



SVD CHINA PROVINCE NEWSLETTER 天主教聖言會中華省通訊

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願天主聖三生活在我們和眾人心中

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SVDs and the Jubilee Year of Mercy

The jubilee year of mercy began on December 8, 2015, also the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, and will close with the solemnity of Christ the King, November 20, 2016. Thus we are well into the year of mercy.

In the second paragraph of the message of Pope Francis opening the year of mercy (*Misericordiae Vultus*) Pope Francis describes what should be the attitude of all Christians toward the mystery of God's mercy:



“We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.” (¶ 2)

And in a later section of the same letter the Pope centers in on those concrete actions in our lives that reflect the mercy of God:

It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead. (¶ 15)

So what does the “jubilee year of mercy” mean for us SVDs, members of the Society of the Divine Word?

First and foremost, the year of mercy must begin in our own communities. How can we preach mercy to others if we do not have mercy toward our own brothers SVDs? Among us there are members who are having a harder time – those up in years, those who are sick, members going through vocational or emotional difficulties. Do we have the patience to listen carefully, to spend time with older or infirm members, to be understanding of younger members experiencing difficulties even if they seem to be performing below our community's expectations?

As provincial, I am particularly thankful to those who spend considerable time helping our ill confreres. I think we are moving in the right direction in that our older members continue to live, when at all possible, in active communities. But this requires patience among all the members of those communities, young and old alike. Here I am particularly grateful to the superiors and members of our communities in Chaiyi and at Fu Jen Catholic University.



We also occasionally have members who are having trouble finding the right work. The SVD is not a company where those who are less productive can simply be “let go.” It is a challenge to help members meet their full potential and at the same time to continue to treat them as brothers.

Above I have stressed patience with those who are having a difficult time. But all of us, at some time or other, will be the one's having a difficult time – whether it is illness, old age, emotional turmoil or vocational difficulty. Are we willing to let others help us? A nurse friend of mine once said that the best and worst patients are doctors and priests. Can we on the one hand do our best to overcome adversity and at the same time graciously accept the concern of others?

Finally we also must be merciful to those who for whatever reason have chosen to leave our congregation. We must be thankful for the time they have spent with us and for their contributions to the community and to the apostolate. They have spent a considerable time together with us and our current attitude should be such that they feel welcome in our communities. If there is any way we can help them to regularize their relations with the Church and with the SVD, we should work toward this goal.

We also have sisters and cousins in the Arnoldus family. We have the same founder as the Holy Spirit Sisters share the same spiritual roots. The Holy Family Sisters and Our Lady of China Sisters were founded by SVDs in Mainland China and continue in a special relationship. Just as in any family, there can be disagreements and some tension. But in the words of a Taiwan SSpS Sister, ***“It is good to have brothers.”*** And we SVDs must realize that ***“It is good to have sisters.”***

There are religious communities in the Church whose primary witness is through their community life. Our style is different. We work closely with our lay brothers and sisters as well as with diocesan priests and religious of various congregations. We often work alone or with one or two other SVDs. And so our works of mercy extend beyond our own family and community.

Perhaps even more in our work we feel the tension between justice, fairness and mercy. I spent most of my career in university teaching and administration. We have all had the experience of dealing with an employee or a student begging for mercy on hearing that he or she may be dismissed or fail a course. Each of us has to pray for wisdom to deal with these kinds of dilemmas. But no matter what the final resolution of a specific case, the person involved should walk away with the feeling that the SVD priest or brother who must make a decision cares deeply for the individual concerned.

During these days of lent, there have been two gospel parables that have struck me as having a particular relevance for the jubilee year of mercy. In Luke 16: 9-14 we hear the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector. The Pharisee lists the good works he has done and why he is better than the tax collector. Jesus states that the tax collector, who stands afar beating his breast in sorrow, leaves the temple justified. The tax collector helps us realize that while we may be called upon to admonish members of our communities, given the complexities of concrete situations and of the human person, true judgments are often beyond us. We must stand afar in silence, *“Who am I to judge?”*

And the gospel of the fourth Sunday of Lent (Year C) – the prodigal son – sets an example for the year of mercy. *“But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.”* Do we rejoice when our SVD brothers succeed? Are we free enough to rejoice when our brother or sister *“was lost and has been found”*?

Let me close the final words of Pope Francis in his message opening the jubilee year of mercy:

In this Jubilee Year, may the Church echo the word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love. May she never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort. May the Church become the voice of every man and woman, and repeat confidently without end: “Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old” (Ps 25:6). (¶ 15)

Frank Budenholzer, SVD

March 6, 2015 (4th Sunday of Lent)

Pope Francis, *Misericordiae Vultus*.

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html
(accessed March 6, 2016)

Fr. General's visit to Taiwan



December 18 - 21, 2015



Fr. General's visit to Da Ping Lin Community_Dec 18, 2015



Taiwan South (TWS) SVD Confreres Dec 19, 2015



Alishan Mission (Tsou aboriginal tribe) Dec 20, 2015



Fr General's visit to President Chiang Han-Sun, President of Fu Jen University Dec 21, 2015



Meeting with academic administrators of the SVD Section of Fu Jen Catholic University Dec 21, 2015



Meeting with personnel of the SVD Section Office of Mission, Fu Jen Catholic University_Dec 21, 2015



Formation and Fu Jen Communities Dec 21, 2015

51st International Eucharistic Congress

Cebu, Philippines, January 24-31, 2016

Eucharist builds Community, the theme of 51st International Eucharistic Congress was “Christ in You, the Hope of Glory”, taken from the text of St. Paul to the Colossians, (Col. 1:24-29). The theme itself captures the profound meaning of the Eucharist. Eucharist gives life to the community and the Eucharist’s end or goal would build the community of God.



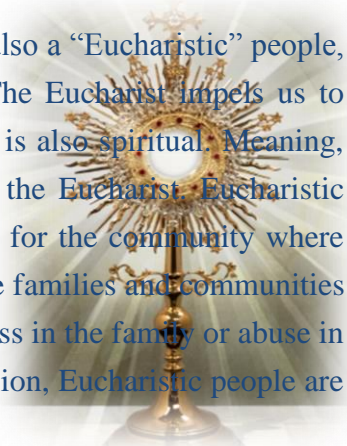
The atmosphere of the Internal Eucharistic Congress was so moving and inspiring because Lay people were so participative in various activities. Some gave lectures, others gave their very inspiring testimonies. I believed this is the fruit of the Eucharist that we received in the celebration of the Holy mass. The Holy Eucharist brings us to unity as one people of God. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28). We cannot limit the Holy Eucharist into Sacramental celebration, it is a way of life as a baptized. The Eucharist must be our life, it is our identity as followers of Jesus, who commanded us to remember him in the Eucharist. “Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.” (Lk. 22:19).



Eucharist is remembering the mission of Jesus that he came to save humanity. Jesus came to give us the fullness of life. In the Eucharist, Jesus give us this life. We will never experience the fullness of life if we are not in communion with one another, if we are not in reconciliation with one another. There is no Eucharistic community if we do not give life to one another. If there is division in the community, there is no fullness of life. It is only in union with God and others that fullness of life is attained.

As Religious-Missionaries, our mission is to bring life to our communities, and we build communities that is powered by the Eucharist. Communities that is not centered in the Eucharist will soon to fail. No wonder our Founder, St. Arnold Janssen had a great devotion to the Eucharist. Because Eucharist will truly build a community of missionaries that are willing to sacrifice, and give their lives for the mission, in organizing and building the people of God.

In the Holy Eucharist we learn and receive the grace of God to become also a “Eucharistic” people, ready and willing to give his life for the mission, for the people of God. The Eucharist impels us to become missionary because the Holy Eucharist is not only sacramental but it is also spiritual. Meaning, that as we received the Holy Eucharist it challenges us to live the spirit of the Eucharist. Eucharistic people are missionary people, they go out of themselves and offer their lives for the community where there is chaos, turmoil and injustice. Eucharistic people are instruments to unite families and communities if there is division, Eucharistic people are agents of healing if there is brokenness in the family or abuse in the society, Eucharistic people are instruments of reconciliation if there is division, Eucharistic people are agents of hope when people are in despair. Christ in you, our Hope of Glory.



Jay Francis Flandez svd

Closing of the Year For Consecrated Life

In Hong Kong diocese there were many activities during the year of consecrated life. There were activities in the diocesan level and parish level. Many talks and sharing were done both in diocesan level and parish level. On 31st January there was a colorful closing ceremony at the Caritas hall presided by Bishop Joseph Ha. In the beginning there was evening prayer. Followed by entertainment programs presented by different congregations. SVD presented two songs. First song was SVD theme song “Called by the Lord”. The second song was “Word of God”. The hall was full with people and the programs were well received by the audience. The whole closing ceremony was for three hours. On the following day there was a closing mass at the Cathedral. After that a movie about Mother Teresa of Calcutta was shown.

James Areechira, SVD



Closing Ceremony of the Year of Consecrated Life in Taiwan

On February 3, 2016, over 500 religious, members of communities of apostolic life and diocesan priests representing seven dioceses, over 50 religious congregations and apostolic communities celebrated the closing of the Year of Consecrated Life. The event was sponsored by the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Men and Women (AMRSMW) in Taiwan and took place at the Stella Matutina Girls’ High School in the city of Taichung. SVDs from both the north and south of Taiwan attended along with representatives of our sister congregations, the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Family Sisters and the Sisters of Our Lady of China.



Chiayi Diocese with choir master Fr Gregory Sebastian, SVD on left and the future pope in the center



Opening Eucharist presided by Archbishop John Hung, SVD.JPG



Three SVD attendees Fathers Tuan Anh Mai, Brian Lawless and Frank Budenholzer .JPG

SVD Mission Day

It's amazing how fast time flies! Before we realize it, February is here again. Our SVD Mission Day Celebration is in every second day of the Lunar New Year. This year the celebration was in Holy Family parish, Choi Hung Kowloon, on February 9. This moment is usually an opportunity for us to share our SVD identity to the people we are called to work with. There is a need to awake an awareness that we should feel responsible to contribute towards sustaining the missionary service according to our own possibilities. Well, in this Year of Mercy, we also celebrated God's mercy in our mission.

Indeed, the celebration of the Holy Mass was very solemn, led by new missionary from Brazil to China province Fr. Denes Silva, SVD and homily given by Fr. Reggie, SVD. Fr. Reggie in his homily said, life as a missionary like St. Joseph Freinademetz and the mission of mercy should go together. Mission without mercy is nothing. So, we should always show mercy, Fr. Reggie added.

After the mass we joined in singing our Spirituality Song. The cultural and concert program immediately following the Spirituality Song. The celebration of the SVD Mission Day concluded with great success. Now, on behalf of the Mission Animation Team, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all who have contributed in one way or other to the success of the SVD Mission Day. As part of our global mission, may the Divine Word shower you and your loved ones abundantly!

Heribertus Hadiarto, SVD



SVD Hong Kong - Macau Youth Day

December 26th 2015 was a memorable moment for our SVD Hong Kong Macau District. It was the first time we held the sport event for Chinese youth community in which we called that event as SVD Hong Kong- Macau Youth day. This initiative came from our SVD youth members. Under the theme: come and see, we invited the youth to come and experience our SVD charism, and at the same time they could enjoy the sport through the basketball and football competition. The main purpose of this event is to deepen their understanding about our society and as a vocation promotion as well. We started with the mass presiding by Fr. Johnson and homily by Fr. Angel, with some priests assisting during the mass. It was an unexpected experience because we thought that this event would not have many participants but it turned out to be a successful one with many youth participated in the event.



We thank all the parishes who have joined us, these include St. Cosmas and Damian Parish, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish, Holy family Parish, St. Edward Parish and also those who came with Fr. Angel and Brother Toto from Fatima Parish in Macau. After the game we sat together and listened to the youth sharing of their stories. We had an awesome time together. The youth had so much fun and enjoyed themselves so much as the SVD fathers and brothers interact with them freely in the game. They hope this event can be held every year and we hope this event can become a milestone for our vocation promotion among the local people.

Antonius Reynolds Balubun, SVD



**"Your life, O Lord, is our life!
Your mission, our mission!"**

I'm Denes Costa da Silva, one of the new SVD missionaries of the SIN Province. I come from Brazil, specifically, from the northern Brazil, the Amazon region. My Brazilian state of origin is called "Pará", the second largest state of Brazil. I'm 34 years-old, the eldest of three brothers (the second is 32 years-old, the youngest is 28). My father is a farmer and my mother is a housewife. They always live and work in the farm and participate in the local catholic community. I had grown up halfway between the farm and the city, but only after graduated from High School I became much more interested in religious matters. Afterwards, I worked in a small chestnut trading company in my hometown, Oriximiná ("castanha do Pará").

The local parish, Saint Anthony of Padua, is the first SVD parish in the currently Amazon Region (BRA). The first SVD missionaries arrived there in 1982 and have been working in the place since then. To the local people the changed from the Franciscans to SVD's was a big one. But, the SVD style of working and living the mission of the Church caught the people's heart.

I myself was impressed by the "modern way" of life of the SVD missionaries. Moreover, I felt that the SVD missionaries were much closer to the people than the Franciscan missionaries. Their missionary spirituality and animation remains for me a strong feature of the SVD identity.

As I longed to be a SVD missionary, I talked to a local SVD priest and started my discernment and vocational accompaniment. I entered the SVD seminary on February 18, 2003 in Santarém, state of Pará. I was very confident, but self-conscious too. My novitiate, philosophy and theology studies were done in Sao Paulo which is located in southern Brazil, BRC province. I had my OTP experience in the Philippines in 2011 to 2012. It was a very intense and interesting time in my life. After returning back to Brazil I took the perpetual vows and ordained to the diaconate on May 24, 2014. For personal reasons, I had decided not to go back to the Philippines. However, as I had an experience in Asia I applied for Taiwan (SIN Province). After my priestly ordination on January 31, 2015, I went to the USA to strengthen my English skills. I arrived in Hong Kong on January 06, 2016. I was warmly welcomed by Fr. James Areechira, Fr. Henry Cabral and Jay Flandez.

Now, I'm staying in the OTP Formation House in Sha Tin, New Territories, with Fr. Jay and other SVD brothers. I've already started my Cantonese lessons at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Besides study, I also help the Filipino migrant community. My first priority is to settle down and integrate into the Province and the Hong Kong-Macau district. I foresee I will face challenges at some time here and it is natural to have difficulty adjusting to a new culture. Willingness to risk and to face the unknown is part of the missionary life. Every day gives me a new lesson to assimilate to a new culture. It is not always an easy transition. I thank the Lord for giving me a wonderful opportunity to reach out to others of different cultures and share the gospel message with them.



Denes Costa da Silva, SVD

SVD Band in action during the WESHOW program at Sing Yin Secondary School. On December 22 2015, our SVD Band was invited to perform during the WESHOW program in Sing Yin Secondary school of Hong Kong. Fr. Jay, Fr. Reynold, Fr. Heri, Brother Forgor, Br. Arjay and I were able to join the event. We prepared two songs for our performance. The first song was my own composition called: The Word of God. Since many among us were already familiar with the song, we thought this song would define our identity as Divine Word Missionary. The second song was 真的愛你. This is a song from a famous rock band in 90s called Beyond and is known to all people in Hong Kong. My feeling from the performance was that, the students were extremely excited. When we appeared on the stage as a band, they have never seen something like this from priests and brothers before so it was a joyful thing to see them performing live on stage. I heard from our confrere, Fr. John who works in the school said the students and teachers were surprised seeing priests and brothers singing and playing musical instrument professionally.

Most of them thought priestly life is only for saying Mass. Now our performance has changed the way they understand religious life. A student whom I know told me later that they enjoyed the performance and they thought we knew how to light up the atmosphere. From this experience, I think it is always important to be closer to the students not only through supervising, teaching and pastoral ministry. Events joy of being religious.

Reginaldus Amleni, SVD

