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Divine Word

Missionaries Magazine

Mission Updates from Around the World

Winter 2011



**Remember
Divine Word
Missionaries
in your Will
and make a
meaningful
change in
someone's
life...**



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. Your gift is also a wonderful memorial to your understanding of the great needs our missionaries face each day.

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:

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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**

Editorial

Celebrating two feast days

During January, we celebrate the feast days of Saint Arnold Janssen, our founder, on January 15 and Saint Joseph Freinademetz, our first missionary to China, on January 29.

Father Arnold Janssen founded Divine Word Missionaries in 1875, and during his lifetime, he sent missionaries to China, Brazil, Togo, New Guinea, Chile, the United States, Japan, and the Philippines. At his death in 1909, there were over 1,000 Divine Word Missionaries.

Today, over 6,000 Divine Word Missionaries are at work in seventy countries around the world. Please join us in praying to St. Arnold and St. Joseph for continued blessings on our work and the missionary work of the Church:

Loving God, you called Arnold and Joseph to follow your son, the Divine Word, in proclaiming the Gospel to all people.

Burning with love for him and filled with his Spirit, they dedicated themselves totally to the work of spreading your Kingdom of peace and love. Their example has inspired many generations of missionaries in many parts of the world. May it continue to inspire us today.

Inflame our hearts like theirs with a burning love for Christ.

Shape us by your Son's self-giving in the Eucharist, so that we may become signs of your never ending love for our world.

Teach us to rejoice in the abundant diversity of people and give us a loving heart ready to embrace all people. Transform our world into one heart fully alive with Christ's Spirit. Amen.

On behalf of all our missionaries, I thank you for your friendship and your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dennis Newton, SVD". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Bro. Dennis Newton SVD
Mission Director

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

director@svdmissions.org

DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

AIDS Is Not Just a Disease

Philip Gibbs SVD



Not a Typical Parish

Dennis Newton SVD



...in a mission parish, the life of the pastor is often anything but typical. Fr. Peter may have to plan a new water well, help treat a child who was attacked by a lion, or drive a hundred miles to visit a parish outstation.

The Language of Love

Dennis Newton SVD



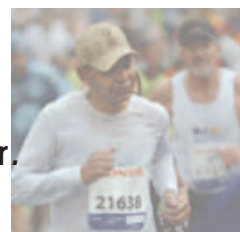
The next generation of missionaries will go out in the world equipped with new language skills.

Run to the Hills

Anthaiah Madanu SVD



...not to the doctor.



United in Prayer and Worship

Carolyn Schmit



...thousands of village chapels in at least twenty countries and seventy-three dioceses or archdioceses all over the world.

Where I Live

Michael Quang Nguyen SVD

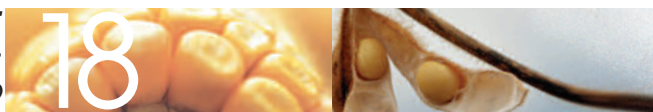


In May 1984, from Bataan refugee camp in the Philippines, a boat person set foot in San Jose, California.

Down on the Farm:

Harvest

Michael Hutchins SVD



MATCH the FLAGS learn about the country...

page 6



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AIDS

Is Not Just a Disease

Philip Gibbs SVD



Agnes cared for her sister who died of AIDS, and she too was infected with the HIV virus. Agnes invited women, mostly homeless and living with HIV, to come and stay with her and share what little food she had.

I visited her home one evening. Women came at different times through the darkness of the unlit settlement until there were eight of us sitting on the rough, wooden floor around a kerosene lamp. They shared about what it was like to live with HIV. Many had been cast out of their families due to the stigma and discrimination associated with the HIV virus and AIDS. What impressed me was the sense of community and the way they supported one another. Sometime after midnight, I was tired and was shown to a corner of the room where I could rest. I heard the others in the next room praying the rosary. You can imagine my mixed feelings. These women from the streets were devoutly praying while I, the missionary, rested, secure under a mosquito net.

Before she died of AIDS, Agnes taught me a lot about mission by witnessing to the love of Christ in very down-to-earth human ways. As I reflected on what I learned from Agnes, I thought, isn't that what mission is about?

...isn't that what mission is all about?

Papua New Guinea is a country where over thirty thousand people have tested positive for HIV, but the number infected could be far greater because the majority of those infected do not know it. Besides the *infected*, there are hundreds of thousands of people *affected*, searching for the resources to care for family members who are ill, or trying to cope without a husband, a wife, a mother, or a father.

In the last few years, my principal mission as a Divine Word Missionary has been to research social and cultural factors that are contributing to the HIV epidemic and to look for strategies that can help to alleviate it. The experience has taught me a lot about mission because I have come to realize that I am the one who needs to be converted—in my attitudes, in my openness to different cultural values, and in my understand of what it means to be truly human amid the perplexity, the suffering, and the mystery of life and death associated with HIV and AIDS.

The Churches in Papua New Guinea play a major role in caring for the infected and affected. The Catholic Church has initiated and administers many voluntary testing and counseling centers and many care centers. People are invited to take a blood test to find out whether they are infected. The news that one is not infected brings great relief. Some smile. Others cry. Learning that one's test is positive and that one is infected is devastating news. At such moments,



The news that one is not infected brings great relief. Some smile. Others cry.



people ask questions such as: Did God send this epidemic? Am I being punished? Does God care for people living with AIDS and their families? Does God hear our cries for healing?

Thirty Divine Word Missionaries in Papua New Guinea discussed such issues in a week-long workshop on how to respond as pastors to the situation. We see it as an opportunity for prophetic dialogue, one of our principal approaches to mission today. Prophetic dialogue involves speaking out in word and deed, not on our own authority, but on God's authority. In this context, we try to be open and to understand the epidemic in the light of people's experience and the Christian mystery. Our response affects the way we think about the epidemic and those affected by it. We must see the person rather than the disease. Because of Jesus' compassion for and solidarity with the sick, his mission and ministry provide the model for healing. If we are to talk about God, then it must be about how God accepts us as we are. Can God be found, not outside, but in the midst of the HIV epidemic?

If God is to be seen in the face of a person living with HIV, then the Christian community has a responsibility to respond with the love and compassion that have their origin in God. Antiretroviral therapies available today can prolong life. But it is even more important to promote a new quality of life and meaning in life so that people no longer think and talk about "dying from HIV" but rather "living with HIV."

Some Christians find the HIV and AIDS issue embarrassing because they link it to behaviors that the Church disapproves of. Yet when one looks at the reality in Papua New Guinea today, the persons most at risk of contracting the virus are not so-called high risk groups, such as truck drivers, but church-going, married women. How does one talk of the goodness of God in a situation where a faith-

ful wife tests positive, having been infected by her husband?

Religious sisters at Church hospitals have taken the lead in promoting medication for preventing mother-to-child transmission of the HIV virus. Churches are instrumental in helping to promote a sense of unity and social cohesion among the members. The support and health of a community are important factors in slowing the transmission rate of HIV infection. Churches are also promoting the ideal of healthy families and opposing domestic violence in all its forms.

The social stigma of HIV infection affects people when community members brand a person they know or suspect of being infected with HIV as a danger or liability to the community. This causes that person to be excluded or marginalized. Infected people experience internal stigma when they themselves, through fear or shame, isolate themselves and feel that they are being punished for something they have done.

In some dioceses, World AIDS Day on December 1 is an important occasion to speak out and witness against stigma and discrimination. In the Mendi Diocese, I took part in a week-long gathering of health workers and people infected with HIV. Bishop Stephen Reichert O.F.M. Cap. joined us in a march through the streets of the town and spoke out against a commonly held belief that AIDS is a punishment from God.

Through the experience of working with people infected and affected, I have come to realize that AIDS is not just a disease. It is a symptom of a cultural crisis, of dysfunctional political and socio-economic structures, of lack of knowledge, of things that have gone wrong in the way we relate to one another and, most importantly, in the way we love one another. □



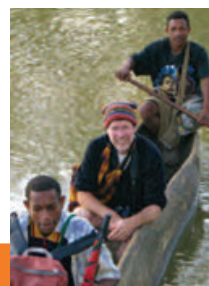
How does one talk of the goodness of God in a situation where a faithful wife tests positive, having been infected by her husband?

Fr. Gibbs has produced two films about HIV and AIDS in Papua New Guinea.

You can view them on the Internet at:

www.vimeo.com/13991163 (*Mist in the Mountains*) and

www.vimeo.com/13993903 (*World AIDS Day, Mendi*)



WATCH

Online an interview with Fr. Gibbs at:
svdmissions.org



Not a Typical Parish

Dennis Newton SVD

When we use the word *parish* in the United States, it conjures a certain image. That image does not quite fit Father Peter Pinto's parish in Tanzania, Africa. In many ways, Fr. Pinto's day resembles that of a pastor here in the United States. He celebrates Mass, visits those who cannot come to church, visits the hospital, and perhaps teaches a class. But in a mission parish, the life of the pastor is often anything but typical. Fr. Peter may also have to plan a new water well, help treat a child who was attacked by a lion, or drive a hundred miles to visit a parish outpost.

Simanjiro parish is larger than the state of Rhode Island and has a population of about 95,000. Ninety percent of the parish population are Maasai, who are mostly nomads, shepherds, and farmers. The majority of people are Christian, with Catholics numbering approximately 11,000. Other religious

groups in the region include Lutherans, Pentecostals, and followers of traditional African religions.

Two Divine Word Missionaries, Fr. Peter Pinto SVD, and his associate, Father Jose Santos SVD, are responsible for the main church in Simanjiro and nineteen outstations. The pastoral staff and the leaders of local Christian communities work together to find permanent solutions to many challenges and problems, which include high illiteracy rates, very low incomes, a shortage of good water, high numbers of HIV infections, and a lack of basic medical care. Fr. Peter is quite frank in assessing their achievements and failures in addressing the needs of the parish and the wider community.

Basic health care was one of the first priorities addressed. In 1980, the parish began a small dispensary, which has grown to a 42-bed hospital. The local people, the Franciscan Sisters of St. Joseph, Divine





Word Missionaries, and Archdiocese of Arusha are partners in operating the facility. The out-patient clinic serves more than fifty people each day. The hospital staff frequently treats malaria, measles, pneumonia, and typhoid. It is not unusual for the hospital to treat accidents such as snakebites and attacks by lions or other wild animals. The hospital also offers programs in hygiene and first aid. A mobile unit allows nurses to care for patients in the outlying villages. Fr. Pinto hopes to improve the hospital by purchasing some basic equipment for the lab, installing a generator, and building an operating room for urgent surgeries.

A critical need for the parish is to have reliable, permanent sources of clean water for the villages. Although the problem has not been fully solved, the situation is much improved.

Since the basis of the economy is animal husbandry and agriculture, the parish established a vocational training school, which offers a four-year course in cattle farming, pest control, and alternative agriculture. Graduates now serve as veterinarians in local villages and in areas beyond the boundaries of the parish. The parish also invested in five maize milling machines in five villages.

Fr. Peter's hopes for the parish are those that any pastor has. He acknowledges that so much has been accomplished in Simanjiro parish, yet much remains to be done. He, Fr. Santos, the





pastoral staff, and the leaders of the Christian communities have set short-term goals of faith formation with an emphasis on knowledge of the Bible; strengthening of family life; and development of leaders who will have roles in addressing pastoral and social issues.

In time, Fr. Peter hopes that the parish can become more self-sustaining. There is an initiative to farm leased land in order to increase the parish income and improve the food available to the people. Many chapels must be repaired and others must be built. He recognizes the need for literacy programs for adults and schools for children, as well as education in health and hygiene.

Fr. Peter is inspired by the life of the early Christian community described in Acts 2:42-47. Simanjiro is not a typical parish, but it has a vitality that is rooted in the hearts and spirits of the people. Their faith is nourished the celebration of the Eucharist, their prayer as a community, and on-going evangelization and catechesis. In partnership with civil and pastoral leaders, the people are increasingly attentive to social issues. More and more, they participate in community planning and in discussions of secular issues relevant to the situation in their region. Even now, the people are witnesses to Christ, in whom they are one with each other and with the members of his Body far beyond Simanjiro and Tanzania. □

delivering HELP



HOPE

A 42-bed hospital...An outpatient clinic that serves more than fifty people a day... Hospital staff that treats malaria, measles, pneumonia, and typhoid along with snakebites and attacks by lions and other wild animals...

A mobile unit that delivers care to patients in outlying villages.

This is mission life...

Give HELP & Hope to a mission community.

A gift from you will bring care and basic medical attention to those in need.

Your gift will educate patients on nutrition, hygiene, infant care, sexually transmitted disease, and abstinence.

\$25 will assist our missionary programs in 70 countries around the world

\$50 can provide medicine to a mission community in need

In addition to your financial support, we earnestly need your prayers! Together, let us pray for the needs of our missionaries and those they serve.

**Share your prayer requests with us at:
www.svdmissions.org**



The Language of Love

Dennis Newton SVD

Last fall, seminarians began using a beautiful, new language center with state-of-the-art equipment at St. Paul Seminary in Ledalero, Indonesia. Besides learning English, they learn about a man named Heinz Mundhenke and his loving brother, Herbert.



Heinz grew up in Recklinghausen, Germany, where he worked in local coal mines and later as a welder. In 1957, he married Gerta Boetcher and they had a son, Gert. In his spare time, Heinz enjoyed tinkering with electronics and model railroads. His beloved wife passed away in 1996 and Gert died in 2007. Heinz died of cancer on February 24, 2010.

Heinz's brother, Herbert, who lives in the United States with his wife, Walburga, contacted the Mission Center after Heinz's death. He wanted to honor Heinz's memory by initiating a project to help others. When he learned of the need at St. Paul Seminary, Herbert decided to fund the language center.



Father Maximus Manu SVD supervised the project in Indonesia. He worked with planners and the seminary faculty to design the new facility. The seminary community broke ground for the project in spring 2011. On September 19, 2011, the Heinz Mundhenke Language Center was blessed and



inaugurated by Fr. Leo Kleden SVD, the provincial of the Ende Province in Indonesia.

The new language center includes a lab with computers and audio-visual programs, a reading room with English books, as well as CDs, DVDs, and other equipment for self-study, a room for one-on-one tutoring, a conference room, a reception area, and a small room where students can place their books and bags.

St. Paul Major Seminary is the largest Divine Word Missionary seminary in the world. Currently, there are 285 students in all stages of formation enrolled at the seminary. In addition to serving our seminarians, the language center is also used by other religious and lay persons.

As the next generation of Divine Word Missionaries goes out from Ledalero to serve all over the world, they go equipped with new language skills and with deep gratitude to the Mundhenkes. □





Run to the Hills...

Anthaiiah Madanu SVD

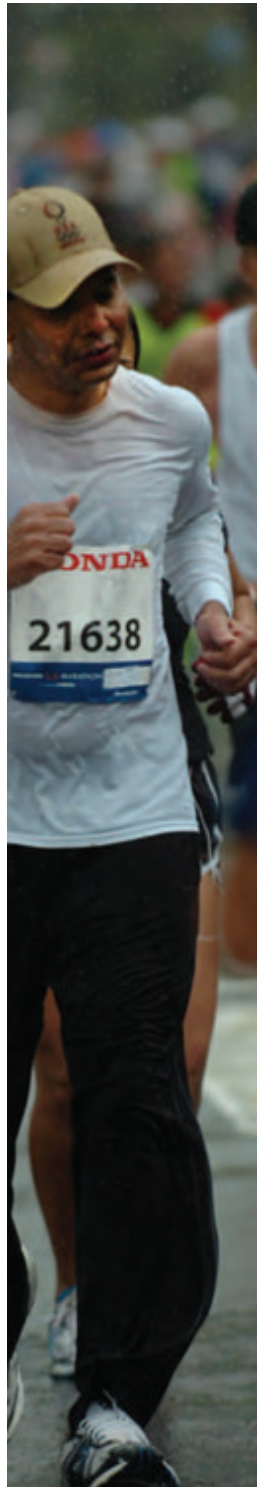
“You know that while all the runners in the stadium take part in the race, the award goes to one. In that case, run so as to win!” (1 Cor. 9:24) I am not a professional runner and I never participated in any races at school, but I played volleyball and basketball while working in the schools in my home country of India. When I left for Bolivia as a missionary in 2002, I began to skip rope and do mild exercises to stay fit. After I came to the United States, I began to think about doing some strenuous exercises to improve my health.

I began by running in the parking lot at my parish, St. John the Evangelist in Los Angeles. After running for just a few days, I developed inflammation in both knees. My doctor prescribed some medication and told me that I should not run on hard surfaces. That solved the problem.

One day, I took a visiting Divine Word Missionary to Griffith Park, where I discovered trails through the hills. I began running those hills and trails on my day off, and I was soon running the ten-mile course twice a week. Encouraged by my success, I began to think about running the twenty-six mile Los Angeles Marathon.

I soon found that running thirteen miles was quite easy. Getting up to twenty miles, however, was more challenging. Still, I registered, along with twenty-five thousand others, for the 2010 marathon that was held on March 21. The route of the marathon was from Dodger Stadium to Santa Monica Beach.

The route was scenic and it took me through many ethnic neighborhoods. The first eighteen miles went smoothly, but after that my legs began to cramp and I felt as if someone had thrown the brakes on my legs. I found a tree on the roadside and stretched my muscles. There were scores of other runners in



not to the doctor

the same condition and some of them were even being taken away by ambulance! But I continued. I finished the marathon in four hours and forty-five minutes. The winner of the race, a Kenyan, finished it in two hours and nine minutes. Just as St. Paul noted, only one runner received a prize, but I found the experience very rewarding.

I participated in the 2011 Los Angeles Marathon this year. The weather was dreadful and it rained incessantly. My clothes and shoes were completely waterlogged, and I felt as if I were carrying a reservoir of water. I completed the entire course in the same amount of time as the previous year.

My training and participation in the marathons have taught me many important lessons. The first lesson is discipline. Just as discipline is needed for running, so it is also needed in our spiritual lives. While preparing for the marathon, I was able to combine physical discipline with spiritual discipline. Physical discipline required that I get up at 4:30 a.m. three times a week to run twelve miles. My running time became a time of prayer and reflection on the Word of God for the day.

The second lesson was about health. My motto became: "Run to the hills, not to the doctor."

The third lesson I learned is to better appreciate nature. I am the first one to reach the hills in the morning. I see nature come alive with many varieties of wildflowers. Birds chirp gleefully as they usher in a new day. I view the glorious sunrise as it breaks over the hills.

When I think about the positive spiritual and physical effects of the marathon, I am reminded of St. Paul's words, "I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Tim. 4:7) □



"Go, teach all nations."

– Mt. 28:19

**Can you imagine...
every morning
of every day,
searching desperately
for food to eat?**

Our missionaries face these problems daily. Whenever we can provide food and clean water we do. But...the best way to solve these problems is to provide a way for an entire village to grow their own food.

**Divine Word Missionaries'
sustainable life programs
help families—
whole communities
become self sufficient.**

**A gift
of \$25**

**could help a family
start a farm.**

**Your financial support,
is important to us...
but your prayers mean the world!
Please join us in praying
for those in need.**

**To give a gift TODAY, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
www.svdmissions.org
and click the DONATE NOW button.**

Fr. Felix Mawusi Atepor wrote and sent photos to tell a story with a happy ending.

“Many years ago, a cattle outpost was located about fifty-four miles from Kanye, in southeastern Botswana. The owners used to come out from Kanye to check on their animals every weekend. Eventually, they decided to settle there permanently. Others joined them and the outpost became the village of Tswaneng.

Some Catholics were among the settlers. They asked the priest at Kanye to visit them once a month to celebrate Mass. Their “church” was a tree near the village. Six years ago, this village became the smallest outstation in my parish. The forty-three Catholics in Tswaneng needed a chapel.”

Holy Trinity Chapel, Tswaneng, Botswana



United in Prayer and Worship

Carolyn Schmit

Since the 1950s, through the Mission Center of Divine Word Missionaries in Techny, Illinois, our benefactors have helped to provide for thousands of village chapels in at least twenty countries and seventy-three dioceses or archdioceses all over the world. Last year alone, the dream of a permanent chapel became a reality for the people of forty-five faith communities. The chapels are often in very remote areas and they serve as outstation or “satellite” chapels for the church at a parish’s main station.

“Before a chapel can be built, the community often gathers in the homes of the people or even under a tree. In these settings, the sacredness of the Holy Mass is never experienced due to many other activities going on simultaneously,” writes Archbishop Alex Thomas SVD of the Archdiocese of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. He goes on to describe how a mission chapel not only solves many practical problems, but also brings dignity to the local Church: “To have a chapel in the village enables people to gather more freely and in a better environment. Whenever a chapel is built in a village, the number of faithful grows faster. . . . All of these communities have grown very well after the construction of the chapels.”

Father Pablo Garay, Jr. SVD, a pastor in the Philippines, has also seen faith communities strengthened by new chapels. He writes: “The chapel is a place for catechetical instruction of children, religious seminars for youth and adults of the community, and many other programs. The people are happy that they have a decent chapel where Mass and other

Divine Mercy Chapel, Barangay Bato, Philippines



...The chapel is a fitting tent for God's special presence in the tabernacle."



Father Pablo Garay, Jr. SVD

sacraments are celebrated. The chapel is a fitting tent for God's special presence in the tabernacle."

The chapel program is truly a cooperative partnership between missionary pastors, the parishioners, and benefactors who contribute funds for chapels. Archbishop Thomas speaks directly to this: "The construction of the chapels is done by the people themselves. The people on their own provide all the human labor. They also provide the stones, sand, and water. This makes them feel proud to have their chapel built by their own hands. Only the materials, such as the cement, wood or stone, the door frames and window frames, and roofing materials are paid for with the funds provided by the benefactor."

Benefactors who contribute to the chapel program often do so in honor of a loved one or in memory of a deceased relative. Some have marked anniversaries, a special event, or another occasion in their lives with a grant gift for a chapel. Others include a bequest for a chapel in their estate plans. The missionary pastor and the people install a plaque inside a new chapel as a permanent testament to the intentions of their benefactor. The priest serving that faith community remembers their benefactor's intentions in the Masses celebrated in the chapel. Worshippers show their gratitude to their benefactor through their prayers.

To learn more, call our toll-free number and ask for information on the Mission Chapel Program.

Benefactors sponsor mission chapels for many reasons and some have spoken to us about their reasons. One benefactor in Texas read about the Mission Center's chapel program and remembers thinking how terrible it would be not to have a place to pray and come together. He thinks sponsoring a chapel is a good way to memorialize loved ones and give people a place to pray.

Another benefactor in Illinois learned about mission chapels and wanted to sponsor a chapel in memory of her late husband. At the same time, she felt it was something she and her family could do for the Catholic faith. The members of the family contributed to the gift they made for a chapel. She knows that the people who go to the village chapel are praying for her husband, for her, and for her family.

A couple in Oklahoma told us they decided to sponsor a mission chapel because of their devotion to the Eucharist. Making a chapel gift was a way to help people have a place for Mass. They said: "Everything comes from God and we wanted to share what we had. We are united with the people in prayer and worship."

As it has for many years, the chapel program will continue to bring together our benefactors and the people of mission villages in a practical, yet very spiritual, partnership that encompasses the globe and is animated by faith, hope, and love. □

More people die from unsafe water than from all forms of violence, including war.

These deaths are an affront to our common humanity, and undermine the efforts of many countries to achieve their development potential."

-Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary General, United Nations, March 22, 2010

Such a simple thing... clean water

Reliable access to clean water is so commonplace that we tend to not even give it a thought. But 1 in 6 people around the world are in dire need of what we consider an everyday convenience.

Help Divine Word Missionaries bring clean water to those in need. Your gift can provide equipment to dig wells and training for pumping water. Your gift can teach water conservation that will assist sustainable farming practices.

Your gift will help make the world a better place to live...

*Donate online today
www.svdmissions.org*

**DONATE TO:
HELP OUR
MISSIONS GROW**

*or
Use the enclosed envelope to mail your gift*

Where I Live • *Michael Quang Nguyen SVD*

Old Telegraph Station

Alice Springs, Northern Territory

In May 1984, from Bataan refugee camp in the Philippines, a boat person set foot in San Jose, California. At night, the new arrival found work as a waiter in a pho restaurant in Vietnamese town, and as a janitor in Mexican night clubs in downtown San Jose. During the day, he took the bus to West Valley College. Later the young refugee transferred to San Jose State University. With God's blessing, this former boat person graduated and worked in Silicon Valley until the day he received the call to be a Divine Word Missionary in Chicago. In 2006, that missionary came to the Land Down Under, Australia.



Anmatyerr Big Man

Aileron, Northern Territory

Oh, Australia, the land whose custodians are the Aboriginal people who inherited one of the oldest civilizations in the world; a civilization that is more than forty thousand years old; a civilization that has the tribal chief who stands tall to oversee the land.



Anmatyerr Mother and Daughter

Aileron, Northern Territory

Oh, Australia, the desert culture whose land is scorched by the summer heat that changes the color of the soil from brown to red; the culture that has a beloved mother who uses her own body as a shield to protect her child.



Federation Square

Melbourne, Victoria

Oh, Australia, from the days of 1770 when Captain James Cook first spotted the eastern coastline; Australia with European people arriving forty thousand years later to construct new cities along the sea coasts; Australia made up of diverse ethnic groups of African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and European people, all speaking English with an Aussie accent, "G'day, mate!"



Sunset on Simpsons Gap

Alice Springs, Northern Territory

The journey is unfolding in the late afternoon when the sun disappears quickly below the horizon, erasing all signs and directions on the road.



God, the Rock

Devil's Marbles, Northern Territory

But the downcast missionary suddenly remembers God, who "is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverance."

(Ps.18:2)

VIEW "Where I Live" ONLINE

View Michael Quang Nguyen's award-winning photos as an inspiring online prayer.

www.svdmissions.org/whereilive/





Down on the Farm: Harvest

Michael Hutchins SVD

Late autumn is harvest time in our neighborhood at Divine Word Farm, Weldon, Iowa. With the arrival of cool temperatures and drying winds, farmers take to the corn and soybean fields with urgency. Giant combines, like oversized creatures from a sci-fi movie, sweep across the countryside sometimes well into the night, drawing up the year's precious produce.

Heavily laden, sixteen-wheel grain trucks churn up thick clouds of dust as they speed down the gravel road past Divine Word Farm at twenty-minute intervals. The ritual continues for nearly a month. At sunset one evening, I watched as our own soybeans poured from the combine into a waiting wagon.

During an autumn harvest season thirty-two years ago, Pope John Paul II made a historic visit to the United States heartland. On October 4, 1979, in Des Moines, the Holy Father proclaimed a message of appreciation and encouragement, "To all of you who are farmers and all who are associated with agricultural production I want to say this: the Church highly esteems your work." His homily to the largest gathering of people in Iowa history celebrated the potential of U.S. agriculture for alleviating world hunger. Characteristically optimistic, even in the face of a looming agricultural crisis, John Paul expressed a vision for agriculture that is important even today.

The Holy Father's message to farmers still provides a basis for fruitful reflection. The complexities of contemporary agribusiness challenge the very survival of the small family farm. The pressures of global commodities markets raise serious moral questions about the proper direction of agricultural production and the responsible use of land and



water resources. For those seeking an alternative vision for agriculture and, more deeply, a spirituality of agriculture, Pope John Paul's exhortation offers useful guidance.

A Christian vision of agriculture is primarily a vision of sustainability, the care and cultivation of natural resources, so that the land will remain "fruitful for generation upon generation." In Pope John Paul's words, "Therefore, conserve the land well, so that your children's children and generations after them will inherit an even richer land than was entrusted to you." A Christian vision is also a vision of generosity. The ultimate goal of agriculture must be the sharing of resources, particularly food resources, within just social structures, in order to satisfy people's most basic needs.



A Christian spirituality of agriculture arises from an awareness of human *dependence* on the Creator, a disposition the farmer acquires through a daily closeness to nature. The abundant blessings of nature, from which the farmer draws livelihood, are from the Creator's hand. Such direct dependence on the Creator inspires a deeply felt sense of *gratitude*. Humble dependence and heartfelt gratitude are realized in *community* through prayer and worship. Close-knit rural communities, aware of their shared reliance on God and one another, moved by their common appreciation of God's blessings, prize the value of community. Community holds the potential for an experience of Church, an experience centered in the Eucharist, the ultimate source of blessings and grateful praise.



Here at Divine Word Farms in south central Iowa, we take inspiration from the words of Pope John Paul II.

- Through our crop and cattle operations we are demonstrating generosity and a commitment to addressing the challenges of world hunger and child poverty. Income from these operations is directed to special Divine Word ministries serving children and adults in need overseas.
- Through our participation in conservation and land care programs, we are responding to the challenges of sustainability.
- At our Divine Word Farm in Weldon, we have taken a number of small initiatives. Tree planting is well underway. Our chestnut trees, 750 to be exact, are now one year old and doing well. We will likely plant additional species of trees in the future. A small prairie restoration project will get underway this winter. Our greenhouse, the sole survivor of a small tornado that destroyed three

others two years ago, will undergo repairs ahead of next year's gardening season. We will raise vegetables for distribution to area food banks serving individuals and families in need. Our two fishponds and start-up goat herd are intended as interest features for visiting groups of school children, parish groups and others. We hope that, in time, Divine Word Farm in Weldon might become an educational site for those drawn toward a Christian vision of agriculture. We hope that it might become a spiritual center, a community, through which men, women, and children might come to share in a specifically Divine Word Missionary form of agricultural spirituality.

Against the challenges of world hunger, child malnutrition, environmental devastation, and market forces, our efforts are indeed modest, certainly by any worldly measures. And yet "the signs of the times" point to a deep hunger for an alternative vision of agriculture and resource cultivation, a Christian vision. Through our Divine Word Farms we can be part of that alternative vision with its global implications. In my view, we are involved in something important.

In his homily to the farming community back in 1979, Pope John Paul II quoted Jesus' instructions to the disciples in their moment of concern for a hungry multitude, "Give them something to eat yourselves." (Mt. 14:16) Through our Divine Word Farms, we are trying to take that same instruction to heart. We will appreciate your continued prayers and support as we make our way forward, as we celebrate and share God's bounteous blessings. □



1

Read the articles, then match the numbers on the flags with the correct country mentioned below...

2



Find the correct flag.

Father Peter Pinto worked in **BOLIVIA** before moving to Los Angeles



Father Philip Gibbs was born in **NEW ZEALAND**



Father Peter Pinto and Father Athaniah Mandano were both born in **INDIA**



Father Michael Quang Nguyen is a missionary in **AUSTRALIA**



Find the answers at the bottom of page 21

Father Philip Gibbs works as a missionary in **PAPUA NEW GUINEA**



Father Peter Pinto's parish is in **TANZANIA**



4



3



5



6

MEET THE AUTHORS

Philip Gibbs SVD is a Divine Word Missionary priest from New Zealand. Father Gibbs has a postgraduate diploma in anthropology and a doctoral degree in theology. Since 1973, he has served in Papua New Guinea as parish priest, director of a pastoral center, seminary teacher, and researcher. Presently, Fr. Gibbs serves as research advisor with Caritas Australia in Papua New Guinea and as secretary of the Commission for Social Concerns for the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Papua New Guinea.

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Michael Quang Nguyen SVD was born in Saigon, Vietnam, and immigrated to the United States, where he entered Divine Word Missionaries in 1997. After perpetual vows in 2001, he was ordained to the priesthood at Techny in 2002. Father Michael is currently working in Alice Springs, Australia.

Anthaiiah Mandanu SVD is from Hyderabad, India. He entered Divine Word Missionaries in 1986, professed perpetual vows in 1991, and was ordained in 1992. After teaching in India for a number of years, Father Mandanu received a mission assignment to Bolivia. He is currently associate pastor at St. John the Evangelist Church in Los Angeles, California.

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Answers from page 20.
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