

The  
**ct FRONTIERS**  
SVD India Mumbai Province News



*St. Arnold Pray for us*

JANUARY 2025



**Witnessing to the Light from  
Everywhere for Everyone**



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# Editorial

Dear Readers,

I'm happy to reconnect with you once again as The Frontiers returns to your homes!

This January, as we celebrate the Feast of Saint Arnold Janssen on January 15, we are blessed also to mark a momentous milestone: 150 years since the foundation of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). This historic occasion invites us to reflect on the vision and mission of our founder, Saint Arnold, whose unwavering faith and missionary zeal gave birth to a global congregation dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel and building bridges of faith, hope, and love across cultures.

The theme for this milestone year, "Witnessing to the Light, From Everywhere for Everyone," encapsulates the essence of Saint Arnold's mission. He envisioned a world where the light of Christ transcends boundaries, reaching every corner of the earth and transforming lives. This vision remains at the heart of our work as we continue to respond to the call to be missionaries of the Word, bearing witness to God's love in service to humanity.

Saint Arnold's legacy inspires us to embrace diversity and unity, to cross borders—geographical, cultural, and social—and to engage with compassion and respect. His founding of not only the SVD but also the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS) and the Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration (SSpSAP) reminds us that mission is a collaborative endeavor, sustained by prayer, community, and shared commitment.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all who have journeyed with us—lay partners, benefactors, and communities worldwide. Your steadfast support and shared dedication have been instrumental in furthering our mission, empowering us to serve the poor, advocate for justice, and spread the light of Christ in places of darkness.

As we celebrate the Feast of Saint Arnold Janssen and this remarkable 150th anniversary, may his spirit inspire us to live out his vision with renewed passion. With grateful hearts, let us step forward into the future, confident in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, united in purpose, and filled with the light of Christ.

Wishing you all a blessed Feast of Saint Arnold Janssen and a year of grace, strength, and renewed mission!

With gratitude and joy,



**Fr. Jolly M SVD**  
Editor, The Frontiers  
Editorial Team

# Message from the Provincial Superior

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate the Feast of Saint Arnold Janssen on January 15th particularly this year as we mark the 150th anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your steadfast support, friendship, and generosity.

This significant milestone invites us to reflect on the profound vision of our founder, Saint Arnold Janssen, who dedicated his life to proclaiming the Gospel and fostering unity among diverse cultures. His mission remains as vital as ever in a world often marked by division, pain, and uncertainty. His legacy calls us to be witnesses of Christ's light, spreading hope, compassion, and the Good News to every corner of the world.

As we honour Saint Arnold's vision, may his spirit inspire us to embrace diversity, work toward reconciliation, and serve those in need with unwavering love. This sacred occasion reminds us of the strength we derive from faith and community. Through God's grace—and the efforts of our missionaries, lay partners, and benefactors like you—we continue to sow seeds of peace and hope.

As we commemorate this historic anniversary and the Feast of Saint Arnold Janssen, let his example renew our commitment to the missionary call. Together, let us carry his vision forward, spreading Christ's light and building a world rooted in justice, unity, and love. Thank you for walking this journey with us and for being part of this great mission. May the blessings of this feast fill your hearts and homes with grace and renewal.

With gratitude and prayers,



**Fr. Tomy Thomas, SVD**  
Provincial Superior,  
SVD INM

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# Our Seminaries In Focus

## Empowering The Youth For The Mission

### Divine Word Seminary, Pune



Divine Word Seminary, Pune is the Alma Mater and pride of the SVDs. The final years of formal training and formation are spent here at Divine Word Seminary (DWS). The foundation stone for DWS was laid on the 18th June, 1956. The seminary was blessed and inaugurated on the 2nd of February 1958. Today the Divine Word Seminary is the Alma Mater of more than 650 SVD priests and brothers who work in India and abroad.

The main thrust of Divine Word Seminary is to strengthen the intellect of its members through theological and scriptural studies in Jnana Deepa (JD) and especially by developing a specific area of interest like communication and Missiology given future specialization and the frontier mission situation. At present there are 52 students at DWS.



### Vidya Niketan, Mysore (Seminary for Graduation)



In the early 1970s, the erstwhile Bishop of Mysore, Most Rev. Mathias Fernandes and the Principal of St. Philomena's college, Fr. Frank D'Souza, welcomed the SVDs warmly to Mysore. In June 1974, VidyaNiketana saw its first daylight and in July, 1974 the first batch of juniors from Palda (Indore) were welcomed by the Rector for their graduation studies in Mysore. At present, VidyaNiketana has 74 students.

## SVD Shishyalaya, Vasai

The SVDs had always envisioned a minor seminary in Maharashtra, and since there were many vocations from Vasai, this house was blessed by His Lordship Bishop Thomas Dabre and inaugurated by the then Provincial Superior, Fr. Augustine Kanjamala, on 17th June 2001. The Seminary is blessed with vocations from all over Maharashtra, especially Vasai, Uttan, Talasari, Aurangabad, Sirpur, Silvassa and Amaravati. The first missionary priest, Fr. Francis Mastan, now working in Ghana Africa, was ordained in 2007. For the last five decades, the Divine Word Seminary has dedicated itself in shaping the young SVDs to set out and work across the globe. There are 13 students at SVD Shishyalaya at present.



## St. Francis Xavier's Ashram, Raia, Goa



Goa was always in the minds of Fr. Zimmermann and companions for Indian recruits for the Society. After Goa became part of the Indian Union in 1961, plans were ready and the great pioneer Fr. Peter Verehalen, who had pioneered vocation work in Mhow, Kaduthuruthy, and Mangalore, was appointed to Goa.

The latest statistics show that 29 Goans have been ordained priests of whom several are working in foreign missions, in Africa and South America. There are 17 students at various formation levels at the SVD Seminary, Raia, Goa.



## St. Peter's Apostolic School, Kirem, Mangalore

Fr. Peter Verehalan SVD started the Apostolic School in the Padua High School hostel at Nanthur Cross. The Apostolic School was inaugurated on 22.12.1962. St. Peter is the patron saint of this house. It is registered as St. Peter's Apostolic School, Aikala. The total number of SVDs from Mangalore is over 100. At present there 3 students at Kirem.



## St. John's Mission Seminary, Changanacherry, Kerala



St. John's Mission Seminary Changanacherry, Kerala, was started in 1962 for higher Secondary school students. There are over 200 ordained priests and of these around 100 are working in different mission countries around the globe. The seminary has contributed significantly to forming zealous, committed, and active SVD missionaries who work worldwide. At present, there are 19 students in this seminary.



## Bestowal Of The Mission Cross at DWS, Pune



It was a joy and grace-filled occasion for the Society of the Divine Word, as the newly ordained priests had gathered together in their Alma mater DWS, Pune to receive their Mission Cross on 9th June 2024. 14 newly ordained priests had been brought under the tent of DWS, Pune for the bestowal of the Mission Cross, which has been the long traditional practice of our Society. This gracious occasion was presided over by Fr. Richard Quadros SVD, the Vice-Provincial Superior of INM- Province. Fr. Jesuraj Rayappan SVD, the Rector of DWS, welcomed the august gathering and highlighted the significance of the Mission Cross in his introduction. Fr. Johnny SVD, the Vice-Rector of DWS, presented

Fr. Richard with a bouquet of flowers as a sign of cordial welcome. Then, the Vice-Provincial bestowed the Mission Cross to the 14 newly ordained priests during the Holy Eucharist and prayed over them the prayer for sending the missionaries before the final blessing. The DWS, Ishvani, and SSS Communities witnessed the entire ceremony. After the bestowal of the cross, newly ordained priests were felicitated in the refectory by their younger brothers. They, too, thanked the DWS community and their formators for their support and guidance. The entire day was filled with blessings and graces in the presence of the newly ordained priests.



## Reaching out to the families affected by the Landslide In Vilangad And Wayanad, Kerala

The devastating landslide occurred on the 30th July 2024 at Vilangad and Wayanad in Kerala resulted in significant loss of life, damage, and disruption to the lives of several families. Many houses were completely washed away and others partially destroyed, leaving many without shelter, essential items, and means of livelihood. Fr. Babu Kakkaniyil SVD, INM JPIC coordinator and Fr. Mathew Nirappel SVD visited the affected areas and took stock of the situation. They visited the area and collected more information regarding this tragedy from people of various walks of life. A proposal was made to the Provincial administration to extend educational support to the children of affected families who are doing professional studies such as Nursing, Engineering and so on. We decided to extend

educational support to 40 students by making available one — time partial support for their current year fees.

This year being the Sesquicentennial jubilee year of the SVD, we take extra effort to extend our helping hand to the severely affected people of Vilangad as one of the Jubilee outreach projects of INM Province. Heartfelt gratitude to Frs. Babu, Mathew Nirappel, who took time to visit the affected areas and identified the genuine beneficiaries. We are grateful to St. Arnold's Educational Trust, Pune for bearing most of the cost of this project. We extend our appreciation to Fr. Mathew Chennakudy for obtaining some resources through his friends. It is a small gesture from our part to help these families to have a better future.

”

*It is not lengthy prayers but generous deeds that touch God's heart.*

*- St. Arnold Janssen*

## Divine Call Centre: Mulki, Rekindles Souls



The SVD confrères of Divine Call Retreat Centre, Mulki, Mangalore, are dedicated to fostering spiritual and emotional healing that leads to the transformation of lives and families. Thus, Divine Call Retreat Centre is a beacon of spiritual solace & hope. Retreats are conducted in Konkani, Kannada, and English for families, couples, youth, children, religious, individuals, and even those battling alcoholism. The centre leaves no stone unturned in its mission to heal and transform lives. Youth conventions, inner healing, deliverance, growth, and specialized retreats are regularly held. Recently, a retreat was conducted specifically for senior citizens.

Each day begins with intercessory prayers and adoration, led by the priests and volunteers, followed by the celebration of Holy Mass. A group of 100 dedicated intercessors gathers daily in turns to spend time in the presence of the Holy Eucharist, interceding for various ministries. This reminds us of our Founder St. Arnold Janssen, founding the congregation of the Sister Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration to pray for SVD missions.



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*The most important thing in meditation is not reflection but communion with God, above all in love.*

*- St. Arnold Janssen*



## Widows And Widowers Retreat At SVD Prarthana Niketan, Kaduthuruthy

The Widows and Widowers Retreat at SVD Prarthana Niketan Kaduthuruthy was a deeply enriching and supportive experience for all participants. The three days' retreat provided a serene and spiritual environment for those who have lost their spouses to find solace, companionship, and a renewed sense of purpose. SVD Prarthana Niketan, known for its tranquil setting and spiritual ambience, surrounded by lush greenery, offers a peaceful atmosphere conducive to reflection and healing. The retreat was attended by widows and widowers from various walks of life.

The core of the retreat was a series of spiritual talks and reflections led by the SVD Prarthana Niketan Team. These sessions focused on themes such as healing, forgiveness, and finding hope after loss. Ample time was given for personal reflection and prayer. Various activities aimed at emotional and spiritual healing were incorporated into the retreat. These included the Holy Eucharist, meditation, Confessions and Eucharistic Adoration. Individual counselling helped participants to process their emotions and find new ways to express their grief. The retreat concluded with a moving closing ceremony, where participants shared their reflections and experiences from the weekend. The retreat was met with overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants. Many expressed gratitude



for the opportunity to connect with others who understood their experiences and for the spiritual nourishment they received. The Widows and Widowers Retreat at SVD Prarthana Niketan was a profound and transformative experience for all involved. It provided a space for healing, reflection, and spiritual growth, helping participants to navigate their grief and find renewed purpose in their lives.

“ *A servant of the Lord must be prepared to have much vinegar poured into the wine of his or her life.*

*- St. Arnold Janssen*

## Kerala Labour Movement (KLM) Honours Fr. Babu Kakkaniyil SVD



Kerala Labour Movement (KLM) has honoured Fr. Babu Kakkaniyil SVD with the KLM Golden Jubilee Award in recognition of his outstanding Leadership, unwavering dedication and exceptional service to the unorganised migrant workers. The award was presented to Fr. Babu by Mr. P Rajeev, honourable minister for Industries and Law while Bishop Silvester Ponnuthan (Chairman of KCBC labour commission and Bishop of Punaloor) and Bishop George Madathikandathil (Bishop of Kothamangalam) congratulated him for his meritorious service for the migrants with a shawl and presenting him a memento. This award was presented to Fr Babu on the occasion of the concluding celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Kerala Labour Movement held at Ernakulam Town Hall on 18th August. Our congratulations to Fr. Babu for his dedicated ministry and receiving this award.

## Blessing Of The Chapel Of The SVD Community At UCDC/SVD Centre, Bandra



On 24 September 2024, Fr. Tomy Thomas SVD, Provincial Superior of INM, along with the confrères, blessed and inaugurated the SVD Community Chapel at UCDC (Urban Community Development Centre), Bandra West, Mumbai, by cutting the ribbon. A solemn Eucharist followed in the new chapel. Confrères from St. Theresa's Church, the SVD Provincial House, SVD Shishyalaya Vasai, and Provincial Councillors Fr. Raja Ratna Reddy and Fr. Tony Menezes joined the celebration.

In his speech, Fr. Lawrence Correa, the director and superior of UCDC, mentioned that this was a long-awaited dream finally fulfilled. Dinner was organized in the community dining hall after Mass, and we gratefully remembered the benefactors who made this dream possible. Frs. Lawrence, Cosmos, and Jolly began residing in the new residence that day, marking the start of a new SVD community in the INM Province.



## Harvest And Karam Festival: A Celebration Of Unity And Culture



On October 13, 2024, the Urban Community Development Centre hosted a grand Harvest and Karam Festival for over 5000 Chotanagpur migrants. The event aimed to unite the tribal community, preserve their cultural heritage, and raise awareness about tribal rights.

The festival featured two main parts: a Mass and a Cultural Program. The Mass began with a vibrant entrance dance and hymns, followed by a sermon from Rev. Fr. Angelus Ekka, who emphasized the



connection between faith and gratitude for nature's bounty. Women performed a traditional dance after the Mass. The cultural program, hosted by social worker Ms. Goretti Xalxo, featured a storytelling session about the Karam festival, followed by a cultural dance from St. Theresa Bandra Hindi choir and St. Arnold Sports Club. Dr. Bipin Jojo, the Chief Guest, spoke on the importance of Tribal Identity and rights, inspiring the audience to continue advocating for their culture.



The festival also highlighted women's empowerment with stalls run by eight women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs), offering traditional food and tribal costumes. Fr. Cosmos concluded the event with a prayer of thanks, and a community dance symbolized unity and cultural pride. The event celebrated the strength and spirit of the Chotanagpur tribal communities, honouring their traditions while advocating for the preservation of their culture and rights.

## St. Theresa's Church, Bandra celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SVD foundation



On 8th September 2024, St. Theresa's Parish celebrated the grand opening of the 150th Jubilee of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). The event featured a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Richard Quadros SVD, the vice-provincial, along with other SVD priests. The liturgy began with an entrance dance by the Hindi Community, followed by the enthronement of the Holy Bible in a newly designed globe, symbolizing the global SVD mission.

Following the theme, "Witnessing to the Light from Everywhere for Everyone," Fr. Richard Quadros, Fr. Henry (the parish priest), Mr. Errol Ferreira (PPC vice president), and Severine Volado (DDW member) lit the

lamp, officially opening the jubilee year. A logo competition had been held in the parish, and the winning design, selected from thirteen entries, was unveiled during the Mass. Parishioners were also invited to participate by pinning flags with St. Arnold's quotations on a board..

At the conclusion of the liturgy, the SVD jubilee flag was unfurled at the church entrance, and cake was distributed to all.



## SVD Indo-Bangla Subzone Annual Formation Board Meeting And Inter Provincial Forum Meeting At Atma Darshan

The Indo-Bangla Subzone Annual Formation Board Meeting was held at Atma Darshan, Mumbai, from September 16 to 17, 2024. This gathering of committed formators focused on the theme: "Witnessing to the Light in Our Daily Lives at Seminaries," emphasising the role of educators and spiritual guides as beacons of hope in a world in need of redemption.

Fr. Tomy Thomas introduced the resource person, Rev. Fr. Gilbert D'Lima, Rector of Goregaon Major Seminary. He addressed the theme, "Witnessing to the Light from Everywhere for Everyone," encouraging formators to approach seminarians with compassion, understanding, and acceptance. He emphasised the importance of being true mentors rather than merely administrators, urging formators to embody qualities such as honesty, patience, and endurance. Quoting Psalm 27:11, "Teach me, O Lord, thy way; on an even path lead me," Fr. D'Lima highlighted the need for formators to practice what they preach.

Following this, the Indo-Bangla Subzone Annual Meeting of the IPF took place from September 19 to 20 at the same venue, reinforcing the call to witness in every aspect of our ministry.

A significant highlight was the keynote address by Mr. Royston Braganza, who spoke on "Witnessing to the Light: From Everywhere for Everyone." He reminded participants that the Jubilee year is an opportunity to reset and restore our lives to their divine purpose. Citing Luke 4:18-19, he emphasized our call to bring freedom, healing, and hope to those in need, challenging us to reflect on what comforts us at the expense of standing for truth.



## Vocation Camp At SVD Seminary, Raia



From October 28 to 30, 2024, the SVD Seminary in Raia hosted a vocation camp for 13 young boys exploring missionary life and their spiritual calling. The three-day program featured meaningful activities to inspire purpose and commitment to the missionary path. Fr. Richard Cardoz SVD, a missionary



from Austria, led reflective sharing sessions, encouraging the boys to explore their personal journeys and understand the values of compassion, dedication, and selflessness central to missionary work. Action songs, games, and teamwork activities fostered enthusiasm and camaraderie.



*God loves those who thank him even in suffering.*

*- St. Arnold Janssen*

## SSS, Pune Organises One-Day Seminar On Child Protection



On October 19, 2024, a one-day seminar on child protection was held to equip 30 social workers from 13 NGOs with essential knowledge and tools to address child abuse and strengthen child safeguarding efforts.

Mr. Digamber Birajdar led the sessions, beginning with an analysis of child abuse statistics from 2017 to 2022, which revealed an alarming rise in cases. He highlighted that over 52% of children in India experience sexual abuse, yet only 3% of cases are reported, and 69% of those face hostile legal proceedings. The stigma around reporting, especially among lower-middle-class families, was emphasized as a significant barrier to justice.



## Janseva SVD Tala SHG Women Explore Government Schemes at Panchayat Samiti

On August 23, 2024, women from the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the Janseva Society in Tala visited the Panchayat Samiti office to gain insights into various government schemes. This visit aimed to empower SHG members by providing them with information and resources that could benefit their communities.

During the visit, Panchayat Samiti officials briefed the women on welfare schemes, especially those targeting rural development, health, education, and women's empowerment. The interactive session allowed the women to



ask questions about eligibility, documentation, and application processes. Additionally, they learned about financial support and subsidies available for rural entrepreneurs, essential for driving local economic growth.

The visit highlighted the Janseva Society's commitment to encouraging women in Tala to be proactive in understanding and utilizing government resources for the betterment of their families and villages. This initiative reflects the growing role of women in rural development and their active participation in creating a self-sufficient society.



## Sacred Heart– Furnace of Love; Parish Day Celebration at Sacred Heart Parish, Andheri East



Sacred Heart Parish, Andheri East, celebrated Parish Day on November 9-10, 2024, with gratitude and joy. This year marked two special jubilees — the 150th anniversary of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and the Silver Jubilee of the Church Building and Small Christian Communities (SCCs).

The celebrations were preceded by a nine-day novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with parishioners offering prayers, cash, and essential items to support the Tala Mission in Mangaon. Each evening, the 36 SCCs prepared and sold snacks, fostering fellowship and raising funds for the festivities.

On November 10, the Feast Day, His Grace, Bishop Dominic Savio Fernandes, presided over the solemn Eucharist. He spoke on the theme



“Sacred Heart – Furnace of Love,” emphasizing that love shines brightest in sacrifice, not abundance. The parish was also blessed by the presence of Fr. Tomy Thomas SVD, Provincial, and Fr. Richard Quadros, Vice Provincial.

The evening concluded with a grand Family Meal shared by around 3,500 parishioners, with prepacked meals delivered to the homebound. A live band added energy to the celebration, with many parishioners dancing to the music.

Led by parish priest Fr. John Mascarenhas SVD, along with the clergy and organizing teams, the Parish Day celebration was a beautiful display of faith, unity, and love. The parish community prays, “May the Sacred Heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all!”

# *Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year - Inauguration In Our Province*

*(150 Years Of The SVD Foundation)*

**SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year  
Inauguration - Vidya Niketan, Mysuru**



**SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year  
Inauguration - St. Teresa Of Calcutta**



**SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year Inauguration -  
SVD Prarthana Niketan, Kaduthuruthy**



**SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year  
Inauguration At Sarva Vidya Deepa, Bailhongal**



### SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year Inauguration - St. Theresa's School, Bandra



### SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year Inauguration - LCF, Pune



### SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year Inauguration - St. Arnold Nivas, Kirem And DCC Mulki



### SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee Year Inauguration And Girl Child Day - St. Arnold's Central School, Mysuru



## Sarva Vikas Deep Mangaon



**Bal Panchayats**, also known as children's parliaments, are initiatives designed to empower children and give them a platform to voice their concerns and participate in decision-making processes.

In the work area of Sarva Vikas Deep there are 125 hamlets of Katkaris of which from 25 hamlets 155 child leaders and office bearers participated in a one day training program on 11th August 2024.

The concept of Bal Panchayat is part of the broader Child-Friendly Panchayat Initiative at the local level. Children were trained on the concept of VCPC (Village child protection committee), its members and the functions. Gram panchayat president is the head and Anganwadi Sevika is the secretary and their duties were explained to the children. At the school and gram panchayat level, teachers students and the office bearers of various villages too were made aware of their functions.

**World Food Day** is celebrated annually on October 16th to honor the establishment of the

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. The theme for World Food Day 2024 is "Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future".

At Sarva Vikas Deep about 150 women from various SHG (Self Help Group) were given input session by Dr. Manoj Talati head of the department, Dr. Mandovkar specialist in vegetables and agricultural cultivation and Dr Magrekar, specialist in Nutrition, from Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, (agricultural university) Roha, Raigad on the same day in the afternoon.

**World Indigenous Day**, also known as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, is observed annually on 9th August. The theme for 2024 is "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact"

This theme highlights the unique challenges faced by indigenous communities that choose to live in isolation from the rest of the world. Katkari communities often reside in remote forests and have a deep connection to their ecological environment. The day aimed to raise awareness

about their rights given by the constitution of India particularly through its Fifth and Sixth Schedules, which acknowledges the unique socio-cultural and economic status of tribal communities and provides specific protections regarding land ownership and governance.

Children at various hamlets took out rallies to express their culture. Thousands of people gathered at Mangaon, Goregoan, Nijampur and Indapur to celebrate the day and exhibit their culture, tradition and unity.

### SHG Federation Meet

Sarva Vikas Deep Self-Help Group (SHG) Federation meetings are held bimonthly. To discuss crucial development and sustainability of SHGs. These meetings provide a platform for members to discuss various issues, share experiences, and plan collective actions. They often cover topics such as group rules, responsibilities, financial management, and Government development schemes. Leaders present their success stories of livelihood initiatives and the failures due to various reasons.

*The missionary is not the light  
but reveals the light - Christ.*

*- St. Arnold Janssen*



## Feature Article

# Reflections on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the SVD Foundation

As the SVDs celebrate the sesquicentennial year of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), founded by St. Arnold Janssen on September 8, 1875, in Steyl, Holland. From its humble beginnings in a small two-story structure, the SVD has grown into a congregation of 5,754 members worldwide, representing 76 nationalities and serving in 79 countries. As of 2024, the SVD is the sixth-largest religious congregation of men in the Catholic Church. In addition, there are 70 officially recognized lay associate groups with 7,153 members, and 169 SVD partner groups with about 20,520 lay members in various stages of formation.

The celebration theme is “Witnessing to the Light: From Everywhere, for Everyone.” This theme captures the thrust of 150 years of SVD missionary work centered on Jesus, the Light of the world. It calls us to witness Christ’s light, drawing from the diverse rays of light found in people from all corners of the world, and offering that light to all, without discrimination. The imagery of light from the Gospel of John captures the ongoing struggle between light and darkness in our world: “In Him was life, and that life was the light of all humankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.” (John 1:3-4). We live in a world filled with both light and darkness, and we need the power of the Holy Spirit to discern what belongs to the light and what belongs to darkness.

Two images came to my mind while reflecting on this theme. The first is that of 72-year-old Mr. Ashraf Ali Syed Hussain, who was brutally assaulted by fellow passengers on a train recently. What started as a simple argument over a seat escalated into a violent attack, with the attackers accusing him of carrying beef. This incident is part of a larger pattern of violence across India, where many, especially minorities, have been

targeted based on false accusations. This darkness in our society shows how deeply hatred can take root, causing people to turn against one another in unspeakable ways.

The second image is a more hopeful one. It is the meeting between Pope Francis and Nasaruddin Umar, the Grand Imam of the Istiqlal Mosque in Indonesia. Together, they walked through the Tunnel of Friendship, which connects the Catholic Cathedral and the Mosque. The Pope emphasized that we all need to journey through the tunnels of life with our eyes fixed on the light. In their joint declaration, both leaders condemned the use of religion as an instrument of conflict and violence, and called for it to be a force for peace.

We live in a world where images of violence and images of peace constantly compete. Our opinions are often shaped by what we consume on our phones and screens. You may have noticed that when you watch a particular video or read a specific story, your device begins to offer you more content along similar lines. Eventually, we become convinced that what we see on our screens is the truth. As the saying goes, “We become what we consume.”

To be people who discern and embrace the light of Christ, we must actively choose to consume images and stories of light—stories of reconciliation, acts of kindness, and narratives of peace-building. We must fill our minds and hearts with examples of people who bring light into the world. That is one way of opening our hearts and minds to the light of Christ from everywhere.



One shining example of how the SVD lives out this theme is through their ministry to migrants. Migrants are often uprooted from their homes, cultures, and families, finding themselves in difficult and precarious situations. The SVD offers shelter, legal support, skills training, and opportunities for a better life. In Mexico, the SVD and the Holy Spirit Sisters run a home for migrants in Salto de Agua, Chiapas. A recent report filed from this house describes the visible sadness and pain on the migrants’ faces—people who have escaped violence only to face new dangers along their journey. The home has become a place of refuge, where they can rest, regain their strength, and continue their journey with renewed hope.

Sharing the light of Christ with everyone means reaching out to those who are trapped in darkness. In her Magnificat, Mother Mary sang, “He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.” By identifying and uplifting the lowly among us, and by working collectively to bring them comfort, we become witnesses to the light—from everywhere, for everyone.

Fr. Dr. Joseph M. T. SVD (Fr. Dr. Joseph M.T. SVD is an assistant professor in the University of Mumbai)

## Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Andheri



### Beginning

DDW began in 1999 as a small group of lay volunteers who helped propagate the programs conducted by Atma-Darshan, a SVD Center for Spirituality and Counseling, Mumbai, India. Fr. Gregory Pinto, SVD, was the group's initiator and first spiritual director. In October 2014, DDW Andheri was recognized by the SVD administration as an SVD Lay Partner Group of the Society of the Divine Word, India Mumbai Province (INM). The group has its Vision, Mission Statement, and Statutes for smooth and effective functioning.

### Celebrating Silver Jubilee

For the DDW members, 25 years of being together has deepened the bonds of commitment and relationship with one another. The faith experience,

coupled with the worldwide missionary needs of the church, compels the group to reach out to the people living on the margins. We promote and support mission awareness and nurture missionary vocations, in particular of the Society of the Divine Word. Members visit the missions regularly and share their time, talents, and resources towards the holistic and sustainable development of the poor.

### Together, we make a difference

"Feed the Hungry" is a beautiful story of compassion, unity, and the power of group action. The story follows our journey as we gather every Saturday to feed the hungry and homeless on the streets of Mumbai, India. It doesn't matter if it's sunny or rainy, whether it's Christmas or another holiday. Together with Atma Darshan, we serve approximately 1500 hot-packed meals to the hungry. In addition to a meal, we give the needy

a bottle of water, toiletries, medicines, clothes, etc. Our volunteers play a pivotal role in this project. Their dedication and compassion enable meal preparation and food distribution. By turning empathy into action, we try to create a positive impact on these vulnerable people, ensuring that every person, regardless of their circumstances, experiences warmth, nourishment, and dignity.

### Witnessing to the Light

Pray-Reach Out-Connect is the guiding motto of our Feed the Hungry project. Looking back, we realize that the Holy Spirit leads us forward. St. Arnold Janssen's vision, characterized by prayer, innovation, and risk-taking inspires us. The collaboration with the SVDs has helped us to break new ground and become faithful and creative disciples in our part of the wounded world.

**Susan Noronha**  
President,

Disciples of the Divine Word, Andheri (INM)



*True love and real trust form the basis of all good teamwork.*

*- St. Arnold Janssen*

## Celebrating 3 Years of Spiritual Growth and Service: DDW Bandra



On October 11, 2024, the Disciples of Divine Word (DDW) Bandra marked their 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary with a Mass at the UCDC Chapel. This significant milestone gathered current members, and newcomers from the “Come and See” program, emphasizing the group’s dedication to spiritual growth and community service. The Eucharistic celebration, presided over by Fr. Jolly SVD, featured a homily by Fr. Joseph M. T., centering on the SVD’s 150<sup>th</sup>-anniversary theme, “Witnessing to the Light: From Everywhere for Everyone.”

### Origins and Mission

Founded on September 8, 2021, alongside the mission office’s establishment at the Institute of Indian Culture (IIC), DDW Bandra officially began its journey on October 15, 2021, under the spiritual guidance of Fr. Jolly SVD. Its members, drawn from diverse parishes, united with a shared commitment to Arnoldian spirituality and the Mission of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD).

### Achievements and Growth

DDW Bandra’s initiatives include:

- Monthly Formation and Spiritual Programs: The group engages in retreats, recollections, and sessions to deepen their faith and understanding of SVD spirituality.

- Community Outreach: Members actively participate in outreach programs, supporting marginalized communities and engaging with seminarians.
- Celebration of Milestones: The group’s formal recognition came during its second year, with members taking vows on St. Arnold’s Feast Day.
- Participation in Assemblies: From regional meetings in Mulki and Mumbai to the All-India Lay Partner Meet in Puri, DDW Bandra enthusiastically represents the lay community. Their secretary’s participation at the Lay Partner Meet in Nemi, Rome marked international involvement.

### Looking Ahead

As they celebrated their third anniversary, DDW Bandra welcomed new members, inspired by the examples of DDW Andheri and DDW Pune. Meetings now held at the SVD Centre in Bandra strengthen their sense of community and focus on their mission. Committed to the SVD’s charism, the group looks forward to continued growth, spiritual enrichment, and expanded service.

With three years of steadfast dedication, DDW Bandra remains a vibrant example of faith in action, rooted in service, fellowship, and the transformative power of God’s mission.



# Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Pune 2024 Highlights

2024 was a year of celebration, reflection, and growth for the **Lay Partners of the Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Pune, INM Province**. It marked our 4th Anniversary and a renewed commitment to our shared mission with the **Society of the Divine Word (SVD)**.

Our anniversary on 6th October 2024 was a heartwarming gathering at the **Divine Word Seminary, Pune**, where we celebrated the Holy Eucharist led by Fr. Victor Sagayam, SVD, along with four other SVD priests. It was a joyful moment of thanksgiving, followed by the presentation of our annual activity report by our President, Leena Xavier, and a touching felicitation of our members by the seminarians. The celebration concluded with a fellowship lunch that strengthened our bond with SVD confreres and seminarians.

Continuing the joy, we went on a day-long outing on 12<sup>th</sup> October with our Spiritual Director, Fr. Gregory Arockiam, SVD. It was a day of fun, relaxation, and togetherness — a beautiful reminder of the family spirit we share as Lay Partners.

Another proud moment this year was being part of the 150th Anniversary celebration of the SVD on 8th September 2024. The celebration at Divine Word Seminary, Pune, was marked by an inspiring talk by Fr. Naveen Rebello, SVD, titled “From Steyl to the World: Revisiting Founding Memories for Creative Fidelity Today”. The event also saw

the unveiling of the Jubilee logo by Fr. Tomy Thomas, SVD, Provincial Superior, INM Province, who presided over the Holy Eucharist, calling us to rekindle our commitment to the mission of St. Arnold Janssen. We were blessed to share this moment with SVD confreres, Holy Spirit Sisters, and

other Lay Partners, united in faith and gratitude.

Our commitment to social justice was deepened when six of our members attended a National Conference on “Gender and Sexual Minorities in India” from 20th to 22nd October at Ishvani Kendra, organized by the SVD community. The conference created a safe space for conversations on LGBTQIA+ inclusion and social justice. We learned about issues such as healthcare inclusivity, human sexuality, and the impact of stigma and discrimination on transgender lives. It was an eye-opening experience that inspired us to be more inclusive and compassionate in our pastoral care and outreach efforts.

**As Disciples of the Divine Word, 2024** was a year of celebration, growth, and renewed purpose. We remain committed to living out the vision of St. Arnold Janssen with faith, creativity, and love for all. We look forward to continuing our journey of

**service, inclusion, and discipleship** in the years to come.

**Ad maiorem Dei gloriam!**  
(For the Greater Glory of God)



“Announcing the Gospel is the first and greatest act of charity.”

- St. Arnold Janssen

## Youth Retreat By Divine Word Retreat Ministry, Andheri



From October 30 to November 1, 2024, the Divine Word Retreat Ministry, Andheri, hosted a three-day residential youth retreat at St. Arnold's School Hall, Andheri, with 300 participants from Mumbai. Held during the Diwali holidays, the retreat offered a time for spiritual renewal, reflection, and a deeper connection with God. Fr. Salate,



Fr. Raja, Fr. Chinna, and Fr. Evan inaugurated the retreat in a prayerful atmosphere. With support from AISS Trust and St. Arnold's School, participants were accommodated on campus. On the second day, over 15 SVD priests provided counselling and confessions, offering spiritual guidance and healing.

## National Colloquium On Arnoldus Spirituality And Mission Today

A National Colloquium on Arnoldus Spirituality and Mission Today was organized at Atma Darshan, Mumbai from 13-15 November 2024. The three-day colloquium was attended by 68 members of the Arnoldus Family in the Indo-Bangla Sub zone. Among them there were 33 SVDs, 22 SSpS and 13 SVD-SSpS Lay Partners. The theme of the National Colloquium was: "New Wine in Fresh Wineskins: Becoming Creative Disciples in Today's Wounded World". The keynote address was delivered by Fr. Stanislaus Lazar SVD,



the General Mission Secretary from Rome. He outlined some of the creative ways and means of doing mission in the "wounded world" of today and in the socio-political context of India. This was followed by the video presentations of Sr. Miriam Altenhofen SSpS, the Congregational Leader of SSpS; Fr. Peter Dušička SVD, the Coordinator for Spiritual Animation and a message from Fr. Xavier Thirukudumbam SVD, the Vice General on behalf of Rev. Fr. Anselmo Ribeiro SVD, the Superior General of SVD.



For more information about the SVD congregation and its Mission kindly contact:  
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# SVD Priestly Ordinations 2024 - 2025

*“Let your light shine”*



**Albert  
Kunnethara**

USA Chicago (USC)  
02/01/25  
*To Become All things to All*



**Anil Kumar  
Tandi**

India Central (INC)  
11/01/25  
*To Become All things to All*



**Deepsan  
Dungdung**

India Eastern (INE)  
19/01/25  
*To do Everything for the  
Glory of God*



**Lucas Jojo**

Ecuador (ECU)  
08/02/25  
*I have called you by name,  
you are mine*



**Karthik Sabbineni**

Vietnam (VIE)  
13/1/25  
*Before I formed you in the womb,  
I knew you*



**Daniyar Siddi**

Zimbabwe (ZIM)  
01/03/25  
*Being His Light to  
Serve with Joy*



**Ravi Kamaliya**

India Eastern (INE)  
27/12/24  
*I will make you a light to the  
nations*



**Sandeep Noel S**

Germany (GER)  
05/01/25  
*Broken to Serve*



**Voora Satheesh**

Australia (AUS)  
08/01/25  
*Anointed to Bear Witness  
to the Light*



**Vinod Kumar M**

Colombia (COL)  
13/01/25  
*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me  
Because He has Anointed me*



**Valesh Prajwal  
Aranha**

USA Chicago (USC)  
29/04/25  
*To Grow in Grace*

## The Sesquicentennial of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD)



Holy Triune God source of life and communion,  
We thank you for inspiring Saint Arnold Janssen  
to found the Society of the Divine Word.

We extend our gratitude to those  
who preceded us, and to all collaborations in mission.

United to Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word,  
we are his missionary disciples who proclaim  
the Good News of his life and joy,  
alongside works of friendship and compassion  
for a wounded world.

With your Holy Spirit renew us, Lord,  
strengthen our journey as pilgrims of hope,  
and in the face of new challenges,  
may we generate responses with creativity,  
fidelity, and synodality.

Holy Mary, Mother of the Divine Word, guide our mission  
with signs that build communion and promote participation.

May the Light of your Son, which over comes darkness,  
illuminate our hearts, and all of humanity and creation.

Amen.



## Sponsor A Seminarian

The Divine Word Missionaries (SVDs) dedicated their lives as Priest and Brothers to evangelize all over the world. Presently we are numbering nearly 6000 working in 84 countries. There are about 800 SVDs working in 4 Provinces and one Region in India and over 300 Indian SVD priest and brothers working in 84 countries around the globe. We look forward to your generous contribution towards a seminarian. A one-year sponsorship of the total expenses of a seminarian entails a donation of Rs 50,000.

**Exclusive Sponsorship:** One-time contribution amount: Rs 2,00,000.00 (two lakhs only)

**Non- Exclusive Sponsorship:** (between four benefactors): One-time contribution amount: Rs 50,000.00 (fifty thousand only)

### Divine Word Seminary, Pune

You can also remit the amount through NEFT in the following address.

Name of the beneficiary: DIVINE WORD SEMINARY  
Account No. 0282-01220795/190001

Name of the bank: CSB Bank Ltd., Branch: Ramwadi, Pune  
IFSC: CSBK0000282

### Fr. Johny Vattamala, SVD

Director, SVD Mission Support,  
Divine Word Seminary, Sanikawadi, Pune – 411014  
Email: johnyvattamala@gmail.com /  
svdmissionsupport@gmail.com



THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF  
THE SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD (SVD)

**WITNESSING TO  
THE LIGHT**  
**FROM EVERYWHERE, FOR EVERYONE**

FOUNDER : ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN  
YEAR OF ESTABLISHMENT: 08 SEPTEMBER 1875

PROVINCES	: 45	BISHOPS	: 49
REGIONS	: 07	PRIESTS	: 3996
MISSIONS	: 07	BROTHERS	: 457
COUNTRIES	: 79	DEACONS	: 133
NATIONALITIES	: 76	FRATRES	: 864
		NOVICES	: 255

**TOTAL MEMBERS : 5754**

**4 ZONES**  
ASPAC, AFRAM,  
PANAMA, EUROPE

**4 CHARACTERISTIC DIMENSIONS**  
BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE  
MISSION ANIMATION  
COMMUNICATION & JPIC