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EDITORIAL

There are countless aspects of the life of a missionary. Most of us go unaware of these things. Some are mundane. Some are challenging. All contribute to their work as they strive to be living examples of God's love and mercy.

The articles in this issue of **Mission Update** illustrate some of these aspects, examples of why the lives of our missionaries are unique—and uniquely blessed.

Father Bao Nguyen SVD sent us a story about his time in Papua New Guinea. He recalls a day when he and a seminarian journeyed deep into the bush to celebrate Mass ... and the young seminarian learned he will not find even the most basic of modern conveniences—or early 20th century conveniences—in remote Papua New Guinea.

Fr. Bao's story made us laugh here at the Mission Office, but we also saw it as a human reminder of the sacrifices our missionaries make when they leave the comforts of their homes to serve God's people far from what we call civilization.

In the Philippines, Brother Jonattan Plascencia SVD discovered that life as a missionary can change in an instant. He was in Cebu City last September when a severe earthquake hit the other side of the island of Cebu. Because he is training to become a nurse, he joined a medical mission to the earthquake zone.

There, he learned an unexpected lesson as a missionary. The most valuable thing he had to offer people devastated by loss was his presence. To listen to them. To hold their hands. To be where God needed him to be to serve his people.

In this issue we also learn about perseverance as Divine Word Missionaries return to South Sudan after being forced to leave nine years earlier in the flames of civil war, about integrity as one of our missionaries in the Philippines is recognized for the decades he has spent serving the street people of Manila, and about inspiration as an account of St. Joseph Fienademetz—one of our earliest missionaries—proves why he remains a role model to Divine Word Missionaries today.

There are countless aspects of the life of a missionary. We are pleased to share with you just a few of them in this issue.

Yours in the Divine Word,

Bro. Daniel Holman SVD
Mission Director

Contact me anytime, my email address is
director@svdmissions.org

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for your
prayers & support!**



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151

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79

COUNTRIES



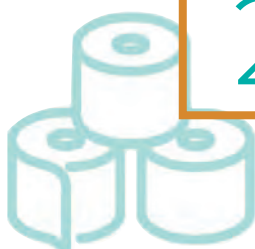
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Divine Word Missionaries work in over 79 different lands on all continents except Antarctica.

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Editorial Team: Bro. Dan Holman SVD • Carmelita J. Linden • Jeffrey Westhoff • Fr. Jorge Zetino SVD



In the Bush— Mission Lessons Happen in Unexpected Places

By Bao Nguyen SVD

One morning after Mass, a man approached me with a simple but heartfelt request. His mother had just passed away, and he asked if I could come to his village to celebrate her funeral Mass. I don't remember the name of the village now, but I do remember the journey.

The village lay nearly a mile from Yampu station, a remote outstation deep in the bush of Papua New Guinea. It took about 45 minutes to walk there along a winding path through rugged mountains and thick jungle beneath a wide-open sky. Modern conveniences were almost nonexistent. But what the people lacked in infrastructure, they made up for in something far more powerful: faith—raw, resilient and beautifully alive.

That day, I had a special guest with me: Frater Tinh, a fellow Vietnamese Divine Word Missionary seminarian visiting from Kainantu in the Diocese of Goroka. He had come to spend a few days experiencing missionary life, and I thought this funeral would be a perfect introduction.



*He was
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and
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It was his
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into
the bush.*

"This will be a good opportunity for you," I told him. "You'll see how the people mourn with deep emotion and how they celebrate both life and death with songs, tears, food and prayer." He was eager, full of curiosity and energy. It was his first time venturing into the bush.

When we arrived, the community had already gathered. Men, women and children were seated on the ground beneath the open sky. Some were singing in soft, haunting tones; others were wailing in grief. The deceased lay in a simple wooden coffin, surrounded by flowers, the scent of burning leaves and the quiet hum of the forest. The atmosphere was sacred, heavy with sorrow, yet full of reverence and hope.

Mass began. I stood before the people, focused on the Word and silently preparing my homily. Then, during the first reading, I felt a



gentle tap on my arm. Frater Tinh leaned in and whispered urgently: “Fr. Bao, do you know where the toilet is? My stomach is upset. I need to go now!”

I looked at him, half-concerned, half-amused. Welcome to the mission, I thought. I motioned to one of the local men and quietly asked him to take Frater Tinh to the nearest “toilet.” Of course, in the bush, that word can mean many things—a pit latrine behind a bamboo wall, a rickety wooden outhouse or just a private spot behind some banana trees.

Frater Tinh hurried off with his guide while the reading continued. I smiled inwardly, knowing this would become a part of his real missionary formation.

After Mass, as we sat on the ground sharing some kaukau (sweet potato) and instant coffee, I turned to him and asked casually, “So, how was the toilet?”

He gave me a tired but honest smile. “Father ... the toilet is new.”

“Oh, that’s good!” I said. “You’re lucky. Probably they just dug the pit, so it’s still clean. Was there water?”

He looked down and chuckled sheepishly. “No water. And no toilet paper either.”

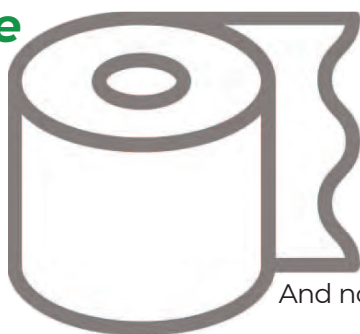
I couldn’t help myself. I asked, “Then ... what did you do?”

He hesitated, then burst into laughter. “I remembered the stories you told me—how you used to go into the bush without toilet paper and had to use whatever was available: a handkerchief, a sock, even leaves. So ... I used my briefs!”



*I looked at him,
half-concerned,
half-amused.*

**Welcome
to the
mission,
I thought.**



We both laughed – not out of mockery, but from deep, shared understanding. It was the kind of laughter that comes from lived experience, from recognizing something true and universal about missionary life.

I looked at him and said, “Now you’re becoming a real missionary. This is how it begins.”

It might sound like a trivial story—an upset stomach, a missing roll of toilet paper and a sacrificed pair of briefs. But in truth, that moment held a profound lesson. I told him that mission isn’t just about preaching the Gospel or celebrating the sacraments. It’s about living fully with the people—in their joys and sorrows, in their comforts and discomforts, in their dignity and, yes, even in their messiness.

A true missionary learns to eat what the people eat, even when it’s unfamiliar. You drink what they drink. You sleep where they sleep. You bathe in the river with them. And, yes, you go to the toilet the way they do. It’s not about endurance. It’s about solidarity. It’s about humility.

We don’t bring the Gospel from above, like experts with answers. We bring it from within by becoming part of the people’s story. We walk with them, we listen to them, we live among them. We don’t come to change their culture but to understand it, to honor it, and to let the Gospel take root in it.

In that humble toilet, deep in the bush of Papua New Guinea, Frater Tinh didn’t just find relief. He stepped deeper into the mystery of the Incarnation of God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. Because mission, too, is incarnational. It isn’t always clean or convenient. Sometimes it smells. Sometimes it breaks down our pride and strips away our comforts. But it is real. And it is holy. ●

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When the Earth Moved

**everything shakes ...
but God continues to pass among us
gently, from hand to hand,
in the midst of his people**

By Jonattan Plascencia SVD



It was almost 10 o'clock at night on that unforgettable Sept. 30 when Mother Earth began to move.

It wasn't a loud noise at first, but a deep tremor, as though the ground itself was struggling to breathe. I was in my room in Cebu City, which is on the southern coast of the Philippine island of Cebu. I was sitting at my desk finishing a hospital clinical case presentation that I was to present the next day. I felt everything in our old house begin to move, and, for an instant, time seemed suspended—then the most intense shaking came.



It wasn't my first time experiencing an earthquake, but it certainly was one of the strongest. I stood, and the tremor threw me off balance. Although the room was still shaking, my first reaction was to run and check that our older missionaries in the house were safe. When the movement finally stopped, there was silence ... and then messages, calls, names, faces. Fear didn't scream. It sat still, lodged in the chest.

That night I hardly slept. Not because our house had suffered damage—fortunately, we were safe—but because strong aftershocks kept coming. Also, my heart was already somewhere else, with our people on the northern part of the island. News from there was

already starting to arrive — the first earthquake had caused severe damage. At least 79 people died, and nearly 1,300 were injured. Approximately 185,900 houses were damaged, with structural costs at millions of Philippine pesos.

My heart and mind that night were in the north. There, where the earth not only shook but broke. I thought of families, of children, of the elderly, of those who no longer had walls to protect them. I felt a restlessness that

would not leave me. It wasn't anxiety. It was a calling.

ARRIVAL IN QUAKE ZONE

A few days later, we went to northern Cebu in coordination with the University of San Carlos and the JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) dimension of the Philippines - South Province. I was assigned to a locality called Borbon to support the medical mission. Getting there was difficult. Just two hours before our 4 a.m. departure, another 5.8-magnitude earthquake struck. At our destination we saw collapsed houses, broken roads and exhausted faces. I encountered anxious people, people with headaches, people with fear, people who had lost almost everything and yet still gave thanks for a





bag of rice or a simple wound dressing.

As a nursing student, my hands did what they knew: clean wounds, take vital signs, touch to calm anxiety. As a missionary, my heart did

who helped one another without asking why. In the mother who consoled another mother. In the volunteer who carried boxes when no one was looking. In the respectful silence before the day's work began.

And there, in the middle of that shattered reality, I understood in a new way what it means to be a missionary of Jesus. A missionary like Jesus. I understood from another angle what St. Arnold Janssen so often taught about how to live as missionaries. The medical mission was not a comfortable or safe place. We worked under improvised structures with simple tables, boxes of medicines and long lines of people waiting.

While I took vital signs, cleaned wounds or explained how to manage pain and anxiety, the ground kept reminding us that nothing was entirely stable. Small aftershocks occurred suddenly. The body tensed. The heart sped up. For an instant, fear returned with force.

Moments came when, while attending to a patient, I felt the ground move again, slightly. No one screamed. No one ran. We just looked at each other, fully aware that a stronger quake could strike at any moment.



what it has learned: stay, not flee from pain, look into their eyes, touch, listen without hurry, be a steady presence, offer a hand that holds, a steady gaze when words are no longer enough. I heard testimonies of sleepless nights, of children crying every time the ground vibrated, of elderly people who resisted leaving the place where their home once stood.

At times, I felt I wasn't enough, especially as hundreds who had lost their homes arrived. They were anxious, sleep-deprived, wounded and hungry. I felt that a bandage and a stethoscope were trivial things. But there I learned something that isn't in books or in theological reflections: Healing is not about solving; it is about accompanying. Being there. Sharing the weight.

REVELATION IN THE WRECKAGE

I discovered that God was not found in long explanations or quick answers, but in the people



And still, we continued. No one let go of the patient. No one left the table. No one said, “Let’s go.” We kept working with fear on our shoulders, but also with a quiet conviction: Now more than ever, we needed to be there.

member a dear friend, the late Gustavo Villavicencio SVD, a missionary in Angola for 30 years who had lived through its civil war. He used to say, “While other religious people from other Christian denominations decided to leave, the Catholic missionaries stayed.” And yes, that had been my intuition from the first hours after the first strong quake. Caring for God’s people means being present when everything is shaking; caring when it hurts; staying when it would be easier to leave.

I returned home tired but more aware. I learned that serving does not eliminate fear but transforms it. I learned that faith is not about not trembling, but about not running away when everything is trembling. That night of the earthquake, I understood that my vocation is not to be safe, but available. And I understood that God, even when everything shakes, continues to pass among us ... gently, from hand to hand, in the midst of his people.

With much affection, for all those who support us with their prayers, help and assistance from different parts of the world, I share with you these consoling words from our founder, St. Arnold: “When we have done all that is within our power, God will do the rest.” ●

WITH GOD, BEING PRESENT

I clearly remember a mother who, when she felt one of those small tremors, squeezed my hand tightly as I took her blood pressure. Her eyes filled with fear. As I checked her pressure, I asked her to breathe with me. It wasn’t a complex medical intervention, but it was profoundly human. We were both experiencing the fear. In that moment, I understood that many people were not seeking only medicine but calm and safety—someone who wouldn’t leave when the earth began moving again.

And at the end of it all, God was there in us, with us, beside us. I re-

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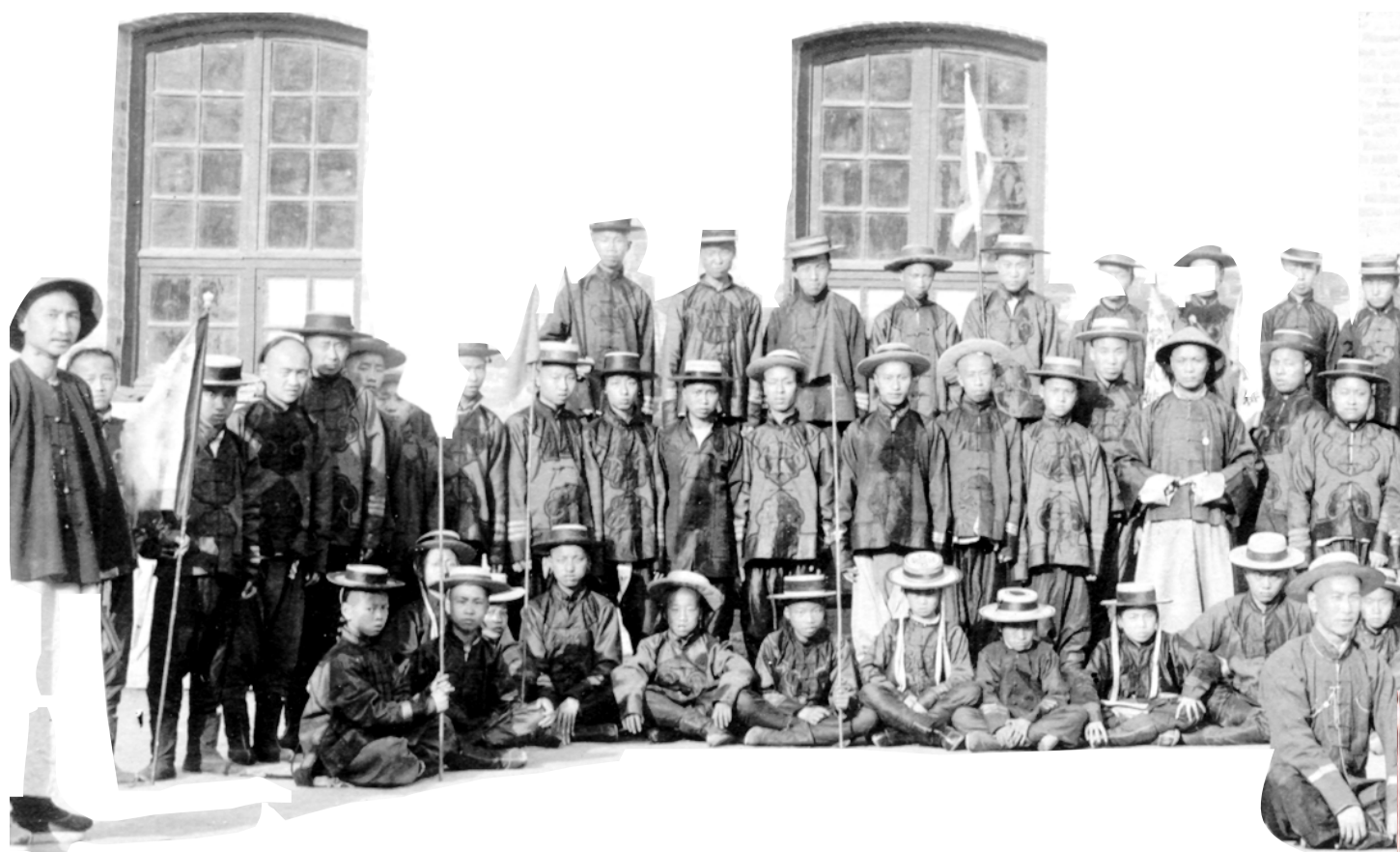
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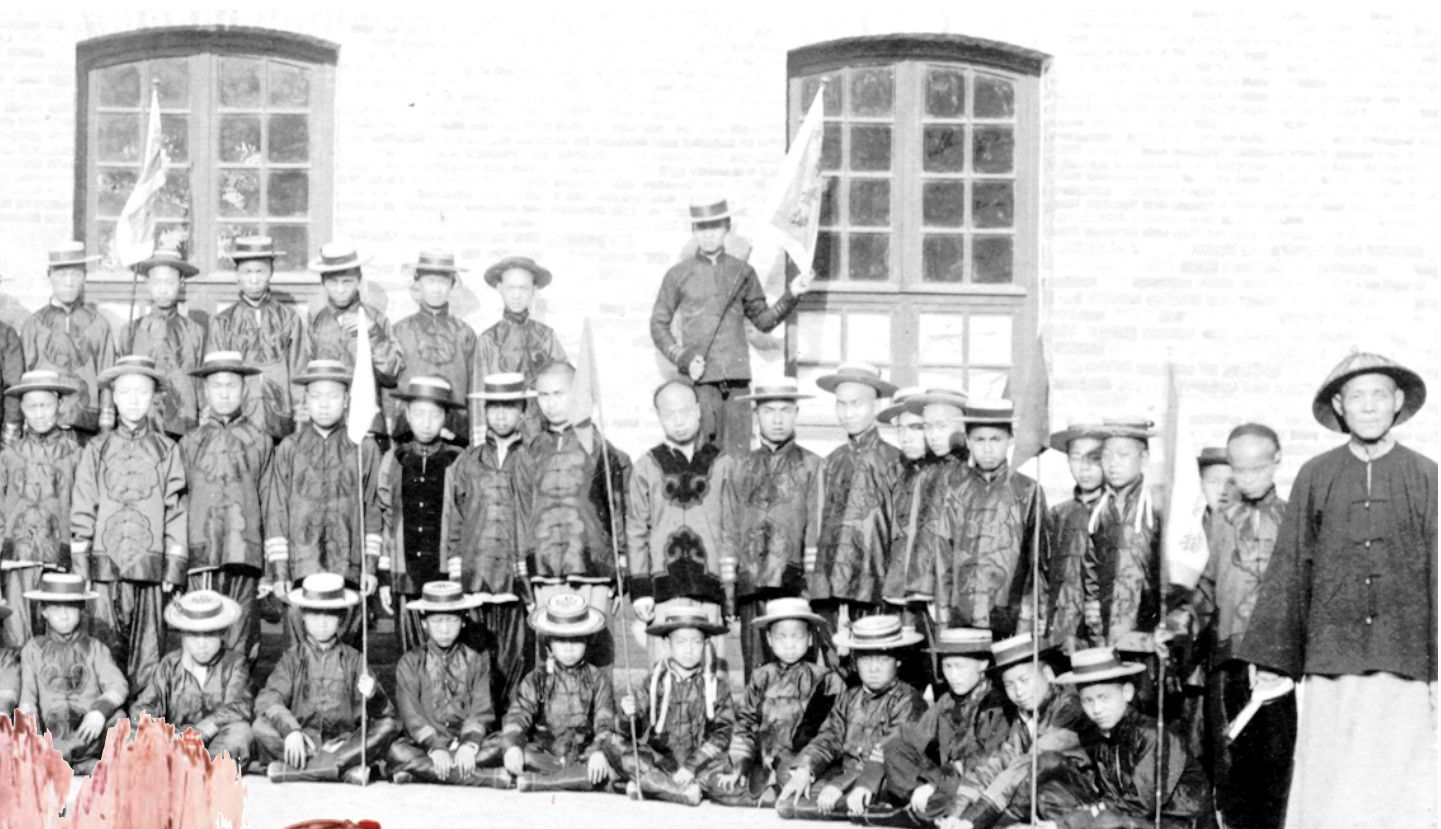


The Lesson of St. Joseph Freinademetz

**True Mission
Means
Becoming One
With Others**

By Seby Ouseph SVD

When St. Joseph Freinademetz SVD, one of the first two Divine Word Missionaries to serve abroad, stepped off the boat in China in 1879, he carried more than luggage. He brought the unexamined certainties of a European priest who assumed he understood exactly what these people needed.



The Chinese, he had been taught, were backward and morally confused, a civilization waiting for Western enlightenment. Within months, everything he thought he knew had collapsed. Watching Chinese families navigate life with grace, witnessing their moral sophistication and ancient wisdom, he faced an uncomfortable truth: He was the one who needed educating.

This was not a polite adjustment of perspective. It was a complete dismantling of his worldview, the kind that leaves you fundamentally different than before. St. Joseph did not just learn to appreciate Chinese culture from a respectful distance. He dived in completely, spending years mastering a language that twisted his tongue, adopting clothing that felt strange on his body, eating food that initially unsettled his stomach, and submitting himself to daily rhythms utterly foreign to everything he had known.



His Chinese neighbors eventually stopped seeing him as that foreign priest and started calling him Fu Shenfu ("happy priest"), one of their own. This was not performance or strategy. It was love made visible through the choice to belong rather than observe.

What separated St. Joseph from other missionaries was his radical conviction that Christianity did not need to destroy Chinese culture to take root there. While missionaries from other orders and Christian denominations were busy trying to turn Chinese converts into European replicas, he was asking a more revolutionary question: What if the Gospel could flourish within this culture, speaking its language and wearing its face?

He saw that faith possesses an extraordinary flexibility, capable of becoming genuinely Chinese or

African or Brazilian without losing its essential character. But this required something most missionaries were afraid to offer, genuine power-sharing.

St. Joseph poured himself into training Chinese catechists and priests, knowing that foreign missionaries could not sustain a living Church indefinitely. He taught, mentored and then stepped back. He trusted Chinese Christians to lead their own communities even when they made choices he would not have made.

This trust was revolutionary. Other missionaries questioned whether Chinese converts were ready for such responsibility. Local authorities suspected his motives. He faced exhausting resistance from multiple directions, enduring loneliness that could have easily turned into bitterness. Yet he remained stubbornly gentle, sustained by a prayer life so

deep it became the oxygen he breathed. His spirituality was not separate from his mission. It was the furnace that kept him going when everything else argued for giving up.

We need St. Joseph's example now more than ever. Our world drowns in cultural anxiety, with people building higher walls and viewing differences as threats rather than gifts. The Church is not immune to this fear. Too often, we approach other cultures with barely concealed superiority, confident that our particular expression of Christianity represents the only legitimate form. St. Joseph exposes this assumption as a betrayal of the Gospel itself.

His life insists that a real mission begins with vulnerability. You must listen before you earn the right to speak. You must learn before you presume to teach. You must become part of a community before you can offer meaningful leadership. This unnerves us because it requires surrendering control and admitting we do not have all the answers. It means accepting that God might reveal himself through cultures we initially misunderstand or dismiss.

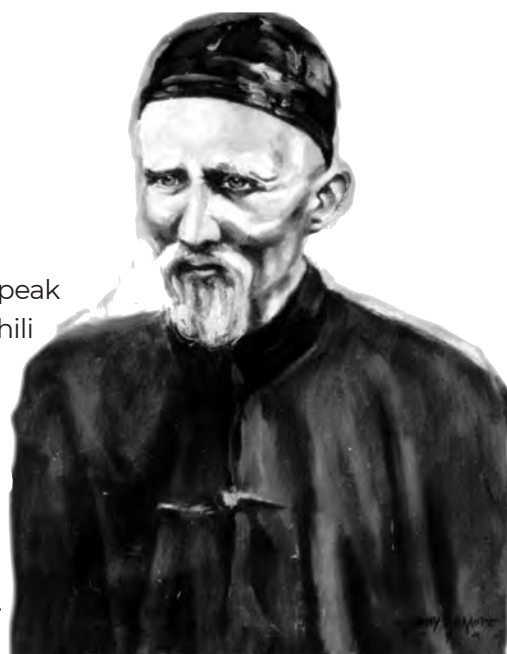
St. Joseph understood something we keep forgetting: the Gospel's universality does not mean uniformity. It means

Christianity can speak Mandarin or Swahili or Portuguese with native fluency. The faith is not diminished by this diversity. It is enriched beyond measure.

But we discover this richness only when we release our grip on cultural dominance and trust that God is already at work in places we have barely learned to pronounce.

A real missionary looks like St. Joseph, someone willing to be changed by the people he came to serve, someone who discovered that in losing his cultural certainty, he found something infinitely more valuable.

In our fractured world, we need missionaries who build bridges instead of fortresses. We need Christians who view cultural difference as a revelation rather than an obstacle. We need the courage St. Joseph Freinademetz embodied—the willingness to become genuinely present, to choose partnership over paternalism and to risk the disorienting transformation that happens when you let another culture reshape your understanding of faith itself. ●



Shepherd of the Streets: The Compassionate Journey of Father Flaviano Villanueva

By Sonny de Rivera SVD

The first encyclical of Pope Leo XIV, *Dilexi Te*—meaning “I have loved you”—powerfully highlights the Church’s enduring call to reach out to the poor, the marginalized and those in need.

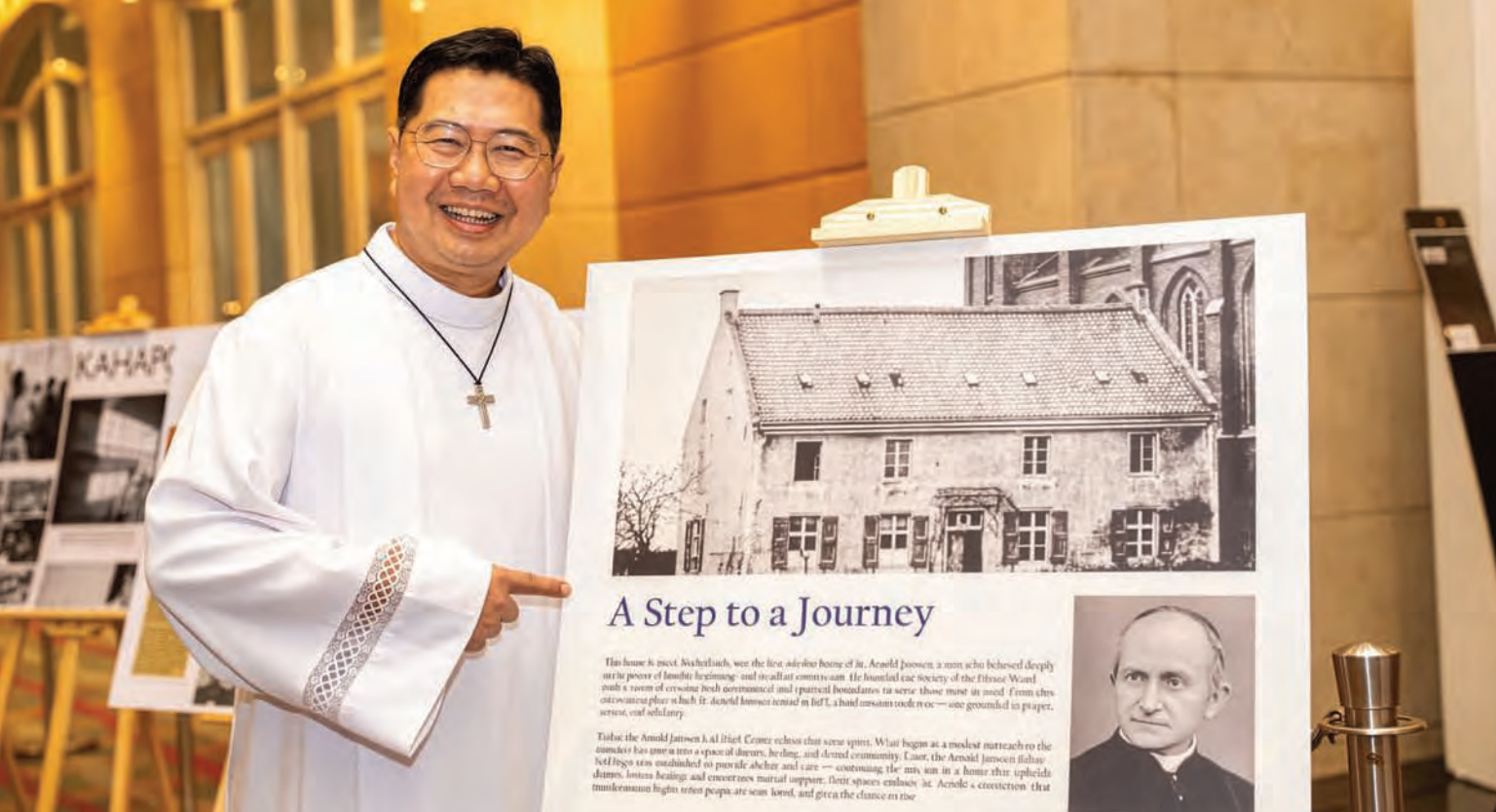


This phrase is nothing new to Father Flaviano Villanueva SVD. For years on the streets of Manila, capital of the Philippines, he has faithfully embraced this call amid countless challenges. His ministry is a living journey of *Dilexi Te*, a journey marked by compassion, service and solidarity with those often forgotten by society.

I sat down with Fr. Flavie to learn how he navigated the depths of grief and found hope that sustains his tireless ministry to the homeless, the slain and the neglected—a work that earned him the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award, Asia’s highest humanitarian honor.

When Fr. Flavie arrived for our conversation, he was a few minutes late. He had a good reason. He had just come from reporting on the previous night’s encounter with some of the homeless who are part of the Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center community.

With infectious enthusiasm, Fr. Flavie recounted the joy and dignity experienced by the homeless participants at the event. Their victory in both the ballroom dance and Mister Catholic Trade competitions was a testament to their resilience. What truly touched Fr. Flavie was not the awards they carried home, but the dignity they experienced—applause instead of ridicule, the microphone instead of silence, teamwork instead of alienation. For once, they were not invisible.



From Dream to Shelter

Ten years ago, Fr. Flavie founded the Arnold Janssen (AJ) Kalinga Center, a haven for the homeless to shower, wash their clothes and receive a hot meal. Beyond these basic services, AJ Kalinga became a space where the dignity of the poor is restored. "I often wondered how it feels to be homeless," he said, recalling times when he sat with beggars on sidewalks to share their pain.

This ministry flows from a faith that sees God's providence at work in every face of the poor. As St. James reminds us, "If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?" (James 2:15-16). For Fr. Flavie, theology is never detached from practice. Compassion must always give rise to action.

The AJ Kalinga Center was born out of Fr. Flavie's passion and a simple yet profound vision: to show that the poor and the homeless are not invisible, that they matter and that they are part of a larger community. In this way, the center was not just a physical space,

but a testament to living out the values of dignity and inclusivity. Its birth is a beacon of hope and inspiration for all who believe in the power of compassion and community.

Fr. Flavie, much like St. Arnold Janssen before him, encountered a world resistant to his vision. He was a man driven by passion and purpose, though faced with numerous obstacles. It was in these challenges that Fr. Flavie's determination grew stronger.

He embraced the belief that God often calls us to create something new when circumstances seem most against us, just as Fr. Arnold had faced similar struggles in the founding of the Society of the Divine Word. "I was so driven to start this center that I had to borrow money to start it," Fr. Flavie said. Despite financial challenges and initial resistance, he persevered, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to his vision.

From this trial of hardship and hope, the AJ Kalinga Center was born, and it is no surprise that Fr. Flavie named it in honor of St. Arnold Janssen.



“This was rock bottom,” he whispered. The pain of a life stolen, a future erased and a family left behind weighed on him so profoundly that his own tears became prayer.



The Smell of the Sheep

Pope Francis once urged pastors to be “shepherds with the smell of the sheep”—leaders who live, laugh and cry with their people. Fr. Flavie embodies this. His ministry is not carried out from a distance but from the ground, where wounds are raw and cries are loud. He listens, ponders and responds.

To journey with the homeless is, for him, to travel home to God. This companionship reflects the heart of Jesus who, seeing the crowds, “was moved with compassion for them, because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

Out of this same compassion was born the Dambana ng Paghilom (“Shrine of Healing”), the country’s first columbarium (a mausoleum to hold urns) for victims of the Philippine drug war, when thousands of suspected drug dealers or users were killed without arrest or trial at the orders of former President Rodrigo Duterte. Here, widows and orphans find dignity, comfort and healing. They discover that love is stronger than death, and that memory becomes a seed of hope.

Rock Bottom Moments

In the middle of our conversation, Fr. Flavie’s voice grew heavy as he recounted standing before the coffin of a young man, innocent and slain without reason. His words faltered, his eyes filled with tears and for a moment, he could not continue. “This was rock bottom,” he whispered. The pain of a life stolen, a future erased and a

family left behind weighed on him so profoundly that his own tears became prayer.

Yet for him, even “rock bottom” is not the end. It is the place where God’s voice says, “Time to get up.” In the cross of Jesus, he sees the path from death to resurrection. In every coffin he stands beside, he entrusts the young, the broken and the forgotten to Christ, the Lord of life.

One unforgettable moment in his journey was his encounter with Pope Francis in Rome. Fr. Flavie presented the holy father with a statue of Christ breaking bread with a child—a gift from the homeless and the survivors of extrajudicial killings. “Is this for me?” the pope asked with childlike innocence. “Yes,” Fr. Flavie answered, “this is from the streets, the homeless and the wounded.”

In that brief exchange, Fr. Flavie received three enduring lessons from Pope Francis: humility in power, wisdom clothed in innocence, and empathy without judgment. These lessons continue to guide his ministry and inspire all who hear his story.

A Brotherhood’s Support

When news broke on Aug. 31, 2025, that Fr. Flavie had been chosen as a Ramon Magsaysay awardee, his confreres across the country and around the world rejoiced. The provincial superior and council members of the Philippines - Central Province offered their congratulations, recognizing his work as a timely witness

*“This is from
the streets,
the homeless
and the
wounded.”*



during Divine Word Missionaries' 150th anniversary. Cardinal Pablo Virgilio David of Kalookan, a close companion in this ministry of healing, also expressed his joy. He praised Fr. Flavie's courage to bring the Gospel into places of pain.

For Fr. Flavie, the affirmation he received was deeply reassuring. It confirmed that what once seemed peripheral had now become an integral part of the Society of the Divine Word's core mission of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. This recognition was not just a validation of his work; it was a powerful reminder that his vision for the AJ Kalinga Center and Dambana ng Paghilom had found its place within the society's broader charism.

The journey has not been without resistance. Criticism, misunderstandings and even threats have accompanied his mission. But he remains steadfast, seeing every challenge as a call to deeper faith. “For every rock bottom,” he says, “there are pockets of hope.”

Honored, Yet Humbled

The Ramon Magsaysay Award is Asia's most prestigious recognition of humanitarian work. While confreres and peers rejoiced, Fr. Flavie received it with humility. “This is not about me,” he said, “but about putting the plight of the homeless and the wounded into the spotlight.” For him, the award is not an end but an invitation—to his congregation, to the Church and to society at large—to encounter Christ in the poor, to open doors and to breathe in “the smell of the sheep.”



Fr. Flavie's story stands as a profound witness that the Gospel is alive whenever compassion takes root in the world. His ministry is a living movement of mercy, rooted in the most profound theological insight of the Word made Flesh. For Fr. Flavie, it is not enough to speak of Christ's presence. He longs for those who come to the AJ Kalinga Center and Dambana ng Paghilom to experience it, to feel that Christ, in all his humanity and compassion, is present among them.

In Pope Francis' words, these centers are like “field hospitals,” places where the wounded of society are received, healed and shown that they are not forgotten. Here, the message of the Word made Flesh is not a doctrine to be discussed but a reality to be lived.

As our conversation came to a close, I realized how Fr. Flavie's ministry continues to echo Christ's love and compassion, calling us all to serve, to be present and to respond—truly living out *Dilexi Te* in a world that desperately needs it. ●



By Andrew Truong Quoc Hung SVD

After nine years, Divine Word Missionaries have returned to South Sudan. The decision followed thoughtful conversation and careful consultation. With the support of the General Council, we renewed our mission in Holy Family Parish, Lainya, on July 23.

This decision came as a response to the call of Bishop Alex Lodiong Sakor Eyobo of the Diocese of Yei and to the expectations of the many Christians of the parish. On Sunday, Aug. 31, we had the joy of welcoming Bishop Alex as he presided over the Mass for the official reopening of Holy Family Parish and the appointment of the new parish priest, Father Andrzej Dzida SVD, superior of the South Sudan Mission.

Divine Word Missionaries first came to South Sudan in 2012, just one year after the nation gained independence from Sudan. Unfortunately, our missionaries and their parishioners would get caught up in the new nation's ongoing civil war.

Buildings at the Holy Family mission were burned to the ground in March 2015. In May 2016, Holy Spirit Missionary Sister Veronika Terezia Rackova SSpS was shot while driving an ambulance. She died four days later. That July, a group of several hundred soldiers took control of the mission compound at Lainya and occupied it for four days. Our missionaries were evacuated from the country on July 29, 2016, and the South Sudan Mission was closed.

Meanwhile, millions of refugees crossed the southern border into Uganda and approximately 285,000 of them found a new home in the Bidibidi Refugee Settlement. Most members of the South Sudan mission team relocated to Uganda to serve the needs of the refugees at Bidibidi, including their former Holy Family parishioners.

The reopening Mass this summer marked the official return of Divine

Word Missionaries to South Sudan.

In his homily on Aug. 31, Bishop Alex reminded us that Divine Word Missionaries are not here only for the people but with the people. Together with all Christians, we are called to build up the parish, live our faith and bear witness to the Good News of the Catholic Church.

After the homily, Bishop Alex handed over the parish documents, keys and the parish stamp to Fr. Andrzej. The entire congregation, filled with joy, applauded warmly and congratulated him.

Following the Mass, the bishop met with the parishioners. The faithful shared their concerns about the parish situation and expressed their willingness to work closely with us. They also offered us gifts as a sign of welcome and thanksgiving to God for the presence of our missionaries. Afterward, we shared a festive lunch with the bishop and the community.

This day was truly a joyful and grace-filled moment in our mission.

The reopening of Holy Family Parish and the renewal of our community in South Sudan are important milestones as we celebrate the 150th Jubilee of the Society of the Divine Word.

With deep gratitude, we thank God, Bishop Alex and the faithful of Lainya for warmly welcoming us back to the mission. *We also extend heartfelt thanks to all our benefactors and friends who continue to support us with their prayers and generosity. Please continue to pray for our mission in South Sudan and for the mission of the whole Catholic Church.* ●

Divine Word Missionaries return to South Sudan

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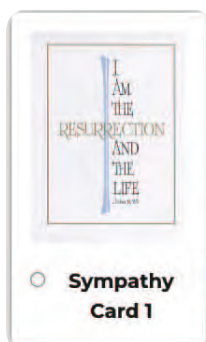
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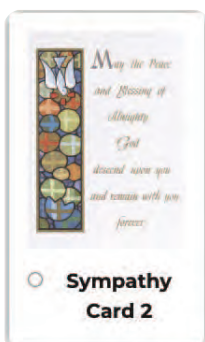


Divine Word Missionaries are honored to pray with you for your special intention.

- Your Mass will be celebrated by our missionaries overseas.
- Your offering supports our missionaries and the people they serve.
- Mass cards can be sent to an honoree or a family member.
- Mass requests are also available by calling 1-800-275-0626.



○ Sympathy Card 1



○ Sympathy Card 2



○ Sympathy Card 3



○ Sympathy Card 4

\$11
Individual Mass

\$91
Novena of Masses (9 Masses)



○ Birthday Card 1



○ Birthday Card 2



○ Get Well Card 1



○ Get Well Card 2

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Triduum of Masses (3 Masses)

\$359
Gregorian Masses (30 Masses)

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To sustain our mission programs overseas, it is an undeniable necessity to use these two words “plan” and “budget.” Budgeting is the only way to ensure consistent funding. Preaching the Gospel, feeding the poor, providing medical attention to those in need and helping families around the world become self-reliant takes a lot of planning. These long-term investments in the future of struggling Catholic faith communities can be done only with consistent and planned monies coming in.



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