



Dear Partners in Mission!

As the new mission secretary for the Chicago Province, I want to thank Fr. Mark Weber, SVD, for his leadership role in promoting SVD Partners in Mission. I hope to continue in his footsteps and share with you—our Partners in Mission—articles on our SVD spirituality and missionary activities.

Below please find an article by Father Adam MacDonald, SVD, one of our SVD vocation directors about our Society of the Divine Word's commitment to justice and peace and the integrity of creation. I want to thank Father Adam for sharing his thoughts with us and hope you will be inspired by his words to put your faith into action and work for justice. Let us continue to support each other in our prayers and work together so that St. Arnold Janssen's dream that the heart of Jesus will live in the hearts of all will become a reality.

Please note the new email address: [missionusc@gmail.com](mailto:missionusc@gmail.com). Feel free to contact me at any time!

Blessings,

Brother Bernie Spitzley, SVD

### ***DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES – BUILDING AND ANTICIPATING GOD'S KINGDOM***

There are many characteristics that mark the life of a Divine Word Missionary (SVD). Among these are a commitment to knowing and promoting God's Word, using modern means of communication for the sake of evangelization, and inviting others to live their baptismal call to mission. Another essential dimension of SVD religious missionary life is the effort to help build God's Kingdom here on Earth, and doing so by advocating for justice and peace on the personal, national, and global level, Divine Word Missionaries anticipate that Kingdom and endeavor to make it a reality in our world today.

The commitment of the Divine Word Missionary to justice and peace is often referred to as JPIC—Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation. Under this umbrella, the missionary commits himself to a host of important issues and causes, and chief among these are promoting a culture of life, ministering to and advocating on behalf of ethnic and indigenous communities,

attending to the needs of migrants, working for social justice and solidarity with the poor, and promoting practices that protect the environment as God's creation.

In addition to appointing JPIC coordinators at the general, provincial, and local levels, each individual Divine Word Missionary is formed and educated to have a concern for and desire to affect change in the world by the way he lives his life and allows the principles of JPIC to guide and direct the decisions he makes both personally and professionally.

Given the wide range of ministries and apostolates that Divine Word Missionaries are involved in across the 70 countries where they serve, the particular JPIC issues in which individual missionaries are involved vary, but the overall commitment remains the same as expressed in our SVD Constitutions: "The poor have a privileged place in the Gospel. In a world deeply scarred by injustice and inhuman living conditions, our faith calls us to recognize the presence of Christ in the poor and the oppressed. We thus commit ourselves to fostering unity and justice and to overcoming egoism and the abuse of power. We consider it our duty to promote justice according to the gospel in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed."

Although the impact of the individual missionary's efforts at making the world more just and peaceful may seem minimal, there's no doubt strength in numbers. And that's why the Divine Word Missionaries decided to team up with one of its sister communities, the Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, and several other religious communities of both men and women in forming a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) at the United Nations. Since 2004, VIVAT International has called together individuals whose work, expertise, and experience has a direct bearing on issues related to social justice, development, peace and ecology. VIVAT has special consultative status at the United Nations, and it works to bring spiritual and ethical values to the United Nations and other international organizations.

Following in the footsteps of Jesus, one who challenged the economic and social structures of his day by proclaiming the coming of a Kingdom, where the poor and marginalized would have their rightful dignity respected, Divine Word Missionaries today remain committed to building and anticipating that Kingdom through their efforts to promote justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.