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THE PRESIDENT

Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

You Anoint My Head With Oil...

These last days of winter and the early days of spring are the time when lambs are born. I remember my grandfather’s farm in southern Minnesota and his small flock of sheep; and I remember the shepherds of central Mexico where I lived for a couple of years in the 1970’s. One bad memory is the clouds of flies that follow the sheep. One particular pest, the nasal fly, deposits larvae in the moist tissue of the nose. After a month the larvae crawl deeper into the sinuses. The accompanying inflammation and irritation can cause the sheep to beat their heads against trees, rocks, posts, etc. to find relief. (Every gardener in Iowa could sympathize with the sheep when clouds of gnats emerge here in early June; they are not dangerous, but they are terribly aggravating.)

The Sunday Gospel this past week recalled Jesus’ parable about noticing the splinter in the eye of a brother or sister, while ignoring the wooden beam sticking out of one’s own eye. He concludes that evil is the product of an evil heart. I can’t help but shift the metaphor and think of suffering sheep and frustrated gardeners.... Idle criticism, gossip, insults, rumors and personal attacks are like clouds of tormenting insects. They don’t kill the victim, but they can make life miserable. Is there anything that can be done for relief?



Psalm 23, the Good Shepherd Psalm, is a favorite for many people. One line especially comes to mind: “you anoint my head with oil.” That is what shepherds have done for their sheep for millennia. Even until today, poor shepherds in the Middle East and East Africa, at the first signs of nasal flies, rub a homemade repellent of olive oil, sulfur, and tar onto the heads of their sheep. Jesus’ parable suggests that the goodness that flows through the kindly words of a good person can work as an antidote to destructive criticism of a brother, or a sister, or even of oneself.



On Ash Wednesday we will “anoint” our heads with ashes. The sulfur in the ashes might help us remember the centuries old home remedy for sheep. During Holy Week and in the Easter season we will remember the Good Shepherd once again. Then, we will be in the season for Baptisms and Confirmations with their accompanying anointing with olive oil-based chrism. Those paschal moments invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit, a sure help for us to resist and ward off gossip and evil words.

As we begin Lent, I have a penance in mind that I think will do me good. My mind has long been trained to search out problems rather than to notice blessings. Often enough, I can find three things wrong in a situation before I notice something good. Being over-critical can contribute to the cloud of “flies” that may irritate and discourage other members of the community. I can also see part of myself in the sheep who crashes around trying to escape unfair criticism from others, or even from myself. The Sunday Gospel finished with a lovely phrase “A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good.” In an instant I was reminded of two confreres whom I have loved; one from Germany, another from Vietnam. I have often marveled at their ability to “say something kind” in a situation where I would be tempted to be critical.

Perhaps you would like to join me spending some Lenten time and mental effort on finding the goodness in our hearts and allowing it to produce kind and good words. Thereby we draw closer to putting into practice an inspiring line of the SVD constitutions: “We propose to make the goodness and kindness of God visible in our life and service.” When we do that, we surely contribute to a holy anointing for all of God’s people.



Remembering Arnold Janssen in Lent

Theodore Tepassee, a layman lived in the town of Rhede, Germany, a few kilometers from Bocholt Germany, where Fr. Arnold served as a parish priest and school teacher before founding the mission house at Steyl, Holland. In 1933, he recalled Fr. Arnold coming to his home parish from Bocholt in the days just before Lent. Doubtless, Fr. Arnold spoke about his strong devotion to the Sacred Heart:

“During the pre-Lenten carnival in Bocholt, Father Janssen came to Rhede, six kilometers away, where I was born. But in Rhede, instead of holding carnival, we were observing the 40 Hours Adoration. Rector Janssen preached, principally on charity. For this reason we called him the disciple of love. He was known to be a very pious priest.”

Sr. Ascelina (Katharina Haltermann) was a member of the Poor Sisters of St. Francis. As a girl she also knew Fr. Arnold from his time in the parish church at Bocholt. She recalled the strong impression that Fr. Arnold left with her when she was a child of six years old:

In 1869 at the beginning of Lent my aunt Adelheid gave me permission to attend the devotion of the Way of the Cross twice a week in the Capuchin church in Bocholt. She said: “Father Janssen leads the Stations and you can pray them with him.” The ceremony was very impressive. First came a server

carrying the cross; he was accompanied by two smaller servers with lighted candles. The priest prayed with such touching devotion and deep sympathy that one imagined one was following the dear, suffering Savior himself. It was all so very simple and devout.

Fr. August Arand SVD worked for many years as a writer and editorial assistant at Steyl. In 1935 he wrote about his memories of fasting at the mission seminary, particularly during Lent:

“When I entered Steyl in 1885 the strict observance was still the fashion: abstinence three times a week; fasting once a week. **Of course fasting was also observed during the whole of Lent.** Only one person in the Seminary had the faculty to dispense from the law of fast - Father Rector Arnold Janssen - but that he did not easily do. We all suffered because of this. Only much later were the confessors given the faculty of dispensing and then the law was greatly relaxed. Father Holthausen, however, had always dispensed the group that gave the chapel a thorough cleaning and scrubbing. Naturally for this chore there was always a large number of volunteers; afterwards we could eat as much as we wanted.”

Fr. John Baptist Peil SVD, was the founder of Techny and the first SVD superior in the USA. In 1921 he wrote about his memories of Arnold Janssen, recalling especially Fr. Arnold’s humility and self-denial. Maybe you will be inspired to adopt a Lenten penance similar to those expressed below.

“The custom was observed for a long time of **not having meat on three days of the week.** Beer or wine was almost never served at dinner or supper. When it was, the portions were innocuous. **Smoking, as well as the use of snuff, was strictly forbidden.** Violations of this rule were punished by dismissal. The same was true for the secret use of alcoholic drinks. This strict life style was meant to prepare the young people for their difficult vocation, to strengthen them and to inure them to all sorts of future difficulties. The experience of 40 years has shown that this kind of training not only was not too strict but was actually the only correct one. The more exactly it was observed, the stronger Arnold Janssen’s spiritual sons proved to be amid the dangers and difficulties of mission life.”

“Neither was any extravagance in the matter of clothing allowed. Articles made of fur were taboo; unusual styles of clothing were not tolerated. The furniture and other furnishings in the various rooms - workrooms, dormitories, study halls - all bore the stamp of simplicity and austerity.”

“Health was a matter of much concern. To be able to work people had to be strong. Seven hours of sleep at night were prescribed. A nap after the noonday meal was at first strictly forbidden; later on it was allowed for certain groups but always with the appropriate restrictions.”

Board of Administration Meeting – February 27, 2025

Reviewed and approved:

- Revised job descriptions for External Affairs Department
- Revised job descriptions for Admissions Department
- 2025-2026 Budget Proposal from the Financial Affairs Committee
- Proposal for adjustment of tuition for IELI program for 2026-2027
- Revised policy for student medical/dental expenses
- Revised policy for academic probation
- Proposed policy language for Academic Assessment (Handbook 10.03)
- Announcement of Search Process for VP for Academic Affairs

Shared reports on:

- St. Josephine Bakhita Celebration
- Spring Break Project
- External Affairs Meeting
- Training for Child Abuse Reporting
- Commencement Preparations

VPAA Search Underway

As announced in the faculty Senate meeting in January, a search process for a successor as “permanent” vice president for Academic Affairs (VPAA) is underway. Dr. Joshua Young has served very admirably as “interim” VPAA since last May. Now is an appropriate time to move toward a more permanent appointment.

I have established a search committee. After consultation with the members of the Board of Administration and with various senior members of the faculty I appoint the following members for the search committee.

1. Ms. Sandy Wilgenbusch (BOA member and Coordinator for External Affairs)
2. Dr. Ron Condon (Asst. Prof. of Philosophy)
3. Dr. Seo Hyun Park (Director of the Intensive English Language Institute)

Ms. Wilgenbusch has agreed to serve as chairperson. She will work closely with Mr. Steve Winger, the Vice President for Operations and Human Resources Representative, and with Ms. Chris Jackson, the Executive Secretary to the President. The job description will be posted in the very near future.

Commencement Planning – May 16, 2025

As we look forward to Spring Break, the time for our Commencement Ceremonies will be racing up right behind!

The graduation committee has been meeting somewhat frequently in the past weeks. Frt. Nam Nguyen SVD was chosen by the class to serve as their representative on the committee.

The class has chosen a theme: **“With Christ, We Journey in Hope”**

They have also nominated three of their members for consideration as Valedictorians:

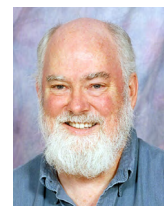
- Mr. Ladouceur Flarissaint
- Sr. Maurine Ozioma Okpara, SST
- Sr. Nhung Hong Thi Tran, LHC-TD

The nomination of the graduating class is itself a very special honor all on its own. They trust that each of these classmates would be capable of speaking for them to the assembled College community and to family and friends sharing through virtual broadcast. After consulting with the Board of Administration, **I have asked Sr. Maurine to deliver the valedictory address.**

I have also asked Dr. Ron Condon to deliver the Commencement Address. He has graciously and generously accepted the challenge! His 26 years of devoted service at Divine Word College give him a wonderful perspective in this year that we remember the 60th anniversary of the opening of the College here at Epworth.



*Sr. Maurine
Ozioma
Okpara, SST*



*Dr. Ron
Condon*



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Joshua Young

Don't Break During Spring Break

This time of year is something I look forward to because the weather is starting to get warmer, and I want to get outside and enjoy it before it gets too hot. I imagine it's one of the reasons schools adopted Spring Break. However, I want to encourage examine the use of the word "break." Most use the word "break" to suggest it's a time for rest; however, at DWC it's also the time of great academic challenge to be able to partake in that time for rest.

This week, our students are in need of extra support and prayer. The students in IELI studying English will complete their exams that will determine if they advance or complete the program. Many are hoping the studying they've done will be enough to help them pass. Students in the undergraduate program are completing midterm exams, papers, and presentations and hoping their midterm grades don't destroy their final grades and GPA. Please pray that our students don't "break" from the pressure, and that we all enter Spring Break ready to rest but not quit the work.

Strengthening our Missionary Commitment

Dr. Benjamin Wintress was just accepted to participate in the Teaching Interfaith Understanding Workshop hosted by the Council of Independent Colleges at DePaul University in June 2025. Dr. Wintress will learn about the trends in teaching interfaith understanding. Dr. Wintress is one of only 25 individuals selected from around the United States, and he will use this opportunity to continue to develop the College's commitment to missionary discipleship and teaching students to walk with faith-seekers and those of no or differing faith.



Dr. Benjamin Wintress

St. Arnold Janssen Oral Communication Award Submissions Open

Every year, Divine Word College awards the St. Arnold Janssen Oral Communication Award for the student that best answers the question, "What does it mean to be a missionary today?" Submissions are being accepted now until April 18. For details about submission requirements, please see the appendix.

Dr. Yasmin Rioux **Assessment Bites**

Updated Review Process

As mentioned in last week's Faculty Senate meeting, the IAC recently updated and formalized the review process of rubrics and signature assignments. This approach is as follows:

Rubric and Signature Assignment Review Process

- **January/August:** Departments review and provide feedback on relevant signature assignments and rubrics
- **October/March:** Submit feedback to IAC; IAC reviews and submits feedback back to Departments
- **December/May:** Departments submit all final revisions to Director for Institutional Effectiveness; Director for Institutional Effectiveness updates OAP



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



Ash Wednesday and the Lenten Season

This Wednesday, March 5, 2025, we will have a large community mass to begin the Lenten Season with Ash Wednesday. Lent is a time of fasting and prayer, and a time for us to prepare ourselves for 40 days and nights to experience Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection. It is important for all of us to use this time to quiet ourselves down and, with faith and devotion, experience God’s love for us in this Lenten experience.

Beginning this Wednesday until Easter, Wednesday’s dinner will be silent. We will eat dinner together, listening to reflection music in the dining room. Also on Fridays, we will have Stations of the Cross in the main chapel at 7:30 pm. Fr. Sonny De Class, SVD, our college chaplain, will assign each formation group to lead the Stations of the Cross weekly.

Spring Break

Thanks to all of you for informing me whether you are staying or leaving for Spring Break. Spring Break

officially begins after your last class this Friday, March 7, 2025. Please return back to the college no later than Sunday, March 16, 2025.

For those who are staying at Divine Word College - “Those students staying at DWC during the Spring Break are required to contribute three (3) hours of community service each day to defray the cost of room and board” (Student Handbook 805.1). I ask that you faithfully do your community service. This week, I will assign the days and times for washing dishes for those who are staying. Please check the bulletin board.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS

SUNDAY, MARCH 9

Daylight Savings Time

This Sunday, March 9, 2025, is daylight savings time. Please remember to turn your clocks and watches ahead one hour before you sleep. We will lose one hour of sleep; however, we will have more time to enjoy the sunlight.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMISSIONS

Len Uhal

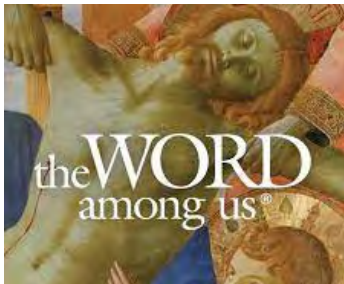


Come and See Visitor

We welcome Fr. Joseph Lu as a Come and See visitor to Divine Word College this week. He arrived on March 3 and will depart campus on March 6. Thank you for helping him to feel at home in our community during his visit.

Mission Trip to Mexico

There is still time to apply to participate in the vocation office’s annual mission experience trip—this year to MEXICO! Fr. Anthony Nguyen, SVD, will host this trip from May 20 to June 2, 2025. This trip is open to Divine Word College students, faculty and staff who would like to learn more about the missionary work of the Church and work alongside SVD and SSPs in Mexico City. To learn more, [visit here](#). There is also a promotional flier posted on the bulletin board. If you have questions, please contact Len Uhal at luhal@dwci.edu. He can assist you in applying if you are interested in participating. Please note that this is not a free trip—there is a cost to participate. Again, please see Len with your questions.



The Word Among Us


The Lenten issue of *The Word Among Us* is now available. All students should have received a copy of the booklet in their mailboxes. Copies in Spanish are in the Queen of the Americas Chapel. A few extra copies in English are available in the vocation office. Continue to pray for the anonymous donor who makes this resource available to all students at seminaries in the USA.

Justice and Peace Committee

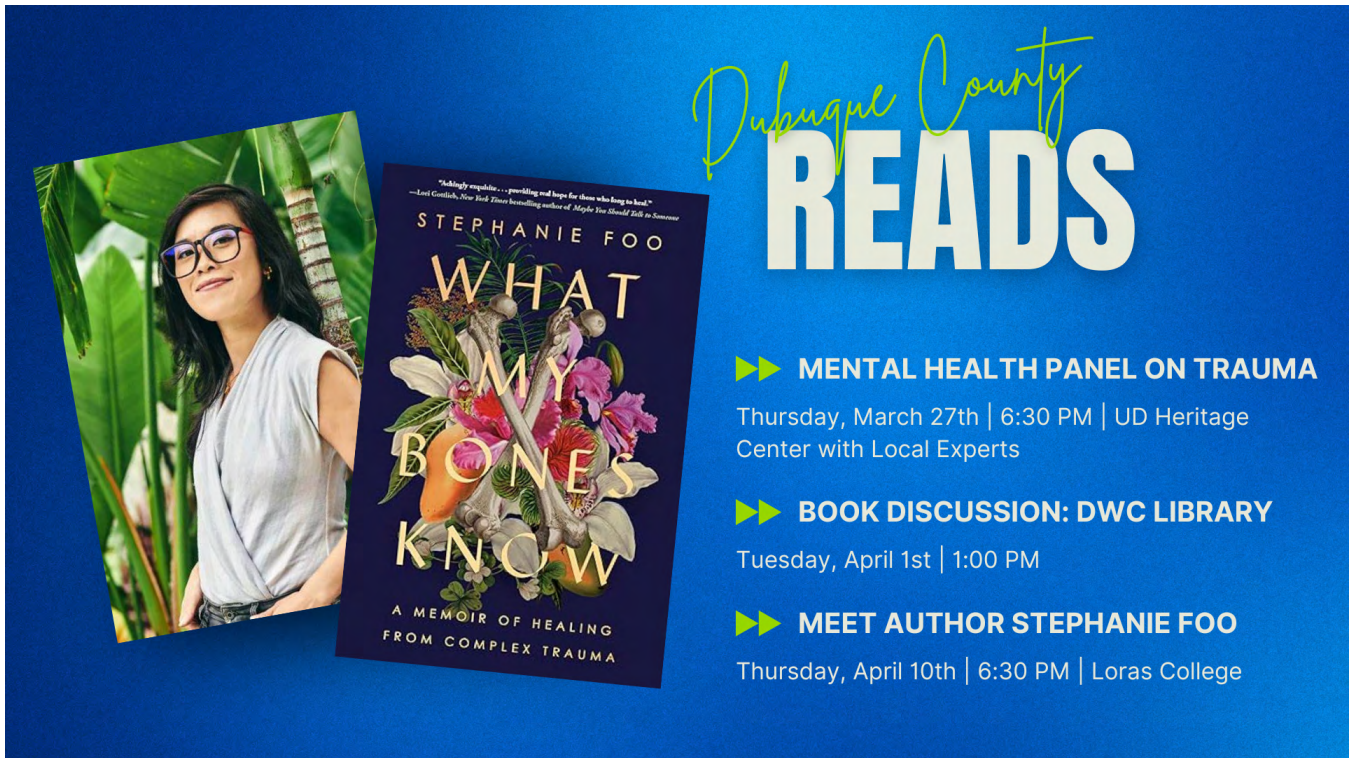
Prayers for the People

We pray for the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where violence continues to spread, bringing fear, suffering, and displacement. The city of Bukavu, a second major city in the country’s east, has fallen into conflict, and fighting in Goma has left thousands dead and many more forced to flee their homes. Decades of unrest have created one of the world’s largest humanitarian crises, leaving millions in fear and uncertainty. People are desperate for peace, yet the world’s response feels distant and slow. In this time of pain and anger, we pray for strength, wisdom, and compassion. May God guide us to listen to those who suffer and help us find ways to bring hope and peace to those in need.



 Matthew Jacoby Library

opac.dwci.edu



Dubuque County
READS

- ▶ **MENTAL HEALTH PANEL ON TRAUMA**
Thursday, March 27th | 6:30 PM | UD Heritage Center with Local Experts
- ▶ **BOOK DISCUSSION: DWC LIBRARY**
Tuesday, April 1st | 1:00 PM
- ▶ **MEET AUTHOR STEPHANIE FOO**
Thursday, April 10th | 6:30 PM | Loras College

Dubuque County Reads Update

All of the free copies of *What My Bones Know* have been given out! If you would like to participate in the 2025 Dubuque County Reads, please email ewinter@dwci.edu or stop by the library.

The first Dubuque County Reads event is at the end of March. The Mental Health and Trauma Panel at the University of Dubuque’s Black Box Theatre features a discussion between DWC’s Br. Brian McLaughlin and five other local specialists. There will be a sign-up sheet posted on the student board in the coming weeks for those who would like to attend and need a ride over.

The next upcoming event is our on-campus book discussion on April 1st. Everyone who is reading the book is highly encouraged to attend this event!

A list of participating libraries and additional details are available online at www.bit.ly/DubCoReads25.

What’s Your Favorite Book?

I’m still looking for book recommendations for the “DWCI Picks” Book Display. Fill out [the recommendation form!](#) Each DWC community member may submit up to two recommendations. The recommendation form is also available on the [library’s website](#).



DWC BLOOD DRIVE!



There will be a College Blood Drive on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the gym. Bro. Mike will post a sign-up sheet on the Main Bulletin Board. Please sign up by March 20. If you have any questions, please see Bro. Mike.



Tuesday

25
March

2025



Mission Experience to Mexico

Get ready for an adventure in Mexico City where you will work alongside Divine Word Missionaries and Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters to serve people in need by offering compassion and a sign of God's love for them.. Apply today!

May 20 - June 2, 2025



Join Us

Join Fr. Anthony Cong Nguyen, SVD, as he leads a group of volunteers supporting Divine Word Missionaries in daily ministries in Mexico City. Activities may include:

- Visiting schools and chapels
- Distributing supplies to Indigenous communities in the State of Hidalgo
- Parish maintenance
- Visiting the Basilica de Guadalupe and San Juan Diego as well as Grutas Tolantongo

Program Goals

The program familiarizes participants with the Church's missionary efforts. Attendees will engage in daily tasks with the Divine Word Missionaries, the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, and other individuals dedicated to mission work. They will also develop a unique insight into the Mexican language and culture.

Schedule May 20 - June 2

May 20: Arrival and Orientation
May 21 - June 1: Mission Mexico
June 2: Return to the States

Cost

Airfare plus approximately \$400 which covers housing, meals and in-country transport

Optional Donations

Participants are invited to bring gifts and candy for children and to provide funds for the supplies needed for a catechism classroom.

→ Housing

St. Santiago de Anaya Parish will host volunteers at the parish rectory. The accommodations are simple yet sufficient. Two people will share a room, but there will be separate beds. If there is a large group of volunteers, other housing arrangements will be made. Meals are provided using funds contributed by participants. Evenings will be dedicated to sharing experiences and engaging in discussions about the Church's missionary work with fellow volunteers and missionaries.

→ Participation Criteria

The Mission Experience is planned primarily with Catholics in mind, but can accommodate people of other faiths under special circumstances.

Those wishing to participate must:

- Be 18 years or older
- Have a passport to travel outside the country
- Be physically able to participate in manual labor (painting, carrying up to 40 pounds, etc.)
- Have health insurance or purchase insurance
- Sign a liability waiver

APPLY TODAY!

Mr. Len Uhal
Divine Word College Seminary
PO Box 380
Epworth, IA 52045



luhal@dwci.edu



800-553-3321

The St. Arnold Janssen Oral Presentation Award

The Divine Word College Oral Presentation Award is bestowed upon the student that most eloquently and convincingly answers the question, “what does it mean to be a missionary disciple, today?”

The question poses the central concern of every missionary of the Church and must certainly have been on the mind of the founder of the Society of the Divine Word. It is a concern expressed by Pope Francis in *The Joy of the Gospel* and foundational to the great commission to go forth and preach the gospel.

Students will write and deliver an oral presentation answering the question. Students will be assessed on content and style. Students are encouraged to focus on the dimensions of prophetic dialogue in the context of missionary discipleship and to utilize concrete examples of Christian witness as promulgated by Pope Paul VI, 1) demonstrating a good Christian life; 2) proclaiming the gospel; 3) teaching the Catechism; and 4) participating in ecumenical dialogue.

Any full-time DWC student is eligible to enter. The top three entries will be recognized with a stylish medal and certificate. The top entry shall be recognized with the Arnold Janssen Oral Presentation Award having their name engraved on a plaque displayed within a place of prominence in the college. In the event of a tie, multiple students may be presented the Arnold Janssen Oral Presentation Award.

Submissions will be accepted in video form. Students are asked to record themselves delivering their presentation and then upload them, preferably to YouTube. Presentations are strictly limited to 10 minutes. Videos are submitted to Dr. Joshua Young at joyoung@dwci.edu.

Submissions are due by 11:59pm CST, April 18, 2025. Winners are expected to be announced at the annual awards luncheon.