

The **FRONTIERS** SVD India Mumbai Province News

JANUARY 2026



**“ROOTED IN THE LOVE OF THE
FATHER AND LED BY THE SPIRIT
INTO THE MISSION OF CHRIST”**

- INM VISION



SVD Ordinations 2026

Congratulations and Blessings
to our SVD deacons who will be ordained priests in 2026





Editorial

JPIC Mission at the Frontiers of Life

Dear Friends,

At the heart of the Society of the Divine Word is a mission that looks outward and listens attentively to the cries of our times. The focus of Frontiers on JPIC—Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation—reminds us that this dimension of mission is not optional, but central to who we are and what we do as SVDs in the INM Province.

JPIC is more than a social service or welfare activity. It is a missionary spirituality rooted in the Gospel and the Church's social teaching, seeking the integral development of the human person and care for our common home. Evangelization remains incomplete if it does not address unjust structures, wounded relationships, and ecological destruction.

Across the INM Province, JPIC takes concrete shape in ministries among migrants, tribals, and the urban poor; initiatives for women, youth, and children at risk; peace-building efforts; advocacy for human dignity; and ecological action inspired by *Laudato Si'*. These are not separate from our proclamation of the Word—they are the Gospel lived and made visible.

In a world marked by inequality, violence, displacement, and an environmental crisis, JPIC places us at the frontiers of mission, calling us to move beyond charity toward transformation and justice. Inspired by St. Arnold Janssen's trust in Divine Providence and the incarnational witness of St. Joseph Freinademetz, we are reminded that authentic mission means walking with people, sharing their struggles, and nurturing hope.

As we reflect on this issue of Frontiers, may we renew our commitment to justice, peace, and care for creation in all our ministries. JPIC is a mission. JPIC is the Gospel in action. JPIC is our shared journey toward fullness of life—for all and for our common home.



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

Message from the Provincial

Mission at the Heart of Society

Feast of St. Arnold Janssen & St. Joseph Freinademetz.

St. Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz remind us that mission is inseparable from life and society. Rooted in prayer and sustained by deep trust in Divine Providence, St. Arnold envisioned a mission attentive to the signs of the times, one in which the Gospel meaningfully engages human struggles through education, compassion, justice, and the defense of human dignity (cf. Prov 3:5; Mt 25:40).

St. Joseph Freinademetz embodied this vision in a profoundly incarnational way during his mission in China. By learning the language, embracing the culture, and becoming one with the people he served, he witnessed to a mission grounded in love, presence, and solidarity, echoing Jesus' call "to bring good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18) and St. Paul's invitation to become "all things to all people" (1 Cor 9:22).

Together, these saints affirm that mission and JPIC - Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation, are inseparable. Faith must take concrete form in action: challenging injustice, building peace, promoting human dignity, and caring for creation (cf. Jas 2:17; Mic 6:8; Rom 8:22). Their lives invite the INM Province to remain at the frontiers of society, where the Word becomes flesh (Jn 1:14) and where all may have life, and have it in abundance (Jn 10:10).



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

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



Urban Community Development Centre (UCDC), Bandra Where Hope Finds a Home, and Lives Find a New Direction



In the heart of Bandra—amid narrow lanes, crowded bastis, and the everyday struggles of migrants and slum dwellers—stands as a beacon of hope that has glowed steadily for more than five decades. The **Urban Community Development Centre (UCDC)**, founded on 19 February 1971, is more than an organisation. It is a movement of compassion, a quiet revolution built on the simple yet powerful belief that **every human being deserves dignity, opportunity, and love.**

A project of the **Society for Community Development in India** (a Registered Public Trust), and inspired by the missionary spirit of the **Society of the Divine Word (SVD)**, UCDC has dedicated itself to walking alongside the poor—listening to their struggles, understanding their dreams, and accompanying them toward a brighter future.

A Legacy of Upliftment and Courage

What began as a small initiative to assist slum families has grown into a transformative centre that touches thousands of lives every year. UCDC works tirelessly with:

- children longing for a safe space to learn,
- women striving for independence,
- youth searching for direction,
- senior citizens yearning for companionship,
- migrant families building a home far from home.

With every programme, every class, and every visit, UCDC whispers a gentle message:

“Your life matters. Your dreams matter. You are not alone.”

Lighting the Lamp of Education

From its earliest days, UCDC has believed that education is not merely about literacy—it is about unlocking possibilities.

Adult literacy classes empower those who were never given a chance to sit in a classroom. Daycare services allow children of domestic workers to be, learn, and grow in a safe, nurturing environment. Skill-building courses give school dropouts a second chance to stand tall, earn with dignity, and rebuild their dreams.

Education at UCDC is not confined to books—it is learning for life.

Healing with Compassion

In the crowded slums where medical care is often a luxury, UCDC becomes a lifeline.

Medical camps bring doctors to the very doorsteps of the poor. Specialised clinics like Dental, Physiotherapy, Homoeopathy, General Physician, Ayurveda, and Yoga offer quality care at nominal rates. For those who cannot afford even that, UCDC steps in with concessions and unconditional support.



Every patient who walks through UCDC's doors is treated not as a number, but as a person—with respect, kindness, and deep humanity.

Empowering Through Awareness

True empowerment comes from knowing one's rights, discovering one's worth, and finding the courage to speak.

Through regular awareness sessions, UCDC equips migrant and marginalised families with knowledge on health, rights, safety, parenting, financial management, and social issues—helping them rise above exploitation and insecurity. These sessions spark confidence, resilience, and a newfound belief

that change is possible.

A New Space, A Renewed Mission

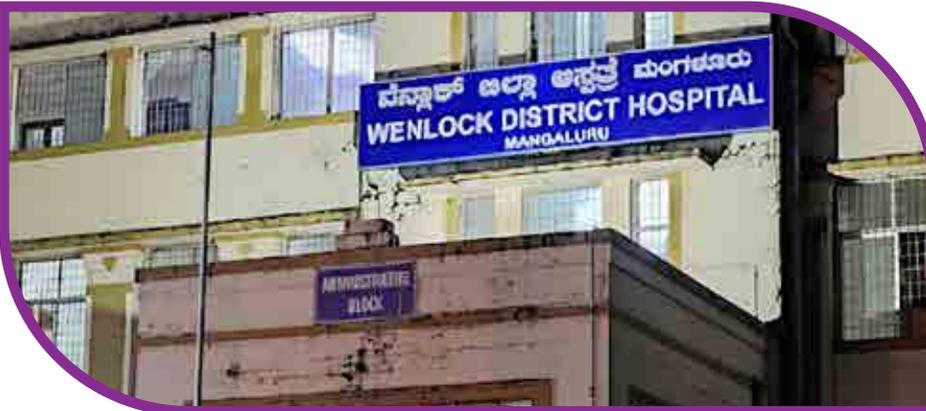
The old UCDC building, worn with time and memories, gave way to a new structure raised by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). Today, UCDC thrives across newly designed floors that house modern clinics, classrooms, activity halls, and offices—all dedicated to the same unwavering mission:

To serve. To uplift. To empower.

Brick by brick, room by room, the new UCDC is being shaped into a home where thousands will find learning, healing, and hope.

Migrant Ministry, Mangalore

A Lifeline in Crisis: Community Response Saves Two Migrant Workers



In the coastal city of Mangalore, migrant workers come from other states, carrying dreams of better livelihoods and hopes of supporting their families back home. Among them were two women from the tribal district of Kunkuri in Jharkhand who came for their livelihood. They were initially employed but lost their jobs due to wage theft by their employers. Left without income, they took up work at a construction site to survive.

Due to poor living conditions at the construction site and the stress of their situation, both women fell seriously ill. They were rushed to Wenlock Government Hospital, Mangalore, after being found unconscious at a construction site. One was later diagnosed with brain malaria, and the

other was diagnosed with typhoid. Both patients have been admitted to Wenlock Government Hospital, which is providing free medical treatment.

Migrant Ministry Mulki, responding to an emergency call, coordinated with compassionate local residents. Local community members assisted in the rescue and hospital admission process. The women are receiving necessary medical care at the government hospital. Their family members are informed about the health update of the patients.

This report highlights the ongoing challenges faced by migrant workers and the importance of community support systems in providing emergency assistance in times of need.





Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune Lighting the Path Where Hope Was Once Lost



Some journeys begin not with grand declarations, but with quiet courage. For Sarva Seva Sangh (SSS), the journey began in the late 1970s when young Divine Word missionaries and theology students stepped into Pune's forgotten corners—railway platforms where children curled up on cold floors, traffic signals where tiny hands stretched out for coins, and market lanes where survival replaced childhood.

They carried no banners, only compassion. Their tools were smiles, songs, and the unshakable belief that every child deserves a chance. Slowly, fear softened. A child dared to trust. Another picked up a pencil. And in these small, sacred moments, SSS was born—officially registered in 1979, but spiritually alive long before that.

As Pune grew, so did the challenges. By the mid-1990s, SSS found itself walking alongside children in street situations and families battling HIV/AIDS—people the world often looked away from. But SSS did not look away. It looked deeper.

Mobile Schools carried education to pavements and platforms. Tuitions, Balmelas, camps, and Children's Parliament gave children not just knowledge, but joy, confidence, and a voice. Counselling helped them heal invisible wounds.



Families received home-based care, nutrition, emotional support, and guidance through life's toughest chapters. Mothers discovered their strength in Self Help Groups; youth found direction and dignity through skills, education, and mentoring.

Today, SSS stands as a living testimony that transformation is possible—touching the lives of over 300 children and countless families each year. Under open skies and inside small classrooms, children learn to dream again. Parents take brave steps toward stability. Youth step into adulthood with purpose and resilience.

And then came the moment that captured the soul of SSS—a reunion of 75 former beneficiaries. Children once seen on railway

platforms returned as nurses, engineers, IT professionals, entrepreneurs, and confident young adults. Their laughter that day was not just a celebration; it was proof. Proof that patient love can rebuild lives. Proof that compassion creates ripples across generations. Proof that the mission of SSS is alive and powerful.

Grounded in the values of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation, Sarva Seva Sangh continues to stand beside those who walk the hardest roads. It remains a beacon—a reminder that when the world forgets, hope does not. And when hope is nurtured with faith, courage, and compassion, lives are not just changed—they are reborn.



Sarva Seva Sangh Andheri

Serving the vulnerable with compassion

Sarva Seva Sangh, located at Gyan Ashram Campus, Andheri East, Mumbai, serves vulnerable individuals from various walks of life, respecting their dignity and social status. Among these, persons living with HIV/AIDS remain a key focus of our outreach.

As Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of UNAIDS, once said, "Investment in AIDS will be repaid a thousandfold in lives saved and communities held together." HIV/AIDS devastates families and communities and continues to threaten the social, cultural, and economic fabric of society, particularly in poorer regions. It is indeed a matter of life and death, calling for unwavering solidarity between the healthy and the sick, and between the rich and the poor.

At Sarva Seva Sangh, Andheri East, we organize medical assistance for HIV/AIDS beneficiaries every fourth Saturday of the month in collaboration with Holy Spirit Hospital, Mahakali Caves Road. Currently, 47 beneficiaries from different parts of Mumbai take part in this monthly program. We begin by providing them with breakfast, followed by a consultation with doctors. Afterward,

they receive free medicines and monthly ration hampers containing essential items.

With the help of students from Nirmala Niketan College, we also conduct awareness sessions and share health tips. These gatherings create a safe and caring space where beneficiaries feel respected and valued. Over time, they have built strong bonds of friendship and mutual support, openly sharing their struggles and experiences.

Our outreach also includes Self-Help Groups (Bachat Gats) in Gautam Nagar, Annawadi, and Subash Nagar. Recently, a new group has formed among migrant workers. The core purpose of these groups is to encourage saving habits and promote Stri Shakti (Women's Empowerment).

Every alternate Sunday, migrant workers gather for informal "tea and chit-chat" sessions. Many of them are new to Mumbai, and these gatherings help foster community bonds. Motivational talks and guidance sessions are also part of these meetings.

In Gautam Nagar and Subash Nagar, we run tuition classes for underprivileged children, especially those studying in Marathi-medium schools. A full-time teacher conducts these classes. We also organize extracurricular activities to help children develop their talents and gain confidence.



We provide regular computer classes for poor and needy children, aiming to equip them with essential digital skills. Plans are underway to establish a day-care center for young children in the community.

Additionally, every Thursday and Sunday, we conduct follow-up sessions for individuals recovering from alcohol addiction. These include guided sharing and orientation programs that promote healing, support, and personal growth.

Through these varied initiatives, Sarva Seva Sangh remains committed to reaching out to the marginalized and vulnerable, helping them live with dignity, hope, and self-worth.



Sarva Vikas Deep (SVD) Mangaon, Raigad district Lighting the Path from Darkness to Light



Sarva Vikas Deep (SVD), founded in 2006, is an SVD-run NGO rooted in the heart of Mangaon, Raigad district, along the Mumbai-Goa highway. Guided by its motto "Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya" (Lead me from darkness to light), the organization works with deep commitment among the Katkari tribal communities—one of Maharashtra's most marginalized groups.

Over the last two decades, SVD has touched 105 villages, accompanying families struggling with poverty, illiteracy, and

social exclusion. Its mission is clear: to build an empowered, self-reliant, and just society, with a preferential option for tribals. Through grassroots mobilization, sustainable livelihood initiatives, rights awareness, and capacity building, SVD has created a model of holistic rural development.

Empowerment Through Community Participation

The strength of SVD lies in its participatory and rights-based approach. Every program

is designed with people's involvement, focusing on the whole community—women, youth, children, farmers, and village leaders.

Its women-led Self-Help Groups are among the most inspiring success stories. With 57 SHGs and 650 active members, women have moved from seasonal migration to independent livelihoods—becoming trainers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. Their resilience and leadership have become a powerful catalyst for change.

”

The language that all people understand is the language of love

- St. Joseph Freinademetz, SVD





Transforming Lives Through Focused Programs

SVD's initiatives span multiple developmental fronts:

- **Self-Help Groups & Livelihoods:** Goat rearing, fisheries, brick-kilns, kitchen enterprises, tailoring, incense-stick making and more—helping families earn with dignity.
- **Education & Literacy (Gyanodaya):** Supplementary classes for 180 children, a hostel for 30 Katkari boys, and continuous support for dropout prevention.
- **Youth Development (Tarun):** Training young people in driving, masonry, sports, and entrepreneurship.
- **Good Governance (Swaraj):** Building awareness on Panchayati Raj, Gram Sabhas, and community leadership.
- **Rights Awareness (Jagriti):** Training communities on human rights, forest rights, food security, and education entitlements.
- **Health & Wellness (Arogya):** Medical camps, traditional herbal healing, PHC collaborations, immunization drives, and cataract surgeries.
- **Environmental Action (Nisarga):** Tree plantation, organic farming, vermicomposting, and collaboration with social forestry departments.
- **Documentation & Schemes (Niyaman & Sahyog):** Supporting villagers in securing Aadhar, ration cards, caste certificates, pensions, housing schemes, MGNREGS benefits, and tribal department schemes.
- **Child Protection (Chetna):** Awareness and intervention to curb child marriage through VCPC training and community mobilization.

A Centre that Learns, Researches, and Shares

SVD has become a hub of research and rural engagement. It has collaborated with TISS,



Nirmala Niketan, KVK Roha, Dapoli Agriculture University, government departments, and human rights commissions. Students, scholars, and youth frequently visit to understand grassroot realities and contribute to ongoing development efforts.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and natural calamities like Cyclone Nisarga, SVD emerged as a lifeline—reaching stranded migrants, distributing food, and offering emergency relief.

Hope at the Threshold of the City

Just a stone's throw away from Mumbai lies a world of struggle, simplicity, and resilience. Sarva Vikas Deep invites everyone—students, volunteers, professionals, and supporters—to experience tribal life firsthand and join hands in this mission of transformation.

Together, we can help the Katkari communities step fully into a future of dignity, justice, and hope.

Vachana Jyothi, De-Addiction Centre, Pilathara, Kerala Mentoring Lives towards Recovery and Hope



Vachana Jyothi, located at Pilathara in Kerala, is a residential de-addiction and social-rehabilitation centre run by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). It is a registered, non-governmental, non-profit organisation established on 2 October 2012, originally under the SVD India Mumbai (INM) Province.

The vision for Vachana Jyothi emerged when the Provincial Administration entrusted Fr. Mathew Nirappal, SVD with identifying a relevant social ministry in North Kerala. After extensive study and dialogue with professionals and people from diverse backgrounds, Fr. Mathew discerned that substance addiction had become a pressing social concern. His proposal to establish a de-addiction centre was accepted, leading to the birth of Vachana Jyothi.

Vision and Mission

Vision: *Mentoring Lives*

Vachana Jyothi is committed to treating and rehabilitating persons struggling with alcohol and drug dependence in a **supportive, inclusive, and non-discriminatory environment**, irrespective of caste, creed, or religion. Beyond recovery from addiction, the centre focuses on restoring human dignity, rebuilding family relationships, and enabling social reintegration.



An awareness class about drugs

Treatment and Rehabilitation Approach

Vachana Jyothi is a **30-bedded, residential, multi-disciplinary treatment centre**. Its core programme is a **21-day structured residential course**, which includes:

- Medically supervised detoxification
- Individual and group therapy
- Individual and family counselling
- De-addiction therapy
- Yoga and wellness sessions
- Relapse-prevention planning
- Introduction to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Al-Anon principles

Patients are strongly encouraged to continue attending AA and related support meetings after discharge.

Recognising that recovery is a long-term journey, the centre provides **free long-term follow-up care**. Regular "Sober Meets" are organised to ensure continued peer support, life-skills development, and sustained family and social reintegration.

Who Can Avail the Services?

Vachana Jyothi supports individuals affected by alcohol or drug dependence, along with their families. At the time of admission, the **presence of at least one family member** for the first one or two days is encouraged, ensuring shared responsibility and family involvement in the recovery process.



The new Block

The centre also welcomes **trainees and volunteers**—including students and professionals from social work, psychology, nursing, clergy, religious congregations, and community-based organisations. **Short-term supervised placements** ranging from two weeks to one month are offered, particularly for degree students.

Broader Social Impact

Vachana Jyothi addresses substance abuse not only as an individual concern but as a **family and community issue**. By offering affordable and inclusive treatment, it reaches people from varied socio-economic backgrounds. Through counselling, family involvement, follow-up care, relapse-prevention strategies, and community-based support, the centre promotes **sustained recovery rather than short-term detoxification**.

Since its inception, **over 4,100 beneficiaries** have found renewed health, hope, and restored relationships through the ministry of Vachana Jyothi.

Looking Ahead

The number of individuals seeking help to live a sober life continues to grow. In response, the **INM Province is committed to strengthening the Centre's infrastructure and services**. Plans are underway for the construction of a new block, for which support and contributions are earnestly invited.

Note: Vachana Jyothi is the only De-addiction Centre run by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in India.



Group sharing by the patients



Sarva Vidya Deepa, Social (JPIC) Ministry of the SVD Mission, Bailhongal, Belgaum diocese, Karnataka A Journey of Faith, Service, and Social Transformation



The SVD mission in the Diocese of Belgaum began in 2008 at the invitation of **Bishop Peter Machado**, who called upon the India Mumbai Province to extend its missionary presence in the region. Responding to this call, **Fr. Edward Cyril Alphonso SVD** and **Fr. Walter Dency Mendonca SVD** arrived in June 2009 to initiate the mission. The SVD presence was formally inaugurated on **12 June 2009** at Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Godalli, which became the mission's first base.

Recognising the growing pastoral and missionary outreach of the SVDs, the diocesan authorities and parish community requested an expansion of the ministry. After prayerful discernment, **St. Francis Xavier Mission, Bailhongal**, was chosen as the mission centre and officially inaugurated on 10 June 2011.

A historic milestone was reached on **10 October 2019**, when the first-ever church in the history of Bailhongal Taluka headquarters was inaugurated and blessed. The ceremony was presided over by His Lordship **Most Rev. Dr Derek Fernandes** and inaugurated by **Rev. Fr. Richard Mathias SVD**, then Provincial of the India Mumbai Province.

Over the years, several dedicated missionaries have contributed significantly to the mission's growth. **Fr. Solomon Reddy SVD** served the mission with deep commitment for six years, while **Fr. Richard D'Almeida SVD** also rendered six



years of faithful service, strengthening both pastoral outreach and structural development.

Today, the mission serves 11 Catholic families in Bailhongal and two families in Harugoppa, while simultaneously reaching out to thousands of non-Catholic families in surrounding villages through its social and developmental initiatives. The mission is currently entrusted to **Fr. Ezekiel Rakesh D'Souza SVD** and **Fr. Mark Mathias SVD**, assisted by a Regent, **Br. Joyson Correa SVD**. Together, they nurture the spiritual life of the community while advancing its social transformation.

At present, the mission's primary focus is its **JPIC ministry**, carried out through **Sarva Vidya Deepa**, the social work arm of the SVD Mission at Bailhongal, committed to inclusive growth and holistic human development.



Key Mission Activities and Areas of Service

The JPIC ministry extends its services across the taluks of **Savadatti, Bailhongal, Kittur, and Belgaum**, with a special focus on the most vulnerable. Major areas of engagement include:

- Health and hygiene awareness programmes and medical check-up camps, especially for the poor and persons with disabilities
- Assistance to persons with disabilities in obtaining UDID cards
- Awareness programmes on HIV and AIDS
- Skill-development support for school dropouts
- Distribution of free textbooks to children from economically weaker families
- Facilitating access to bank loans and Panchayat-linked schemes for women

Notable Achievements & Ongoing Initiatives

The JPIC ministry has made visible progress in

empowering communities and fostering self-reliance:

- Formation of 100 Self-Help Groups
- Free tuition classes conducted in two villages
- Seminars on women's empowerment and leadership
- Awareness campaigns highlighting the importance of education
- Assistance to women in accessing government welfare schemes
- Organisation of skill-development programmes
- Celebration of Women's Day to promote dignity and confidence
- Financial subsidies of Rs. 20,000 each to 10 Self-Help Groups through Sarva Vidya Deepa

JPIC Reflection

The JPIC ministry of the SVD Mission in

Bailhongal is a living expression of the Gospel values of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. Through Sarva Vidya Deepa, the mission seeks to restore dignity to the marginalised, empower women, uplift the poor, and build awareness that leads to sustainable and inclusive development.

Each initiative reflects a deep commitment to fostering a society grounded in **human dignity, equality, and solidarity**. By standing with the weak and the voiceless, the mission becomes a visible sign of Christ's compassion and a prophetic witness to justice and peace.

As the mission looks to the future, it continues to explore new pathways of service—strengthening hope, nurturing faith, and working tirelessly for a more just and compassionate society.

Fr. Ezekiel Rakesh D'Souza, SVD Director, Sarva Vidya Deepa

Janseva Society, Tala.. at Raigad District



Janseva Society, Tala (JS Tala) is a JPIC initiative of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), India Mumbai Province, in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Bombay. Established following an agreement on **1 June 2012**, the mission began its pastoral and social engagement in **October 2012** and was officially inaugurated on **26 January 2013**. Rooted in the Gospel vision of justice and compassion, JS Tala seeks to make Christ present among the most marginalised communities of **Tala Taluka, Raigad District**.

The ministry accompanies **22 Katkari tribal hamlets and three Dhangar (shepherd) villages**, where systemic injustices such as illiteracy, child and bonded labour, alcoholism, poor health and hygiene, and lack of basic infrastructure continue to deny people their dignity. Responding to these realities, JS Tala works to restore justice by empowering women and youth, strengthening access to education, promoting livelihoods, and facilitating government welfare schemes.



DDW Bandra visiting the centre

Peace is fostered through community organisation, leadership development, and strengthening local self-governance, enabling people to claim their rights and participate actively in decision-making processes. The integrity of creation is upheld through health awareness, promotion of traditional healthcare practices, and respect for indigenous wisdom and sustainable ways of life.

As a JPIC ministry, JS Tala stands in solidarity with the tribal communities, striving to transform structures of inequality and build an empowered, self-reliant, and united society—where every person's dignity is recognised and life is nurtured in fullness.

Walking with the Migrant Labourers (SSS KERALA) Accompanying Lives Beyond the Journey Home

The title "Walking with the Migrant Labourers" recalls the painful images of migrant workers walking home during the COVID-19 pandemic. While that trauma remains unforgettable, this article highlights a new and hopeful initiative of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), India Mumbai Province—Sarva Seva Sangh – Kerala—which accompanies migrant labourers during their life and work in Kerala.

Migrant Workers in Kerala

Across Kerala's towns and villages, one hears Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Odia, and many dialects from North and North-Eastern India. Nearly 40 lakh migrant workers, about 12% of the State's population, now live and work in Kerala. Drawn by better wages, safer working conditions, and strong migrant networks, they have become an integral part of the State's social and economic life.

Sarva Seva Sangh – Kerala

Responding to the growing migrant presence and their vulnerabilities, the SVD formally began this ministry in October 2019, building on earlier informal efforts in Kottayam. Today, Sarva Seva Sangh conducts regular meetings at 18 locations across three districts, offers awareness programmes, provides need-based support, links migrants to government schemes, and serves as a bridge between migrants and public authorities.

Advocacy, Care, and Support

Working closely with the Labour Department, the Centre has helped migrants access welfare schemes such as the AWAS housing programme and insurance benefits. Since 2024, it has assisted over 1,000 migrants in securing the Athidhi Card through online registration.

Sarva Seva Sangh
Center for the Empowerment of Migrant Labourers

Our Vision
Transforming Lives Through Empowering Presence

Our Mission
To empower migrants by fostering awareness, facilitating access to government welfare schemes, and advocating for fair job opportunities and just wages. Through education, advocacy, and support programs, we aim to build a more equitable and cohesive community where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

The infographic features the Sarva Seva Sangh logo, a central text box with vision and mission statements, and three circular images showing community activities: a group of people in a meeting, a person receiving support, and a group of people in a community setting.



Fr. Babu honoured by Kerala Labour Commission

Pastoral care is central to the ministry. Monthly Masses and meetings are held in migrants' own languages at 18 centres across eight dioceses, with around 1,600 participants. The Centre also responds to crises, provides medical assistance, promotes health and hygiene awareness, supports school enrolment for children, and helps address issues like exploitation, wage theft, and unsafe employment.

Towards Inclusion and Dignity

Sarva Seva Sangh envisions itself as a Migrant Resource Centre, networking with NGOs in both source and destination States to ensure holistic

support. Cultural inclusion is fostered through celebrations such as the Karam Festival, which in 2024 brought together 1,200 tribal migrants from across Kerala in a powerful expression of identity, dignity, and belonging.

Walking Together in Hope

Faithful to its mission of reaching out to the last, the least, and the lost, the Society of the Divine Word, through Sarva Seva Sangh – Kerala, continues to walk alongside migrant labourers—listening, accompanying, and journeying with them in hope.

Fr. Babu Kakkaniyil, SVD



Migrant Ministry in Goa Bringing Hope, Dignity, and Support to Migrant Families



Goa's growing economy has attracted thousands of migrant workers from across India, especially from Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Today, over **four lakh migrants** live and work in the state, contributing greatly to construction, fisheries, domestic work, industry, and daily labour. Yet, many continue to face challenges such as poor living conditions, lack of documentation, and social exclusion.

To address these realities, the Migrant Ministry in Goa was launched in 2021 and later strengthened by Arnold Seva Kendra (ASK) in 2022. Since then, ASK has been a lifeline for hundreds of families, offering not just relief but dignity, hope, and a sense of belonging.

Pastoral Presence and Spiritual Support

ASK reaches out to migrants through Hindi Masses, sacraments, retreats, family visits, and funeral services. These moments of prayer and fellowship help migrants find community, emotional support, and spiritual strength far away from home.

Empowering Livelihoods

The centre promotes self-reliance through Self-Help Groups and skill-based activities such as tailoring, candle-making, canteen



services, and farming on leased land. These initiatives empower women, youth, and families to build stable incomes and confidence.

Legal Aid and Documentation

Many migrants struggle with identity documents. ASK assists with obtaining Aadhaar, Voter ID, PAN, birth certificates, and passports—opening doors to government schemes, employment opportunities, and civic participation.

Education and Youth Development

ASK ensures school admissions for migrant children and provides hostel facilities for students and youth. Vocational courses in hotel management and nursing help young people secure dignified employment. The Chotanagpur Youth Group, Goa, recognised nationally by the CCBI Youth Commission, fosters leadership, sports, faith formation, and social outreach.

Crisis Care and Compassion

In times of crisis—serious illness, abuse, accidents, deaths, or missing persons—ASK offers immediate support, including dry ration assistance and spiritual care through hospital and home visits.



Celebrating Culture and Community

Through events like the Karam Festival, Migrant Day, Christmas gatherings, and Women's Day, ASK builds a sense of belonging and celebrates the rich cultural heritage of migrant communities.

A Ministry of Hope

The Migrant Ministry under Arnold Seva Kendra stands as a powerful testimony of faith in action. Addressing spiritual, social, legal, and economic needs, it helps migrants find stability, identity, and a brighter future. As migration continues to shape Goa's social landscape, this ministry remains committed to walking with migrant families in solidarity, compassion, and hope.

- Fr. Michael Pereira, SVD



Conclusion of the SVD Sesquicentennial Jubilee in INM Province

SVD House, Aduvasserry, Kerala



Pune



DCC, Mulki -

Retreat for married couples and families



Mangaon and Tala (Raigad district)





St. Arnold Nivas



Kaduthuruthy



St. Theresa's Church, Bandra



St. Teresa of Calcutta, Mysuru



Mission News

Celebrations - INM Jubilarians

The celebration of the Sacerdotal and Religious Profession Jubilees of our confrères was held at the Atma Darshan Chapel on 14 November 2025. The programme began with the Eucharistic Celebration at 6:30 p.m., presided over by Fr. Jacob Kavunkal SVD, with the other Jubilarians concelebrating and the homily delivered by Fr. Ittoop Panikulam SVD, together with the INM Provincial Superior, Fr. Tomy Thomas SVD. After the Mass, students of Gyan Ashram offered a graceful cultural dance. Fr. Henry D'Souza SVD then introduced the Jubilarians to all gathered, SVD confrères, SSsP sisters, other religious sisters, DDW Andheri members, and collaborators. On behalf of the Jubilarians, Fr. Salvador Carvalho SVD expressed words of gratitude, after which Fr. Thanuzraj Stanislaus Lazar SVD led the community in grace before meals. The felicitation programme was followed by an outdoor supper on the lawns, enlivened by a few games and fraternal interaction.



Gyan Ashram Music & Dance Academy - Solo Dance Competition



Gyan Ashram Music and Dance Academy conducted a solo dance competition on 9 November 2025 at the Gyan Ashram auditorium. Seventy-four participants

competed in two categories, Senior and Junior, performing various styles including folk, Indian classical, and western dance. Miss Kitty and Sr. Sushma served as judges. Sr. Sushma, a renowned Bharatanatyam teacher from

Prarthanalaya Convent, emphasized that dance is a passion requiring dedication and hard work. All participants received certificates, and the top three from each group were awarded trophies. The well-appreciated event concluded with the auditorium full until the end.



Sacred Heart Church, Andheri Celebrating a Year of Milestones and Grace

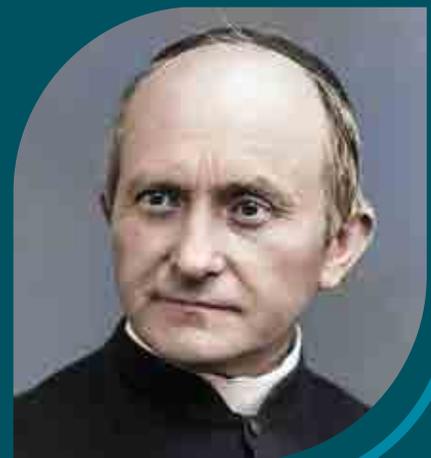
Since 8 September 2024, we have journeyed through a grace-filled Year of Trinitarian Jubilees, celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the SVD, the 2025th Jubilee Year of the Apostolic Catholic Church, and the Silver Jubilee of our Parish Building and SCCs. This year was marked by many spiritual blessings: the inauguration of the Silver Jubilee with a solemn Mass led by Fr. Walter Mendonca and concelebrating priests; the New Year's Mass by Emeritus Archbishop Leo Cornelio; the Jubilee Mass on 15 January 2025 by Emeritus Bishop Chacko; and a three-day Lenten retreat preached by the Divine Retreat Centre Fathers. We were further blessed by Masses for Religious Professions celebrated by Bishop Thomas D'Souza and Bishop Malcolm Sequeira, the SCC Jubilee Mass led by Auxiliary Bishop Allwyn D'Silva, and the youth-led adoration and Solemn Mass by Bishop Savio on 14 September. The Year of Jubilees concluded with a Thanksgiving Mass celebrated by Cardinal Gracias. Throughout the year, the "Pilgrim Cross" visited every family, strengthening unity, while 10 months of Night Vigils with Eucharistic Adoration deepened prayer life.



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Prayer is the first and most important work of the missionary.

- St. Arnold Janssen, SVD



SVD Sarvodaya, Karjat Blessing Of The New Chapel



On 21 November 2025, at SVD Sarvodaya, Karjat, the newly constructed Chapel was blessed and the tabernacle was installed by Fr. Tomy Thomas, SVD, during a Eucharistic Celebration attended by SVD confrères, and SSPs Sisters. The celebration concluded with a warm fellowship meal.

Fr. Baptist Pais SVD completes his term as Executive Secretary for Ecumenism



On 26 November 2025 at KROSS, Bangalore, Fr. Baptist Pais was formally thanked and felicitated by Bishop Francis Serrao, Chairman of the CCBI Commission for Ecumenism, together with the Regional Secretaries and the newly appointed Executive Secretary. This acknowledgement marked the completion of his term as the CCBI's National Executive Secretary for Ecumenism, which concluded in June 2025. Fr. Pais expressed that he had done his best to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to him.



Unleash the Champion Within

Annual Sports Event 2025–26 | St. Arnold's Central School, Pune



St. Arnold's Central School, Pune, celebrated its Annual Sports Event 2025–26 on 20–21 November, inspired by the theme "Unleash the Champion Within." Rooted in SVD JPIC values, the event affirmed sport as a space for promoting human dignity, equality, discipline, teamwork, and peace.

The Sports Meet was inaugurated by Mr. Manish Kaushik, Arjuna Awardee and Commonwealth Games Silver Medallist, whose presence encouraged students to pursue excellence with integrity and perseverance. Athletic events for students from Classes 1 to 12 highlighted fair play, mutual respect, and inclusive participation, creating an atmosphere of unity and joy.

The Closing Finale on 21 November was graced by Fr. Tomy Thomas, SVD, Provincial Superior, and Fr. Nicholau D'Costa, SVD, former Principal. Students showcased drills, formations, and cultural presentations emphasising the values of a true champion—self-discipline, solidarity, resilience, and service.

The event, attended by over 3,500 parents and well-wishers, reflected the SVD commitment to holistic education, nurturing young people to become agents of justice, peace, and harmony in society.

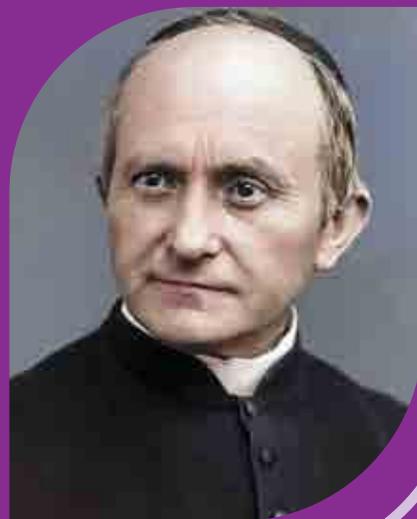
Fr. Sunil Menezes, SVD
Principal



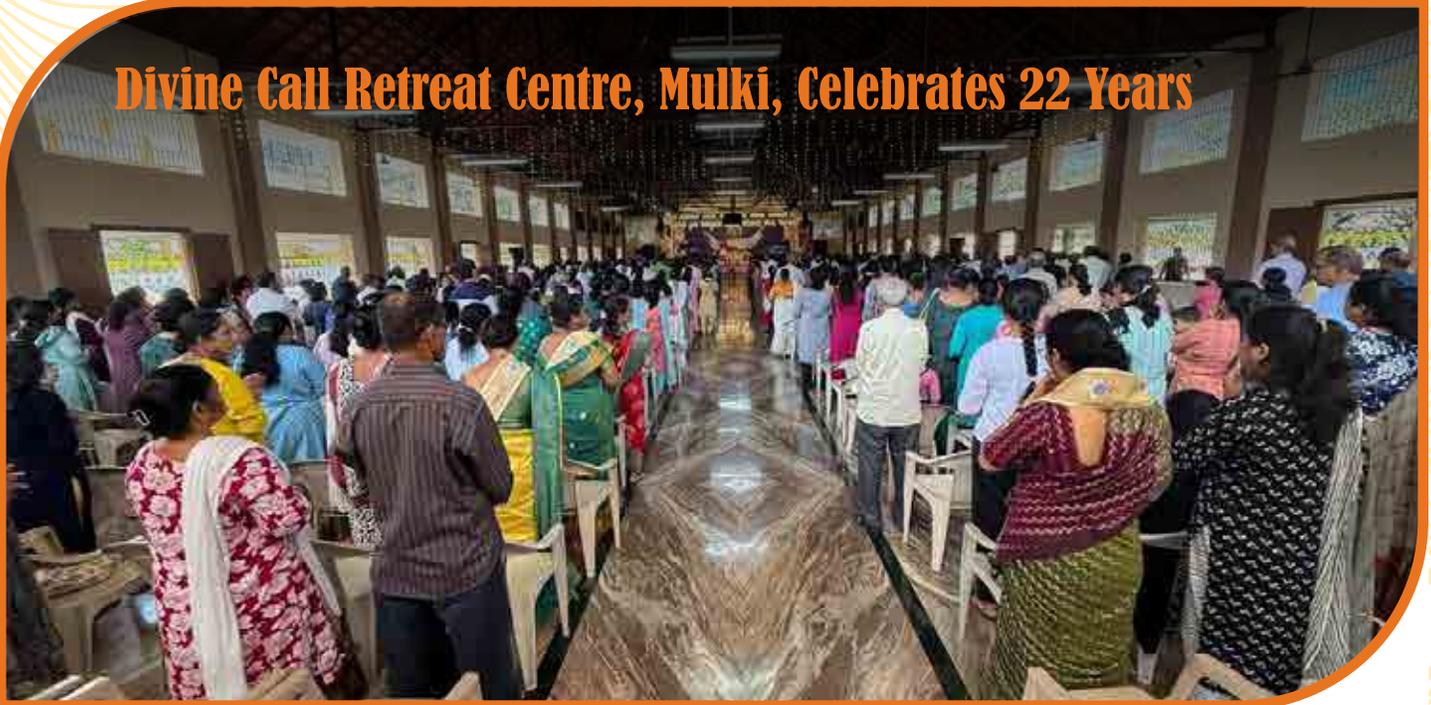
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*Trust in God's
providence. He
will not fail us.*

- St. Arnold
Janssen, SVD



Divine Call Retreat Centre, Mulki, Celebrates 22 Years



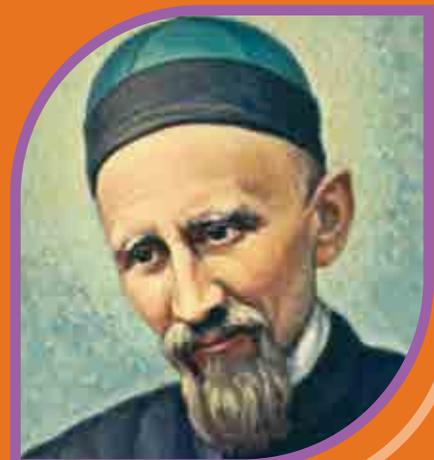
Divine Call Retreat Centre, Mulki, celebrated its 22nd anniversary with a four-day spiritual programme aligned with the 150th Jubilee of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). The celebrations began with a night vigil attended by 210 devotees, followed by a vibrant Gospel orchestra led by the youth, inspiring 170 participants. Praise and worship on the third day, led by the Divine Intercessory Team, united priests and the faithful in prayer. The finale featured a solemn Eucharistic celebration with 15 priests and 1,500 faithful, the blessing of new counselling facilities, and the initiation of 12 members into the Divine Intercessory Group.



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*The heart of a missionary
must be as wide as the world.*

- St. Joseph Freinademetz, SVD





DDW Bandra A Mission of Love at Soverdia House



On 22 November, the members of DDW Bandra visited the senior Fathers at Soverdia House, Andheri East, in a spirit of gratitude and companionship. The visit was a gentle yet powerful reminder that mission continues through presence, listening, and shared joy.

The DDW team was warmly received by Fr. **Felix Lobo SVD**, Director of the Centre, with gracious hospitality extended by Fr. **Raja Reddy SVD** and Fr. **Ginto SVD**. The afternoon unfolded through meaningful conversations, joyful games, and moments of song and laughter, as the senior Fathers shared their rich missionary memories and wisdom.

In a heartfelt gesture of appreciation, DDW Bandra offered small gifts to the Fathers and to the dedicated staff of Soverdia House, acknowledging lives poured out in service and care. This initiative, supported by Fr. **Jolly SVD**, Spiritual Director of DDW Bandra, became a living expression of mission rooted in love, respect, and solidarity.

The visit concluded with grateful hearts and renewed bonds—affirming that the missionary journey is sustained not only by action, but by presence, remembrance, and communion.



Disciples of the Divine Word, Pune Growing in Faith, Reaching the Poorest of the Poor



The Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Pune, joyfully lived out their call to charity and compassion through two meaningful outreach initiatives during the Advent-Christmas season.

On **28 November 2025**, in the chill of the night, DDW members visited the slum areas of **Kalyani Nagar, Pune**, distributing **40 blankets** to families and people living on the streets. The smiles and gratitude of the recipients spoke louder than words. One family's simple gesture of offering ginger tea became a sacred moment—an encounter with Christ Himself. In covering the poor, the members felt they were truly covering **Jesus in the manger**, discovering the face of God among the least.

This spirit of joy continued on **7 December 2025** with a Christmas celebration for the orphans and street children of **Sarva Seva Sangh, Pune**. The children were welcomed with cake, chocolates, games, carols, dance, and gifts, creating a vibrant and faith-filled celebration. The presence of SVD Fathers, seminarians, DDW members, and families added warmth and spiritual depth.



These moments of sharing and fellowship strengthened the DDW Pune community in faith, reminding all that true spirituality is lived through loving service to the most vulnerable.



DDW Andheri, Silence: When Christmas Walks Barefoot

Feed the Hungry as Mission in Action

Christmas often arrives wrapped in lights, carols, and carefully prepared celebrations. Yet, for many on the margins, Christmas comes quietly, on dusty roads, in empty stomachs, and in the fragile hope of being seen. Through the **Feed the Hungry** initiative, we, the **Disciples of the Divine Word (DDW), Andheri Mumbai**, have been privileged to encounter Christmas where God has always chosen to dwell among the poor, in silence.

A Silent Encounter

On Saturday, 20 December 2025, as our team stepped out to distribute food, one image stayed deeply etched in my heart. On a dusty roadside, one small boy carried another, both barefoot, trusting, silent: No cries, no complaints, no demands. In a world filled with noise, that silence spoke louder than any sermon. In that quiet act of love, we met the Child of Bethlehem once again.

The **Feed the Hungry** project is not simply about distributing meals. It is about presence. It is about stopping, noticing, and responding. It is about recognizing Christ in the hungry, the homeless, and the unseen. Each packet of food carries with it a message: **you matter, you are loved, you are not forgotten.**

For us in the SVD family, this mission flows naturally from our charism. St. Arnold Janssen reminded us that the Word must become flesh again and again, in every culture, every context, every human struggle. On the streets, as hands reach out for food, the Word becomes flesh through compassion, dignity, and shared humanity.

What makes **Feed the Hungry** especially powerful is how silently compassion multiplies. There have been moments when, even as our supplies ran low, generosity overflowed. Strangers pause, notice, and help, often without a word. In the stillness of these moments, love spreads. Silence, too, becomes contagious.

This mission also calls us to conversion. Silence strips us of excuses and comforts. It confronts us with faces, not statistics. The hungry are no longer "them"; they become us. Their quiet endurance becomes our responsibility, and their hope calls for a response shaped not by pity, but by solidarity.

Emmanuel Among Us

At Christmas, we celebrate Emmanuel - God with us. Through **Feed the Hungry**, we experience Emmanuel - God among us. As we continue this mission, may we protect these sacred silences. Two little feet on a dusty road; one small body carrying another; a shared meal; a quiet smile. These are not empty moments. These are holy encounters. These are sacraments of the street. This is Christmas made real.



May **Feed the Hungry** continue to shape us as missionaries who dare to listen in a noisy world, who recognize the Word walking silently among us, and who respond with open hands and open hearts.

Susan Noronha
(DDW Andheri, Mumbai)

Note: Feed the Hungry is a DDW (SVD lay partners, INM Province) initiative inspired by the SVD charism of witnessing the Word made flesh, through presence, compassion, and concrete acts of love among those on the margins.

INM Annual Retreat: Becoming Creative Disciples in a Wounded World



In mid-November, the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) in India gathered at Atmadarshan, Andheri, for its annual retreat, centered on the theme "Becoming Creative Disciples in a Wounded World." Fifty-three SVD missionaries, along with seven Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, came together for a week of prayer, silence, and spiritual renewal.

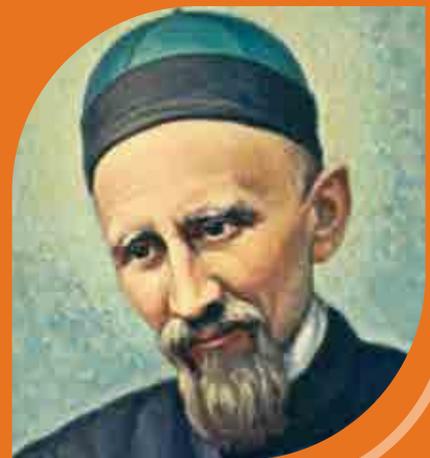
Guided by Fathers Gregory Arockiam, Gregory Pinto, Ittoop Panikulam, and Tony Menezes of the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Network, the retreat created a sacred space for Gospel reflection, healing, and communal discernment. Meaningful liturgies, reflective inputs, and the serene atmosphere invited participants to listen deeply to God's call amid the wounds of today's world.

The retreat concluded with a blessing for mission, sending participants forth renewed in hope, unity, and commitment. Similar AJSN retreats across all five SVD provinces highlighted the vitality of the Society's missionary spirit in India, as participants reaffirmed their guiding vision: "May the Word be our life and our mission."

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What matters is not what we do, but for whom we do it.

- St. Joseph Freinademetz, SVD





Know our St. Joseph Freinademetz, SVD

St. Joseph Freinademetz was born on April 15, 1852, in Oies (Badia), South Tyrol – then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – into a simple and devout farming family. From his early years, he showed a deep faith and love for God.

After his priestly ordination in 1875, he served briefly in parish ministry, but his heart was drawn to missionary work. Encouraged by priests who shared news of the missions, he wrote to St. Arnold Janssen, founder of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), expressing his desire to be sent overseas. With his bishop's permission, he joined the SVD mission house at Steyl in the Netherlands in 1878.

On March 2, 1879, Fr. Freinademetz received the mission cross and set sail for China with his confrere Fr. Johann Baptist Anzer. They arrived in Hong Kong after a five-week journey and began their missionary life there.

In 1881, he and Fr. Anzer moved to the southern part of Shandong Province, a region with over 12 million people and only about 158 baptised Christians. The mission was extremely challenging: long, difficult journeys, sickness, hostile reactions, and immense cultural barriers.

Heart of a Missionary

Freinademetz deeply embraced Chinese culture and people. He learned local dialects, adopted Chinese ways of life, and even received a Chinese name – Fu Shenfu – meaning “priest of good fortune.” He aimed to “become Chinese with the Chinese” so he could truly share Christ with them.

He also focused on training Chinese lay leaders and clergy, writing a Chinese catechism, and encouraging local Christians to take an active role in evangelisation.

Trials and the Boxer Era

During the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1900) – a violent uprising targeting foreigners – Fr. Freinademetz refused to abandon the people. Unlike many missionaries who took refuge, he stayed with his community despite the dangers.

Final Years and Death

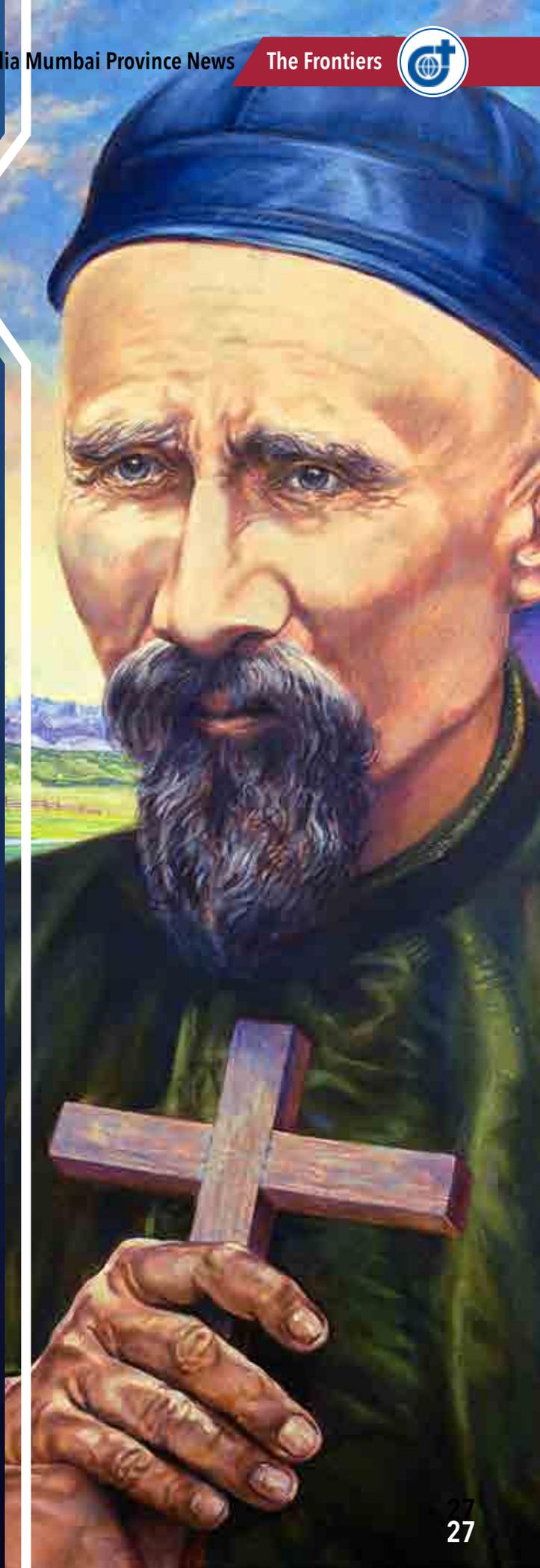
Years of hard work took a toll on his health. After bouts of illness, including tuberculosis, he was sent for rest in Japan but returned to serve in China. In 1907, he became the Administrator of the mission and led tirelessly during a typhus epidemic. While tending the sick, he himself contracted the disease and died on January 28, 1908 in Taikia (Shandong). He was buried there beneath the twelfth station of the Way of the Cross, and his grave soon became a place of pilgrimage.

Canonisation and Legacy

Joseph Freinademetz was beatified on October 19, 1975 by Pope Paul VI and canonised on October 5, 2003 by Pope John Paul II, together with his spiritual father, St. Arnold Janssen. His feast day is celebrated on January 29

He is remembered as a saint of charity, a missionary who lived and died out of love for Christ and the Chinese people. His life embodied his own motto:

“The language that all people understand is the language of love.”



**“ Support a vocation today...
You will have a Missionary tomorrow.”**



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