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THE PRESIDENT

Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

“What You Do For The Least Of My People”

Harvest time stubble now decorates the fields of November as almost all the crops have now been gathered in. The liturgical celebrations that open this month, All Saints and All Souls, also remind us of the great gathering-in to the heavenly kingdom. Throughout this month, our community especially remembers in prayer all those who have died.

Today is Election Day in the US, and plentiful attention is showered on the choices that the voters are making. Perhaps by the last Sunday of the month, we will be sober enough to celebrate the solemn feast of Christ the King. The second reading for that day opens with the words: “Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth.” No matter how our politics play out, I am confident that in the long run, we will be in the good hands of the King.

In the 25th chapter of Matthew’s Gospel, in the context of a story about the coming of the King at the end of time, Jesus praised those who: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome strangers, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the imprisoned. Then he added: “whatever you did for one of these least brothers (and sisters) of mine, you did for me.” That end-of-time story continues to serve as a mission statement for today.

With Jesus’ words in mind, Divine Word College established the Matthew 25 Award in 2001 to recognize and encourage people in our local community who continue reaching out to those most in need at the margins of Church and society. This year the award will be made on the Feast of Christ the King.

The DWC Board of Administration has proposed that this year we honor the members of the Epworth Community Volunteer Fire



Department with the award.

The Fire Department's Mission Statement notes its dedication to "protecting life, property, and the environment in the vicinity of Epworth, Iowa by providing:

- Community fire and life safety education
- Fire Prevention
- Fire Suppression
- Response to medical and other emergencies with professionally trained personnel using teamwork, and the resources provided by the community."

Chief Tom Berger has noted that, since 1911, the fire fighters and medical emergency personnel have been helping the families, neighbors and community in moments of great need. The volunteers answer the call of duty and serve unselfishly for the Epworth Community.

Like so many of our neighbors in and around Epworth, DWC and the previous St. Paul Mission House have long received selfless and generous care from the members of the Department. Have you ever heard the story about a "warm welcome" that Divine Word Missionaries received on our first Christmas in Epworth in 1932? It seems that in the very first months of the presence of Divine Word Missionaries in Epworth, the relationship with the people (at that time mostly Methodists) was rather strained. Then one event really changed things – a fire in the old gymnasium! Fr. Francis Humel SVD, the first rector of the community, wrote about it years after the fact.

"Of all possible times, the fire started Christmas morning shortly after eleven. The Methodist Christmas service began at that time. When the fire alarm bell rang, out of their service they came running to put out the fire. None of them took it amiss that they had to put out that Catholic fire on Christmas morning. Everyone became friendly from then on. But were we embarrassed!"

We won't be at all embarrassed on **Sunday, November 24** when we welcome the families of the fire fighters and EMTs to join us in a moment of prayer and celebration. Pie and ice cream should help to make the event even sweeter.

Please note: The Matthew 25 Award celebration will take place on Sunday, November 24 at 3 PM. This is a change from what is printed in The Almanac.





A Missionary Promoter of Prayer for Others

St. Arnold Janssen’s first assignment as a young 24-years-old priest was to teach mathematics, languages, and natural science at a small high school in the town of Bocholt. During his 12 years of ministry there, he became an ardent promoter of the Apostleship of Prayer.

The Apostleship of Prayer put a great emphasis on *prayer for others* rather than on prayer for one’s own needs. At first, Fr. Arnold was especially fervent in his prayer for the dead. He rejoiced at being able to gain indulgences for the poor souls who could do nothing for themselves. Later, with the political unification of the German states an accomplished fact, Fr. Arnold became an ardent promoter of prayer for the reunification of the Church in Germany. The promotion of the Apostleship of Prayer offered an early opportunity for Fr. Arnold to grow in missionary zeal. Whenever he was free of commitments at school, Fr. Arnold traveled to parishes both near and far to promote the Apostleship and to encourage devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Arnold’s blood brother, Bro. Juniper, O.F.M.Cap., reminisced in later years about the zeal with which Arnold promoted prayer.

“He spent his vacation holidays travelling from village to village, from town to town, to persuade parish priests to enroll their congregations in the Apostleship of Prayer. Of course, the reception he received varied from place to place. At times it was outright rejection or indifference; sometimes he was told that his suggestions would be considered; in still other places, however, he met with genuine interest. In these latter cases the simple young priest was even offered food and drink. The parish priest of Erfurt told me that when Arnold came to him he was half-starved. He had been on the move all day long without having taken anything to eat.”

At Divine Word College, we dedicate the month of November to continual prayers for those who have died. We might well remember that prayers for others played an important part in St. Arnold’s growing missionary consciousness. May it be the same for us in 2024.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Dr. Joshua Young

While attending the Council of Independent Colleges Conference, last week, I witnessed something incredible. The city was being boarded up in anticipation of today’s election. It hurt me to see so many walls being put up to protect individuals in a community from each other. Nevertheless, there are legitimate safety concerns, even for us at Divine Word College. The anti-immigrant rhetoric of this year’s election has been a source of confusion and anxiety. As our community awaits the election results, here are some things to keep in mind that can help us protect ourselves and keep hope alive for an inclusive future.

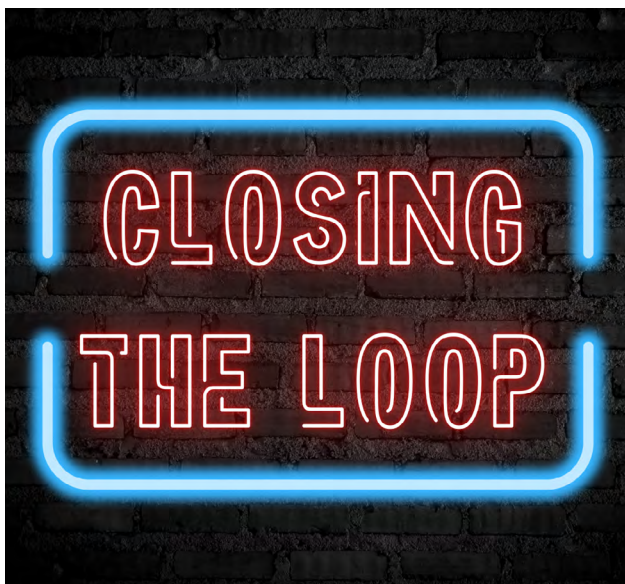


- In the coming days, consider traveling with a companion when you leave campus. Do not put yourself in a situation to confront those upset about election results alone.
- Engage in healthy perspective checking. The feelings of anger stem from fear and ignorance. Such feelings often cause us to reject reality or alternate points of view.
- Recognize when it is time to disengage with people that are not ready for a different view. Jesus tells us, if people are not willing to open the door, dust off your sandals and move on. This doesn't mean abandon them; it means we must give them time.

Democracy can be messy, but it is the system American's have chosen for their self-governance. This idea of freedom to choose is one of the pillars of Catholic Social Teaching; however, to be effective, our freedom must be motivated for the attainment of the common good. We will likely not know the results of the elections for a few days, but it's impact will be significant. Please pray for God's and that His will be done.



Assessment Bites by Dr. Yasmin Rioux



In order to keep in mind important assessment concepts and terms, let's review what "closing the loop" refers to in assessment.

According to Allen (2004), "closing the loop" describes a part in the assessment process where "faculty discuss assessment results, reach conclusions about their meaning, determine implications for change, and implement them (p. 166)". In other words, "closing the loop" refers to the part in the assessment cycle that can be viewed as the end, but also the beginning because this is where faculty examine the collected data to make data-driven and based recommendations that will then be used to suggest and implement curricular or program changes that then influence the first parts of an assessment cycle again! Assessment results and data are "recycled" back into program improvement.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION/DEAN OF STUDENTS

Fr. Tuan Hoang, SVD

Theological Reflection

By the end of this week, all those who are doing ministry will complete your Ministry Practicum for the fall semester. After your ministry practicum, you are encouraged to meet with your ministry group and your supervisor to share your theological reflection. Sr. Aprilia Untarto, SSpS, the ministry coordinator will send you the guidelines to do theological reflection this week. Theological reflection will begin on November 10, 2024, and all theological reflection papers should be submitted by November 17, 2024. I ask the ministry site supervisors to set up a date and time with your group to share their theological reflection.

Remember that ministry practicum is not just part of the program at Divine Word College, but it is our vocation as God calls each one of us to participate laboring in God's vineyard.

Dean's Forum

This Thursday, November 7, 2024, we will have a Dean's Forum at 1:00 pm in room 107. We will gather together to discuss about important matters concerning student life at Divine Word College. All students are required to come to the Dean's Forum. Please be there on time.

SVD Memorial Mass

We continue the month of November remembering our deceased family, relatives and friends. It is also important to know that SVDs are part of our family in a special way. This Friday, November 8, 2024, we will have special memorial mass at 8:00 am remembering our SVD confreres who passed away this year. Please join us at this mass and remember the deceased in your prayers.





VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMISSIONS

Len Uhal

National Vocation Awareness Week

This week, November 3-9, is National Vocation Awareness Week. This week is set aside for celebrating the sisterhood, brotherhood, priesthood and diaconate. For more information visit the [NRVC website](#) or the [USCCB website](#).



SVD Guests Arriving

Next Monday, November 11, the vocation office will welcome two Divine Word Missionaries for a short visit to Divine Word College. While Fr. Bart Jasilek, SVD, is a former ESL student from about 12 years ago, Fr. Joshua Munterim, SVD, has never visited Epworth. Both are from the SVD Southern USA Province and are coming to visit the College to learn more about our formation and education programs. The vocation directors regularly visit SVD parishes around the country (and even into Canada and the Caribbean) in their vocation promotion efforts. We ask Divine Word Missionaries to look for young men who may have a calling to be an SVD brother or priest and make referrals to the vocation directors. This visit will allow Frs. Bart and Joshua the opportunity to learn more about our program here at Divine Word College and better explain it to young men who may be interested in a religious vocation. Help us welcome our two visitors when they arrive on campus next week!



VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATIONS

Steve Winger

Fire Safety Awareness

Divine Word College will be conducting a fire drill in the coming weeks. Please be prepared to evacuate quickly and safely following the procedures outlined below. Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes, exits, and assembly points. This knowledge is critical during a real fire emergency.

5.08.02 Policy Handbook

Fire:

- When the fire alarm goes off leave the building immediately through the nearest exit! Walk fast, do not run!
- Proceed to the soccer field. Students should gather by your formation groups. Employees (faculty and non-faculty) should gather together. SVD member should gather together.
- Stay on the field until the fire department gives the “all-clear” signal. If you are unable to return to the main building, proceed to Megan Hall. If you reside at Megan Hall and are unable to return to the building, proceed to the main building.



KNOW FIRE SAFETY

- Contact persons are assigned to each formation group. They are to inform the fire department if someone is missing in their group. No one but the Fire Department is to go back into the building to look for someone who is missing.
- Beware of emergency equipment that will come on campus.

Important Information

When the fire alarm sounds, you should receive a text message indicating that we are conducting a fire drill. If you do not get a “fire drill” text message, please see Kimberly after the drill is over. Once the fire alarm goes off, move quickly to the parking lot near the soccer field. **DO NOT RUN! DO NOT LOOK FOR FRIENDS.** Please get out of the building.

Once you are at the soccer field you should break into groups as follows: (please stay in your group so we can do roll call).

- If you are a student, you should gather by formation groups. Fr. Tuan will take roll.
- Employees should gather together. Jeffrey Puccio will take roll.
- SVD should gather together. Fr. Simon will take roll.

Once the fire alarm has stopped sounding and roll has been taken you will be released to return to the building. **Please do not return to the building until you have released by your group leader.**

Thank You

Dear Community Members,

“Gratitude is the fiber of the heart.”

It brings me immense joy to send you this thank-you message.

On behalf of the Development Office and Public Relations, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to our beautiful All Souls celebration today. It was wonderful to see so many SVDs, staff, and students taking the time to engage with our benefactors in meaningful conversations. Your presence and willingness to connect were truly appreciated by our guests.

A special thank you goes out to all the musicians, cantors, readers, ushers, greeters, housekeeping staff, kitchen staff, and everyone who dedicated their time to welcome our guests and make them feel at home in our community. Your active participation and collaboration are a testament to our intercultural and united spirit. May our community continue to be a beacon of light for the world.

In the Divine Word,

Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD
Associate Director of Development

Rest in Peace



The college will host a very special celebration on Friday, November 8. A funeral mass for Mr. Edwin Geers, will take place at 10:30 AM in the main chapel. Friends and family of Mr. Geers will have lunch in the dining room at 12:30 PM.

Mr. Geers was born in Iowa, not far from Epworth, and was ordained an SVD priest in 1961. He served in Mexico, India and throughout Asia as a member of the SVD. After leaving the priesthood in 1980, Mr. Geers continued the life of a missionary, living in several countries and working for agricultural organizations assisting low-income farmers.

A full obituary for Edwin William Geers is available here: [Edwin Geers Obituary \(1933 - 2024\) - Manchester, IA - The Gazette](#)



Laudato Si Presentation on November 13

Samuel Agcaracar SVD will speak on Wednesday, November 13, at 7:00 PM CST (Chicago time). The title of his presentation is *Toward Eco-Missiology: The Case of the SVD Laudato Si' Farm*. Sam has a doctorate in Missiology, teaches at Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay, and is the executive director of his province's Laudato Si' SVD Farm in Tagaytay. Sam emphasizes the harmonious balance between environmental responsibility and spiritual growth and that the farm is a place for mission where anyone can encounter God, nature, and others.

The speaker series is intended for (1) SVDs, SSpS, and SSpSAP, (2) our alumni, members of our parishes and ministries, and (3) anyone who may be interested in the topic of the presentation. Those who are interested, can **register by clicking [HERE](#)**. The Zoom link is on the registration page. This should be an informative presentation.

Mission Sunday Professional photos coming soon!

You may be excited to see the photos taken by professional photographer Erin LaBelle. Please be patient! Erin is editing the photos and will have the gallery available soon. Watch your email for a link to the collection.

Halloween Photos

[Check out the photos](#) from last week's Halloween celebration! Thank you to everyone who participated in the event. We had an impressive selection of carved pumpkins from the students and staff.

