doctor with skills in many specialties, including obstetrics, gynecology, plastic and reconstructive surgery, urology, pediatric surgery, and orthopedics.

Front Cover:  
*Samuel Balkono SVD with Catholic Youth Group in Papua New Guinea.*

Spring 2013

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# ¡Bienvenido a Ecuador! Welcome to Ecuador!

*¡Bienvenido a Ecuador!* Welcome to Ecuador! That is how Magdalena Mendrek, Agnieszka Laskowska, Monika Kiermasch, and all new volunteers arriving at the airport are welcomed by Father Jan Koczy SVD, a Divine Word Missionary and founder of the St. Joseph Freinademetz SVD–Fu Shenfu Foundation in Ventanas, Ecuador.

## Volunteers Hear Their Names Called a Thousand Times a Day

*Dennis Newton SVD*

From its beginning seven years ago, the foundation has relied on volunteers. Ecuadorians have always formed the core group, but the program has also welcomed volunteers from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany, the United States, and Japan.

Volunteers, each with his or her own motivation for service, are usually at least twenty years of age with some work experience. Magdalena Mendrek describes how she learned about the foundation: “I had decided to work as a volunteer in another country when I was in high school, but everybody around me advised me against it. Despite that, my dream remained deep in my heart. After finishing college and working for a company, I kept thinking about volunteer service, although I kept these thoughts to myself. One day at my parish church, I had the chance to meet a Divine Word Missionary who was working in Ecuador. He told me about the volunteer program at the foundation. He suggested that I should meet with Father Koczy, who was in Poland for a few weeks. That meeting with Fr. Koczy did it. I had no other option but to go, that wish was so strong.”



**La Poza, a small ghetto of bamboo huts built on stilts and connected by narrow bridges made of wooden boards**

Agnieszka Laskowska had a similar experience. "During high school and at the beginning of college, I dreamed of doing volunteer work in India. I was fascinated with the whole culture, the people, religion, the language. But nothing came of it. I finished my college degree, started work, and finally my dream led me to Ecuador."

Sometimes the voluntary service is a way to fill the free time during a "gap year" between high school and college. That was the case for Monika Kiermasch, "I finished high school in Germany and I was not sure about what to study or what to do with my life. That is why I decided to serve as a volunteer, to get to know my skills and abilities, my possibilities, a different culture and language. I read an article about the voluntary service at the foundation and that is how my adventure began."

Volunteers at the foundation serve in groups of two or three, often from the same language group. "To have the possibility to speak with someone in your native language is extremely important. Even if you are able to understand every word in Spanish and to talk to the Ecuadorians, it's not the same as talking to a countryman in your mother tongue," says Magdalena. Volunteers coming from a foreign country are away from their families and friends, and they come to a new place on the other side of the world where they do not know anyone or anything about local customs. It can be very difficult."





"We work primarily with children from troubled homes. There may be problems with alcohol or drugs. A lot of them live in the sector called La Poza, a small ghetto of bamboo huts built on stilts and connected by narrow bridges made of wooden boards. We deal with children who have no dreams for the future. Their whole world consists of a little bamboo hut and a daily handful of rice. These are the children whom we want to take care of. We begin by emphasizing common courtesies: how to treat other people, how to communicate properly, how to use common expressions, such as 'thank you,' 'sorry,' 'please,'" explains Agnieszka.



Many of the children from La Poza do not attend school because they have to work in the mornings or they simply cannot afford the books. Volunteers have worked with ten-year-olds who could not count to ten or tell time because they do not have clocks at home. The older children take part in the "School of Leaders,"



**The St. Joseph Freinademetz SVD Center provides 65 children with a daily meal and tutoring.**



a program that teaches responsibility and citizenship. Often it is enough just to be there, to listen, to cuddle, and to hug. "There is one family in the foundation which comes to the afternoon class every day. These children live in a small house with their parents, aunts, and their grandparents. Twenty-four people live in the house. One day Nahomy, Scarleth, Genderson, and Edwin came and asked me to be their mommy for that week. So I agreed, and that is how I managed to become a twenty-seven-year-old mother of four for one week," tells Agnieszka with a laugh. "We hear our names at least a thousand times a day—whispered, shouted in Spanish, sometimes with their attempt at a Polish accent, sometimes with tears in their eyes. The patron of the foundation is St. Joseph Freinademetz, *Fu Shenfu*, who said, 'Love is the only language everybody understands.' Our greatest reward will always be the huge, often gap-toothed smiles on the young children's faces." ♦

Fr. Jan and his volunteers want to give these kids a future...



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# Healing Hearts, Binding Wounds

*Jerzy Kuzma SVD*

*“He heals the*





**brokenhearted and binds up their wounds”** -Ps.147:3



My vocation call came in stages. My first calling was to be a doctor. Then in the final years of medical school, I felt the Lord calling me to serve him among the poor and less privileged. Finally, I realized I was called to religious life, to become a religious Brother and to serve the poor as a doctor. With that goal in mind and with trust that the Lord would nourish and develop what is the best in me, I began my journey into the unknown. It has been a fulfilling journey and one that I have never regretted.

In 1986, I completed medical school at the Medical University in Lublin, Poland, and then worked for four years at a hospital in Kozenice, obtaining my specialization in general surgery. It was then that I made my decision to enter religious life.



I entered the novitiate and professed my first vows in 1992. After novitiate, there was theology study in Pieniezno and part-time work in a surgical ward in Braniewo. For three years, I continued my medical studies in general surgery at Bialystok Medical University, did research, and finally completed my doctoral degree in medicine.

After seven months of improving my English in Ireland, I was sent as a Divine Word Missionary and a doctor to Papua New Guinea, where I have been serving for the past fifteen years.

My work in Papua New Guinea began at two hospitals, one a government hospital and the other, a mission hospital. Often I went on medical patrols to visit the sick in very remote areas of the Simbu Province, traveling by jeep, small airplane, or on foot. Some of these areas had not seen a real doctor for more than ten years. In all my journeys, to all my patients, I brought not only my medical bag, but also the Good News and the message that God loves them.

As a new doctor I discovered that, unlike in the United States or Europe, in Papua New Guinea it was impractical to refer a patient to a specialist. Either the specialists did not exist or they were hundreds of miles away. For example, even today, there are only two radiologists in the entire country, both of whom are in Port Moresby, about two hundred and eighty miles away from our Simbu Province mission. Because of this problem, I became a doctor with skills in many specialties, including obstetrics, gynecology, plastic and reconstructive surgery, urology, pediatric surgery, and orthopedics.



During my travels on medical patrols I met so many children and young adults who, due to the lack of proper medical care, were sentenced to a life of disability. After training in orthopedics, friends, donors, and sponsors helped me build an orthopedic ward. The new twenty-three-bed facility services patients with trauma to limbs, spine, and other orthopedic problems. The next step is to establish an orthotic clinic to produce simple prostheses, splints, orthopedic shoes, and other devices to help disabled people with everyday life.

Today my days are mostly filled with working at the hospital and lecturing in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Divine Word University in Madang. It is gratifying to be able to teach and pass on my skills to young Papua New Guineans. Now because of my teaching obligations, I have less time for medical bush patrols. However, during holidays I do manage to find time to organize Catholic Health Service patrols to remote areas.

I cannot imagine where else my medical practice would be so diverse or so necessary. So, when I look back at my journey with Jesus, and when I reflect on the unique way the Lord has led me, I can say with joy: Thank you Lord. Thank you for your trust in me, despite my doubts and struggles along the way. ♦

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# Life in the Jungle

*Paul Gbortsu SVD*



My first mission assignment was in Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia, but a year ago, I was assigned to a new parish. You can find it by going to the edge of nowhere and continuing a bit farther. The main church is in the village of Murindo, and we have twenty-two mission stations attached to the main church. Life in this remote area of Colombia is exciting and challenging.

Saint Bartholomew the Apostle Church is the main station, where many members are descendants of freed American slaves, although there are also indigenous people from the tribal groups that originally occupied the Americas and people of European descent. Many of the faith communities in outlying mission stations are made up of indigenous groups who have a distinct language. This creates a special challenge for us missionaries who struggle to learn these languages and dialects.

Traveling from the main church in Murindo to the mission stations can be very difficult. St. Bartholomew Church and six of the stations are situated along the Atrato River. They are the most accessible since we can get to them by motorboat. The other communities, however, are located farther into the forest. This requires a



three-hour boat ride, followed by eight hours on foot. In good weather, the river is our friend because it makes transportation easier. But each year that friend shows a bad side when St. Bartholomew's and at least seven of the outstations are affected by floods.

A typical visit to the outstations is quite an adventure. Our team is comprised of two Sisters, a couple of lay volunteers, and me, all in our little motorboat. We leave from the main parish early in the morning. If our trip only involves a boat ride, we can arrive at the village by midafternoon. Upon our arrival, we spend the rest of the afternoon visiting individual families. The following morning, all of the families gather around eight o'clock. We devote a few hours to catechesis. Ordinarily, I spend time with the adults, while the Sisters break the children into groups. We conclude the afternoon with a celebration of the Eucharist and baptisms, if there are children to be baptized. After Mass, we again take time to visit families. On the third day, we get back into the boat and head to the next community. During a single trek, we usually visit three communities, and then we return to the main station.

In addition to the language and travel difficulties, we also encounter political problems.





Most of the outstations are in the hands of the rebel group known as "FARC." In English, we would call them the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. It is a left-wing guerrilla organization that has been in conflict with the Colombian government since 1964. I have seen estimates that place their strength between 8,000 and 18,000, and Human Rights Watch reports that twenty to thirty percent of FARC's ranks are children. Fortunately, our missionaries are generally not targets of their activities, although the Vatican reported that six priests were killed in Colombia last year.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to take some time for home leave in Ghana. My reunion with my family was wonderful, and I also visited our seminary. The seminarians were anxious to hear about my mission experiences. One of the seminarians seemed surprised by the very poor conditions in my mission, but I told him how much joy and satisfaction I receive in serving the poor, for they are Jesus' favorites. I quoted a familiar Gospel passage from Luke's Gospel in which Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor" (Lk. 4:18).

The people whom we serve show us much gratitude and appreciation. Often they tell me, "The politicians come to visit us once in every four years during elections. You and the Sisters remain with us." It is true that we have many challenges, but I would not trade my parish for any other. ♦



*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor*  
(Lk. 4:18)



### Where in the World Is Father Grad?

Using the clues below, can you guess where Fr. Zdzislaw Grad SVD works? How many clues did you need to get the right answer?

1. Fr. Grad works on an island in the Indian Ocean.
2. The country where he works has two official languages. One of them is French.
3. Fr. Grad works on the fourth largest island in the world.
4. Fr. Grad works in the nation's capital, Antananarivo.
5. Here is a picture of the country's flag.



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# The Day It Rained Tears

Melvin James SVD

*A special shrine honors Our Lady of Mercy and memorializes all who die in prison and of all who die alone. The statue of Our Lady of Mercy is all that remains from the old chapel. The once-beautiful statue had been damaged during a deadly riot in the prison. Her hand was broken as well as her crown. Over the years the statue had lost a lot of color, and the base had rotted.*

*Now Our Lady of Mercy is fully restored. On seeing the renewed statue, one of the nuns gratefully commented: "Father, you sent Our Lady to the beauty parlor."*

PHOTO CREDITS: Francisco Garcia



When my alarm clock broke the silence of the night, I opened my eyes and whispered, "Dear God, please no rain today!" I knew that two hours later I would be walking into the federal prison in Tijuana, Mexico, and heading for the leaky chapel in the women's section. After experiencing so many rainy days and so much water on the floor, the chapel had earned the nickname "Our Lady of the Lake."

Like prisons everywhere, our prison is overcrowded, understaffed, and underfunded. Repairing the roof on the chapel was not one of the administration's highest priorities, so when the director of social services in the prison asked me if I could try to raise funds to put a new roof on the chapel, I knew that if I did not take up the challenge, the roof would never be repaired.

A month later, I was assigned to preach a parish mission appeal in southern California. When I arrived at the parish, the pastor turned me away because he had invited one of his friends, another missionary, to take up the collection that Sunday. Feeling more than a little dejected, but not wanting to waste my trip across the border, I drove to the nearby Saint Louise de Marillac Parish and offered to help out for the weekend Masses.





The pastor, Father Robert Fulton, had just arrived at the parish. He is a former Missionary of Charity Brother, the community founded by Mother Teresa. Fr. Fulton is a very gracious man and he gave me a warm welcome.

During the weekend homilies, I told the parishioners about my prison ministry and my goal to raise money to put a new roof on the chapel. At the end of the noon Mass, a man greeted me outside of the church and squeezed something into my hand, saying, "Father, please take this and put that new roof on your chapel. I've been blessed, and I want to give this back to God in gratitude." He had placed in my hand a check for ten thousand dollars! When I saw it, I was so overcome with emotion, that I spontaneously hugged him and began to cry. I am convinced that St. Louise de Marillac, who, with Saint Vincent de Paul, sacrificed their lives in service to the poor, had led me to her church!

I returned to Tijuana with the newly acquired funds and a bounce in my step. I knew we could get the roof fixed, but now I set my sights on giving the chapel a complete facelift. I rolled up my sleeves and got to work by sending letters to friends asking for help. I sent them pictures of the old chapel, a dark and damp place with holes in the ceiling and dead rodents in the storeroom. My plea to them: "I wish to resurrect this chapel for Easter."

Well, we did not get it done by Easter, but on May 31, the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we celebrated the Mass of rededication. The chapel would no longer be called by its nickname, Our Lady of the Lake, but by its proper name, Our Mother of Mercy.

*...a man greeted me outside of the church and squeezed something into my hand, saying, "Father, please take this and put that new roof on your chapel. I've been blessed, and I want to give this back to God in gratitude."*



**“To you do we  
send up our sighs,  
mourning and  
weeping in this  
valley of tears.”**



On the day of the rededication, the chapel was full. I was a little nervous when I saw the looming presence of the warden, a very large, rough and tough, no-nonsense man. I always think twice before I approach him about anything, somewhat fearful that he might bite my head off. Fortunately, I was also greeted by many friendly and familiar faces: other priests who are involved in prison ministry; Mother Antonia Brenner, the founder of a religious order of Sisters who work at the prison; and, of course, the women inmates. None of them had seen the inside the chapel during the three-month renovation. I knew it would be very emotional celebration.

Just before beginning Mass, the priests processed to the rear of the chapel, where we sang a Latin hymn before a shrine to the Blessed Mother. It was the hymn that we sang in the seminary at the end of our night prayers, the *Salve Regina*. As we sang the hymn, I caught a glimpse of the warden's face. It was not a happy face.

At the end of Mass, Father Miguel, the director of prison ministry in the Archdiocese of Tijuana, and Mother Antonia made some brief remarks. Then, the warden reached for the microphone. I noticed his hands were trembling.

Tears were welling up in his eyes, and as he turned, his gaze fell on Mother Antonia and the Sisters, the members of the Third Order of Our Lady of Mercy, the construction men, members of his staff, and finally, the inmates. He tried to speak, but his lips were quivering. I think the image of the priests singing to their Mother was still with him. As he gazed into the eyes of the women inmates, he must have realized that most of them are mothers, mothers who miss their children, and whose children surely miss them. Suddenly he could no longer hold back his tears. It was as if a dam had burst. Rivers of tears flowed down his cheeks. Soon everyone in the chapel was weeping. In the words of the Latin hymn we sang, “To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.” For most inmates, the prison is indeed a valley of tears, but on the feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 2012, in that valley of tears we shed tears of joy!

Through the generosity of many friends and benefactors, we were tremendously blessed to witness an amazing transformation. With our own eyes we saw a dark, damp, dingy chapel converted into a sacred place that is now beckoning, bright, and beautiful! I can now wake up in the morning and pray, “Dear God, if is your will, LET IT RAIN!”◆

## A Big Step

*Sister Elizabeth Newman SSND*



The Orthopedic Training Center (OTC) in Ghana has taught hundreds of disabled children how to take that first small step with new, properly fitted prostheses. Now the center itself is taking a giant step by establishing the new Prosthetic and Orthotic Training College.



The OTC has always made training a part of its vision, but the newly inaugurated college will be the first school for orthotics and prosthetics in English-speaking West Africa.

Codirectors Brother Tarcisius de Reuyter SVD and Sister Elizabeth Newman SSND realized the necessity of upgrading their own staff and technicians by offering quality education. At the same time, Ghana's Ministry of Health, which was very aware of OTC's fifty-one-year history of excellence, approached the directors, asking them to start a diploma program in orthotics and prosthetics.

The Prosthetic and Orthotic Training College will be a satellite campus of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, and it will open in August of this year. It will prepare well-trained practitioners to meet the needs of the physically challenged in Ghana and surrounding countries.

Through a grant from the Australian Embassy, the OTC has been able to build the new facility and to equip the computer laboratory. We are seeking additional funding, and we are working with universities in the United States and Europe to develop the college's curriculum.

Most of all, we are grateful to God for bringing us to this time in our history. We dream of what can be and of the young prosthetic and orthotic technicians who will hold high the torch that has been passed on to them. ♦



# Down on the Farm

*Michael Hutchins SVD*

Divine Word Missionaries around the world invest considerable time and energy in learning languages. Our international congregation expects members to develop facility in English or Spanish, in addition to their native language. Many members surpass the expectation, developing true fluency in additional languages essential for effective ministry across cultures. Here in the United States, Indonesian and Polish seminarians study English, even as they look forward to later studies in Chinese. Vietnamese seminarians undertake Spanish studies not long after completing an arduous English language course. Through their studies, our students develop basic skills in their new language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. At the same time, if less perceptibly, they begin to gain entrée to another people's culture and its systems of values and beliefs. Situated within those cultural systems, our missionaries live in witness to the Gospel. Language learning is a process that is sometimes challenging, often rewarding, and always necessary for missionary service.

During nearly two years of ministry here at Divine Word Farm Weldon, I have sometimes leaned on the language learning metaphor for support. My learning requirement is, of course, not as dramatic as that of a Pole determined to learn Chinese or an Indonesian to learn Hungarian. My northeast Iowa English is well understood here in south central Iowa. Still, the learning dynamic is not entirely dissimilar. I am a newcomer seeking belonging and significant participation in a community unfamiliar to me in many ways. This community is comprised of parishioners, Church personnel, and close neighbors to be sure. It is also a broader assembly of individuals and groups, both religious and secular, committed in different ways to the care and celebration of creation, to peace among all peoples, to the health and well-being of the poor, and to the eradication of world hunger. My missionary challenge is to achieve entrée to the ongoing conversation about these important issues, indeed Gospel imperatives. My responsibility is to represent the distinctive commitment of Divine Word Farms and Divine Word Missionaries to addressing these Gospel imperatives.





Through various endeavors, including our row crops, conservation efforts, cattle herd, summer garden, reforestation program, wind and solar energy projects, hospitality, and pastoral assistance, Divine Word Farms has adopted a vocabulary of concrete demonstration. A new friend of Divine Word Farms recently voiced her appreciation for the integrating effect of our work, its concrete demonstration of what we Catholics celebrate and proclaim in our Sunday Eucharist. Our friend's positive observation echoes an aspiration cherished by all Divine Word Missionaries and enshrined in the prologue to our *Constitutions*: "We propose to make the goodness and kindness of God visible in our life and service." Our friend's observation was heartening, confirming that we are learning and speaking a language that our community understands and appreciates.

Divine Word Farms aims to provide material assistance to ministries sponsored by Divine Word Missionaries in India and Thailand. Growing crops to assist street children in Pune, India; and raising cattle to provide for HIV/AIDS orphans in Nong Bua Lamphu, Thailand, is speaking a language recognizable to many; to many, in fact, who may never frequent a church or listen to a Sunday homily. Employing wind and solar energy resources and planting trees here at our Weldon site are other ways of speaking the vernacular of those committed to the care of the earth. Our farm undertakings are a combination of things practical and symbolic. They are intended to produce tangible results but to point always to something greater, to the ideals that give them meaning, to the Creator who gives them life and ultimate purpose. Our undertakings reflect, I hope, the spirit of the New Evangelization movement set forth by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and last year's Synod of Bishops.

The Gospel offers a vision of life and of the world that cannot be imposed, but only proposed, as the good news of the gratuitous love of God and of peace. The message of truth and of beauty can help people escape from the loneliness and lack of meaning to which the conditions of post-modern society often relegate them. Therefore, believers must strive to show to the world the splendor of a humanity grounded in the mystery of Christ. Popular religiosity is important but not sufficient; more is needed to help recognize the duty to proclaim to the world the reason for Christian hope, to those Catholics estranged from the Church, to those who do not follow Christ, to the sects and those experimenting with different kinds of spiritualities (XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*, prop. 13, October 27, 2012).

Like all new language learners, we of Divine Word Farms have much to share and celebrate. Like all new language learners, we know the frustrations of limited vocabulary and confused syntax. Like all new language learners, we are silenced in certain moments by the realization of how much we have yet to learn. Like all believers, we also know that what is truly good and lasting comes not from ourselves but from above, from the Creator. With all believers, we confidently follow the Son and patiently listen to the Holy Spirit, who entrust to us the language of truth and love, all we need. ♦



*Witnessing the ceremony was fellow Ghanaian, Deacon Samuel Balkono SVD. Learn more about Samuel Balkono SVD at: [www.svdmissions.org/samuel](http://www.svdmissions.org/samuel)*



## Missionary Recognized for Distinguished Service

*Samuel Balkono SVD*

Divine Word Missionary, Father Joseph Nene Sakite SVD, received a national award for service to Papua New Guinea on November 29, 2012.

Grand Chief Sir Michael Ogio, the governor general, invested Fr. Sakite with the insignia of an Officer of the Order of Logohu for his distinguished service to the nation.



# MEET THE AUTHORS

**Jerzy Kuzman SVD** was born in Mlelec, Poland, and he professed first vows as a Divine Word Missionary Brother in 1991. Brother Jerzy studied medicine in Poland. Doctor Jerzy teaches medicine at Divine Word University in Madang, Papua New Guinea.

**Melvin James SVD** is originally from Washington, D.C. He became a Divine Word Missionary in 1966. Father James is chaplain at the federal prison in Tijuana, Mexico.

**Paul Gbortsu SVD** is from Hlefi, Ghana. He professed first vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 2002. After ordination in 2007, Father Gbortsu was assigned to Colombia, where he was pastor of Saint Bartholomew Parish in Murindo. Recently, he was assigned to study biblical theology in Mexico.

**Samuel Balkono SVD** is a seminarian from Kintampo, Ghana. He professed first vows in 2007. Samuel participated in supervised ministry in Papua New Guinea and was ordained a deacon last year. He will be ordained to the priesthood in 2013 and receive his first mission assignment.

**Elizabeth Newman SSND** is a School Sister of Notre Dame. Sister Elizabeth professed her first vows in 1963. In 1974, she was among the first group of School Sisters to be missioned to Ghana. From 1988 to 2003, Sister Elizabeth returned to the United States where she served in leadership for the Dallas Province of the School Sisters. She returned to Ghana in 2003 and is currently the codirector of Orthopedic Training Center.

**Michael Hutchins SVD**, from Dubuque, Iowa, is assigned to the Divine Word Mission Center and resides in Weldon, Iowa. Father Hutchins professed first vows in 1972 and was ordained at Techny in 1975. For nearly his entire career, Fr. Hutchins has been involved in education, teaching high school in Los Angeles and later serving as president of Divine Word College, Epworth, Iowa. He holds a doctoral degree from the University of Iowa.

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