

the DWOC World

Educating Tomorrow's Missionaries



WHAT'S INSIDE



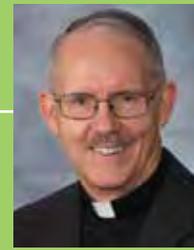
Formed in the Divine Word

Holy water!

The Divine Word College student body gathered on the morning of September 9 to begin the annual Family Feast celebration. Every year on this weekend, the members of each of the three religious congregations founded by St. Arnold Janssen celebrate the spiritual family he formed. At DWC, the fun begins with games that are sure to make students squirm and squeal. This year, they were challenged to form lines and pass water in a bowl over their heads from one person to the next. The team with the most water in their pan at the end of the line was supposed to be the winner, but it quickly became clear that the real winners were the students who managed to run away before the pans of water were thrown into the air at the end of the game!

— FROM THE PRESIDENT —

Missionary Grandfathers and Grandmothers



Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

Through Baptism, God calls ALL of us to share in God's mission. With Jesus as our light and the Holy Spirit as our energy, we set out on a great pilgrimage to the fullness of the Father's Kingdom. Every day, as we journey along, we pray "thy Kingdom come," and we reach out to neighbors and friends along the way. For some people, their journey passes through Divine Word College. Hundreds of young people come here to discern whether God is calling them to missionary service as priests, brothers or sisters. Happily, some do become priests and religious, but our goal at DWC is to help ALL the students become dedicated missionaries. I am very glad that some of our alumni are addressed as Brother, Sister, or Father, but I am also glad that many are addressed as Mom, Dad, Grandpa and Grandma!

Did you know that an estimated 99.87% of the members of the Church are laypeople? Only 13 out of 10,000 are priests, deacons or religious brothers and sisters. The great missionary journey is primarily a parade of lay folk! Mr. Leo Chinelly has a beautiful reflection in this newsletter. He tells how his experiences at DWC in the early 1970s helped him live a missionary life. He has served as a social worker, city employee, and pastoral worker. He's also a husband, dad, grandpa and great-grandpa. With the Holy Spirit working through him, he is bringing a whole tribe of people along as he makes his way to the Kingdom! Leo is one of the missionary grandfathers that DWC has helped to form. Personally, it is a great joy for me to hear the hope-filled story of a man with whom I studied nearly 50 years ago. As you read these lines, I hope you know that your journey also is passing through Divine Word College. We are humbled and grateful that we can be a part of your pilgrimage.

Fr. Tom

Faith goes digital

Sharing the Word of God is a skill that's important for missionaries, but finding the best method to reach people in the digital age can be a challenge. That's why a new communication class at DWC is preparing students to meet people where they're at during these busy times.

In his Digital Public Witness class, Assistant Professor of Communication Dr. Joshua Young's students are learning to create and record a podcast. They develop themes, create episode outlines, write scripts, record audio files, upload content and promote the podcast. Each week, the class releases a new episode. Some installments share a scripture reading followed by a student's reflection on the Bible message. Other episodes focus on a student's personal missionary experience or other related topics. "It's very useful for us to know how to do ministry in this way," said Sr. Tram Thuy Thi Nguyen, MSC, who is taking the class. "By using technology and social media, we're able to distribute the message and share the Gospel with young people who prefer to use their phones or computers these days."

As students learn to use this emerging communication channel, Joshua said they're further developing skills like crafting scriptural reflections, personal testimony and teaching Catechism. They're also building on foundational communication concepts they've been learning. "Students have been very excited to produce content and get feedback," he said. "They want to produce something they can be proud of that they can share with others."



For more information about Divine Word College, call 563-876-3353, email info@dwci.edu, or visit: www.dwci.edu



Listen to the podcast at dwcpublicwitnessmedia.podbean.com

The lasting impact of my SVD education

By Alumnus Leo Chinelly

Divine Word Missionaries have been a major influence in my life – theologically, spiritually and personally.

I have been encouraged along the way by the missionaries who I came to love and admire. In high school, I studied at Girard, Pennsylvania, Conesus, New York and St. Mark's Diocesan Seminary in Erie, Pennsylvania. After graduation, I attended Divine Word College from 1972 to 1975 and graduated with a bachelor's in sociology.

When I returned home to Rochester, New York, I took a social work job at Hillside Children's Center. Forty-seven years ago, I married my wife, Rosemary. We have three children, six grandchildren and four great grandchildren. After seven years in social work, I took a new job working

for the Village of Macedon as a municipal worker and stayed for two decades.

I had the opportunity to work for the Diocese of Rochester and was drawn to pastoral work. I studied at St. Bernard's Institute and earned a master's degree. I took a job with three parish churches that were coming together as one and retired in 2014 from this rewarding work.

My brother SVDs continue to affect my life, as they did when I was a part of their loving family. This is the power of Christ in me. Sure, it started in the cradle with baptism and with my

parents who instilled the gift of faith in me. But I am also sure that with my final breath, Jesus commands my destiny. So, I stand with Christ and my brother SVDs until He calls me home.

My consistent support of DWC has remained because of all the great gifts, memories, academic growth and most of all the friendships. When I reflect on those years, my mind meditates on the Holy Spirit's presence at DWC. In my thankfulness, I want as many as possible to receive that same nourishment. My eight years in SVD seminaries have helped nurture my true self and my heart in the past and present. I hope that it has and will for all other alumni, too.



You make it possible!

At the beginning of each new school year, it usually takes a few weeks to meet all the new students and learn their names. Some names are easy to remember and others are more challenging.

Recently at lunch, I introduced myself to the students who came to sit with me. I shared with them the best part about working at Divine Word College – meeting people from all over the world. Sitting with me were people from five countries – Cameroon, Ghana, Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam – and me from the U.S. After the person from Vietnam left, another from Congo took his place. I doubt there are many places in the world, other than maybe the United Nations, where you could have lunch with people from seven different countries.

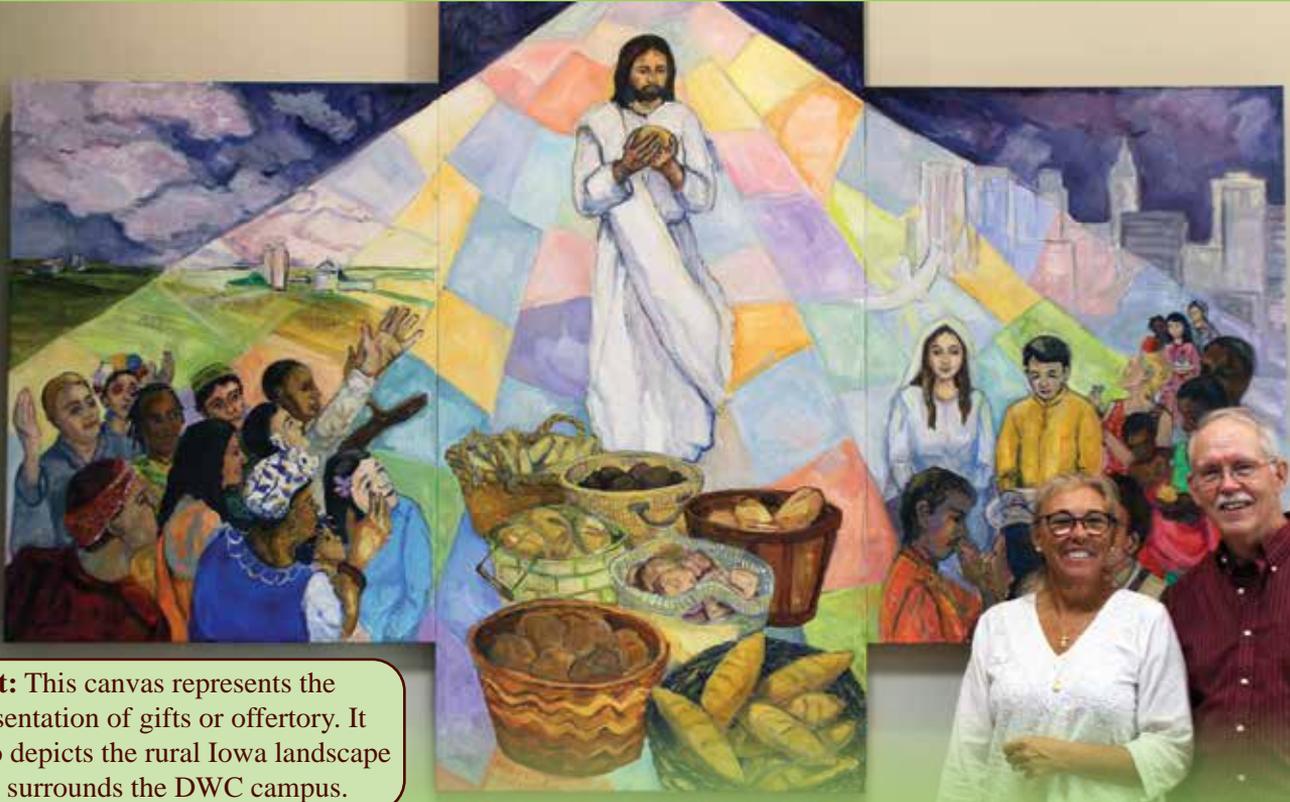
That's one of the things that makes Divine Word College so special. And it's because of you that this daily lunch occurrence can even happen.

Divine Word College is truly a melting pot of cultures, which helps students learn about parts of the world they are not familiar with. When they move on to their next ministry, this knowledge will help them fit in with their new community. Without your donations, the students you read about in our newsletter would not be at Divine Word. You make it possible for them to be here! Donations to Divine Word are very important for the long-term success of the college and our students. Leo Chinelly is a 1975 graduate of Divine Word. He shares his story with you in this newsletter and why he and his wife have chosen to donate to the college annually. I hope you consider doing the same.

Thanksgiving Day will be here soon. I am thankful for you and all you do to help our students with their education. You do indeed make it possible. Have a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas!



Mark Singsank
Development
Office



Left: This canvas represents the presentation of gifts or offertory. It also depicts the rural Iowa landscape that surrounds the DWC campus.

trptych noun

trip-tych

A work, such as an altarpiece, consisting of three painted or carved panels that are hinged together.

Middle: The center canvas displays a theme of transformation and consecration. It shows Jesus offering bread from seven baskets, which represent the seven continents of the world.

Right: This canvas shows an image of sharing or communion. The background is an urban setting, which symbolizes the way Divine Word Missionaries share their gifts and talents throughout the world.

A gift worth a thousand words

In September, a colorful trio of canvases were installed in the Divine Word College dining room.

The artist, Beatriz Ramos-Rivera Maliszewski, is originally from Spain but has lived in Georgia since she was 21. She’s a close personal friend of DWC President Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD. Beatriz spent a few days visiting the college last spring when

she brought pieces of her artwork to display in the Weyland Art Gallery on campus. That’s also when Beatriz learned more about Epworth and the DWC community so she could begin developing a theme and concept for the college’s new artwork. After feeling inspired by the theme of the trinity in the main chapel, she decided to use three canvases to carry that same concept into her own work.

1. The people in the image are modeled after Divine Word students. The artist used photos from the 2022 Mission Sunday celebration as inspiration.
2. A light is pouring down on the painting across all three canvases. It represents that Jesus is the light of the world and reminds us that without light, there is no food.
3. The sash that Jesus is wearing on the painting says the words “I am” in a number of languages. Near the baskets, the words “bread of life” appear.

FUN FACTS

This year, the Chicago Province of the Society of the Divine Word has 60 men in various stages of the formation process.

- 18 are in early stages of formation or “pre-novitiate” at DWC
- 8 men are in temporary vows and studying at DWC
- 5 are in the Novitiate program in Techny, Illinois
- 15 men are in temporary vows and studying at Divine Word Theologate in Chicago
- 9 are on location for their Cross-Cultural Training Program (CTP)
- 5 men are in perpetual vows and became deacons on Oct. 1

This academic year, five new SVD candidates joined the formation program and enrolled in classes at Divine Word College. Among them was 19-year-old Bao Nguyen, a Texas native who learned about the SVD from his uncle who discerned with the community for a period of time. Last year, Bao was studying engineering at Texas A&M, but he’s been considering the possibility of religious life for a while. He explored a few religious communities before enrolling at DWC and starting classes in August. “I think I’m off to a strong start,” he said.

As the formation program unfolds, Bao said he’s most eager to dive deeper into the ministry aspect of the program. Currently, he is serving at a ministry site in Davenport, Iowa where he helps children from the parish learn about

the Bible and also tutors them on Vietnamese grammar. While the encounters can be challenging at times, Bao said he enjoys it because he remembers having a similar experience when he was a child attending church.

For most men who enter religious life as a Divine Word Missionary Priest or Brother, the formation process takes between 8 and 13 years, depending on a variety of factors. For students like Bao, the religious formation program and

discernment process is a long and personal journey, but it begins with saying “yes” to considering God’s call.

“Being here for a few weeks, I’ve had a taste of everything now and I really enjoy it,” he said. “I find myself very comfortable. This is a place that I think I can really be happy.”



Left to right: Bao Nguyen, Benedict Khual and Peter Brungardt are received as new SVD candidates.

Formed in the Divine Word

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



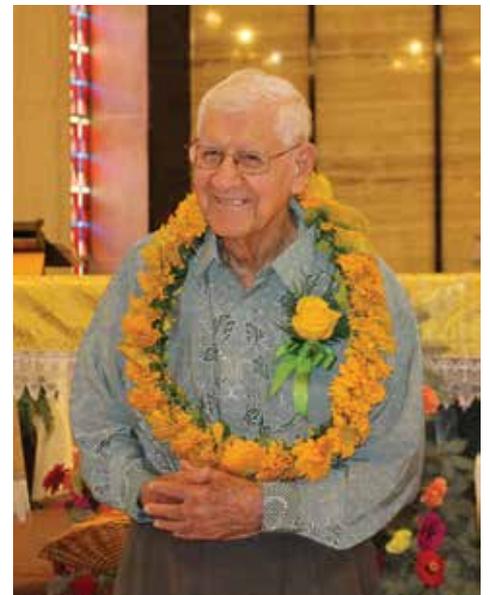
Disc golf in play

Divine Word College unveiled a 9-hole, public disc golf course on campus this fall. Epworth city officials were looking for a place to construct a course for the popular sport and college administrators saw it as an opportunity to continue building relationships with the community. Funds raised by the city and Silker's Grocery Store covered more than half of the project cost. The course is open to the public daily from dawn until dusk.



Putting for a purpose

A record number of golfers turned out in July for the 9th Annual Benefit Golf Outing at Timberline Golf Course. More than 100 people gathered and helped raise \$14,000 for the Divine Word College Student Scholarship Fund! Talk about golf for a good cause! Thanks to all who continue to support this event and don't forget to keep an eye out for details about next year's outing.



Missionary milestone

In September, the DWC community honored Bro. Larry Kieffer, SVD for his 60 years in religious vows. This Iowa native served in Papua New Guinea, often called the "land of the unexpected," for more than 40 years. Since returning to Iowa, he's been helping at Divine Word College, which he says can be a bit unexpected in its own right! His genuine joy for life and love of being a missionary are inspiring examples to everyone at the college.



Ready to run

A new student who has marathon experience gave the whole school a run for their money at this year's annual Labor Day 5K at Divine Word College! Thankfully, the event is just for fun, so everyone was able to enjoy the event whether they broke a record or just walked the course casually. Thanks to the Student Senate for organizing a fun weekend that promoted friendship and fitness!



ALWAYS READY TO SERVE

Table tennis champ sets his sights on religious life

At 37, DWC Senior Hoang Son Vu has had his fair share of life experiences. Once a promising table tennis player in the Omnipong Table Tennis system in California, today he's more focused on how he can serve God than how he can serve a ping pong ball.



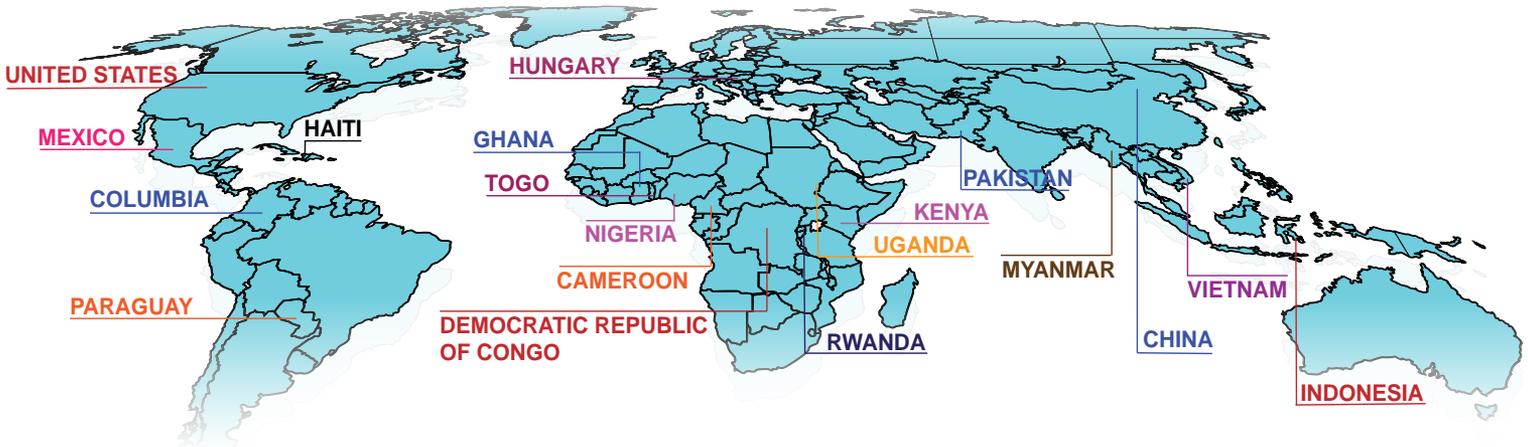
When he was a little boy in Vitenam, Hoang Son says his mother was spiritual but his grandmother was the one who took him to church. Back then, he didn't have much interest in religion.

He moved to Saigon for high school and had his first experience away from his family. During that time, Hoang Son considered leaving the church altogether. He felt uneasy when he saw people who dutifully attended Mass but did not live like Christians.

Then when he was attending university, Hoang Son met a priest who liked table tennis and the two started playing the game together. The priest started mentoring Hoang Son and became his spiritual guide. The priest's younger sister, who is a religious sister, also helped him find direction for his life. With their guidance, he gradually became more involved in the Church community. He joined the choir and felt inspired by their service to the poor. The sister asked him one day if he ever considered being a priest. He was surprised and felt challenged by her question. "I said 'are you kidding me?' I never thought about that before," he said. He took a lot of time to consider the idea, explore religious life and discern whether it was something he felt called to pursue.

Hoang Son was seriously thinking about becoming a priest when he learned about the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). He entered formation in Nha Trang and later immigrated to California with his family. Hoang Son made new friends in the United States and continued playing competitive table tennis. Still, he says he didn't find real happiness with the party lifestyle that most of his peers enjoyed. He was winning matches and even taking home some prize money, but it felt like something was missing in his life.

That's when Hoang Son met Vocation Director Fr. Anthony Cong Nguyen, SVD and got enrolled at DWC. During his time at the college, Hoang Son has improved his English and continued discerning his vocation. This May, he expects to graduate with a certificate in Theology.



The world comes together at DWC

The 101 students enrolled at Divine Word College this fall come from 19 countries across the world. The intercultural experience they gain during their time here is perhaps the most valuable lesson our students can learn without even entering a classroom. They spend their days living, studying, eating and praying with people from a variety of cultures. They learn to collaborate, cooperate and communicate with people who see the world through a different lens.

For the SVD candidates who are discerning a call to religious life, this is a taste of what their lives may look like as missionaries for the Society of the Divine Word. It helps inform their decision about their vocation while developing intercultural skills at an early stage.

| DWC STUDENT CITIZENSHIP | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Cameroon - 3 | Myanmar - 7 |
| China - 4 | Mexico - 2 |
| Columbia - 1 | Nigeria - 4 |
| Democratic Republic of Congo - 1 | Pakistan - 1 |
| Ghana - 2 | Paraguay - 1 |
| Haiti - 10 | Rwanda - 1 |
| Hungary - 1 | Togo - 1 |
| Indonesia - 4 | Uganda - 3 |
| Kenya - 2 | USA - 5 |
| | Vietnam - 48 |



This year, one cultural group at Divine Word College jumped in numbers! The college gained five new students from Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. That brings the total number of students from Myanmar to seven. They include two SVD candidates, one SSPs discerner who is living in community with the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and four lay students who are learning English. Myanmar has been in a humanitarian and human rights crisis for several years. According to the United Nations, 1.5 million people have been internally displaced. With more than a third of the country’s overall population reportedly requiring some humanitarian assistance, the DWC community is happy to help even just a few lay students get a start in the United States.