

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD



## Celebrating 150 Years of Missionary Service

September 8 marked the beginning of a special year for Divine Word College as we celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Society of the Divine Word. On that day in 1875, St. Michael's Mission House opened its doors in Steyl, Netherlands, paving the way for our global missionary work. Throughout the coming year, we will reflect on our mission with the theme, "Witnessing to the Light: From Everywhere for Everyone." Here at DWC, that idea is truly coming to life.

St. Arnold, our father and founder, faced enormous challenges as he worked to build up our Arnoldus missionary family. Our global family now includes Divine Word Missionary Priests and Brothers (SVD), Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (SSpS), and the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters (SSpSAP). There are also many other Missionary Partners counted in the Arnoldus family, including many DWC alumni, faculty and staff of the College. Our College community really is from EVERYWHERE; the students, faculty and staff hail from more than 20 countries, all united in one mission.

St. Arnold Janssen had a vision of sharing God's light with EVERYONE in all corners of the world. He wanted both men and women missionaries to dedicate themselves in friendship to everyone — especially faith seekers, the poor and marginalized, people of many cultures, and followers of other faith traditions.

I believe the heart of missionary spirituality is the deep hope that everyone fully experiences and participates in God's love. Like St. Arnold, we trust that the Holy Spirit will continue to bless us and guide us to work with greater creativity, faith, and love as we face new challenges. Whether here in North America or around the world, we welcome immigrants, help care for the earth, our common home, and work together for peace.

As we set out on this year-long celebration, we remember that our work is sustained by the generosity of people like you. Together, may we continue to help God's loving LIGHT shine from everywhere for everyone. Thank you for being part of our mission, and may we grow ever closer to God and one another.

Fr. Tom



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## New SVD Candidates Begin at DWC



This fall, Divine Word College welcomed six new SVD candidates! From across the globe, these young men are ready to start their formation journey. Pictured left to right are Tai Van Truong from Vietnam, Joseph Truong Van Nguyen from Vietnam, Nguyen Vo from Vietnam, Joseph Vu from California, Thi Van Nguyen from Vietnam, and Alejandro Gonzalez Cruz from Texas.

We caught up with Tai Van Truong to see how he's settling in. Tai grew up in north-central Vietnam, where he loved going to church to pray as a child. He even dreamed of becoming a priest—until life took him in other directions during high school and college. In 2021, he earned a degree in domestic tourism, but like many of us, the pandemic caused him to rethink things. While staying home, that old dream of priesthood reignited, and Tai joined the SVD postulancy.

"There were so many times I wanted to give up because I felt I wasn't deserving of God," Tai shared. "I prayed a lot, asking, 'Why me? There are so many others who are more talented and holy than I am.'" But each time he struggled, Tai said he heard a voice deep within his soul, reminding him, "Be strong, you can do it." That reassurance kept him going.

Now, Tai's made a big leap—literally! He's moved to the United States to study English at Divine Word College and continue his formation. He says the beauty and peacefulness of the campus took him by surprise. "What really stands out to me is how respectful, patient, kind, and friendly everyone is," Tai said. "I hope to nurture my dreams here and accumulate the necessary experience and knowledge to equip myself for future missionary work."