

The **FRONTIERS**

SVD India Mumbai Province News

SEPTEMBER 2025

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A Shared Birthday of Grace and Mission

08 September 1875 - 2025



Witnessing to *the Light*
from Everywhere, for Everyone



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*Fr. Arnold loved to call Mary by two titles:
Immaculate Spouse of the Holy Spirit
and Immaculate Heart of Mary.*

Editorial

*September 8 –
A Shared Birthday
of Grace and Mission*

Concluding Our Jubilee with Gratitude and Hope

Dear friends,

As we celebrate the Nativity of Mother Mary on September 8, we also rejoice in our SVD Foundation Day, born on this sacred date in 1875 in Steyl. This shared birthday is a beautiful reminder that every mission begins with a humble "Yes" to God's Word.

This Jubilee Year-150 years of our Society-has been a special time of grace. For us in the INM Province, it's been more than an anniversary. It has rekindled our passion, challenged us to be bold, and called us to serve in new ways.

In this edition of FRONTIERS, we honour the unique ministries that shape our life and mission—from media and interfaith dialogue to healing, justice, and biblical formation. Each one is a living sign of the Word at work in today's India, Mumbai Province, especially among those on the margins.

We look ahead with Mary and St. Arnold as our companions. The Jubilee may conclude, but our mission continues—with faith, creativity, and courage.

Thank you to all our friends, benefactors, and collaborators. You've walked this journey with us. Let's carry the Jubilee spirit forward—together.

Viva Arnoldus! Viva Mission! Viva INM!

In the Word,



Fr. Jolly M., SVD
Editor, FRONTIERS – INM Province
Society of the Divine Word

Message from the Provincial

*A Message of
Hope and Gratitude*

Dear Confreres, Friends, and Collaborators in Mission,

As we draw the curtain on the 150th Jubilee Year of the Society of the Divine Word, my heart overflows with gratitude and renewed hope. This has been more than a commemoration—it has been a celebration of God's enduring fidelity and the transforming grace that flows from a wholehearted "Yes."

September 8 brings a beautiful convergence: the Nativity of Our Blessed Mother and the Foundation Day of our Society in Steyl. A shared birthday of grace and mission—where Mary's fiat meets the missionary vision of St. Arnold.

Throughout this Jubilee Year in the INM Province, we've walked together in prayer, reflection, and creative action. I'm deeply grateful to each confrere, lay partner, benefactor, and parish community. Your presence and perseverance have kept our charism alive and relevant.

This edition of FRONTIERS highlights our special ministries—pastoral counselling, digital evangelization, interfaith dialogue, care for creation, and biblical formation. These quiet, prophetic works are our response to a world in need of healing, hope, and meaning.

We still face real challenges. But the Jubilee has reminded us: our mission doesn't depend on our strength, but on God's faithfulness. Let's continue with courage, intercultural unity, and joy—to sow seeds of the Word in every season.

With heartfelt thanks and prayers for our journey ahead,



Fr. Tomy Thomas, SVD
Provincial – INM Province
Society of the Divine Word



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SVD (Latin) Societas Verbi Divini (English) known as Divine Word Missionaries

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SVD Special Ministries in India Mumbai Province (INM) in focus

Gyan Ashram, Andheri- Mumbai Centre for Music, dance, and all other art forms



Gyan Ashram, established in 1955 by Fr. George Proksch—who later embraced the name Guru Gyan Prakash—is a cultural beacon in Andheri, Mumbai, dedicated to fostering dialogue, peace, and spiritual unity through the arts. This innovative institution blends Indian classical music and dance with the Christian message of love and service, creating a unique space where diverse cultural expressions come together.

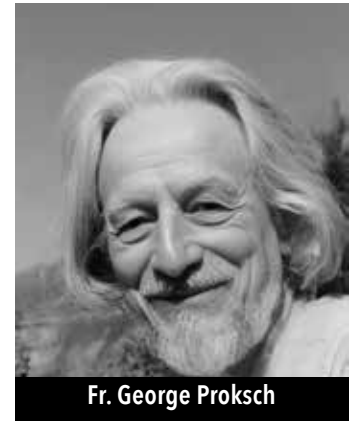
Fr. Proksch arrived in India from Germany in 1933 and immersed himself in the local culture, studying Urdu, Sanskrit, and classical music in Lucknow. His deep commitment to both his faith and the rich traditions of India led him to gather a troupe of talented singers and dancers. His goal was clear: to convey the message of Jesus through indigenous art forms—music, dance,

dramas, and folk songs—thus reaching out to both the privileged and the marginalized.

A defining moment in Gyan Ashram's history was the staging of "Anuttam Prem" (No Greater Love) in 1964 during the International Eucharistic Congress in Mumbai. This grand ballet featured a dazzling performance

by 300 dancers, 1,000 singers, and an orchestra of 100 musicians. The production, attended by over 50,000 spectators and His Holiness Pope Paul VI, showcased the power of inculturation—the fusion of Western evangelistic ideas with India's rich cultural heritage. The success of this performance cemented Gyan Ashram's reputation as a pioneer in using the arts as a medium for spiritual and cultural dialogue.

Today, Gyan Ashram remains active and dynamic. It hosts regular workshops and training sessions in classical music, dance, and yoga, nurturing young talent and preserving age-old traditions. The Ashram organizes seasonal festivals and public performances that bring communities together, offering a platform for dialogue and cultural exchange.



Fr. George Proksch

Special events and interfaith gatherings further underscore its commitment to peace and harmony, inviting artists and spiritual leaders from various backgrounds to share their insights.



In a world often divided by cultural and religious differences, Gyan Ashram continues to live its founding vision by using the universal language of art to bridge divides and inspire unity. Through its present-day activities—from dynamic training programs to large-scale cultural events—the Ashram not only preserves a legacy of cross-cultural dialogue but also paves the way for future generations to experience the transformative power of music and dance.



Institute Of Indian Culture, Andheri

Research centre in anthropology, sociology, religion, and culture



The Institute of Indian Culture in Andheri has long been a beacon of anthropological inquiry and cultural preservation. Founded in 1950 amid a wave of scholarly curiosity, it was established to arm missionaries and researchers with the tools to study India's diverse cultural landscape without disrupting its native traditions.

Initially located at the SVD House in Bandra, Mumbai, the institute began its journey by providing scientific literature to support evangelical work. Its quest for knowledge soon led it on a relocation path—from the Catholic Ashram in Palda, Indore, in 1954 to the Theological College of the Archdiocese

at the foot of Mount Mary's Shrine in Bandra in 1956. By 1976, the institute had firmly planted its roots with a dedicated building and a comprehensive library in Andheri.

Specializing in the intricate study of Indian culture, religion, and philosophy, the institute places a special emphasis on the lives of tribal and Dalit communities. Its collaborative research model, which welcomes laypeople alongside academic scholars, has resulted in an impressive output: over sixty books and approximately six hundred articles that contribute to India's academic and social discourse.

The library at the Institute of Indian Culture is a treasure trove of knowledge, housing around sixty thousand volumes and 200 journals from both Indian and international sources. Among its collection are rare and ancient texts that remain unique in their scope and depth. In 1997, the University of Mumbai recognized the institute's scholarly prowess by designating it as a postgraduate Research Centre in Anthropology and Sociology. Today, it offers advanced degrees, including an M.A. (by research) and a Ph.D., solidifying its status as a premier hub for cultural and social research in India.



Dhyan Kutir: A Sanctuary for Spiritual Oneness, Andheri Centre for interreligious dialogue

In a world often divided by differences, Dhyan Kutir stands as a beacon of unity, fostering inter-spiritual harmony through meditation and holistic well-being. With the vision **“Together Towards Oneness,”** this sanctuary welcomes people from all religions, providing a space where seekers can nurture their spiritual journey and find inner peace.

A Garden of Harmony

Dhyan Kutir aims to cultivate an environment where individuals can explore different spiritual traditions, deepening their connection with themselves and the divine. Through a variety of activities, it serves as a bridge between different faiths, guiding participants toward inner peace and communal unity.

Key Activities at Dhyan Kutir

1. Biweekly Group Meditations

Held every Tuesday and Thursday from 18:05 to 19:15, these sessions are open to all.

2. Higher Consciousness Circle (HiCoC)

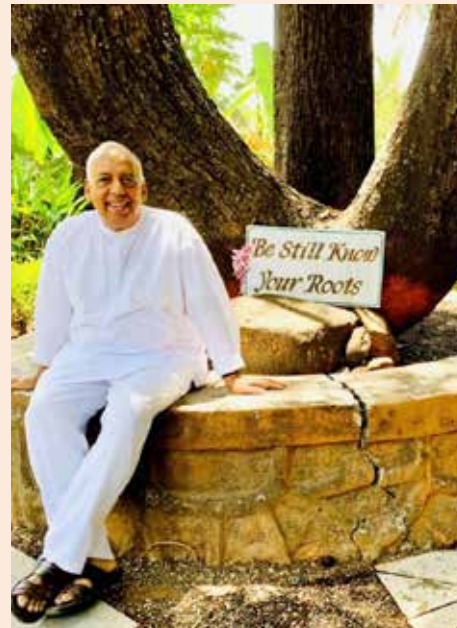
Once a month, seekers of true Self, God, and Truth come together in this unique gathering. Representing seven different religious beliefs, HiCoC promotes spiritual unity by encouraging open dialogue and shared experiences. It is a platform for those who wish to transcend boundaries and embrace a deeper connection with universal consciousness.

3. Retreats and Meditation Classes

Upon request, Dhyan Kutir organizes residential retreats and guided meditation classes. These immersive experiences allow individuals to learn various meditation techniques while embracing silence, reflection, and spiritual renewal.

4. Counselling and Therapeutic Support

For those seeking guidance, Dhyan Kutir offers counseling and therapeutic services tailored to individual needs. The focus is on holistic healing, addressing mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.



5. Specialized Treatment for Psychosomatic Illnesses

Recognizing the deep connection between mind and body, Dhyan Kutir provides special treatments for individuals suffering from asthma, allergies, and other psychosomatic ailments. These treatments incorporate meditation, breathing techniques, and holistic therapies to promote overall wellness.

Embracing Spiritual Unity

Dhyan Kutir is more than just a meditation center—it is a movement toward universal oneness. By integrating diverse spiritual practices and fostering a sense of belonging among all seekers, it inspires individuals to embrace inner transformation and radiate peace into the world.

For those yearning for a deeper connection with themselves and others, Dhyan Kutir offers a sanctuary of tranquillity, guiding them on the path to enlightenment and unity.

Atma Darshan: A Sanctuary for the Soul in the Heart of Andheri

Where Psychology Meets Spirituality, and Healing Begins

Nestled within the serene Gyan Ashram campus in Andheri East, Atma Darshan is one of Mumbai's most respected spiritual and emotional growth centers. Founded in 1998 and run by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) Fathers, this Centre for Spirituality and Counselling has become a welcoming refuge for individuals from every walk of life, faith tradition, and personal journey.

More than just a centre, Atma Darshan offers an experience of wholeness – a space where silence nurtures insight, and where faith and psychology work together to bring about lasting healing.

A Holistic Path to Healing

Atma Darshan is renowned for its integrated approach to care, combining modern psychological principles with deep spiritual insight. Whether one is seeking support through grief, navigating the complexities of mid-life, or simply yearning for peace, the centre responds with compassion and wisdom.

Every person who walks through its gates is treated with dignity and reverence, invited into a process of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and inner renewal.



Transformative Retreats and Courses

The centre offers a variety of retreats and training programs designed to support growth, healing, and spiritual maturity. Among the most popular are:

- Stress Management & Emotional Intelligence Workshops
- Marriage and Family Enrichment Retreats
- Mid-Life Renewal & Aging Gracefully Programs
- Support Retreats for Widows and the Bereaved

- Spiritual Renewal Retreats for Priests and Religious

Building a Listening Church

In addition to its retreats, Atma Darshan trains laypeople and religious in professional counselling and listening skills, creating a ripple effect of healing in parishes, schools, and families. This outreach equips communities to become places of empathy, resilience, and support – echoing Pope Francis's vision of the Church as a "field hospital."



A group of participants after a course.

Ishvani Kendra, Pune

Institute of Missiology and Communication



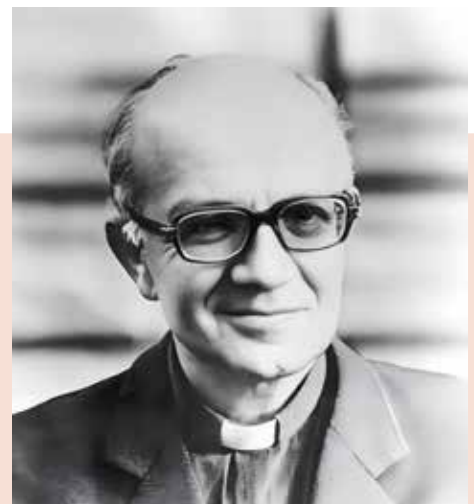
Ishvani Kendra, translating to "Centre for the Word of God," is a trailblazing institution in India—and possibly across Asia—dedicated to the art and science of evangelisation. Born from the visionary pursuits of Fr. Englebert Zeitler, SVD, in the mid-1970s, the centre was established to bridge a critical gap in mission studies and research, an area he felt had long been neglected.

The building's foundation stone was laid on January 6, 1979, a date marked by its symbolic alignment with the feast of Epiphany. Since then, Ishvani Kendra has emerged as a dynamic hub of innovative thought and practical outreach. Its activities range from conducting intensive

short-term courses and seminars on mission and communication to producing high-quality video content for prayer and reflection.

At its core, Ishvani Kendra functions as a comprehensive resource center. Its library, boasting nearly 36,000 volumes, is a treasure trove on subjects as diverse as mission theology, world religions, mass media, and social ideologies including feminist thought and tribal studies. The centre's communication department not only trains and produces content but also supports dioceses and religious groups with expert resource persons for renewal programmes.

Moreover, the institute bolsters its academic and evangelical pursuits with its publication, the



Fr. Zeitler SVD



"Ishvani Documentation and Mission Digest," and regularly convenes research seminars to explore pressing missiological issues. In doing so, Ishvani Kendra continues to play a pivotal role in shaping and energising the landscape of evangelisation in India and beyond.



Evangelization training

Inauguration of Ishvani Kendra Golden Jubilee, Pune



Fr. Provincial opening the Jubilee in the presence of the SVD community

Ishvani Kendra, a premier center for Missiology and Communications, joyfully inaugurated its Golden Jubilee Year (2025-2026) on June 19, 2025, marking 50 years of dedicated evangelizing mission. The celebration began with a solemn Eucharistic Celebration presided over by Fr. Tomy Thomas SVD, Provincial Superior of INM, in the presence of Ishvani Kendra's staff, coworkers, SVD confreres from Pune LCF, and 41 participants. These participants comprising sisters, brothers, and priests from 16 religious congregations, were attending the "Overseas Mission Orientation" programme held from June 8-28, 2025. This preparatory course is

designed to equip missionaries from India with vital psychological and cultural awareness, along with personal competence, for effective mission in foreign contexts. The 41 participants are assigned to over 25 countries. The Overseas Mission Orientation, a hallmark initiative of Ishvani Kendra, embodies its vision of forming creative and faithful disciples for global mission. The Golden Jubilee theme, "Celebrating 50 Years of Evangelizing Mission," affirms Ishvani Kendra's enduring commitment to the Church's mission of dialogue, service, and witness in a pluralistic world.



*Let us work and pray that
the Divine Word may live
in the hearts of all.*

- St. Arnold Janssen, SVD



Mission. Money. Meaning

National Workshop for SVD Treasurers

The SVD India Subzone organized a set of three workshops for all SVDs in India involved in financial matters. The first one was held in Hyderabad from 15 – 17 July, the second one was in Indore from 22 – 24 July, and the third one was from 29 - 31 July at Atma Darshan, Andheri, Mumbai. The workshop was focused on Financial Management, Compliance, Transparency, and Ethical Practices in the administration of trusts, charitable, and religious organizations. These workshops brought together 157 SVDs from across the Indian provinces and regions of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD).

Under the leadership of Fr. Donald D'Souza, SVD, the Coordinator for India Subzone Treasurers, the workshop addressed pressing challenges and best practices in managing institutional finances. Though most of the sessions were conducted by Provincial Treasurers, some sessions were enriched by inputs from professional auditors, and governance experts, who shared practical insights on regulatory compliance, ethical stewardship, and transparent financial reporting.

The workshop conducted in Atma Darshan, Andheri Mumbai was graced by SVD leadership, including Fr. Tomy Thomas, SVD (Provincial – INM) and Fr. Jeevan Kennedy, SVD (Regional Superior – ING), and Fr. Lewis Ronald Pereira SVD (National Mission Secretary) whose presence highlighted the importance of financial integrity in mission sustainability and witness.



INC

Key topics discussed included:

- Directives for the Administration of Temporal Goods in the Society of the Divine Word
- SVD Policy on Financial abuse and Mismanagement
- Latest changes in Income Tax rules for Charitable organisations
- Updates on FCRA, TDS, PT, EPF, ESIC regulations
- School finance management
- Governance responsibilities in religious and charitable Trusts

The workshop concluded with a renewed commitment among participants to uphold the SVD values of integrity, professionalism, and transparency in all financial matters, ensuring that resources are responsibly managed in the service of mission.

This collaborative effort marks an important step toward strengthening institutional governance and deepening trust in the financial administration across the SVD India Subzone.



INH



INM

Divine Word Bible convention in Konkani and English in Mumbai



The Divine Word Retreat Ministry in Andheri East hosted the Konkani-English Convention on March 14 and 15, 2025, at St. Arnold's School Ground. This special event was held to commemorate 150 years of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) and its mission of spreading God's Word worldwide. Many attendees from across the city gathered for this occasion, receiving an abundance of spiritual blessings.

Fr. Tomy, the Provincial Superior of INM, was present at the event and delivered a speech highlighting the importance of the SVD mission in spreading the Word of God. The convention included preaching sessions by Fr. Ravinder Reddy SVD and Fr. Evan Gomes SVD. Br. Prakash Dsouza from the Divine Mercy Prayer Group, Bandra East, led special prayers that enhanced the spiritual atmosphere of the event.



A key feature of the convention was the biblical musical Journeying with Jesus, composed and directed by Fr. Chinnappa SVD and Fr. Salate Nathan SVD. The performance, held on March 15, was wonderfully executed by the Gyan Ashram Music and Dance Academy.



All-Mumbai Migrants Rally: A Celebration of Faith and Solidarity

Excellent collaboration by the SVD INM with the Archdiocese of Mumbai

Fr. Cosmos Ekka SVD (Member of the Migrants Commission, Mumbai)



Over 3,500 faithful gathered on March 16, 2025, at Sacred Heart School, Santa Cruz West, for the All-Mumbai Migrants Rally, organized by the Archdiocesan Migrants Commission (AMC). The event aimed to reaffirm the Church's commitment to migrants, offering them support and hope.



The rally opened with Praise and Worship, followed by the Stations of the Cross, led by Bishop Allwyn D'Silva. The highlight was the Eucharistic Celebration, presided over by Cardinal Oswald Gracias and concelebrated by 18 priests. A traditional entrance dance and a Bible procession enriched the liturgy, with the Bandra Unit leading the choir. In his homily, Cardinal Gracias urged migrants to remain steadfast in faith, reminding them that even Christ faced struggles as a migrant.



Post-Mass, attendees enjoyed refreshments and a video showcasing AMC's work. A parade of units, each carrying banners, celebrated their collective efforts. During a felicitation ceremony, dignitaries including Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop John Rodrigues, and key figures in migrant welfare were honored. Archbishop Rodrigues reassured attendees of the Church's ongoing support.

The rally concluded with five migrants sharing powerful testimonies of resilience, inspiring hope among all present.



Feature Article

Value Addition to Vulnerable People: *A Mission*



**Fr. Richard Quadros SVD,
JPIC Co-Ordinator, ROME**

Value addition is often seen in corporate settings as an enhancement over an existing product or service. It involves improving a value proposition, making it more desirable and beneficial to the customer. While this concept typically revolves around monetary or material gains, value can also be added to human lives in profound ways that don't require financial transactions.

In the context of mission work, value addition can be achieved by investing time, energy, and compassion to contribute to others' well-being, success, and personal growth. I recall an experience while working at Sarva Seva Sangh (SSS) in Pune, where I facilitated a focused group discussion with HIV-positive patients. One participant, struggling with social stigma and contemplating suicide, found new hope through our acceptance and support. Her regular visits to the rehabilitation center gave her the strength to face societal rejection, and our empathy became a powerful force of value addition in her life.

Similarly, at a school in Pune, a physically disabled boy faced rejection from other institutions. Initially hesitant, we decided to admit him, focusing on how we could add value to his life. Years later, he graduated and expressed how the school had made a positive impact on his future. Sometimes, simply being there for someone, offering support when they feel alone, adds immeasurable value to their life.

Another critical aspect of value addition is acceptance. Too often, people face pressures to conform to others' expectations. I recall a hostel boy from Mangaon mission who was rebellious and ran away before exams.

However, by accepting him as he was and nurturing his passion, we helped him pursue a degree in Social Work at a prestigious college in Mumbai. This illustrates that real value comes from accepting others without judgment, allowing them to grow in their own way.

Adding value is also about sharing knowledge and skills. When we teach others what we know, we empower them to succeed. In a world full of pretences, offering authentic support is crucial. People remember those who taught them something valuable or simply listened with empathy. By embracing authenticity and encouraging others to do the same, we can help them realize their potential and add lasting value to their lives.

In conclusion, value addition is not just about material wealth but about enhancing lives with compassion, acceptance, and authenticity. Whether through emotional support, encouragement, or imparting knowledge, we all have the ability to create meaningful change in the lives of others.



Glorious SVD 150 Years Celebrated In St. John's Changanacherry

The sesquicentennial jubilee celebration of the SVD unfolded with grace and reverence in St. John's Mission seminary on January 25, 2025. The landmark event took place at 5.30 pm with the inaugural Eucharist celebrated by His Grace Mar Thomas Tharayil, the newly appointed archbishop of Changanacherry, Provincial Fr. Tomy Perumprayil, Rector Fr. Mathew Chennakudy and Fr. Jacob Kavumkal enveloping everyone in a sacred atmosphere guiding through a deep reflection in gratitude for the years of service and devotion.

Following the Holy Eucharist, the public function was inaugurated by His Grace Emeritus Mar Joseph Perumthottom of Changanacherry

diocese. A video exhibition served as a testament to the rich history and spirituality of the Divine Word religious order in spreading the message of the gospel, love, faith and communion. The speeches along with a blend of entertainment by the brothers of St. John's seminary during the communal celebration had a profound impact on the crowd numbering approximately 250, and served as a poignant reminder of the Divine Word Missionary congregation's enduring legacy in the world. As we move forward, this jubilee serves as a foundation for the continued growth, service and spiritual enrichment for all its members.



The Lord challenges our faith to do something new precisely when so much seems impossible.

- St. Arnold Janssen, SVD



Lenten Recollection for Migrants

Journey of Faith, Renewal, and Hope



The Migrant Ministry Mulki organized a successful and meaningful spiritual recollection for migrants on Sunday, 30 March 2025, at St. Aloysius University in Mangalore. The gathering drew approximately 100 participants seeking spiritual renewal during the Lenten season. The programme commenced with an inspiring motivational talk delivered by Fr. Mark Mathias SVD, followed by a period of adoration and the opportunity for participants to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The

spiritual journey culminated in a Holy Eucharist celebration by all faithful, followed by a shared lunch. The day concluded with a brief meeting, during which participants evaluated the event's activities and shared personal testimonies about their experiences. This feedback session highlighted the impact of the spiritual exercises and created a space for community bonding.

The Migrant Ministry Mulki Team (Fr. Sushil Xess, Fr. Walter Dency Mendonca and Fr. Mark Mathais) extends its heartfelt gratitude to the



Jesuit Scholastics and Sisters who assisted with the liturgy and choir, Fr. Rakesh Bara SJ, and other priests who administered confessions, Fr. Jaison Pinto SDB along with the benefactor who generously sponsored the lunch for all participants, the Rector and Jesuit community who provided their facilities and accommodation for the gathering. This Lenten recollection stands as a testament to the power of collaborative ministry in nurturing the spiritual well-being of the migrant community.

First Siddi SVD Priest Ordained in India



March 1, 2025, Mundugod, Karnataka – In a historic moment, Fr. Daniyar Prancis Siddi SVD was ordained a priest by Bishop Duming Dias of Karwar Diocese, becoming the first Siddi (Indian-African) Divine Word Missionary to be ordained in India.

Fr. Daniyar hails from the Siddi community—descendants of African peoples brought to India centuries ago by the Portuguese. Despite centuries in India, Siddis still face discrimination and remain one of the country's marginalized tribal groups. Karnataka is home to the largest Siddi population, with a significant Catholic presence.



The ordination was a proud moment for his village, Mainalli, and for the entire Siddi community. His sister, Ms. Anjali Siddi, said, "This is a moment of great pride for all of us." There are currently only four Siddi priests and a few women religious in India.

In a symbolic gesture, Fr. Daniyar has been appointed to serve in Zimbabwe—connecting his present mission with his African heritage.

Janseva Society, Tala Opens Development Center for Katkari Tribe

Raigad, June 18, 2025 – In a major milestone, the Janseva Society, Tala, inaugurated its Community and Human Resources Development Center to support the Katkari tribe, one of Maharashtra's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. The event was held during the 150th Jubilee celebrations of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD).

The day began with a Thanksgiving Mass led by Archbishop John Rodrigues, who called the new center a "sanctuary of transformation." Fr. Tomy Thomas, SVD, Provincial Superior, inaugurated the facility, affirming SVD's commitment to the marginalized.

Fr. Nickson Gabru, SVD, and Fr. John Singarayar SVD Director and administrator of the

perspectively of Janseva, described the center as a space for education, skill training, and empowerment, developed in collaboration with the Katkari community.

The event included tributes to former directors, active participation by local women's groups, and a community meal—symbolizing unity and shared hope.



SVD Lay Mission Partners Meet Reflects Spirit of St. Arnold

Mumbai, Jan 4-5, 2025 – The INM Lay Mission Partners Meet 2025 was held at Atmadarshan, Andheri East, drawing participants from across the province. Centered on the theme "Journeying with St. Arnold Janssen, Inspired by His WORD," the two-day event offered a rich mix of prayer, reflection, and learning.

Sessions were led by SVD priests, including Fr. Ittoop Panikulam SVD, Fr. M.T. Joseph, Fr. Gregory Arokyam, and Fr. Raja Reddy, with active contributions from DDW groups in Andheri, Bandra, and Pune. Key themes included lay spirituality, SVD charism, and the evolving role of mission partners. Notably, Fr. M.T. Joseph proposed renaming the group as SVD Mission Partners, dropping the word "lay."

Fr. Tomy Thomas SVD, Provincial, celebrated the Eucharist, while Fr. Jolly SVD, the INM Mission Secretary, animated the gathering with warmth and clarity. A group photo in Jubilee T-shirts captured the spirit of unity.

Participants left with renewed inspiration to live out the mission of St. Arnold Janssen in today's world.



With The Cross To The Missions

Bestowal of the Mission Cross at Divine Word Seminary, Pune

On 8th June 2025, eleven of the newly ordained priests gathered at Divine Word Seminary (DWS), Pune, to receive their Mission Cross – a cherished tradition in the Society of the Divine Word. The celebration coincided meaningfully with the Feast of Pentecost, adding spiritual depth to the bestowal ceremony. The gracious occasion was presided over by Fr. Tomy Thomas SVD, Provincial Superior of the INM Province.

Fr. Jesuraj Rayappan SVD, Rector of DWS, welcomed the gathering and highlighted the significance of the Mission Cross in his introductory remarks. Following this, Fr. Tomy bestowed the Mission Crosses on the newly ordained priests and prayed over them the prayer of sending forth of the missionaries. The ceremony was witnessed by members of the DWS, Ishvani, and SSS communities, along with the spiritual parents of the

newly ordained priests. After receiving the Mission Cross, the new priests were warmly felicitated by their younger confreres. In turn, they expressed heartfelt gratitude to the DWS community and their formators for the invaluable support and guidance received during their initial formation. The day was filled with blessings and graces, marked by the joyful presence and commitment of the newly ordained priests.



Fr. Dr. Naveen Rebello SVD Publishes Ground-breaking Work on Gospel of Matthew

Fr. Dr. Naveen Rebello SVD's doctoral thesis, *Recognizing the Messiah: A Study of Antithetical Anagnōrisis in the Gospel of Matthew*, has been published by Christian World Imprints, New Delhi, under the Wisdom Research Series. The book, based on his award-winning dissertation (Summa cum Laude) from the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, explores how moments of recognition and rejection reveal Jesus' identity in Matthew's Gospel.

The book was released on June 8, 2025 at Divine Word Seminary, Pune, by INM Provincial Fr. Tomy Thomas SVD, and again on June 9 at Jnana-Deepa, Pune, by Fr. Dolichan Kollareth SJ in the presence of Bishop Malcolm Sequeira of Amravati.



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

Healing and Mission: A Grace-Filled Journey



DDW Andheri Group

Healing Through Grace

On 15th June 2025, members gathered at Atma Darshan for a day of grace and reflection. Fr. Gregory Pinto, SVD, spoke on the Holy Trinity and the Eucharist as a call to unity and transformation.

In the core session, "Hurt: Journeying Towards Healing," Jayesh George guided reflections using a broken plate as a symbol of life's wounds held by God's grace. Members surrendered personal hurts in prayer, shared stories of healing, and drew strength from Jesus, the Wounded Healer. The session ended with the symbolic burning of slips, an act of letting go and embracing grace.

Extending Support to Mission Projects

DDW Andheri continues to strengthen its missionary partnership with the SVD through support to key projects in the India subzone.

DDW is actively involved with the Tala Mission, INM, which provides education and social upliftment to marginalized tribal communities. It also supports St. Arnold's Degree College, which offers academic excellence. This collaboration is a proud milestone for both the SVD and the Archdiocese of Bombay, affirming the Church's commitment to shaping Christ-centered leaders.

A Sacred Space for ING: Supporting Naricamp Chapel

In the ING Region, DDW Andheri supports the construction of the Naricamp Chapel Building, a sacred space for worship and community gathering.

Feeding the Hungry and Restoring Dignity

Since its launch in 2019, DDW Andheri's outreach to the homeless and hungry in the streets of Mumbai has continued every Saturday without interruption, feeding over 1,000 people each week.

But this mission is about more than food. It is about restoring dignity. Members



Fr. Avinash SVD from Arunachal and Fr. John the Parish Priest

not only feed the hungry but also clean wounds, offer drinking water, distribute clothes, and provide basic toiletries. Each act of kindness is carried out with deep respect and compassion. What began as a simple gesture has grown into a transformative ministry.

We remain grateful for the grace-filled opportunities to be co-builders in God's mission.



Tiffins, Chalk Dust, and Life Lessons

My Year with the Little Teachers of UCDC



Saloni Rego

I still remember my first day at the Urban Community Development Centre (UCDC). The sun was warm, the air alive with children's laughter, and my heart? A whirlwind of nerves and hope. I had come to teach—but by the end of the year, I realized the real teachers were the children themselves.

From the moment I walked in, I felt something special—something unspoken but deeply present. A quiet warmth. A silent promise: You belong here. It wasn't just the welcoming smiles of the staff or the encouraging nods of the SVD priests. It was in the small things—a child's curious question, a senior teacher's gentle advice, an unexpected cup of tea left at my desk.

Soon, my days were filled with the rhythm of blackboards, books, and chalk dust. I taught English, Hindi, Math, and General Knowledge. But the real learning happened between the lessons.



I watched little quarrels turn into shared meals, tiffins broken in two and offered without hesitation. I saw a girl who once hid behind others sing boldly on stage. I cheered for boys who once stumbled over simple words now proudly reciting poems by heart. These weren't just academic achievements—they were moments of quiet magic. Moments that whispered: Something is growing here.

Because UCDC is not just a classroom. It's a second home for children of working parents, a haven where young hearts are safe, seen, and slowly shaped. Here, no one is just a roll number. Every child is a dream waiting to be noticed. And every teacher becomes a gardener of potential—watering not just minds, but spirits.

Throughout the year, the events weren't just celebrations. They were transformations. Timid voices found their strength. Quiet eyes began to sparkle. Children discovered not

only how to write, but how to speak up, step forward, and shine.

Now, as I prepare to leave, I find myself filled with gratitude—for the lessons I didn't know I needed. That true service lies not in big speeches or grand plans, but in simple joys: a shared tiffin, a breakthrough moment after weeks of trying, a silent nod of understanding.

UCDC doesn't just teach. It lives the motto "Service before Self." I've seen it—in teachers who stay late without complaint, in staff who give more than what's asked, and in every child who walks in with doubt and leaves with a little more light in their eyes.

I came to teach. But I leave a student—of life, of love, and of little teachers who gave me the most unforgettable lessons of all.



Every Christian is a missionary by the very nature of baptism.

- St. Arnold Janssen, SVD



St. Arnold Degree College Inaugurated in Mumbai: A Landmark for Catholic Higher Education

Mumbai, June 22



In a significant step for Catholic education in India, the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) inaugurated its first higher education institution in the country – **St. Arnold Degree College** – in Andheri East, Mumbai.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by **Archbishop John Rodrigues**, Archbishop of Bombay, who blessed the new institution and highlighted the Church's enduring commitment to forming youth through quality education grounded in faith and service.

The event was led by **Fr. Tomy Thomas, SVD**, Provincial Superior of the India Mumbai Province, who welcomed dignitaries, clergy, religious, and lay collaborators. Also present were all SVD Provincials and the Regional Superior from across the Indian subzone:

- Fr. Ignatius Santuraja (India Hyderabad Province)
- Fr. Maria Paulraj (India Central Province)
- Fr. Anuranjan Bilung (India Eastern Province)
- Fr. Jeevan Kennady (Regional Superior, India Guwahati Region)

Their collective presence symbolized unity and a shared vision for shaping future leaders through Gospel-rooted education.

The ceremony drew a large gathering of SVD priests, clergy from neighboring parishes, religious sisters, benefactors, lay partners, and members of the **Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW)**. The atmosphere was one of joy, hope, and thanksgiving.

St. Arnold Degree College, situated in a growing educational corridor of Mumbai, aims to provide academic excellence with a strong emphasis on values, ethics, and social responsibility. Named after **St. Arnold Janssen**, founder of the SVD, the college embodies his holistic vision of mission—integrating education, faith, and service to society.

This historic milestone marks a new chapter not only for the SVD congregation but also for the **Archdiocese of Bombay**, reaffirming the Church's vital role in contributing to nation-building through transformative education.



Joy, Talent, and Inclusion Shine at UCDC, Bandra, Annual Day and Summer camp 2025

The Urban Community Development Centre (UCDC) celebrated its Annual Day on 30th May 2025, marking the joyful culmination of a vibrant summer camp for children from its crèche, balwadi, and tuition classes. The event was a delightful showcase of creativity, confidence, and inclusivity, meticulously organized by SNTD teacher trainees – Safa, Siddhi, Kulsum, and Aditi.

The celebration opened with a heartfelt prayer by Akash Xess, setting a reverent tone for the day. Fr. Lawrence, in his address, commended the SNTD trainees for their dedication and encouraged the children to carry forward the values and skills nurtured at UCDC.



From energetic group dances to meaningful performances, the children left the audience in awe. The crèche children danced to the joyful tune of "Bum Bum Bole", while others performed to "Lungi Dance" and "Khoon Mein Teri Mitti", earning enthusiastic applause. A graceful performance by the girls and a powerful rendition of "We Shall Overcome" added to the day's charm.

A highlight of the programme was a moving skit on disability, prepared and directed by the SNTD team. With a special role by Nilesh Ekka, a student with Down Syndrome, the act was a touching reminder of the dignity and potential of every child, regardless of ability.

Adding to the excitement was a surprise dance by teachers Kulsum, Siddhi, and Aditi – a spirited finale that lit up the room. The children

were also delighted by thoughtful gifts: exam boards sponsored by Akashi Chopra and ice cream by the Inner Wheel Club.

The UCDC Annual Day was more than just a celebration – it was a testament to what children can achieve with love, guidance, and opportunity. A day well spent, and well remembered!

Fr. Thomas DMello SVD, Memoirs of a Great Divine Word Missionary

A Life of Service: 41 Years as a Divine Word Missionary in Ghana

For over four decades, my life as a Catholic missionary in Ghana has been a journey of faith, service, and resilience. From my early formation in the seminary to leadership roles in the Ghana Province, I have encountered moments of great joy and deep challenges. Through it all, I have witnessed the power of faith in transforming lives and communities.

Answering the Call: My Path to the Priesthood

My journey began in 1967 when I joined the minor seminary, taking my first steps toward a

life dedicated to God. In 1975, I made my first vows, formally committing myself to religious life. After years of rigorous study in philosophy and theology, I was ordained a priest in 1983, ready to serve wherever I was called.

My missionary journey began with a deep conviction that God was calling me to serve beyond the familiar. Leaving behind my homeland, family, and everything I had known was not an easy decision, but I trusted that the Lord would guide my steps. When I arrived in Ghana, I was met with a culture rich in hospitality, deep-rooted traditions, and a strong communal spirit.



Fr. Thomas DMello SVD

However, integrating into this new environment required patience, humility, and a willingness to learn.



When I arrived in Ghana I was immediately sent to Northern Ghana, where I worked in the missions for ten years. Those early years were transformative—I learned to adapt to a new culture, language, and way of life. It was a time of deep immersion, where I not only ministered to the people but also learned from them.

Missionary Life: Initial Challenges and Adaptation

As we missionaries come from various countries, intercultural training is essential. New members participate in a month course to help themselves adapt to the local culture, traditions, and food. Additionally, they are given six to nine months to learn the local language and culture ensuring they can

communicate effectively and build meaningful relationships with the people we serve.

Faith in Action: Building the Church and Community

Missionary work is not simply about preaching but about living the Gospel through actions. In my years of service, I have been involved in building both physical and spiritual structures that sustain communities. One of the most fulfilling aspects of my ministry has been establishing few churches in remote villages in the Northern Ghana where the faithful had long gathered under trees or in makeshift chapels to worship. Witnessing a simple wooden cross become the foundation for a thriving

mission station where the sacraments are celebrated, where children and grown ups are baptized, and where some marriages are blessed, has been a constant reminder of God's providence.

Education has also been a critical part of the mission. Many communities lacked proper schools, and children had little access to education. With the help of benefactors and local leaders, we built schools where young minds could be nurtured in both academics and faith. Some of the students who once sat in these classrooms have grown to become priests, religious sisters, teachers, Doctors, Nurses, Politicians and leaders in the communities, a testimony to the long-term impact of missionary work.

Challenges in Missionary Work

Missionary life in Ghana has come with its share of challenges. One major issue is infrastructure, particularly road conditions. Except for some main roads, most roads in Ghana are poorly maintained, making travel difficult, especially to remote mission areas. This lack of upkeep not only affects transportation but also limits access to essential services like healthcare.

Another significant challenge is the state of the health sector. Many health facilities are poorly equipped, making it difficult for people—especially in rural areas—to receive adequate medical care. I have witnessed firsthand the struggles of those in need of urgent treatment but with little to no medical resources available to assist them.

Near-Death Experiences: A Test of Faith

There were moments when I came face to face with death. One of the most terrifying experiences was when I was bitten by a highly poisonous snake. With no immediate access to medical care, I felt the weight of death pressing upon me. I was able to get the needed anti snake venom, and also it was only through the prayers and efforts of those around me that I survived.

Years later, I was involved in a severe car accident. Once again, I found myself in a situation where my life could have ended in an instant. But by God's grace, I survived. These experiences reinforced my faith and reminded me that my mission was not yet complete.

Faith Strengthened Through Trials

As the years went by, my trust and faith in God, though simple, became stronger. One defining moment of my journey was when I had to undergo heart surgery in India. By then, I had spent 30 years serving in the missions, and in that moment of vulnerability, I turned to God and prayed:

"I have worked in Your vineyard for the last 30 years; now, Lord, it is Your turn to heal me with this my heart problem."



This prayer was not a demand but an act of surrender. I placed my life completely in God's hands, trusting that He would take care of me as He had throughout my years of service. That trust carried me through, and by His grace, I have recovered well.

Leadership and Stewardship

Over the years, I took on greater responsibilities within the Ghana Province. I first served as the Provincial treasurer, managing resources to ensure our mission's sustainability. Later, I became the Provincial Superior, guiding fellow missionaries and making decisions that would impact the future of our work in Ghana.

Leadership was never about power or authority but about service—listening, learning, and making choices that upheld the mission's integrity. It required balancing faith with practical challenges, from well managing finances to navigating cultural differences among missionaries from over 15 countries.

Moments of Grace and Joy

Despite the challenges, there have been countless moments of grace that affirm my calling. I have seen lives transformed by the power of faith. I have celebrated Masses where the joy of the people in worship was

so contagious that I felt the very presence of the Holy Spirit moving among us. I have also been blessed to journey with people in their most intimate moments—offering prayers at the bedside of the sick, comforting grieving families like e.g., losing of 7 members to a lightning strike, and witnessing the deep trust in God that sustains so many. These experiences have not only shaped my priesthood but have deepened my faith, teaching me what it truly means to surrender to God's will.

A Mission That Continues

Ghana is no longer just a place of mission for me; it is home. The friendships, the faith, and the shared experiences have made me one with the people I serve. The work of a missionary does not belong to one individual—it is God's work, carried forward by many hands. Every baptized Christian is called to be a missionary in their way, whether in their families, workplaces, or communities. I am grateful to have been part of this remarkable mission and to have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of faith.

(Fr. Thomas D'mello SVD is currently ministering as a Hospital Chaplain at Holy Spirit Hospital, Andheri, Mumbai)

DDW Pune Members Visit SVD Missions in INH Province Hyderabad, July 3, 2025



Five members of the Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Pune, undertook a mission visit to three SVD-run centers in the INH Province—Asha Jyoti (Pregnapur), Arnold Bala Vikasa Ashram (Nizampet), and St. Anthony's Leprosy Health Centre (Jogipet).

The visit proved to be a deeply moving experience. At Asha Jyoti, children living with HIV welcomed the team with handmade



cards, songs, and joyful performances. At the orphanage in Nizampet, they joined the children in games and dance, sharing moments of laughter and love. At Jogipet, the compassion and dignity extended to residents with leprosy left a lasting impact.

The team distributed dry rations and gifts and spent quality time with the poor and



marginalized. "It was a life-changing experience," they shared, "reminding us that where there is love, there is God."

The DDW members expressed heartfelt gratitude to Fr. Nelson, Fr. Alwyn, Fr. Florence, and the SVD community for their warm hospitality and tireless service.

Vice General of SVD Visits Mumbai

Andheri, February 16, 2025—The Atmadarshan Centre in Andheri had the privilege of hosting Fr. Xavier Thirukudumbam SVD, Vice General of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), Rome, during his visit to Mumbai. He celebrated the Holy Mass at the sacred parish in Andheri and interacted with the SVDs and the Laity.

Fr. Xavier was warmly welcomed by the SVD confreres who gathered to interact with him. In his address, he spoke about the current scenario of the SVD worldwide, highlighting the congregation's growth, challenges, and contributions to the global Church. He also shared insights on vocation promotion, formation, and the missionary dimension of the SVD, encouraging communities to nurture and support future missionaries.



His visit included a time of prayer, sharing, and discussions on the congregation's mission and vision in India. The event concluded with a felicitation ceremony, during which Fr. Xavier expressed his gratitude for the community's vibrant faith and missionary zeal.

His presence was a source of inspiration, strengthening the bonds of the SVD family in Mumbai as they continue their mission of spreading the Gospel.



SVD Shishyalaya, Vasai Marks 150 Years of Missionary Service

Vasai, February 19, 2025



SVD Shishyalaya, Vasai, joined the global Society of the Divine Word in celebrating 150 years of missionary presence with the theme "Witnessing to the Light - From Everywhere for Everyone." The event brought together around 150 participants, including clergy, religious, benefactors, and local well-wishers.

The celebration began with a solemn Eucharistic liturgy presided over by Fr. Joel D'Cunha, Vicar General of the Diocese of Vasai. In his homily, he paid homage to St. Arnold Janssen and pioneering SVD missionaries like Fr. Proksch and Fr. Charles Vas, highlighting their lasting impact on mission work in India and beyond.

The liturgy was followed by a lively cultural program with music and dance by the seminarians, culminating in a shared fellowship meal.



Faithful Generations: Sacred Heart Salutes Our Elders

Celebrating Parents and Grandparents Day – Andheri, July 26, 2025

The Senior Citizens' Cell of Sacred Heart Church, Andheri, organized a heartwarming celebration on Saturday, July 26, 2025, to mark **Parents and Grandparents Day**—a tribute to the elders of our parish who have passed on the gifts of faith, wisdom, and love across generations.

With planning meetings held on the first two Mondays of July, the Core Group worked in full strength to design an evening filled with meaning and joy. After much discussion, a thoughtful programme was finalized to honour the seniors in a spirit of gratitude and togetherness.

A Grace-Filled Beginning

The celebration began with a Eucharistic celebration in the Church, presided over by Rev. **Fr. George Meppurath SVD**, Spiritual Director of the Senior Citizens' Cell, and concelebrated by **Rev. Fr. John Mascarenhas**, our Parish Priest.

In his moving homily, Fr. George shared the story of a young man from a humble background



whose father worked tirelessly to give him an education and a better future. Years later, now a successful professional in the city, the young man welcomed his father to his workplace with a warm embrace—a spontaneous act of love and gratitude. The story beautifully reflected the day's message: ***never forget the sacrifices made by our parents and grandparents.***

An Evening of Fellowship and Fun

Following Mass, the seniors gathered in the Community Centre Hall, where they were seated in four groups. Adding a charming and personal touch, the entry passes—hand-coloured by their grandchildren—were displayed along the windows, forming the only and most meaningful decoration in the hall.



The programme brought joy and energy: retro and party music got many up and dancing, an action song titled "We are Family" brought smiles all around, and a group game tested skills and stirred laughter. The evening wouldn't have been complete without a lively round of Housie, which began with a prayer of gratitude for the kind and generous sponsors.

A Fond Farewell

As the joyful gathering came to a close, each participant was gifted a foil-packed dinner and a glass water bottle—eco-friendly and wrapped in a protective cloth casing. With warm farewells and hearts full of joy, the celebration ended on a high note, leaving behind cherished memories of faith, family, and fun.



WOW! 4 Sunday Evenings with the Word of God

Basic Bible Seminar Ignites Faith at St. Theresa's, Bandra



"IGNORANCE OF SCRIPTURES IS IGNORANCE OF CHRIST" – St. Jerome

The Divine Disciples of the Word (DDW) recently hosted a Basic Bible Seminar at St. Theresa's Church, Bandra, drawing 33 participants from various parishes into a four-weekend journey through the Scriptures. Led by Fr. Jolly SVD, with vibrant inputs from Frs. Antony, Nicky, and newly ordained Fr. Sandeep, the seminar unpacked the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, bringing God's Word to life with clarity and conviction.

Though Fr. Henry, the Parish Priest, was away due to a family emergency, his support was

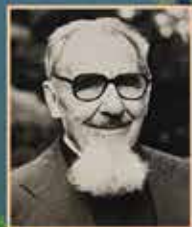
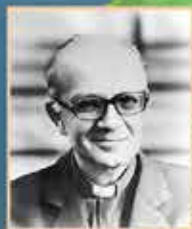
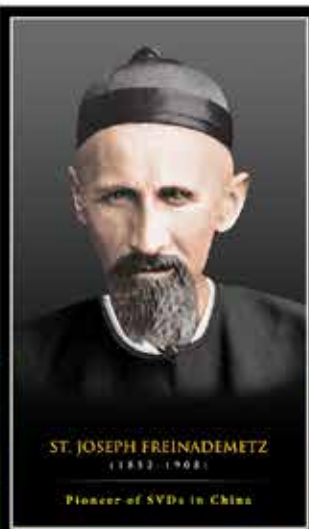
deeply felt. Participants described the sessions as spirit-filled and heart-stirring, echoing the Emmaus disciples: "Were not our hearts burning within us?"

The seminar concluded on SVD Mission Sunday, where Fr. Tomy Thomas SVD, Provincial, commissioned the group during a special Eucharist and distributed certificates. The day ended with a joyful fellowship meal and powerful testimonies.

The overwhelming response? **"We want more!"** The hunger for God's Word is alive – and growing.



Witnessing to
THE LIGHT
from everywhere, for everyone



PARTNER WITH THE MISSION OF THE DIVINE WORD (SVD)

Support us in reaching out to the poor and needy as we journey together
as Pilgrims of Hope. To know how you can support our mission, contact:

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COMPLIMENTS FROM SVD INDIA MUMBAI PROVINCE (INM)