

Common Activities

Together with the Confreres the Arnoldus Family members could strengthen their bond and deepen their spirituality and charism by sharing and interacting with other family members. Well, some occasions need to be created for meaningful sharing and interaction, which will enable the members whether priests, brothers, sisters, or lay partners to find the richness of their own missionary vocation as well as to do our missionary activities in a vibrant way. The following points are some suggestions that would help to create this bond as well as to work together for spreading the Gospel more effectively.

- a. Bible Sharing, Prayers for the Mission
- b. Mission Awareness Days
- c. Vocation Promotion
- d. Recollections and Retreats
- e. Workshops and Seminars on Relevant Topics
- f. Local Mission Outreach programs
- g. Mission projects

Conclusion

The formation is significant and vital, and a substantial formation program would help all the lay partners' members to grow in their spirituality, commitment, and involvement. This has to be sustained throughout one's life. The formation is always life-long and ongoing. We learn from everyday life, from every situation, and from the challenge in life. To be relevant to the world today, formation helps to have new ideas and also to be more energetic, animated, and exciting. Activities are done together with the SVDs and SSps and if possible, with SSpSAP sisters would be helpful and energetic to one's growth. Celebrations of our Saints Arnold Janssen and Joseph Freinademetz and our Blessed Maria Helena and Josepha and our martyrs are opportunities to establish our bond with one another.

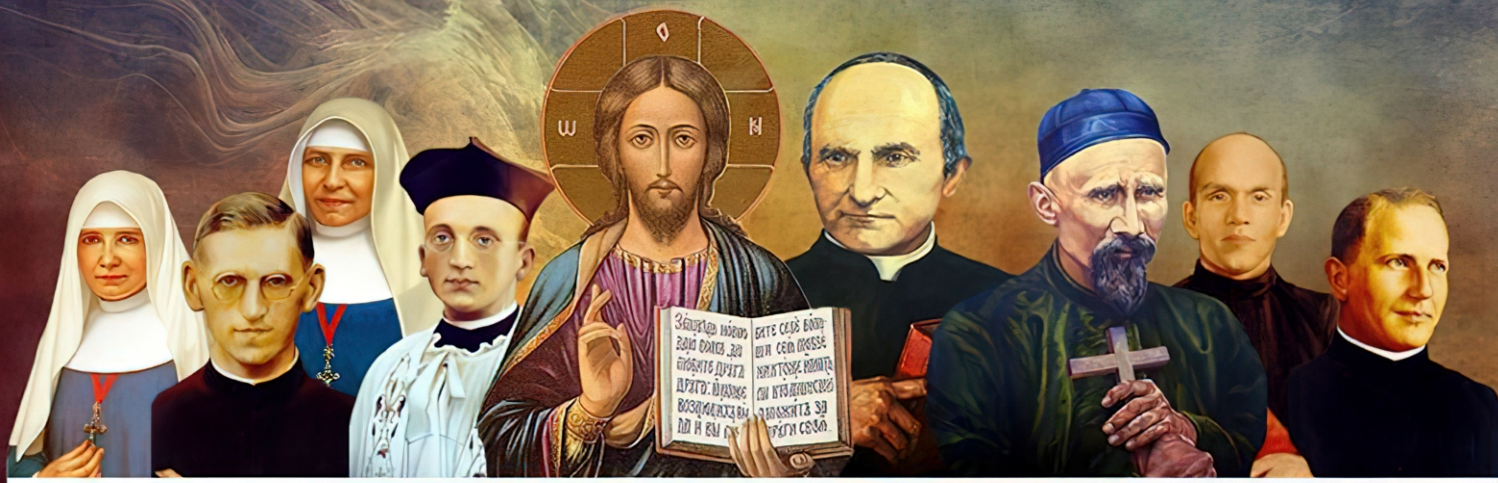


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SVD LAY MISSION PARTNERS



THE LOVE OF CHRIST IMPELS US (2COR. 5:14)
ROOTED IN THE WORD, COMMITTED TO HIS MISSION

Prologue to the SVD Constitutions

“God's loving grace has gathered us from various peoples and continents into a religious missionary community dedicated to the Divine Word and named after him The Society of the Divine Word”.

Introduction

Everyone who is baptized is called to be a missionary; some are called to be priests, some others as religious professing vows in a Society/Congregation, but some persons are called to live this missionary vocation as “lay” persons either married or single. Laypeople live their missionary vocation in diverse forms too. **“Lay believers are in the front line of Church life; for them, the Church is the animating principle of human society. Therefore, they, in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church but of being the Church, that is to say... They are the Church.”** (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 899). To understand this vocation and to live profoundly the missionary call, one can also follow the charism of a Society/Congregation of religious, establishing a close relationship with them. SVD lay partners are those who are called to their own special vocation to be part of the Arnoldus Family which consists of the SVD, SSps, and SSpSAP Congregations. By joining with them in this special manner, they too become Arnoldus Family members.

Any member who wishes to join or grow in an organization needs formation. For religious or consecrated persons, there are well-established norms. The 18th General Chapter of the Society of the Divine Word states, **“Our lay partners need to have the necessary preparation and training in order to appreciate and celebrate the beauty of our missionary charism, our Trinitarian Spirituality, and their own vocation in the Arnoldus Family”** (In Word and Deed [IWD] 6, 2018, 50). Incarnational spirituality and intercultural spirituality are held dearly, and we grow in deepening the word of God. As a layperson, everyone needs to grow in missionary spirituality too for cherishing one's vocation. Therefore, the Society has committed itself “to take necessary steps to develop formation programs together with lay partners and to involve ourselves in the animation of our lay partners” (IWD 51). Formation of lay partners is very significant to make them aware of their vocation, commitment, and missionary activities.

Types of Membership

There could be diverse membership in a group. This depends on how the group is formed and animated. We hope that lay persons will join an SVD lay partner group. But there are also committed Christians who are supporters of SVDs and they want to be friends of the SVD but may not want to be formal members or part of an SVD lay partner group. Each PRM has to decide how to give formation to these members too. Without formation, they may be good “friends”, but they may not participate in our charism in an effective manner and grow in spirituality.



SVD Lay Mission Partners

Freely responding to God's call, SVD lay partners are those who strive to live their lives in accordance with Christ's mandate to serve the people in the light of the mission of the Society of the Divine Word. Therefore, they join the group to be partners in the mission with the Society. They are independent groups carrying out missionary activities in light of the charism of the Arnoldus family. Every group is encouraged to have Statutes to function efficiently. When they are recognized by PRM superiors and their councils, they are called as SVD Lay Associates. Requirements for recognition are listed in the 18th General Chapter resolution no.1.1.4 (IWD 6).

SVD Lay Missionaries

These are committed missionaries who are willing to take an active role either within the country or abroad to build the Kingdom of God together with the SVD missionaries for a longer period. The practical norms are to be established by the sending PRM superior as well as the receiving PRM superior (Cf. SVD Constitutions 111.2).

SVD Charism

The charism of the Society is enshrined in the SVD Constitutions 102-104: **“we consider it our duty to proclaim the word of God to all, to bring new communities into being within the people of God, to foster their growth and to promote communion among them as well as with the whole church”** (102). Thus, the basic aspect is that we proclaim the word of God to all people, and it continues, **“we work first and foremost where the gospel has not been preached at all or insufficiently and where the local church is not viable on its own”** (102).

Formation of the Members

To be an SVD lay partner, every member should know the charism of the Society of the Divine Word and the spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen and the founding generation. These two elements are fundamental to every member. Thus, before being recognized as a member, one has to learn these elements and be convinced of them to grow as a missionary. Therefore, a certain period of formation is necessary to know these aspects. The formation could be divided into initial formation and ongoing formation.

Initial Formation

Initial formation is the period when a new member learns and grows in knowing the fundamental aspects of an SVD lay partner. A person who wants to be a member of an SVD lay partner group should be admitted only after completing an initial formation period.

Duration

This depends on each country/PRM; since there may not be daily lessons, weekly or bi-weekly lessons could be introduced for a period of 3 months to one year. The norms have to be decided locally. Admission to the SVD Lay Partners group Each PRM and the lay partners group should establish a norm regarding admission to the local SVD lay partner group. One should become a member after fulfilling the established norm of the duration of initial formation. Without this formation period, no one should be admitted to the group. Some fundamental lessons are to be taught during initial formation. The following subjects are helpful for imparting basic knowledge to the lay partners.

Arnoldus Spirituality

Commitment to a mission based on the spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen and the founding generation is a primary aspect. Every Congregation participates in God's mission with a distinct charism and a particular spirituality that sustains that charism. Arnoldus spirituality gives life, inspiration, and vitality to the growth of every member as a committed missionary. This is one of the core subjects that inspires and guides the lay partners to participate in the mission.

Knowing Local Mission Territories



As the members are from the local area or the country, they need to know where the SVDs are working and what their missionary activities are. Each PRM has its vision and mission statement and action plan and these are to be shared by one of the confreres from the local PRM. More explanation of the types of activities in each parish or institution and what opportunities there are to collaborate with them could be given. More so, the wide variety of involvement in the mission could be explained, so that the lay partners are drawn towards the need of the PRM. The mission secretaries should assume this responsibility or delegate it to someone to impart this knowledge.



Experience in the Missions, Visit, Staying, Working

After a few weeks of classes, visits to the nearby missions or places of our missionary work could be organized. Thus, the lay partners could visit the missions and interact with the people and they can judge for themselves in what way they could be involved. If possible, staying in a place for two or three days would be more helpful than making a simple visit.

Four Characteristic Dimensions

To promote communion among the people and to focus our missionary activities in the light of the trends of mission in the Church, we serve the people with four characteristic dimensions: **Biblical apostolate; mission animation; justice, peace, and integrity of creation (JPIC); and communications.** The 16th General Chapter (2006) states, “Each of the characteristic dimensions implies a basic attitude in our life and service. In the Biblical Apostolate, the basic attitude is to live centered on God. We resist the temptation to be 'ashamed of the Gospel' (Rm 1:16). Our basic attitude in Mission Animation is to involve others, to animate them with our enthusiasm for the journey to the Kingdom and to be animated by them, rather than falling into the temptation to think that we can do it all ourselves. The basic attitude of JPIC is to commit ourselves to the transformation of society and the world by analyzing unjust structures and promoting human dignity, as well as preservation of the environment, rather than remain silent to the human tragedies and violence to the environment that continue to plague our world. Communication involves an attitude of reaching out that enables us to overcome inertia and the fear that can sometimes overtake us and keep us from engaging our dialogue partners.” (In Dialogue with the Word 6, 9)

Devotions and Prayers

Every member of the Arnoldus family strengthens their family spirit and grows with the devotions, prayers, and how they are utilized for establishing a special relationship with God. These devotions and prayers are helpful tools to pray with other members; thus, these are not occasional prayers to be recited, but with a certain periodical time schedule the prayers will enable the members to express our love for God and our families, companions, and other people. These prayers assist in the reception of the blessings and guidance of the Spirit of God on the members.



Interculturality – Culture, Inculturation, and Inter-culturation



Interculturality means that there are mutually reciprocal relationships among and between cultures; people from different cultural groups interact with one another, learn and grow together, build relationships, and become transformed, shaped, and moulded by each other's experiences. Members learn more about culture, inculturation, and inter-culturation which enriches not only the members but also enables them to work towards the transformation of the world according to the Gospel teaching.



Prophetic Dialogue

In the context of multicultural, multi-religious communities and their various social, economic, and political situations, if the mission of the Church truly and faithfully reflects the mission of Jesus, then today's mission and dialogue go together. Mission not only requires dialogue; mission is dialogue. Mission as dialogue is a personal encounter with the other, building interpersonal relationships which enrich one another. This requires humility, solidarity, respect, love, and openness to others there, and accepting vulnerability missions is and must be prophetic because God's inner nature is also prophetic, and because God is prophetic in history, dealing with human beings and creation.



Retreats

- **Arnoldus Spirituality Retreat**
- **Arnold Janssen Retreat**
- **Interculturality Retreat See the Appendix**
- **The Spirituality of Interculturality**
- **Discipleship Retreat**
- **Retreat on Commitment**