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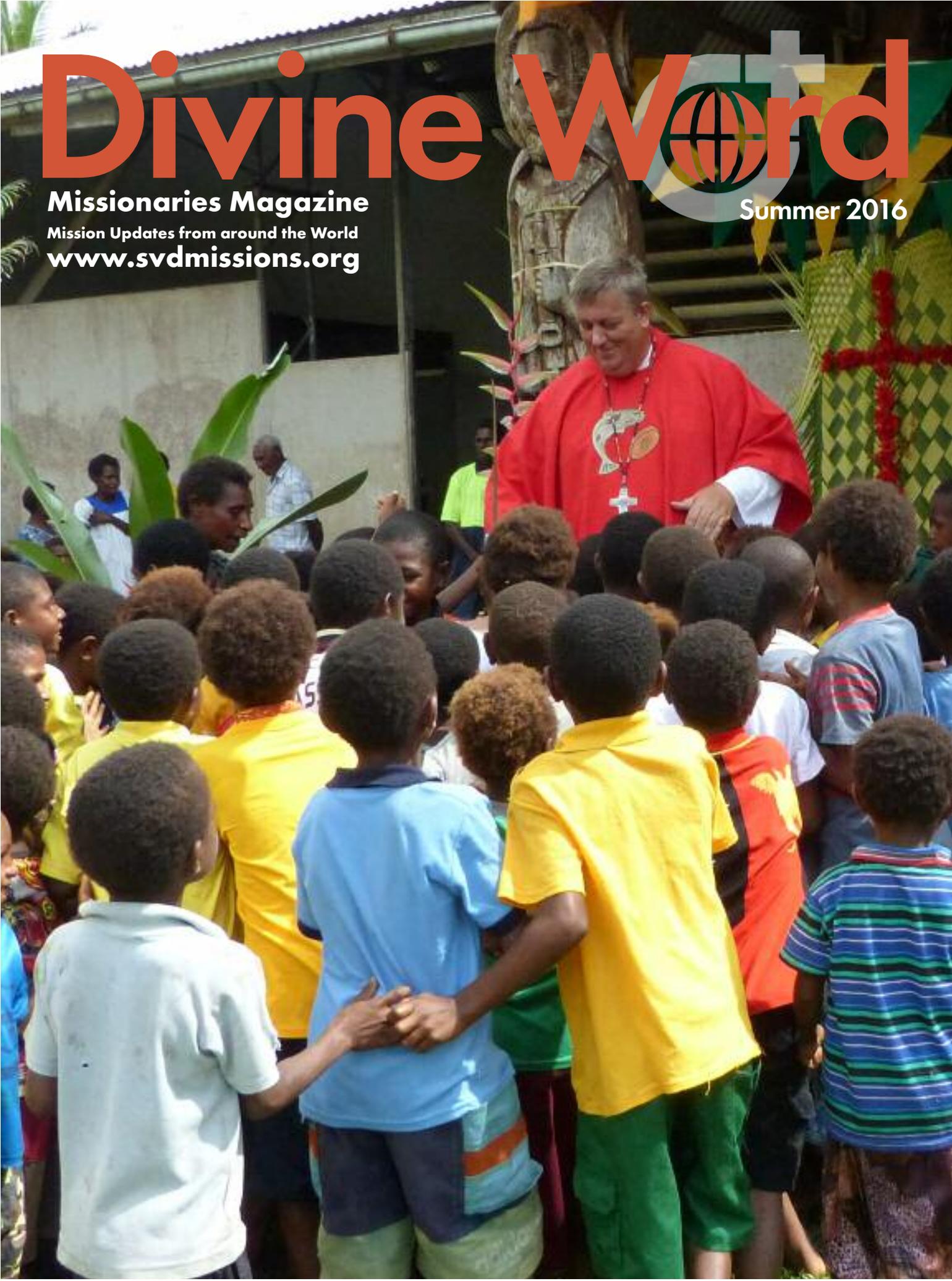
# Divine Word

**Missionaries Magazine**

Mission Updates from around the World

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Summer 2016



# PLEASE Remember Divine Word Missionaries in Your Will

When you are preparing your Will or estate plan, please consider including Divine Word Missionaries. Through your legacy gift, you will help Divine Word Missionaries continue the Church's missionary work you so generously supported during your life.

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If you would like to discuss your estate planning with us, please contact us:

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## Farewell to a Friend

Divine Word Missionaries lost a faithful friend on May 19, 2016, when Sister Irma Dreger SCC passed away peacefully at Sacred Heart Convent in Wilmette, Illinois. She was ninety-seven years old.

Catherine Dreger entered the Sisters of Christian Charity in 1933. During her many years of service, Sister Irma taught elementary and high school in Michigan, Louisiana, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. From 1991 to 2007, Sister Irma, in her "teaching spirit," assisted the editors of *Divine Word Missionaries Magazine*, often taking us to task for our grammar and punctuation. She was always there to help.

At community gatherings, Sister Irma was known for the entertaining songs she would compose. In 2013, Sister Irma's busy, creative life was slowed by a stroke and the worsening effects of Parkinson's disease.

On May 23, Sister Irma was laid to rest at Maria Immaculata Cemetery of the Sisters of Christian Charity.

We are confident that Sister Irma is already singing her songs with the angels in heaven! Thank you, Sister Irma, for being a gift and inspiration in our lives.

*—the editors of DWM Magazine  
past and present*

## From the Desk of Fr. Richie Vaz SVD

### Summer is here again!

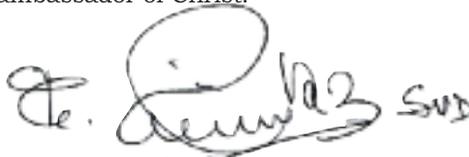
I wish you happy times with family and friends. You may have plans for gatherings, bike rides, camping, or other outdoor activities. For me, summer is a special season that bonds me together with friends and new-found connections.

For ten years, I have been actively participating in the Mission Co-op Program of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. This program makes it possible for the faithful to hear about missionary experiences and the efforts of the worldwide Church to evangelize. It also allows missionaries to request prayers and raise funds for the special needs of people in the missions.

Through the Mission Co-op Program, I have had the opportunity to spend summer weekends traveling to different parishes in the United States to educate and deepen mission awareness among the people. In my homilies, I tell both heartening and troubling stories of our Divine Word Missionaries. The parishioners are able to see and identify the human faces of hunger, struggle, poverty, injustice, abuse, and lack of education. The message challenges, inspires, and invites them to open their hearts and become missionaries too. While the parishioners cannot be physically present in the missions, they give hope to the poor and impoverished by helping Divine Word Missionaries provide food, education, health care, and dignity. In the parishes I visit, people have spoken to me about how they are humbled to collaborate with us in bringing God's love and be able to transform the world through their prayers and financial giving.

I am pleased to present the Summer 2016 issue of *Divine Word Missionaries Magazine* with its powerful stories of the daily challenges our missionaries encounter as they bring God and his message to countries that are difficult to access or areas that are resistant to the Gospel.

As a missionary in India, each time I felt my work was "slipping" because of many problems such as financial difficulties, low attendance, and people's indifferent attitude toward mission work, I had no idea that God was working behind the scenes and was about to bring an incredible breakthrough. The stories in the magazine describe how God is at work in us and in our ministry. We see evidence of his power in our own lives and in others. We are reminded time and again that our works are not dependent on our own efforts. Your prayers, cooperation, and partnership are essential our ministry and vital to the advancement of our missionary work. Thank you for being an ambassador of Christ!



Fr. Richie Vaz SVD  
Mission Director



# DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES

AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIESTS AND BROTHERS

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## Working Joyfully to Spread the Gospel

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It is through the grace of God, the generosity of good people, and the dedication of local priests, teachers, nurses, and lay leaders that we bring about change in tangible ways.

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## “Nothing is impossible with God” It Began with a Dream

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While working at the various schools, we saw that some of the children were very thin. This led to the establishment of three feeding programs: one in Cebu, another in Cabuyao, and a third in Candon City.

## Live, Learn, and Work

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For years, I had the chance to live away from my country and my continent. During all that time, I lived with people of different cultures and mentalities. I had beautiful experiences from which I learned many things.



## Education for All

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## The Circle of Love

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It was the proudest day of their lives. Seventeen young men and women from ORPER received certificates . . . after completing a year of vocational training and a four-month internship or apprenticeship in their chosen professions.

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The Society of the Divine Word is an international Catholic missionary congregation with over 6,000 members from 70 countries. They work in over 70 different lands on all the continents except Antarctica.

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# Our Land of Promises

*Xene Sanchez SVD*

“Give me a space and I’ll make it a farm.” This Portuguese proverb challenges us as we struggle to transform a desert into a “land of promises.”



In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Divine Word Missionaries was a rapidly growing mission society that was sending priests and Brothers to many parts of the world. Our founder, Father Arnold Janssen, instructed the missionaries to establish farms or plantations. The crops from those farms and plantations were sold and produced the money needed to build churches and schools, train catechists, provide medical care, and support our missionary priests and Brothers.



Inspired by our founder and in the light of good stewardship and challenging economic conditions, Divine Word Missionaries in the Democratic Republic of the Congo purchased 124 acres of land about ten years ago. Like those early Divine Word Missionaries, we wanted to generate income to support ourselves and assist people through our missionary work.

The local chief gladly sold us the property, expecting that our presence could promote development in his territory. The land was part of an abandoned village, with the remains of the last dilapidated hut still visi-

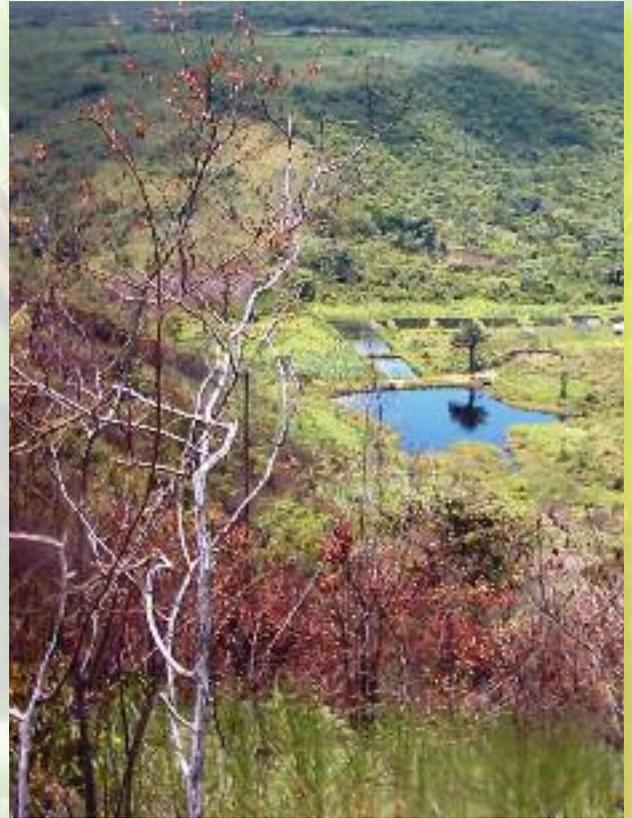


*“Give me a space and I’ll make it a farm.”*

ble. The new farm was named MIVEDI-Kwati. “MIVEDI” derives from *Missionaires du Verbe Divin* (Divine Word Missionaries) and Kwati, the name of the original village. It is located about twenty-three miles from our Divine Word Missionary house in Kinshasa.

In the 1970s, the area was a forest with a rich variety of trees and wild animals. Economic crisis struck during that time. People who had migrated from the interior regions of the country and settled in the capital city of Kinshasa lost their jobs. Instead of returning to their villages, they settled closer to Kinshasa. To sustain themselves, they cut trees and made charcoal. Then they cleared the land with fire and planted crops. This slash-and-burn method quickly exhausted the shallow layer of topsoil. What remained was the sand brought by the Congo River millions of years ago. Nature had wisely nourished the forest thanks to the balance of the ecosystem. After the harsh human intervention, the land became unproductive. The grass that sprang up was pale yellow because it lacked nutrients.

The idea of developing MIVEDI-Kwati into a land of promise was almost crazy. Determination and imagination were needed to begin the transformation. There were countless obstacles, and funds were very limited. In the beginning, with heavy loads on our backs, we climbed hills, wallowed knee-deep in mud, crossed the river, walked a sandy path, and forged our way with machetes. A village football team needed balls, uniforms, and sports shoes. To earn them, the members eked out a road so vehicles could access the property.



# A Prayer for Our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*



Another group of young men built a dam using only wheelbarrows, shovels, and pickaxes. A large fish pond was formed a year and a half later.

Like a pioneer, Brother Lazare Musongi SVD built huts where workers and future students and guests could stay. He planted trees, created more fish ponds, and started a piggery. Currently, a team of three Divine Word Missionaries is responsible for the farm: Father Dondion Soriano SVD, Brother Christian Berani SVD, and me.

A number of years ago, a young boy from the war-torn eastern part of the country stopped by MIVEDI-Kwati. Bertin Bwenge Mutarambirwa had left school because he lacked the money to continue. Divine Word Missionaries helped him complete his studies. When Bertin graduated with a diploma in agriculture, he dedicated himself full-time as head of our farm. His presence is key to the continued development of MIVEDI-Kwati because he loves his work, gives leadership, and shares his technical know-how.



To develop the farm, we conserved what remained of the natural forest and let it grow. There is no cutting and no burning. We planted multiple kinds of leguminous trees in barren places, introduced fruit trees, African palm trees, bananas, taro, all kinds of vegetables, as well as forage for animals. After trial and error, the piggery has become our main source of income. We feed the pigs with our produce instead of buying commercial feeds. Their waste goes into our biogas pit, which processes an excellent natural fertilizer. The farm's sandy soil is slowly being enriched, which provides more cultivable areas. The fertilizer we produce is used in the fish ponds. It enhances the growth of plankton for the fish to eat. We raise ducks, which aerate the water as they paddle around and clean the ponds by eating snails and grass. Chickens eat other leftovers and devour insects.





# You can HELP them GROW

Life is everywhere! Caterpillars have reappeared, and the people are delighted since caterpillars are a favorite food. There are bees among the flowers. Wild animals and reptiles are returning. To our joy, our trees are beginning to bear fruit, especially the African breadfruit trees, which produce a nutritious food.

The local people and agriculture students come to the farm to learn sustainable agricultural methods and animal husbandry. Several villagers work at the farm for shorter or longer periods of time, and their income is helping their families. Eventually, we plan to distribute pigs to the villagers, who will raise them using natural feed. Home gardens will be cultivated using natural fertilizers produced from the waste.

Children are the farmers of the future. Many youth from neighboring villages come to play “farmer” and deepen their love for all of creation. Bertin welcomes them and gladly shares his knowledge and experience. We help some of the most interested children with their primary and secondary schooling. Two of our best candidates are going on to agriculture school just as Bertin once did.

MIVEDI-Kwati farm is not yet a complete “success story.” We still have a long way to go. This year we hope that our income will cover ordinary expenses. There are many projects we would like to initiate, but we can only realize them as our means permit. Nature itself tests us with heavy rains, droughts, and pests. But we are not daunted by those challenges, and we are grateful to everyone who makes it possible for us to continue helping others. Each time we hear people complain about hunger, we are spurred on. Our missionary work would miss its goal if we did not respond to people’s real and urgent needs. The words of the psalmist surely describe what has begun at MIVEDI-Kwati farm, our land of promises: “The grasslands of the desert overflow, the hills are clothed with gladness!” (Ps. 65:12).

**Your** support is vital to furthering our work for the poor around the world.

With help from **YOU**, Divine Word Missionaries can continue to provide programs that will teach sustainable methods of farming.

**Give today** and impact the lives of people in desperate need.

*Please accept my offering in the amount of:*

- \$100
- \$50
- \$25

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# Working Joyfully to Spread the Gospel

*Jozef Roszynski SVD*



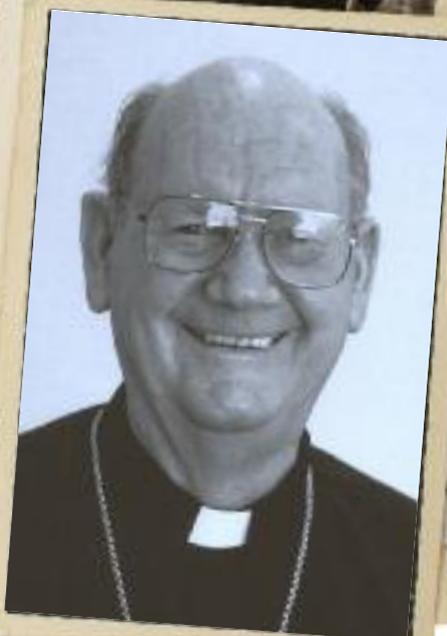
In 2015, I was in Madang, Papua New Guinea, after a short vacation in our country's island province of East New Britain. My return trip by boat across the open sea had been harrowing. I was recovering from a serious leg infection and a high fever. One morning, I received a call from Archbishop Michael Banach, the apostolic nuncio. His news was stunning! Pope Francis had appointed me bishop of the Diocese of Wewak. Was this a bad dream?! ME, the bishop of Wewak?

American Divine Word Missionaries Bishop Leo Arkfeld SVD and Bishop Raymond Kalisz SVD faced many challenges and made significant contributions to the East Sepik province, the Church, and the well-being of the people from 1948 through 2002. Bishop Arkfeld, in particular, was the famous "flying bishop" who built up the Church in the Diocese of Wewak and established many schools and med-

*Bishop Leo Arkfeld SVD*



*Bishop Raymond Kalisz SVD*



Divine Word Missionaries

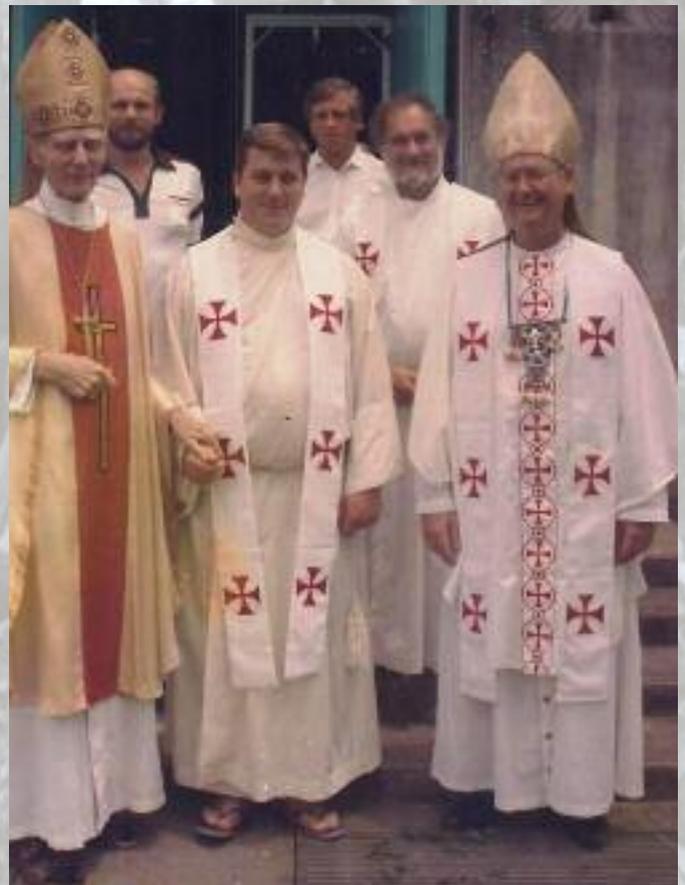


ical aid posts. Even today the fruits of his missionary labors are still being seen. The spirit of Bishop Ray Kalisz continues to empower the people through the Small Christian Community Pastoral Program.

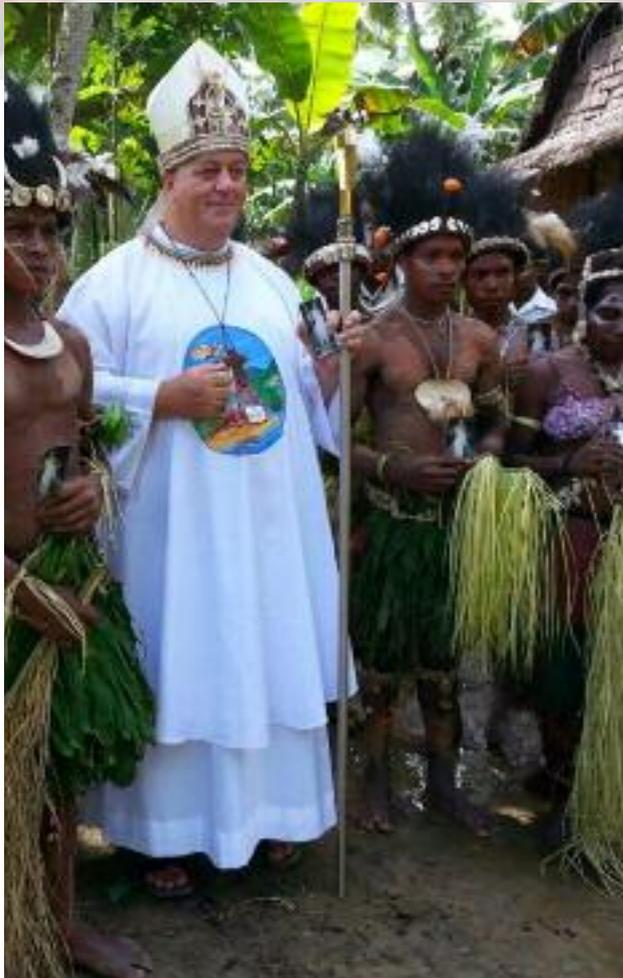
The Catholic Church began its missionary work in Papua New Guinea in the nineteenth century. Until that time, the island was left untouched because of its rough and swampy terrain and its population of indigenous peoples with their own languages, customs, and traditions.

Divine Word Missionaries arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1896. There were many struggles as our missionaries reached and evangelized the people. The country, with a population of almost seven million people, has over eight hundred languages. One challenge was to decide which language to use for the country, the Church, and school work.

The Diocese of Wewak is located in the East Sepik Province along the northern coast of Papua New Guinea. The diocese was established fifty years ago on November 15, 1966, and it is the largest of the nineteen dioceses in the country. It is spread out across the East Sepik Province and encompasses over 14,259 square miles. The latest statistics show that the number of Catholics is about 229,000. The diocese provides pastoral and social services to Catholics in forty-eight parishes. There are sixty community elementary schools, eighty-two primary schools, two high



*Left: Arkfeld    Center: Roszynski    Right: Kalisz*



schools, two secondary schools, two vocational schools, a distance education center, and teachers' college. The diocese also recognizes the importance of health services and is in charge of three health centers, twelve health subcenters, twelve clinics, and five aid posts.

On April 25, 2015, I was ordained the bishop of the Diocese of Wewak. The diocese did not have leadership for a few years. Added to this is the fact that government services totally deteriorated or collapsed in East Sepik Province and in Papua New Guinea as well. Most of the foreign missionaries who supported the diocese through personnel and finances have returned to their homelands. The majority of the clergy in the diocese are now local priests, of which nineteen are in active ministry. From the expatriates who remain, I have two Pallotine priests, five Divine Word Missionaries, and one Spiritan priest. There are only four Brothers involved in the work of the diocese and one lay missionary. With the population growing so much and the cost of everything rising, it is a struggle to do our work effectively.

Unfortunately, more than fifty percent of people are illiterate. Over eighty percent of the population live in remote bush areas without access to electricity, fresh water, or health services. This includes the parishes, schools, and health facilities I described previously. To make the situation worse, many of those parishes, schools, and health facilities are not connected by roads. Access to them is possible only by canoe or on foot.





Divine Word Missionaries recognize that Papua New Guinea is a nation in transition. The Church here is also in transition. It is alive in Christ, yet in need of material support and prayer. Awareness is growing that we are the Church, and that we have a role to play.

In the Diocese of Wewak, a lot was done by my predecessors, Bishop Arkfeld and Bishop Kalisz, and the countless number of missionaries from all over the world who have served here. My main objectives are to establish a viable education system through our Catholic schools, to provide medical care through our Catholic health services, and to improve the water supply for the people. There is great need for trained personnel, whom we hope to educate in our pastoral centers, teachers' college, and vocational schools.

It is through the grace of God, the generosity of good people, and the dedication of local priests, teachers, nurses, and lay leaders that we bring about change in tangible ways. We could not meet the daily challenges and do all that we do here in the Diocese of Wewak without the prayerful support of our friends and co-missionaries near and far.

I invite you to the mission of Christ, which comes from the mandate received in the sacrament of baptism. Be a missionary in whatever way you can wherever you are. Thank you for your kindness and readiness to work joyfully to spread the Gospel among the nations.



Summer 2016

# Changing Times: Open to the Spirit

*Damien Lunders SVD*



## The Mother of Perpetual Help Center

in Nong Bua Lamphu in northeast Thailand began in 1997 as a “welcome house” where men and women infected with AIDS could receive counselling and guidance. A former seminarian started the center, and later, when Brother James Wilkins SVD and I came, the center expanded its services. Gradually, programs were developed to help children and adults with AIDS, as well as poor families throughout the province. An extensive education and awareness program in schools for HIV prevention was also started. The mission and work of Mother of Perpetual Help Center depends very much on the help of our truly dedicated Thai staff. We have tried over the years to be open to the Spirit and to change with the times as needs emerged. God has truly been good, and without his help and the generosity of many generous benefactors, the center would not be what it is today.

In the past, young men and women came for care at Villa Marie Hospice at Mother of Perpetual Help Center, but many were already in poor condition and did not survive. With the development of antiviral medications, many patients now improve and can live normal lives. Those who return to home, family, and friends are able to find work and continue on with life. Those who have no home to return to due to discrimination and rejection stay on and are accommodated at our farm just outside the city limits. On our farm, they are able to care for themselves and make a living by looking after the fruit trees, and raising ducks, chickens, and fish.



In recent years, a new need has arisen. Older people are being sent to us for care at Villa Marie Hospice. The majority of them have mental or physical disabilities, several are blind. Though it may sometimes seem like “the blind leading the blind,” it is heartwarming to watch how the elderly people have befriended one another and look after each other. Due to their disabilities, they are no longer accepted by their families, so most will be long-term residents. These seniors will need care for the rest of their lives.

After working for a number of years at Ban Mae Maria, Brother Bernd Ruffing SVD recently left Thailand to begin a new ministry with refugees in Europe. Truong Thong Le SVD, a seminarian from the United States here for his cross-cultural training program, has stepped in to help take care of the teenagers at Ban Mae Maria (Mother Mary House). Working with orphaned and unwanted teenagers has been a real challenge. Truong has spent several months with the teens and reflected:

The work that I do is a mixture of gardener, bus driver, and guidance counselor. The daily responsibilities and chores are easily managed. However, the more I enter into the lives of the teenagers, the more difficult things become. By all means, I will have wonderful memories from working in the garden and caring for the house, going on weekly outings, and traveling during school breaks. The not-so-fun side of things is disciplining and helping them to make good decisions about their lives. One case is uniquely challenging. I have been caring for Ae, an HIV-positive youth with mental disabilities who is prone to epileptic seizures and frequent emotional outbursts. I learn along the way on how to respond to Ae’s epileptic episodes and how to deal with him throwing a tantrum. The difficulty for me is to consider the level of care that we can give him. If we can’t care for Ae, as he can be a danger to others and to himself, he would have to be sent back to the mental hospital. He is a sweet and intelligent boy, and I do see this side of him. Walking amid uncertainties and having to make decisions that affect another person’s life is quite nerve-wracking. For now, the boy continues to be under our care, and I find him coping well at our center with less frequent emotional outbursts.





*Brother Bernd Ruffing SVD walking with Bai Fern*



Like many of our young people, knowing the rejection that Ae has experienced helps us understand his mental state and instability. Before he was born, his father gave his mother money to have an abortion, but she did not go through it. Eventually, Ae's father and mother separated, but to this day, Ae's father will have nothing to do with him.

A young girl in need of care was discovered in one of the villages in an outlying area of the province. After searching for a place where she could be sent, the neighbors contacted our center, and Bai Fern was brought to Mother Mary House. This girl's parents died of AIDS, and she was under the care of her older brother. Bai Fern was left to fend for herself when her brother went to find work in Bangkok. By the time neighbors discovered her, Bai was in terrible condition. When she arrived at Mother Mary House, she was twelve years old and weighed only twenty-six pounds. She spent some time in the local hospital. For a while, Bai Fern was doing better and gaining a little weight, and we hoped that she would eventually return to good health. But it was not to be. Sadly, with no strength left, Bai Fern passed away after four months with us. Our consolation is that she was able to spend her last weeks of life in a loving, comfortable environment.



*Pawn and Gaew at Mother Mary House*

As the years go on, Mother Mary House will continue to evolve. We recently took in Gaew, a teenager with Down syndrome. Gaew lived with her aging grandfather, who asked us to take her when it became too difficult for him to give her the care she needed. Both Gaew and Ae now go to a special needs school in the city and, under our care at Mother Mary House, they are doing better than ever. As the number of elderly patients at Villa Marie Hospice increases, some have been transferred to Mother Mary House. So, as times and



needs change, we will be open to the future care of the elderly as well.

Since the opening of Mother Mary House in 2010, many youngsters have come and gone. It is inevitable that these young people want to venture out to live independently when they reach maturity. However, once on their own, some discontinue their antiviral medications. After years of training and education about the importance of this medicine, it is difficult for us to grasp why some young adults fail to follow through with these life-changing drugs. Once off the antiviral medicine, doctors are reluctant to reintroduce these young adults to the medication. Sadly, this usually brings them back to us, to Villa Marie Hospice, for care as their health deteriorates.

As times change and bring us struggles and difficulties, they also bring us joy as we see progress made in small but significant ways at our center everyday. We try not to become discouraged when we read that the number of AIDS infections has not decreased significantly, even when information and education are available. We remain open to the Spirit, who helps us to trust in God's graces and strengthens us to keep going with our hospice work, our education and awareness programs, and our response to the needs of the elderly. Our hope is that one day HIV/AIDS will be eliminated. Thanks to the dedicated labors of so many people and the support and prayers offered for us, we can continue to help children, teens, adults, seniors, and families in need here in northeast Thailand.

[www.svdmissions.org](http://www.svdmissions.org)



**I Want to Help the Missions Thailand**

**YES! I want to help the missions in Thailand and around the world, so that children and adults will know they are in our prayers**

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# "Nothing is impossible

## It Began with a Dream

*John Seland SVD*

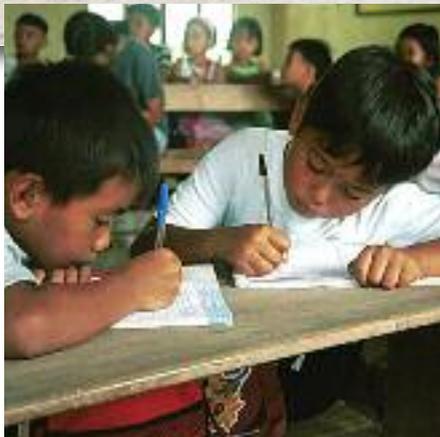
The idea came to my mind in 1980 as I returned from a trip to England with Japanese students. The students were able to see many wonderful places and learn a lot of English. Still, I wondered, why was no one taking them to a country in Southeast Asia? Wouldn't that be valuable, too?

Sister Christine at the Logos Center, our Christian center at Nanzan University, listened to my idea. "Get in touch with a Jesuit living in Tokyo, Father Isamu Ando," she said. "He organizes exposure programs for Japanese students in Thailand."

After a few phone calls, Fr. Ando and I agreed to work together. I would organize students from Nanzan, and he would do the same at schools in Tokyo. And so our joint exposure program began. In 1981, three students from Nanzan participated, but each year the number increased. The program was good. By staying for three weeks with poor families in Udon Thani in northeast Thailand, we were able to learn a lot about the values of the people and their way of life. Incidentally, it was during that time that we decided on a name for our organization: Rural Asia Solidarity Association (RASA).

Things progressed. In summer 1985, a three-day workshop on justice and peace was organized by Divine Word Missionaries working in the Philippines. My provincial, Father Lukas Moriyama SVD, wanted to attend but was hesitant about his English, so he asked me to accompany him. I am glad I did. Later, when I explained to everyone our program in Thailand, they extended an invitation. "There aren't any Divine Word Missionaries in Thailand, but there are many of us here in the Philippines," they said. "Come! We can work together."

Before returning to Japan, I spent the night at Catholic Trade, our Divine Word Missionary house in Manila. After breakfast the next morning, I went with Father Joaquin Ferrer SVD for Sunday Mass at Smokey Mountain, the large garbage dump in north



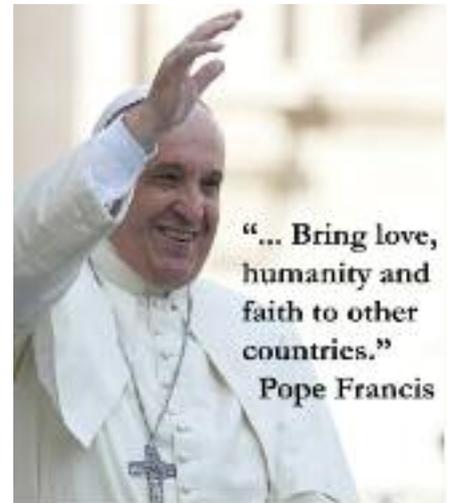


Manila. As we made our way to the chapel, a woman standing outside a small hut beckoned us to enter. When I saw a small girl, about ten years old, lying on a blanket on the ground, I thought she was sleeping. Her mother told us that she died the previous day from malnutrition.

As I made my way back to Japan later that afternoon, I made a decision—we will switch to the Philippines.

At first, we continued what we had been doing in Thailand. But I began to feel that more could be done. Visiting Father Ewald Dinter SVD, my friend in Oriental Mindoro, was the next step. “What do you think?” I asked him. “Is there something else we can do?” In a few minutes, we were walking through the halls of a large high school in Calapan. Peering through the windows of one of the classrooms, I noticed that all the students were sitting on the floor. The teacher explained why. “We don’t have enough money to buy desks.” Then I began to think about the possibility of building small schools. Still, there were questions. Could I manage that kind of work? Where would I get the funds? Would Japanese students be interested in participating? I still remember praying fervently for answers. By and by, the words of the angel Gabriel in the Gospel of Luke began to occupy my thoughts: “Nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37).

One day as I sat in my office at the university, a call came from a reporter from the largest newspaper in Nagoya, the *Chunichi Shimbun*. “Hello, are you John Seland?” “Yes.” “Good! I heard you are taking students to the Philippines for exposure programs. May I come for an interview?” “Yes,” I said, “I’d be delighted.” He came the next day, asked many questions, and took



“... Bring love, humanity and faith to other countries.”  
Pope Francis

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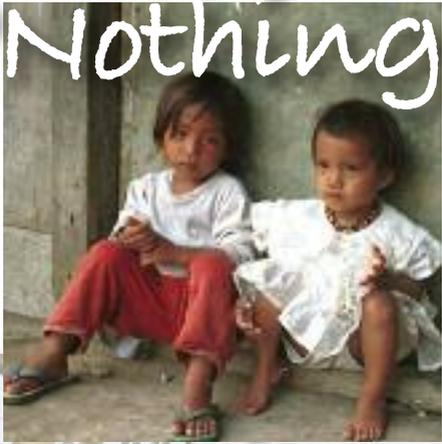


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“Nothing



is  
impossible



with  
God

some pictures. A few days later, an article appeared in the newspaper, along with two pictures. The following day my phone kept ringing as questions flooded in: “Where will you work?” “How much does the trip cost?” “What are the dates?” and so on. Later, back at the Logos Center, Sister Christine told me, “A woman just called up. She deposited \$7,000 in the bank for your project in the Philippines.”

We started during summer 1999 at Puerto Galera, a small port at the northern tip of Oriental Mindoro. Thirteen volunteers worked there. Another group of seventeen worked farther south at a village near Calapan. And so it went. As requests came in, we expanded, usually constructing three or four new classrooms at existing schools in various places: Mindoro, Luzon, and Cebu. And the numbers of volunteers increased steadily from thirty to forty to fifty. As of today, we have built twenty-nine small schools.

In 2003, with the help of some dedicated people, we established a sister-nongovernmental organization (NGO) in the Philippines. My mother was a generous benefactor, so they named the NGO the Mother Laura Gertrude Seland Foundation. From then on, RASA in Japan has been able to work in tandem with the foundation: RASA forwards funds, while the Mother Laura Gertrude Seland Foundation uses the funds for scholarships and to help people in need.

While working at the various schools, we saw that some of the children were very thin. This led to the establishment of three feeding programs: one in Cebu, another in Cabuyao, and a third in Candon City. In June 2015, we began two more programs in Abra. Each school day, some forty children are able to have a good meal at lunchtime.

The blessings we have received doing this kind of work are incalculable. Besides helping Filipino children, the Japanese volunteers are also changed by their experiences in the Philippines when they see families struggling to make ends meet, yet smiling and moving ahead. It all began with a little dream. But grace was there nourishing the dream all along. The angel Gabriel was right. Nothing is impossible with God.



# Live, Learn, and Work

*Raoul Mayulu SVD*

Being a religious missionary means to give a free, personal, and voluntary response to God's call for a special mission. In general, although there can be exceptions as in all rules, when you do what you have chosen voluntarily and without pressure, you should feel fulfilled and happy. The same thing happens when you choose the religious life. It is a free response to God's call and, therefore, one should feel joy and at peace.

Personally, what makes me happy in my life as a religious missionary is the fact that I take as a mystery my living and sharing of my daily life with persons whom I did not choose to live with as my companions and partners in life—confreres with ways of thinking and acting different from mine. In spite of all these differences, we try to understand each other and work together because we have the same purpose in life. It is in this community experience that I really feel the presence and assistance of an "Invisible Being" who acts and makes it possible to live together despite the differences. It is God who makes me happy.

For years, I had the chance to live away from my country and my continent. During all that time, I lived with people of different cultures and mentalities. I had beautiful experiences from which I learned many things. At the same time, I believe they also learned from my many good things. This mutual learning was only possible because I chose to be a religious missionary.

Religious missionary life allows me to be free wherever I am and in whatever I do. This is because a religious missionary is not attached to something or to someone. Being attached to a specific person or to something becomes an obstacle to one's missionary work and personal commitment. Religious missionary life opens me to the possibility of knowing other cultures and their ways of living and working in the Church.

I can say that what makes me happy as a religious missionary is the opportunity to be sent to a place different from my own in order to announce the Kingdom of God. What makes me happy is the joy of reaching out persons from different cultures, mentalities, and nationalities. At the same, it makes me happy to be able to work and live with all these persons in spite of all our differences. This is possible because we have the same goal in life. Feeling God's presence when I do this is a source of joy.

Religious missionary life makes me happy because it gives me the possibility and opportunity to let go of myself in order to live for, learn from, and work with others for the Kingdom of God.

*This article is reprinted from the SVD BROTHERS Bulletin (November 2014). We acknowledge the editorial work of Brother Mark Paglicawan SVD, Brother Hubertus Guru SVD, and Father Nico Espinosa SVD. Without the selfless work of these (and many other) people, the bulletin could not exist. Brother Bela Lanyi SVD is coordinator of the SVD Brother's Bulletin.*





## Education for All

*Alpha Mazenga SVD*



It was the proudest day of their lives. Seventeen young men and women from ORPER received certificates in August 2015 after completing a year of vocational training and a four-month internship or apprenticeship in their chosen professions. Seven students chose clothing design and sewing, five concentrated on hairdressing and cosmetics, and five focused on culinary arts. Their achievement will change their lives forever.

ORPER is an acronym for *Œuvre de Reclassement et de Protection des Enfants de la Rue*, or in English “Charitable Organization for the Rehabilitation and the Protection of Street Children.” It was founded in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in 1981 by the Belgian-born Divine Word Missionary, Father Frank Roelants SVD. The aim of ORPER is to improve the conditions of life for boys and girls fending for themselves in the dangerous streets of Kinshasa. Given their situation, they often despair of ever finishing their education or achieving a better future.

Fr. Frank was determined to help these street children in their struggle to find their place in society. Although financial resources were limited and the number of young people served by ORPER was increasing, he did all he could to guide the youth into areas of vocational skills training suited to their abilities and interests, such as welding, mechanics, plumbing, and cooling and refrigeration.

In 2009, we decided to expand the vocational training programs available to the older street children to include clothing design and sewing, hairdressing and cosmetics, and culinary arts. Like other vocational training available to the youth, these three programs are open to girls and boys from fifteen to eighteen years of age at the homes operated by ORPER.

For the first two years, the programs did not produce the results we hoped for. One of the main reasons for this was that we were attempting to provide





education for street children who were accustomed to living and surviving on their own. Because of their mobility and the instability of their circumstances, it is very difficult for them to settle down in one place and concentrate on anything.

Of the thirty young people who enrolled in the first courses, only seven or eight persevered until the end of one full year of vocational training and obtained their diplomas. Realizing that the youth experience unique challenges in their daily lives, we opened hostels or group homes where they could live and complete their course requirements. After opening the hostels, the course completion rate has risen from twenty-five percent to ninety percent of youth beginning the training.

To standardize the diplomas issued to the young people following their year of training and their four-month apprenticeship in various well-known workshops and businesses in the city, the Urban Inspectorate of Social Affairs (UISA) of the city of Kinshasa stepped in to help, beginning with the training sessions in September 2014. The UISA helped us standardize our training programs and followed up as the young people completed their supervised work experiences. In addition, the bureau organized the final examinations and published the results through official channels. These advances enable the young people to have confidence in themselves and to have confidence that their vocational training brings them up to the same level as their peers who are enrolled in formally established vocational training programs in the city's secondary schools.

Congratulations to the young men and women who received their certificates in August 2015 and to their teachers as well! We are grateful for the generosity of all the friends, benefactors, and organizations supporting us in this very important work of bringing smiles to thousands of children in the streets of Kinshasa.



*"Salam Maria, penuh rahmat, tuhan sertamu . . ."*



## The Circle of Love

Karolus Lanang Ona SVD

A child's voice began the ancient prayer to Mary, the Mother of God, "Salam Maria, penuh rahmat, tuhan sertamu . . ." (Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you). From around the room in the simple, wooden home, voices of children and adults joined in, "terpujilah engkau di antara wanita, dan terpujilah buah tubuhmu, Yesus. . . ." (blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus).

Every May and October we pray the rosary here in St. Joseph parish in Lawe Desky, located in the Aceh province of Indonesia. May has been designated "Mary Month," while October is called "Rosary Month." Years ago, we opened and closed the two months with Mass. Although most of the Catholics had rosaries, they did not know how to pray it. Most often, people wore a rosary around their neck as a holy object to ward off demons.

In October last year, the parish pastoral council and I decided to teach every Catholic student from elementary school through high school how to pray the rosary. The youth, ages ten to eighteen, are students at three Catholic schools and five government schools. Since the parish church in Lawe Desky was the only place large enough to hold the meeting, the young people gathered there with me and the Catholic teachers from the Catholic schools. I was inspired by ten-year-old children who begged their parents to let them participate.

Little by little, we taught over 250 children to pray the rosary. By the end of the month, every child knew the prayers and could lead the rosary. At the suggestion of one of the students, the children decided to call themselves *Laskar Kristus dan Maria* (the Army of Christ and Mary). We divided the youth into groups with a teen leader and an adult leader in each group.

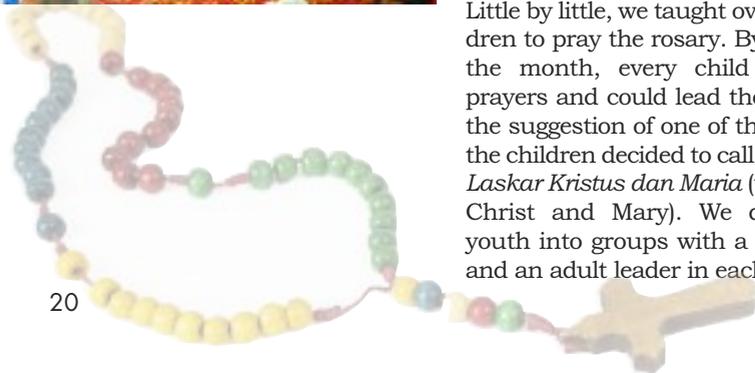


Mary Month this year began with the celebration of Mass. The young missionaries in the Army of Christ and Mary were eager to visit the home of every Catholic family and pray the rosary for the intentions of the family members. Each evening the groups of children moved from house to house around the parish. Even rain did not discourage them from their mission.

When the children gathered with a family, they took turns praying the rosary and passed a candle to each person who led one of the prayers. At the end of each evening, I heard many joyous stories from the children when they returned from the family visits. The father of one family prayed the Hail Mary with his family for the first time. A little boy tried to join in praying the Hail Mary in a barely audible voice. Shy mothers did their best to lead a Hail Mary and were helped along by other family members.

The rosary was prayed in home after home during Mary Month, and the seeds planted have begun to bear fruit. Children in the Army of Christ and Mary are confident missionaries among their neighbors and friends. Families that were visited have learned the rosary and its prayers and do not hesitate to offer their own prayers for special intentions. People who distanced themselves from the Church have begun to practice their Catholic faith again. More people are coming to Mass and receiving the sacraments, and the faith community is stronger.

*"Santa Maria, Bunda Allah, doakanlah kami yang berdosa ini sekarang dan pada saat kami mati. Amin."* (Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.) The rosary is truly a circle of love that encompasses our parish. Jesus and his mother embrace us with their love, and through them, we have renewed life.



# AUTHORS

**John Seland SVD** is from Scranton, Pennsylvania. He professed first vows in 1962 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1968. Father Jack has spent his career teaching at Nanzan University in Nagoya, Japan, and working to help impoverished children in the Philippines.

**Raoul Mayulu SVD** was born in Lusanga, Democratic Republic of the Congo. He entered the novitiate of Divine Word Missionaries in 1982 and professed first vows as a Brother in 1984. In 1992, he professed perpetual vows and received his mission assignment to Paraguay, where Brother Raoul worked at an agricultural school until 2014. During that time, Bro. Raoul studied business administration and worked as manager of a school run by Divine Word Missionaries in Asunción. Bro. Raoul is currently in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, where he serves as provincial treasurer and as manager of the Divine Word Missionary seminary.

**Alpha Mazenga SVD** is from Gungu, Democratic Republic of Congo. He professed first vows as a Divine Word Missionary in 1996 and final vows in 2004. He was ordained in 2005. Currently, Father Alpha is director of ORPER and serves as vice-provincial of the Congo Province of Divine Word Missionaries.

**Damien Lunders SVD** is from Salem, North Dakota. He entered Divine Word Missionaries in 1961 and professed perpetual vows as a Brother in 1969. After many years as a missionary in Papua New Guinea, Brother Damien cofounded the Mother of Perpetual Help Center in Nong Bua Lamphu, Thailand, in 2000.

**Jozef Roszynski SVD** is from Nidzica, Poland. He professed first vows in 1982 and was ordained a priest in 1989. His early pastoral work was in Poland, followed by language studies in Ireland. In 1992, Father Jozef began his mission assignment to Papua New Guinea. He has served for twenty-three years in the Diocese of Wewak in parish ministry and in various leadership roles in the Papua New Guinea Province of Divine Word Missionaries. Those roles included district superior and acting provincial superior. Father Jozef was ordained bishop of the Diocese of Wewak on April 25, 2015.

**Karolus Lanang Ona SVD** was born in Sumba, Indonesia. He professed first vows in 1993 and was ordained in 2000. Father Karolus' first assignment was in the St. John the Evangelist parish in Pinang Sori, Indonesia. Since 2003, he has served in St. Joseph parish in Lawe Desky, Indonesia.

**Xene Sanchez SVD** was born in Mandawe, Philippines. He professed first vows in 1976 and was ordained a priest in 1981. Father Xene has worked in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for over thirty years. During that time, he has been a bush missionary, fostered awareness and study of the Bible, worked as a formator of seminarians, and served two terms as provincial of the Congo Province of Divine Word Missionaries. Currently, Father Xene is director of Verbum Bible, a publishing house for Catholic bibles and biblical materials in different languages spoken in Africa and Madagascar. He is also a member of the team responsible for MIVEDI-Kwati farm.



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