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Winter 2017

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Editorial

When you picked up this latest issue of our magazine, I'm certain you noticed the new look to our cover. Our logo now has a cleaner, more modern look we hope you find appealing. Why the change? We here at the Mission Center thought it was time to catch up with the 21st century. The magazine masthead has not been redesigned since the Winter issue in 2001.

Magazines have played a significant role in the history of Divine Word Missionaries. The year before he founded the Society of the Divine Word, Father Arnold Janssen began publishing *The Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, a monthly magazine that shared news of missionary activity and encouraged Catholics in his native Germany to support mission work.

Two decades later, in 1895, Fr. Arnold dispatched the society's first missionary to the United States, Bro. Wendelin Meyer SVD. Among his duties, Bro. Wendelin raised money for missionary work by selling a German language Catholic magazine to America's burgeoning population of German immigrants. While selling copies of the magazine door to door, Bro. Wendelin learned of a large farm for sale about 20 miles northwest of Chicago. That farmland would become Divine Word Missionaries' American home base of Techny, Illinois.

Please note that in our redesigned logo, the dominant word is now "mission." This stresses that despite any changes to the magazine, important things remain the same. Things have changed since Fr. Arnold's original *Little Messenger of the Sacred Heart* went to press. Fr. Arnold Janssen is now Saint Arnold Janssen. The original magazines were hand delivered door-to-door; our current magazine is sent out to over one hundred thousand households and Churches. The thing that remains the same... the magazine shares news of missionary activity. The photos taken and articles written by our missionaries throughout the world, will continue to bring our mission to the hands and hearts of you, our valued benefactors and friends.

Please let me know what you think of the magazine's new look.


Bro. Daniel Holman SVD
Interim Mission Director

P.S. to learn more of our publishing beginnings go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhTx1QsU7q8>

Please note: In the coming issues more design changes will be taking place.

Contact me any time, my e-mail address is:
director@svdmissions.org



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We try to meet the needs of every person who comes to us, whatever his or her **nationality, language or religion**. If for some reason this is not possible we use the means of other organizations to help.



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 Divine Word Missionaries work in over 78 different lands on all continents except Antarctica.

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“Miss Joan” Lay Missionary in Indonesia

Adapted from an article by Joan Grabowski

We are all missionaries, spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Let us continue to work together, professed and lay, to further the mission begun by the visionary founder St. Arnold Janssen.



Joan Grabowski is an American lay Catholic, and a female volunteer lay missionary in Ledalero, Indonesia. To the Divine Word Missionary, St. Paul Major Seminary community, and the 275 seminarians studying there, her name is “Miss Joan”.

“Miss Joan”

It all began at St. Rita Catholic Church, Fort Worth, Texas, when Joan met Father Paul Papa Kahan SVD. Fr. Paul spoke of St. Paul Major Seminary in Ledalero and Joan was intrigued by the challenge of being a lay missionary.

For two years now, Joan has been living and teaching at St. Paul Major Seminary. She supports the English language program, both formally and informally. She is also a student at the seminary, studying for her Master’s degree in Theology.

“At the same time I arrived, Father Bill Burt, SVD, an Australian, joined the community here. What some might say was a ‘coincidence’, I see as God’s provision.



Father Leo Kleden SVD, the Provincial of the Ende Province, says that he is grateful to have two native English speakers living in the community and serving the English program. Additionally, he told me once that he is happy to have a lay woman residing in the community in Ledalero because the SVDs around the world are interested in exploring many facets of community life and interculturality – not just in terms of nations, languages, and religions, but also economic status, gender and, shall we say, marital status – single, non-professed religious and families, for example. "

Formally Joan meets with seminarians in various, non-academic settings, and leads conversation groups. Informally, she speaks only English with the Fraters. Gradually, she says, it is getting more common to hear English spoken here. The Indonesian students and confreres study English through postulancy, novitiate, and their first year as students at the major seminary. Prior to learning English, most students are already multi-lingual. There are more than 300





Joan says “Thanks!” to Fr. Paul Papa Kahan SVD for encouraging her work in Indonesia.

Fr. Paul is currently Provincial of Divine Word Missionaries United States Southern Province



local languages in Indonesia, in addition to the relatively new national language called “Bahasa Indonesia”. Because of this many students are already skilled in learning languages. Practicing speaking English—as many of them have never before met a native English speaker in this remote part of eastern Indonesia—is a primary need. Conversational English is rarely heard outside of the classroom. Even most local English teachers have never heard a native English speaker in person.

Because there is little English spoken in their local villages, and because many from this Asian culture are loathe to risk making mistakes in public lest they are shamed, there is great reluctance to speak English. Joan explains, “With Fr. Bill and I living in this community for two years and now my studying with the seminarians at the seminary school, I can say that they are gradually gaining confidence to risk speaking English. It helps that I love to laugh and am also learning their language, so they get to see me making many, many mistakes as a normal part of the learning curve.”

Joan shares, "As far as the intercultural aspect of my living in Divine Word Missionaries community, I can say I



Songs for Ledalero

To help support St. Paul Major Seminary in Ledalero, Flores, Indonesia, Joan Grabowski and Fr. Eman Weroh SVD recorded a music CD—seven songs, five of which are in English, two composed by Fr. Eman.

have learned a lot about culture shock and have lived to tell about it! Looking back, I can see that the culture shock was experienced both by those I lived with as well as me. I mean, how many Divine Word Missionaries have ever lived in community with a single woman before? As for me, I had been living independently as an American single woman with a house, car, professional job and pets for over 25 years! When our cultures collided and it took some time for everyone to learn to live together. After my last holiday I returned to the seminary and was delighted by the warm welcome of my confreres. Glory to God – *Puji Tuhan!*”

Joan realizes that the challenge of speaking English—one of the primary official languages of Divine Word Missionaries— is not limited to Indonesia alone. Divine Word Missionaries, around the world are challenged to learn the languages of their new home with each new mission assignment. I pray that they enjoy the challenge and learn quickly.

Joan says, "I am so grateful for the opportunity to partner with Divine Word Missionaries. We are all missionaries, spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. Let us continue to work together, professed and lay, to further the mission begun by the visionary founder St. Arnold Janssen. *Soli Deo Gloria.*”◆



St. Paul Major Seminary

At St. Paul Major Seminary there are almost three hundred Divine Word Missionary seminarians preparing for the priesthood. They attend school with three hundred other priest candidates from various religious orders and local dioceses. St. Paul Major Seminary is one of the largest Catholic seminaries in the world.

Most students studying at St. Paul come from extremely poor families, growing up on farms and living in simple bamboo homes. Flores is 95% Catholic, and the people are good-hearted and welcoming, but like in many areas around the world, they live difficult lives in great economic poverty.

The students live simple lives as they work and learn at the seminary. After attending daily classes, the seminarians tend their gardens and livestock (pigs and chickens) which provides most of their daily food. In addition to their Bachelors and Masters degree studies, and community activities, the seminarians cook for themselves in simple “kitchens” on open wood fires or open-flame gas burners and their diet consists of rice, dried fish, and home-grown vegetables and fruits. Seminarians also hand-wash their own clothes and hang them out to dry before ironing. There is no air conditioning, no showers and no bathtubs, no hot water, they bathe with ground water which occasionally can run out, or sometimes run brown from the water running over the earth. There is Wi-Fi but only when the electricity is working, and even then, the signal is weak and is not sufficient to support the students study needs.

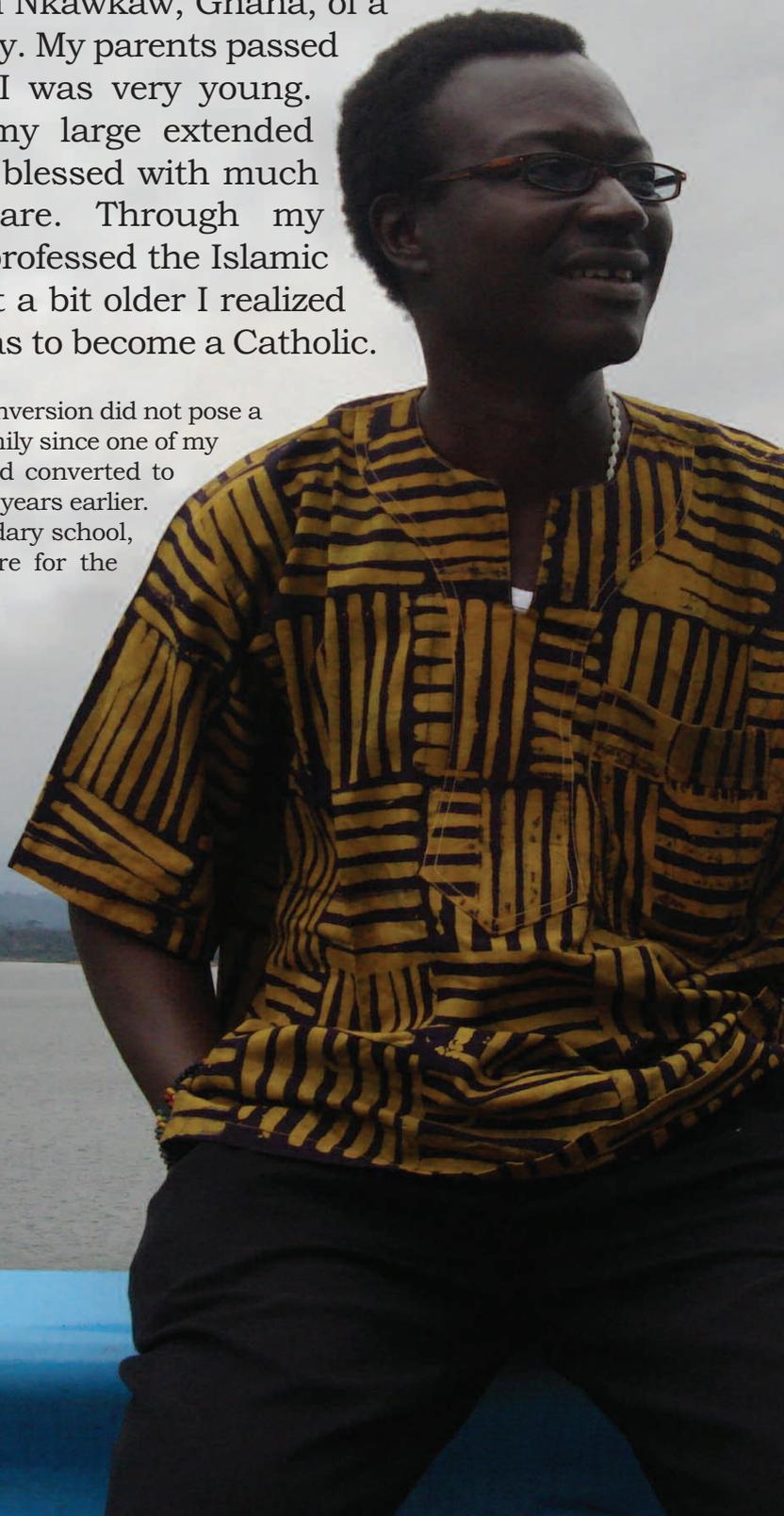
The seminary is staffed by Divine Word Missionaries who have Masters or Doctorate degrees in philosophy, theology, anthropology, or missiology. They have so much wisdom and have dedicated their lives to forming these young men into new missionaries. Please remember all of them in your prayers!

Ghanaian Missionary makes Mexico home

Kingsley Sagru-Larr SVD

I was born in Nkawkaw, Ghana, of a Muslim family. My parents passed away when I was very young. Thanks to my large extended family I was blessed with much love and care. Through my childhood I professed the Islamic faith, as I got a bit older I realized my dream was to become a Catholic.

My thoughts of conversion did not pose a problem in my family since one of my older brothers had converted to Catholicism some years earlier. So while in secondary school, I began to prepare for the



sacraments of Christian initiation. After three years, I was baptized, received my first communion, and was confirmed. It was during these studies that I developed a keen interest in the priesthood.

After high school and a year of national service, I entered Divine Word Missionary's seminary to start philosophical and theological studies.

Then came my Cross-Cultural Training Program (CTP), an important and valuable part of preparing for life as a missionary. I was sent to Oaxaca, in southwestern Mexico, and learned the languages spoken by the people, Zapotec and Spanish. At St. John the Baptist Parish in San Juan Yaeé, part of my CTP ministerial experience was parish activities. This included communion services, catechism, visiting single parents, visiting the sick, and the aged, and working with the local people on the sugar cane farms and coffee plantations. After all this training I professed my final vows and was then ordained back home in Ghana.

Today I am the pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Santa Cruz Yagavila. It has eight outstations and the neighboring parish is San Juan Yaeé, where I did my CTP.

In a joking way, I sometimes say that Mexico is a "continent" just to emphasize that it is a large country with a variety of cultures. It is a vibrant Latin American country in terms of economic and social development.



Today I am the pastor of Holy Cross Parish in Santa Cruz Yagavila.

Like so many Divine Word Missionaries around the world, in Mexico, I am fully involved in the apostolate to the indigenous peoples, who are very poor and marginalized.



Divine Word Missionaries of the Mexico Province work in six states: Mexico City, Morelos, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Chiapas, and Oaxaca. Other Divine Word Missionaries from the Western Province of the United States work in Tijuana.

Like so many Divine Word Missionaries around the world, in Mexico, I am fully involved in the apostolate to the indigenous peoples, who are very poor and marginalized.

As missionaries, we face many challenges. The Archdiocese of Oaxaca, where I work, encompasses one of the poorest areas and is one of the most deprived states of the country. People struggle daily to provide their families with adequate food and shelter. Economically, it is challenging to meet their daily basic needs. As in many places around the world, cultural, social, and political conditions seem to affect the poor the most.

Traveling through miles of rugged roads, mountains, valleys and canyons I visit the sick, celebrate Mass and baptize the “future Catholics” of Mexico.

This year I celebrate my fourth anniversary as a priest, as well as four years in the Mexico Province, my new “home”. I am thankful for these four years with all I have learned and with the many joys I have shared. The people I have met, the challenges I have faced with them, have led me to my next dream...to specialize in pastoral theology. These studies will give me a better understanding, and the skills to help the people, “my new family”, in our province in Mexico.♦

I appeal to you to keep me and my parishioners in your prayers.



Eager to Play, Eager to Learn

Bishop Józef Roszynski SVD

Kids with tablets coming back from school

Children in general, are very creative. Here in Papua New Guinea, children are often creative out of necessity. With no bought or manufactured toys, they will always find something to play with. One day during my sermon I heard some kind of disturbing squeak from the children’s side of the church. I asked, “What’s making that noise?” The kids showed me a small rat they brought to church and were playing with. Not being a rat lover I said, “Remove it,” and they immediately sent it out over the wall. Many times, things as simple as an old tire or a recycled bicycle wheel, serves as a great toy and leads to hours of amusement. Their creativity always surprises me. Once at the seashore, I watched as a group of kids found an old refrigerator and tried to launch it as a boat. I found it very funny; they saw it as a seafaring adventure.

Beyond the amazing ability to create toys from next to nothing, I am equally impressed with their desire to go to school. Not everybody can go to school here. There are not enough teachers and not enough schools. Most of the time, parents do not have money for school fees. Yet despite these obstacles, kids here want to learn and want to achieve as much of an education as possible. I am glad our diocese is very much engaged in education on all levels, from elementary through primary school, all the way to university.

Children in all corners of the world deserve to have an education. But as I watch the children of PNG, I can see they will continue to be creative and work hard to better their life. Those children who have achieved some success will be forever grateful to all who contributed towards their development and education. I pray that more will be willing to help others make progress and better their lives. ♦

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The Arnold Project: Hope for the Vulnerable in Guayaquil, Ecuador

John Cudjoe SVD

Offering hope to families in desperate surroundings, the Arnold Project operates in three parishes outside Guayaquil, Ecuador: St. Arnold Janssen in Mount Sinai, which is northeast of the city, and Our Lady of the Rocks and St. Brother Michael in Guasmo, which is south of the city.

The project is a pastoral and professional response to assist families and children in risky and violent situations. Despite all the dangers in these sectors of Guayaquil, more than 270,000 inhabitants live in this vast area far away from the traditional limits of the city. Seventy-five percent of this population lives in abject poverty, according to a report published recently by the Home for Christ Corp., which has worked in the area for many years.

These families migrated from the interior of the country, mostly from Chimborazo, Azuay and Manabi provinces. They live in small houses made of wood and reeds and built on



the extensions of land acquired from land traffickers. Many families live in distressed situations. It is common to find more than one family living in one house or many single mothers with their children, some from different fathers. Unemployment is rampant.

Families are plagued by physical, psychological and sexual violence. Children are abused by their stepfathers, brothers or uncles. Sometimes the mothers are aware of the ordeal but they do not report it for fear of losing financial support that the men bring to the house. Some women consider reporting these crimes taboo. Others believe they cannot do anything about the situation, probably because they too, underwent the same abuse when they were small.

Drug addiction and gang violence have become a pandemic among youths. This has led to an increase in the level of domestic violence, leaving more children exposed to physical, sexual and psychological abuse. The narcotic traffickers have extended their tentacles into many suburbs of our mission area in Guayaquil. The use of minors to distribute drugs is the biggest danger we face. It has provoked a trend of “micro trafficking” in schools and institutes where the children sell marijuana, cocaine and above all, ‘H’—a byproduct of heroin.





Our daily Mission

These dire circumstances led the Ecuador SVD province to create the Arnold Project, which has been functioning successfully since 2004. In the last two and a half years, the province has extended its missionary services to the new Mount Sinai parish. The families served by the project are grateful for it. They see in the Church and the SVD mission a sign of hope and compassion, a place their children can take refuge, and begin to recover or break the cycle of abuse and violence.

We in the coastal district of the province, consider the Arnold Project an evangelical response to these challenges. We receive the help of many professionals, including three psychologists who assist three times a week in our parishes, as well as a lawyer and civil servants. Other organizations that share our objective also provide services to the families we minister to. ♦





Sekan Sekan

Eric Ankamah SVD

Sekan is an expression in Tok-Pisin (one of the three official languages of Papua New Guinea), which means a handshake or to shake hands with someone. However, the word can take on different meanings depending on the circumstance and the context. For example, it can mean acceptance, or welcome, or thanksgiving. On special occasions when I visit a community for a celebration, there is often a *sekan* as a sign of appreciation by the community.

Once the members of the Legion of Mary in Saints Cyril & Methodius parish in Mikarew invited me to their annual Acies, the ceremony in which legionaries renew their consecration to Mary. The legionaries came from the four Legion groups in the parish. I gave them a spiritual talk on the implications of the *fiat* (yes) of our Blessed Lady for their duties and commitment to the Legion of Mary. Then, as usual, there was time for them to visit the Lord in the sacrament of reconciliation. This was followed by the celebration of the Eucharist. During the Eucharistic celebration, the legionaries had the opportunity to renew their consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary in these words: "I am all yours, my Queen and my Mother, and all that I have is yours." At the end of the celebration, there was *bung kaikai* on the parish premises, time for socializing and sharing of food and drink. Then after a while, it was time for *sekan*, that is, the legionaries wanted to show their appreciation.



As the saying goes in Papua New Guinea, “We don’t only say thank you, but we do thank you as well.” Thus, *sekan* is their way of doing thank you. I was invited to stand up from where I sat among the people. Then the president of each Legion group came forward to offer some words of gratitude and present to me what they had brought as their gift. The items consisted mainly of produce from their gardens. But special among the items was the *buai* or beetle nut. The beetle nut is highly valued because of its social and economic value.

The real significance of *sekan* is relationship. Previously, I was only an outsider to the parish community. But now, I have assumed a new relationship with the people. I have become one of their own. I am no longer an outsider. In essence, they are my new family. Thus, this simple gesture has a profound meaning on a person’s relationship with the rest of the community. It is also a way of receiving new members into the community.

Relationship defines almost every aspect of the daily lives of the people—social, economic, and political. Relationship also provides a sense of security. A person’s achievement does not so much depend on merits as it does on his or her relationship with the rest of the community. This is how serious a person’s relationship with his or her community can be. And so, with this understanding, this is why in any community I visit, their *sekan* means a lot to me and my work among them as a religious missionary. ♦

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- 1 year of study \$500
- 4 years of study \$2,000

The World is as A Classroom

Aris Martin SVD



Back home in the Philippines, when I was younger and more adventurous, I remember a poster on the church bulletin board: “Want to see the world? Be a Divine Word Missionary!” Coming from a family of five brothers in the seafaring industry and being the youngest, I envied their experiences, their stories, and their photographs of Europe, the Americas, Australia, and Asia. I never realized that this desire to see the world without becoming a seaman, was God’s way of bringing me to Divine Word Missionaries.

Fast forward past sixteen years in formation to the time before my ordination on December 6, 2008. Our formator asked us to write down our three choices for our first mission assignments after ordination. There is an unwritten rule in the Philippines that the farther one is assigned, the more exciting the missionary experience would be. I was just a pen away from my dream of seeing the world and going as far as possible! My three choices for my mission assignment were: 1. Mexico (The farther the better); 2. Japan (The more difficult the language, the more exciting); and 3. Australia/New Zealand (It is an

There is an unwritten rule in the Philippines that the farther one is assigned, the more exciting the missionary experience would be. I was just a pen away from my dream of seeing the world and going as far as possible!

“Lord, you must be joking. Where is the world?”

isolated continent, so it would be good to do mission work where the number of cows is greater than the number of people).

After spending a long time in prayer, I handed my letter to my formator. The next day, he called me in and asked me: “Aris, are you not considering the Philippines?” Spontaneously, I said, “NO, Father.” Then he continued, “Have you considered working in the Philippines during your prayer?” I was reduced to silence. Then after more time of thought and prayer, I dropped Australia and put in the Philippines as my third and last choice. I clung to the belief that God knew my heart’s desire. My letter and those of my classmates were forwarded to the Generalate in Rome.

Finally, the time came for our first assignments to be announced. This is a big event in the community. We all gathered together, and the rector read the letter from Rome with our first mission assignments: Frater 1, missionary to Argentina. Frater 2, missionary to the mountain provinces of the Northern Philippines. Frater 3, missionary to the Southern Philippines where Muslims are the majority. Frater 4, missionary to the central Philippines on an island where malaria prevalent. Frater Aris . . .” Then I waited. In silence, I prayed one more

time, “My God, this is the chance to see the world. Please make my dream real.” The rector continued, “Frater Aris, missionary to the Philippine Central Province from Divine Word Seminary, Tagaytay City, to Christ the King Mission Seminary in Manila.” The distance was a little more than sixty miles away, and I was going from one seminary to another seminary. I sighed, “Lord, you must be joking. Where is the world?”

A year later, I went to Rome for further theological studies. Then, I went back to the

Without much excitement about being in a seminary setting again, I said yes. Why not? I was a master of seminary life. I have been in it for almost more than half of my life, from rising in the morning to lights out at night. As my teacher in the seminary used to say, the only difference is the same!

I was asked to teach two theology subjects. One subject I was already teaching in the Philippines, but the other I would teach for the first time. It was called Non-Christian Religions. The title is negative, non-Christian. How can I teach who I am not? But my supervisor encouraged me to take the challenge. So, I took the challenge, believing that perhaps deepening my knowledge of non-Christian religions can better my being a Christian. This inspiration came instantly, like Hans Küng’s spontaneous response to “Why I am Still a Christian” to Bertrand Russell’s “Why I Am Not Christian”.



seminary in the Philippines. By then, I was frustrated and had stopped dreaming of the world. I just accepted my fate that I was not “export quality.” I was only good for local consumption, as the saying goes. Just when my dreams were not desired anymore and my prayers were no longer uttered, I had an opportunity to teach at Divine Word College in Epworth, Iowa.

Filled with anxiety, I entered the classroom the first day. In my mind, I knew I would be teaching who I am not. I knew I would be meeting who I am not. I knew I would be in a place where I am not. Thrilled with the not and the unknown, I stood for the first time before my nine students. I started with a prayer, knowing that it could minimize my anxiety. But that prayer brought us to a consciousness that there is only one God who celebrates differences.

I asked my students to introduce themselves. The first was John, a Korean-American; then Tess and Pho, both Vietnamese; and then Wil, from Haiti; Bri, a German-American; Pao, a Chinese nun; Gio and Man, both American-born of Mexican parents; and Vuo, also Vietnamese. All of them were different, yet we were in the same classroom. Each spoke a language other than English. All of us were Christians, but were willing to learn about non-Christians. Awed with differences coming together and enriching one another, I introduced myself: "I am Father Aris Martin from the Philippines. I am a Divine Word Missionary. The world is our parish. The world is our home."



Then I began to feel the whole world compress in that classroom; a common home for people who are different. Standing before those seminarians, sisters, and brothers after my introduction, I was brought back to that poster of a Divine Word Missionary inviting me to be one so I can see the world. This is the world here and now in this classroom. Here at Divine Word College in Epworth, Iowa, in this small classroom number 208, words on posters are prophetic, dreams are made real, the unknown is not feared, and differences are not discouraged. In fact, the non-, the unknown, the different, and the other are celebrated. It is a welcoming world. Better yet, it is a piece of heaven on earth.

What I know now is that the world is a classroom.

Before the first class ended that day, I noticed that there were still three empty chairs. Is it possible that you, the one reading my article, or somebody else you might know, can fill the three empty chairs? Please spread the news, "Come and see." You might fit in the chair. There is not much of a requirement. Just be yourself and welcome others as they are. Then, when the three empty chairs are filled and roster of the twelve students is complete, I can silently move out from this classroom filled with joy and give way to the teacher par excellence, the Divine Word Incarnate. Who knows? I may be welcomed to another room to teach, perhaps in your college or perhaps in your parish. I do not know. What I know now is that the world is a classroom.♦





“Fu Shenfu” Migrant Center

Jan Wroblewski SVD

How we help



At the Fu Shenfu Migrant Centre in Poland’s capital of Warsaw, we try to meet the needs of every person who comes to us, regardless of nationality, language or religion. Although most of the people we serve come from Asia—Vietnam and China in particular—we welcome immigrants from different parts of the world.

Today’s European migration constitutes one of the vastest movements of people in history. In these last decades, the phenomenon, now involving about 200 million individuals, has altered the structural reality of contemporary society. It represents an increasingly complex problem from the social, cultural, political, religious, economic and pastoral points of view.

In Europe’s quickly changing economic and social situation, large groups of migrants have found their new home in Poland. Therefore, we at the migrant center, offer a wide array of help to everyone who contacts us.

We provide assistance in legal consultancy and administrative procedures. We help prepare applications, revocations and correspondences. We offer translation, spoken and written, in Vietnamese, Chinese and English as well as Polish. We teach Polish language courses, and we provide free access to computers at our Internet Café.

If for some reason we cannot help directly, we refer migrants to public agencies and nongovernmental organisations that have the power to solve the given problem.



Our Activities

As a Catholic organization, we know the importance of human spirituality. That is why we offer pastoral care for Vietnamese Catholics. At every stage we try to meet the individual spiritual needs of all who visit us.

Welcoming the stranger remains a permanent feature of the Catholic Church. The Church, if it were not open to welcome every person, regardless of nationality, would cease to be a sign of salvation for all people. That is why we are open to everyone who visits the Fu Shenfu Migrant Centre.

Outdoor lessons

Field Classes

One of the greatest, and often most frustrating challenges migrants face in their new country is dealing with the language. To help newcomers feel at home in Warsaw, the Fu Shenfu Migrant Centre offers Polish language courses. Yet not every lesson takes place within the center's walls.

We want our students to learn that real life doesn't happen inside buildings. The surrounding world delivers fantastic opportunities to develop students' interests and creativity.

Lessons outdoors, or at least outside the classroom, bring students plenty of benefits. Students gain deeper understanding of issues we have discussed in class. They develop the ability to perceive phenomena and shape their imagination. They gain practical vocabulary and grammar skills to use in real life. Such lessons also allow teachers to acquaint students with our history, culture, national heritage and customs.





Last but not least, migrants often feel uneasy, lonely and sometimes even a bit depressed in a foreign country. Many of them have no family or friends here and must face cultural differences alone. Therefore, field classes offer them a great way to integrate with Poles or other students experiencing the same problems. When the classes are over, they start calling each other and building relationships.

Cooking workshops have been a successful type of “outside the classroom” lessons. The migrant center has had two cooking workshops so far, each following a cycle of Polish lessons connected to food and cooking. Those students who don’t love cooking at least love eating. So all students, no matter their culture, find the topic interesting and delicious.

Both workshops were held in the home of our lecturer, Sylwia, and each went differently. The first workshop took place last year with only three students. While Marina, Ala and Sylwia cooked beef stroganoff with rice and beetroots and Indian-style chicken wings (delicious in a pink spicy sauce), Jelena prepared the dessert: her specialty of angel wings (deep-fried pastry ribbons). Students also sampled cold meats, vegetables and other treats. With so few people participating, they were able to discuss each step of cooking in Polish. After dinner, Sylwia led a language lesson from their course book. Everyone agreed the hit of the outing was Max, Sylwia’s little Yorkshire terrier.

The second cooking event took place in January, this time with 11 people. The students came from different continents, so the menu was international. Each migrant brought ingredients to prepare a meal.

“We had plenty of food, more than was planned,” Sylwia said. She sent a text to the migrant center inviting the friars over to dinner, hoping they would

deal with all the food. “However, it was a weekday so they were busy doing their duties and couldn’t come,” she said. “Fortunately, there was my son and his friend, who sat with us and we had a very good time consuming everything.”

After the dinner, everyone sang songs in different languages.

Cooking workshops aren’t the only lessons outside the classroom. The migrant center also organizes expeditions to sightsee Warsaw. Not only are these opportunities to train students in the language, but also to acquaint them with Polish history, culture and heritage. Accompanied by guides who speak their own language or English, students have toured such sites as the Jewish museum or Wilanów Palace.

A more intensive workshop took place last year in the Warsaw Old Town. This time each student had to prepare a lecture about one significant Old Town sight along with a quiz for other participants, all in Polish. The first lecture, about Sigismund’s Column, was prepared by Marina, from Ukraine. Then Jelena, also from Ukraine, made a speech about the Royal Castle, and Parisa, from Iran, talked about the Barbakan and the remains of the Old City’s fortified walls. Filling out the tour, Sylwia shared more information about this beautiful old place.

After the excursion, the participants received certificates for their participation in the workshop, noting the subject of their lecture and the number of points they scored in the quiz.

The migrant center is now organizing a two-day trip to Toruń with a larger number of students. One of the students has already expressed her willingness to conduct a lecture about the famous Toruń gingerbread. ♦



AUTHORS

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Jan Wróblewski SVD was born in Chorzów, Poland. He entered Divine Word Missionaries in 1975 and professed first vows in 1977. He was ordained in 1982. After his ordination, he served in a parish in Rybnik, Poland. Then, he went for further studies to Warsaw, Poland, and Mainz, Germany. Since 2004, he has been in Warsaw. He was the rector of the local community of Divine Word Missionaries and a member of the provincial council. For the past six years, he has been the director of the Fu Shenfu Migrant Center.

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