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## Birthday Corner:

### OCTOBER

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## THE PRESIDENT

Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

### Mission Sunday Was Glorious!

DWC’s Mission Sunday Homecoming on Sunday, October 20th was fabulous. The fall weather cooperated – 75 degrees and sunny. The ethnic dress of the many participants was remarkably colorful. The food for Taste of DWC was wonderful – more like a taste of the whole world! Music and dancing during the liturgy and the banquet helped raise us up with feelings of joy on all sides.

The liturgy unfolded before a crowd that jammed the chapel, spilling out into the hallways and filling the balcony. It opened with the procession of flags of the nations. Throughout, there were songs in many languages and rhythms. With the Spanish language closing hymn, *Alma Misionera*, the crowd offered up their prayer, “*Oh Lord, I have a missionary soul, lead me to the land that thirsts for God.*” Like so many of our prayers, we might not have known exactly what we were asking for, but our hearts were full and open as we sang.



Fr. Gus Wall SVD was the celebrant and homilist. He particularly stressed three ideas.

First, mission is not just going to the ends of the earth; it’s also about ***serv***ing right here ***where we are***. It may be reaching out to a neighbor or a family member. It certainly includes the work we are doing at DWC!

Second, we need to be creative and faithful as we reach out to the people around us. Creativity is especially needed in unexpected moments of faith (even when it includes magnolia leaves!). And like Pope Francis,



we all need to be faithful in reaching out to others. Each of us is a *personal invitation from God* to the world.

Third, we don't need to rely only on our own resources. *The Holy Spirit is making us all new, stronger, and freer* for the splendid banquet that God is preparing for us.

I kept thinking of a phrase from the Book of Revelations during the celebrating, the pandemonium of the behind the scenes preparations, the warm welcoming of guests, the nearly miraculous clean-up, and the satisfied exhaustion at the end of the day. The phrase I had in my heart was a favorite of St. Arnold Janssen:

“I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice...” (Rev 7:9)

Together with the angels they exclaimed:

“Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving, honor, power, and might be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” (Rev 7:12).

A copy of Fr. Gus' homily is attached, and well worth reading.

To get a fuller flavor of our celebration, check out the YouTube link of the Mission Sunday liturgy.  
<https://www.youtube.com/live/a8Hq9xuQtxA?si=QejDS2AcQ6QXQ1DJ>

A collection of photos is assembled at: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/fJtD7HeYiigRKBdM8>



## On Being a Personal Invitation from God

Mission Sunday Homily

V. Rev. Gus Wall SVD – October 20, 2024

### Gospel: Inviting the Guests

The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. He dispatched his servants to summon the invited guests to the feast, but they refused to come. A second time he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those invited: “Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my calves and fattened cattle are killed, and everything is ready; come to the feast.”’ Some ignored the invitation and went away, one to his farm, another to his business.... Then he said to his servants, ‘The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come. Go out, therefore, into the main roads and invite to the feast whomever you find.’ The servants went out into the streets and gathered all they found, bad and good alike, and the hall was filled with guests. (Mt 22:1-6,8-10)

### ***Homecoming***

I'm delighted to be back at Divine Word College. I was surprised when Tom Ascherman called and invited me. I willingly said yes because this college has meant so much to me over the years, including my time as a student. I spent 14 years here, and Divine Word College will never let go of me; it keeps pulling me back.

When I unexpectedly became the Provincial of the Southern Province, I found that I would be on the Board of Trustees of the College—back again! I'm happy to be a member of the Board and proud of Divine Word College. I'm proud of what it has been, and I'm proud of what it has always been: a sign of God's love and life. Yes, we have our struggles, but that is also a sign of how God calls us to be better. He's always calling us to be more, always calling us beyond what we think we can be. I often say He has more faith in us than we have in Him. He has great faith in each of us, in what we're capable of being and what we're capable of doing, if we allow Him into our hearts.

Now, opening the door to God means you're going to have to clean house a bit. As you all know, when the relatives are coming, you go into that guest room that has become a storage room and you clean it out. You chase out the dust bunnies, and you're ready for your guests—you might even paint the house if you have time! Getting ready for an invited guest, the Lord wants us to be ready, wants us to be cleared. We hear in the gospel today that He expects us to be ready for that invitation because He calls us to something more.

### ***Mission Far and Near***

I chose this gospel today because the pope chose it, and who am I to argue with Pope Francis? He saw something in this gospel—something special that spoke to the spirit of Mission Sunday. I'd like to read just a little bit. He says, "*Mission, we see, is a tireless going out to all women and men in order to invite them to encounter God and enter into communion with Him. Tireless, going in great love and rich in mercy, our dear God constantly sets out to encounter all women and men and to call them to the happiness of His kingdom, even in the face of their indifference or refusal.*" He doesn't take no for an answer—our God is constantly reaching out to us.

You might have heard of a southern chef called Emeril Lagasse. Emeril always says, "Kick it up a notch!" He always wants to add a little spice, to turn things up, make things more lively. That's exactly what God is calling us to be for the world—to be a spice for the world, to lift it up. All of us are called to mission. We celebrate this 150th year since the foundation of the SVD as a time when Divine Word Missionaries and all of our missionary family recall how we are called from **everywhere** to bring joy, light, love, and mercy for **everyone**. We're all called, all summoned forth. It's not just the missionaries, the ordained, or the professed who go forth in the name of the Church; all of us are called, invited, and sent to bring God's love—even if it just means going next door to help a friend in need, asking forgiveness of a family member, or reaching out to someone who is struggling.

Many years ago, I was a seminarian too, and I remember sometimes thinking, "That's later—when I'm ordained, or when I take my final vows, or when I go overseas." But the fact is, we're always called to mission, always called to service. ***Mission is not just going to the ends of the earth; it's also about serving right here.***

Fact is, we're always called to mission, always called to service. Mission is not just going to all the ends of the Earth, but it is also going right here to DWC, helping out in Iowa, as so many SVD brothers and priests have made this place possible. So many of our benefactors, friends, teachers, and alumni have made this place possible. They saw, and continue to see, Divine Word College as their call to mission, and they answer that call.

### ***Being a Personal Invitation from God***

There are many throughout the world who are doing the same. Missionaries are not just called to preach from the mountaintops, we're called to work in the streets, to visit homes. I remember when I was in Lafayette, Louisiana. I was pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary and became pastor in 2019, right before COVID came upon us. My whole time as pastor was somehow affected by COVID, and I was so touched by how ***many parishioners were willing to be creative and faithful disciples***, finding different ways to reach out to those in need—bagging up

groceries and taking them to people's doors, calling the elders and others in the parish to see how they were, writing little notes, doing whatever they could to let people know they were not forgotten, but loved, cared for, and cherished by individuals and by their church.

I remember the first Palm Sunday during COVID. The bishop gave us permission to bless the palms outside. Bishops weren't really sure what to do—none of us were. We blessed the palms in the parking lot and kind of had a drive-through with palms. We gave bulletins, magazines, love, and care. The street was packed. People came from all over, both to help and to be helped. I never saw anything like it. We ran out of palms, we ran out of everything, to be frank. We started blessing magnolia leaves and whatever we could find, handing those out as a sign of love.

That's what it means *to be creative and faithful disciples in a wounded world*. We just celebrated that theme in Nemi, Italy, just outside of Rome. Leaders of the SVD and delegates from different provinces all gathered to see how we can better minister to a wounded world and find ways to help wherever needed, creatively.

One of the things I enjoyed most about the chapter was not just the chapter itself (don't let the word get back to the Superior General!) but the visit with the Pope. My knee was driving me crazy, but I still managed to get up those stairs in the Apostolic Palace and see Pope Francis, as we all did. What amazed me was how he looked you in the eye and paid attention. I wondered how many hands this man shakes in one day—it must be many. We SVDs were just a couple hundred, and I can imagine what it's like for him in a week's time. Yet, *Pope Francis tries, in whatever way he can, to be an invitation to others*.

That's what he's calling us to be, and what the Gospel calls us to be—tireless invitations. *Each of us is a personal invitation from God to the world, to bring others to know the God we know—the One who forgives, the One who challenges, revives, and showers grace upon us*. That's why we're here—not just for the food—but sitting here in the heat, asking the Lord to bless us, to shower down upon us like the dew, to revive and renew us.

#### ***Missionary Service in the Southern Province.***

It was just about a year ago, give or take a few weeks, that Divine Word Missionaries gathered in the Southern Province to celebrate the 100th anniversary of St. Augustine's Seminary. Over 100 years ago, Divine Word Missionaries saw the need to minister to the African American community in the South and to have native African American clergy. It was a tough journey, and many suffered, but it happened because they trusted in the power of God to see them through.

Those who were ordained were not accepted for a long time, but that didn't stop them. They trusted in a God who had brought them this far and would not leave them. As the song goes, "God has not brought me this far to leave me." (I'm not going to sing it, don't worry.) God has not brought any of us this far to leave us. He's with us in our troubles, our trials, and our struggles to be better, to forgive, and to make do in difficult times. He calls us away from hate, anger, and blame, and instead, toward mercy and knowledge—that we are all brothers and sisters. If we bind together and walk in God's name, we will find a solution to any problem, no matter how difficult the journey.

That is the message of Mission Sunday, the message of the Gospel, and the message of Pope Francis. When Pope Francis addressed the leaders of the SVD, he said a couple of powerful things. First, he quoted our motto: "Your light must shine before others because you are faithful and creative disciples in a wounded world. God's word generates life, inspires, and motivates—it is a focal point of your mission."

#### ***Power in the Spirit***

What I found very powerful was when he spoke about the Holy Spirit and forgiveness. He said the Holy Spirit helps us face the sinfulness in the world—both outside us and within us. The flame of the Holy Spirit purifies and renews us as we make our pilgrim way, conscious of our sins but confident in the mercy of God who forgives all. If we face the flame of the Spirit, it will purify us and set us free.



My first assignment as a Divine Word Missionary priest was in Kenya, East Africa. Some of you may have seen me singing along with the Swahili singers today. Kenya was my first love. One of the Swahili words that always struck me was “Bado.” It means “not yet,” but it’s used in many ways. If I asked if you were the Pope, you might not say no—you’d say “Bado”—maybe one day. If I asked my friend if he were the president of Kenya, he’d say “Bado”—not yet, but it’s possible.

I think we, as a church, are called to live in “Bado.” Things are not yet the way they could be, but with the Holy Spirit, with God’s grace, and with our cooperation, it is possible.

May the Lord bless us all. May the Lord guide us and walk with us. May He bless us as we go forward in His grace. Amen.



**VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**  
**Dr. Joshua Young**



**Welcoming familiar faces on Mission Sunday**

Mission Sunday is always a special time for our community because our identity as a community is driven by the mission of the Church. However, it is also special for DWC because it’s a time when many of our alumni return for a visit and other friends come to celebrate our work with us. I, like many others, was overjoyed by all the many visitors. In particular, I was happy to welcome my friends Scott and Carol Walters. I have known them for over 20 years, and they hosted some DWC students when students and I attended the Iowa Communication Association annual conference a few weeks ago in Ankeny. Those students invited the Walters to come experience the mission of DWC, and the impact cannot be understated. It’s important to remember the little things that advance our mission, like inviting people to see who and what we are. I encourage you to continue to invite people to experience our DWC mission, especially to educate future missionaries around the world.



**History Trip a Success**

Members of Mr. Ryan Alfred’s American History course toured President Ulysses S. Grant’s home in Galena over the weekend. Mr. Alfred has focused the DWC American History course on the cultural values of the United States and how they have evolved over the nation’s history. President Grant was instrumental in the reconstruction era after the American Civil War, which influenced economic boom of the early twentieth century and America’s role in global affairs. Mr. Alfred and students are pictured on the front porch of President Grant’s house.



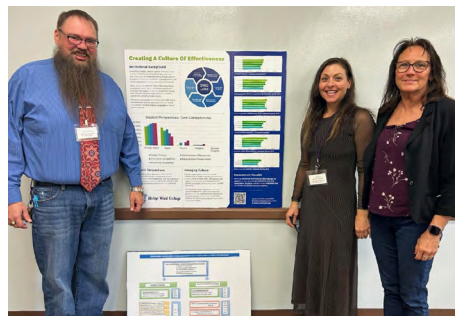
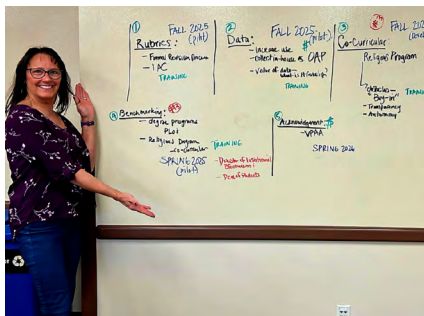
# Higher Learning Commission

## HLC Academy Graduation

The HLC Assessment Academy was a great success for DWC! Pictures from the event show Assessment Academy members' work on creating a sustainable assessment project, poster presentation given by members, and members receiving DWC's certificate of completion.

## HLC Assurance Argument Update

HLC Assurance Argument Committees met on Monday, October 21st in a faculty in-service to review progress made on the initial draft of DWC's Accreditation Assurance Argument due on October 25th. Committee chairs reported tasks to be completed before the deadline. Members of the steering committee will review the draft and communicate next steps to revising the initial draft. Thank you everyone that has worked on or assisted in drafting the Assurance Argument so far.



**Accreditation:** “Certification that programs or institutions have appropriate infrastructure, policies, and services to support their operations and that they are accomplishing their mission” (Allen, 2004, p. 165). Divine Word College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Some of the reasons why accreditation is important:

- necessary for federal aid,
- to ensure ongoing quality and improvement of an institution’s educational offerings,
- to ensure transferability to other accredited schools or graduate programs.

For more information regarding HLC accreditation, please visit the following website:

<https://www.hlcommission.org/accreditation/>



**VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION/DEAN OF STUDENTS**  
**Fr. Tuan Hoang, SVD**



**Words of Gratitude**

I want to thank every one of you for your effort and time in making World Mission Sunday celebration possible. All of you have shown your dedication and spent much time preparing for the food, decoration, liturgy, and many others. I have heard many positive comments from our friends and visitors who joined us last weekend, and they also expressed their thanks and appreciation to you. They enjoyed the liturgy and the delicious food afterward. All of your hard work and team efforts paid off.

**Vocation Mass**

Next Tuesday, October 29, 2024, there will be a monthly vocation mass organized by the community of St. John Vianney, our student priests. In this mass, Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD will be sharing his vocational story and journey. We all know how important vocation masses are to us as stories can draw a lot of inspiration to strengthen our vocational call. Please join us for this vocation mass and show your support to Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD and the members of the community of St. John Vianney.

**All Souls Day**

On Saturday, November 2, 2024 we will join the Universal Church to celebrate All Souls Day. All Souls Day is an important day for all Christians as it is a time for us to remember our deceased family members or acquaintances who have touched our lives. As a community, it is also a day where we remember our benefactors who have supported us with our studies and religious formation. We will have a large community mass that day. Please take note that we will be expecting benefactors, friends, and guests to be present at the All Souls Day mass. After mass, we will join our friends and benefactors in the dining room for breakfast and refreshments. I am asking all of you to join them in the dining room to know our benefactors more, and to show our appreciation to them. Please welcome them when you see them around.

**Annual Retreat**

This weekend, members of St. Joseph Freinademetz and St. Teresa of the Child Jesus formation groups will be having their annual retreat, beginning on Friday, October 25, 2024, through Sunday, October 27, 2024. St. Joseph Freinademetz will be making their retreat at our SVD community in East Troy, WI,





and St. Teresa of the Child Jesus will be making their retreat at St. Columbkille Parish in Dubuque, IA. We kindly request your prayers for the members of the St. Joseph Freinademetz and St. Teresa of the Child Jesus formation groups as they use this time to strengthen their faith and encounter the presence of the Lord in their lives.

## Halloween

Halloween is only a few days away! As some of you may already know, Halloween is one of the traditions that the American culture celebrates each year on October 31st. On Halloween day, you will experience people, especially children, dressing up in a variety of costumes and going around the neighborhood for trick-or-treating (asking for candy and other sorts of sweets).



Next Thursday, October 31, 2024, to observe Halloween, Fr. Tom Ascherman, SVD will share a history of Halloween to the community. After that, the Student Senate will host a pumpkin carving contest for the community with prizes for the winners. Each formation group will have a pumpkin to carve, and the Student Senate asks you to be as creative as possible. Employees and staff will also join the students for the contest as they have a pumpkin to carve. The winner will be determined at lunchtime on Halloween Day. May the best and creative group win.



**VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMISSIONS**  
Len Uhal

## Come and See Visitors

Our large group of seven Come and See visitors who were here for Mission Sunday have come and gone. Thank you to all who helped make their stay meaningful for them. We have one last visitor scheduled for the semester and he will arrive on Monday, October 28th and be with us until Oct. 31st. His name is Lesley Pierre and he lives in Spring Valley, New York. Fr. Jorge will be on campus to help welcome Lesley next week. Thank you in advance for helping him feel at home in our community.







## **VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATIONS**

**Steve Winger**

### **Medical and Dental Open Enrollment Meeting**

The open enrollment meeting for our medical and dental plans will be held on October 28th, 2024. We will meet in Room 107 from 11:00 to 11:30. James Rang, Vice President with AssuredPartners will be here to discuss medical and dental plan details and answer any questions. Employees will be given plan details at the meeting.

The open enrollment period for plan year 2025 will be from October 28th, 2024 to November 4th, 2024. The new plan year begins on January 1st, 2025.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact Ann Maiers in the Business Office.

### **Divine Word College Halloween Costume Party!**

Get ready for a spooktacular time at our DWC Halloween Costume Party! Put on your best costume and join us for fun and snacks. All are encouraged to participate.

**Details:**

**Date:** Thursday, October 31st, 2024

**Time:** 3:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

**Location:** Dining Room


**Event Highlights:**

**Spooky Snacks & Drinks:** Enjoy themed treats and beverages

**A prize will be given for the best costume**

We look forward to seeing everyone in their costumes. Let's make this Halloween a memorable one! For more information please contact Steven Winger, Vice President for Operations.



 **Matthew Jacoby Library**

[opac.dwci.edu](http://opac.dwci.edu)



## Dubuque Area History Expo Recap

While many of you were at the Mission Sunday celebrations, I was representing DWC at the first Dubuque Area History Expo. The event featured 20 exhibitors and 2 presentations. Nearly 100 people attended and the Telegraph Herald featured an article about the event.

My exhibit explored the international identity of DWC. After doing a bit of digging in the archives and with the help of the admissions staff, I discovered that students from 78 countries have taken courses at DWC since 1964. I added flags from each country to a corkboard map, which will be soon be displayed. The map will be updated when students from “new” countries attend DWC. If you would like to view the map and accompanying poster, they are currently in the library entryway.

## New Books

Over 200 new physical books have been added to the collection since the start of the Fall Semester. Stop by the library and browse the new book displays.

## Campus Read Reminder

The next Campus Read event is on Friday, November 1st at noon in the Pour House. We will be discussing Part II.







## All Souls Day – Your participation matters!

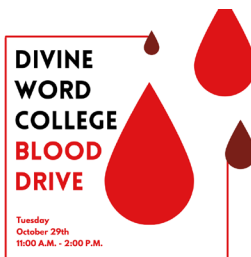
All Souls Day holds special significance at Divine Word College, as it is a time for the entire community to come together in prayer and remembrance. On Saturday, November 2nd, the college will host a special Mass at 8 A.M., inviting friends and benefactors who have lost a loved one in the past year to join us in honoring their memory. Following the Mass, a reception will be held in the dining room, providing an opportunity to connect and offer comfort to those grieving.

We strongly encourage all students and members of the SVD community to attend the Mass and sit and talk with our benefactors at the reception. Your presence will show our solidarity and support, reflecting the spirit of unity that defines our mission. Let's come together in prayer and fellowship to remember those who have passed and offer our care to those who are mourning.



## Peace and Justice

October 24th – 30th - Disarmament Week marks an annual observance initiated by the United Nations to promote awareness of disarmament initiatives globally. This week highlights the critical importance of reducing and abolishing weapons, particularly in light of ongoing conflicts and the threat of nuclear warfare. As nations come together to discuss strategies for achieving peace and security, Disarmament Week serves as a platform for fostering dialogue and collaboration among governments, NGOs, and civil society (UN, 2024).



## Blood Drive

Divine Word College will be hosting a Blood Drive on Tuesday, October 29th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the gym. Bro Mike will put a sign up list on the main bulletin board. If you have any questions, please see Bro Mike. The deadline to sign up is Tuesday, October 22nd.