



The LAY SOCIETY of ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN

Faith Transforming Life

SVD LAY PARTNERS AND MISSION THE LAY SOCIETY OF ST. ARNOLD JANSSEN PHILIPPINES (LSSAJ)



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These are the experiences and learnings of The Lay Society of St. Arnold Janssen and its members in doing mission in the Philippines, especially as partners with the Society of the Divine Word (SVD). LSSAJ is now 9 years in existence since it heeded the call of then Fr. Superior General Antonio Pernia, SVD during the Centennial celebration of the Society of the Divine Word in the Philippines to establish a SVD Lay Group in the Philippines. LSSAJ hereby humbly shares these with similar groups in other countries, as we also learn from them, for our common pursuance of God's Mission.

A. EXPERIENCES AND LEARNINGS IN MISSION

As St. Arnold Janssen established the SVD a missionary congregation, LSSAJ too considers itself a missionary group and aims to proclaim the Good News to mission peoples and areas, and to those least proclaimed to. In addition LSSAJ especially as lay persons with the mandate to sanctify the laity and renew the temporal order, considers mission today as Integral Human Development guided by Catholic Social Teachings. LSSAJ, as per its Constitution, sees current Philippine problems as caused by people's disconnect of faith and life and it focuses on integrating the core values of Christians with daily life, for the bringing about God's Kingdom personally and socially. As LSSAJ goes into missions, it encounters experiences and absorbs learnings that become a cycle (action and theory) of growth together with prayers. Thus, all three constitute our adopted method of "Orare, Discutere, Operare", or "To pray, to discuss, and to work".

As co-responsible persons in mission with the SVDs, the LSSAJ is involved in the following mission areas:

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1. **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**—Mangyans in Paitan Mindoro Province, Agtas in Cagayan Province, Dumagats in Bulacan Province. We experience and learn their unique and rich indigenous culture, hospitality, innate wisdom, simplicity, love of nature, kindness, joy, community life; but also their deprivations, unjust situations, and poverty.
2. **SLUMS PEOPLES**—Parola Manila, San Andres Manila. We experience and learn their community life, simple joys and sharing; but also their deprivations, poverty, crime situations, unjust cases, lack of education, and lack of jobs.
3. **HOMELESS POOR** --- St. Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center, Tayuman. We experience and learn their extreme deprivation, helplessness, hopelessness, addictions; but also their desire to rise up, simplicity, trust in God, togetherness.
4. **BUSINESS LEADERS**—Corporations. We experience and learn their professionalism, integrity, corporate responsibility and promotion of economic progress; but also temptations to profiteering, materialism and impersonalism.
5. **GOVERNMENT OFFICERS**—Government Agencies. We experience and learn their professionalism, service to country and citizens, integrity; but also temptations to corruption.
6. **COMMUNITY AND SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANIZERS**—NGOs and Movements. We experience and learn their zeal for justice, volunteerism, idealism and altruism; but also self-interests and narrow ideologies.
7. **PARISHIONERS**—Hesus Nazareno Parish Dasmaringas and St Arnold Janssen Shrine Cainta. We experience and learn their religiosity, charity and community works, family life, collaboration with SVDs; but also their need for deeper and broader spirituality, lay role and social involvement.
8. **SCHOOL TEACHERS**—Divine Word Colleges at Calapan, San Jose, Legaspi, Vigan, Laoag, Urdaneta, Semirara and Bangued; San Carlos University and Holy Name University. We experience and learn their commitment to youth development, academic excellence, administration, citizenship, close collaboration with SVDs; but also their need for deeper and broader spirituality, role of laity in mission and social involvement.
9. **STUDENTS:** Divine Word Colleges at Calapan, San Jose, Legaspi, Vigan, Laoag, Urdaneta, Bangued and Semirara; 4CD Summer Camp. We experience and learn their idealism, fun, fellowships, creativity, sports, arts; but also their searching, anxieties, need for deeper spirituality, relationships and broader social involvement.
10. **UNSCHOOLED YOUTH**—Alternative Learning System. We experience and learn their desire for knowledge and upliftment; but also their handicaps and difficulties in life.
11. **FAMILIES:** In all of above. We experience and learn their compassion, forgiveness, wisdom, sacrifices, caring, growth, joy; but also hurts, miscommunications, loneliness, apathies, enmities, materialism.



B. HOW TO ORGANIZE

At the outset, the LSSAJ Founding Members drafted and ratified the Constitution and ByLaws. The key concepts of this organization are spirituality, vision, mission, advocacies and directions. These organizational structures and processes are periodically revisited for purposes of effectiveness and efficiency.

1. Discuss and ratify Constitution and By Laws.
2. Coordinate with and inform the SVD Superiors.
3. Invite and campaign for increasing members, both core members and regular members.
4. Steadily increase Chapters and Cells.
5. Make an Organizational Chart considering factors of effectiveness and efficiency. Determine committees, their heads and members matching with their talents, capacities, and time commitment.
6. Identify and prioritize Tasks, Programs, Projects per Directors' goals.
7. Schedule and conduct regular General Assembly, Board meetings, Committee meetings, Fellowship and Prayer meetings.
8. Develop, write and implement Formation Program for members.
9. Annually, the members undertake the Pledge of Commitment before the Spiritual Adviser.
10. Every year around Lent time, the members come together for recollection with the Spiritual Adviser.
11. Prioritize spirituality and mission animation.
12. Ensure organizational cohesiveness and a high spirit of belonging.
13. Regularly network and coordinate with SVD superiors, priests, brothers, and SSpS.
14. Closely monitor and follow up tasks for results.
15. Safeguard and control funds and resources.
16. Record and keep financial books for reporting, compliances and transparency.

C. WHAT TO DO IN A PLACE

Mission projects are always looked forward to by members; generating involvement, results, fellowship, and graces received are conspicuously recognized. Prayers are sought, a Project Management process is put in place where details are conceptualized, written, communicated, implemented and monitored. Important consideration is placed on collaboration with the SVDs through proper coordination with the priests and brothers of the province and in the place.

1. First at headquarters, set objective of mission to the place, mission team, and target date. This should be aligned with prioritized advocacies, and present capacities. Decide on Title of Mission Project or Event.
2. Assess needs and situations of the mission place community and persons groups therein, including socio-economic.
3. Set planning meeting at headquarters among concerned committee/s and members. Among factors to be considered are target audience, speakers, venue, logistics and budget.
4. Pray for success of mission.
5. Notify early and coordinate with Parish Priest /Superior and contact group or persons in the mission place and their contact numbers, and secure approval and cooperation.
6. Confirm with contact persons and Parish Priest the following: objective of mission, target audience, invites, announcements, speakers, venue, logistics, budget, and payment sharing.
7. Prepare speeches, hard and soft copies thereof in enough quantity, similarly for songs and worship.

8. Announce appeal for donations; seek help in case of relief work or distribution of donated items. Procure and prepare these items plus transport thereof.
9. When at mission place, confirm everything, above all preparations and details, and arrange for others such as tarpaulin, food, writing materials, sound system, projector and screen, chairs, tables. Also take care of security, medical assistance, documenters in photos and videos, and others.
10. Make courtesy calls to superiors and officers of the mission area or parish priests and Civic Officers too.
11. Set a preparatory meeting of all persons concerned to ensure preparations in place.
12. For the event, start with prayers, then Gospel reading. Secretary is assigned. Usually there would be talks/lectures, songs, small group sharing, and messages. At end, there could be celebration of Holy Mass, then Fellowship and Meals, group picture taking.
13. Ensure that messages are given by important persons. If possible in a small group, all participants shall be given the chance to speak, but time limit to be observed. In a big group, representatives of clusters will be the ones to speak.
14. After event, Certificates are given, minutes are written, selected pictures are posted on the internet, resolutions, actions are implemented, gratitudes expressed and letters sent.
15. Set meeting to evaluate and assess the mission, to thank for success and to learn and the things to improve.
16. For Relief or Donation giving, local persons will take charge of organizing and setting the procedures.

D. METHODS OF DOING

Methodologies are most helpful in doing mission. These aim to ensure that the objectives of mission are achieved, eliminate inefficiencies, and standardize/coordinate practices and processes. Principal factors are prayer, spirituality and charity. And since our group is by and of lay persons, methods and best practices from secular disciplines are also used.

1. FORMATION. LSSAJ developed and created the following Formation Program of eight sessions (with corresponding source materials), the heart of which is Faith Transforming Life (FTL) Sessions. Core members shall complete these sessions, while regular members shall attend most preferably all. The most important objective is the FTL transformation of the members themselves:

1. St. Arnold Janssen Life and Spirituality – (Fr. Fred Sanial, SVD , “St. Arnold Janssen Spirituality in Asian/Filipino Context”)
2. Bible and Gospels – (Fr. Arlo Yap, SVD, “Liturgical Bible Study”)
3. Society of the Divine Word – 4 Characteristic Dimensions and Prophetic Dialogue – (Nemi Workshop Modules).
4. Role of the Laity – (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* and *Christifideles Laici* – Vatican II and Papal Encyclical)
5. The Lay Society of St. Arnold Janssen – Vision, Mission, Advocacies – (Constitution and By-Laws, Daisy Leones’ Powerpoint)
6. Faith – (Module by Ed Dela Torre)
7. Transformation – (Module by Joseph Pernia)
8. Life – (Module by Charles Avila).



2. PRACTICES. The following customs/practices have also been adopted through the years:

- a. Inclusiveness in welcoming members
- b. Maximum participation of members in meetings and activities
- c. Bonding, caring, and felicitations among members including via internet
- d. By good Leadership. Directors are preferably Committee Heads
- e. Teamwork and cooperation in mission work.
- f. Measures of success are: i) Faith-life transformations of members and audiences, and ii) Increasing numbers of chapters and members especially core members
- g. Prompt documentation in text and pictures and postings on the internet for sharing and information
- h. Prompt and transparent financial processes
- i. Compliance with Government regulations
- j. LSSAJ Choir for Holy Mass, Services and meetings
- k. Chapter-Building and expansion procedures
- l. Recruitment of members via members
- m. Close collaboration with SVDs and SSpS
- n. Quarterly meeting of Directors and Officers with Fr. Provincial and SVD Mission Secretary
- o. Appeals to donors and sponsors for funds and useful items for the mission. Appreciation letters are subsequently sent.
- p. Learning sessions every month by invited SVD priests and experts in various social sciences disciplines
- q. Fund raising events such as Symposia, Concerts, etc.
- r. Symposia, summits on Advocacies, e.g. Environment, etc.
- s. Discussions of social issues guided by Catholic Social Teachings
- t. Agreed Statements and Actions on current social issues
- u. *Veni Creator Spiritus* at start of every meeting
- v. Prayers of St. Arnold Janssen in meetings, such as Quarterly Hour Prayer
- w. In meetings, reading of the Gospel for the coming Sunday, meditation and sharing, facilitated by SVD spiritual adviser
- x. *Salve Regina* at end of every meeting.

3. SPECIFIC MISSION APPROACHES. LSSAJ members have developed and written the following methodologies/ articles in doing lay mission. We note that many members are ex-seminarians, some are ex-priests, and there is thus a good unique combination of religious and secular disciplines and methodologies. (Some articles are by SVD priests written for LSSAJ):

- 12 Steps in Drug Rehabilitation – by Gil Reoma
- Accounting and Cash Management for LSSAJ –by Daisy Leones

- Alternative Learning System – by Fr. Jerome Marquez, SVD
- Business Integrity System – Elmer Sarmiento
- Business Process Manual for LSSAJ – by Elmer Sarmiento
- Church and Government Collaboration in Drug Rehabilitation - Samuel Yap
- Clinical Pastoral Counseling – Daisy Leones
- Collaborating Mission with Business Leaders – by Joseph Pernia
- Community Organizing – by Ed Dela Torre
- Doing Mission in the Judiciary Sector – Judge Manny Siayngco
- Doing Mission with the Youth – by Wyndell Gaspan
- Doormat Making for Housewives – by Emma Flores and Bet Balcalso
- Engineering Technical Skills and Employment for the Unschooled – by Cris Lim
- FTL Module for Parishioners – by Gemma Patricio
- Good Governance advocacy, opposing Dynastic Charter Change and Federalism, and Voter Education using *Gabay Kristo* (Christian Guide)– by Sammy Yap and Sam Ferrer.
- Liturgical Bible Study – by Fr. Arlo Yap, SVD
- Livelihood Skills Short Courses– by Timmie Bernaldez
- Lives and Spiritualities of Saints especially Lays – by Myrna Villarosa
- LSSAJ Manifesto – by Charles Avila
- LSSAJ Prayerbook – by Steve Villarosa
- Microfinancing for the Poor – by Roy Dizon
- Mission with Families – by Rudy Besinga
- Organizing Coconut Farmers – by Mayette Tamondong
- Prayers for Faith Transforming Life – Evelyn Flordelis
- Role of Laity – Tyrone Cimafranca
- Salt of the Earth , Mission of Lay Persons – by Fr. Antonio Pernia, SVD
- Small Food Business Training (Foodcart)– Julio Tonquin
- Song Compositions for the Mission – Anton Ferrer
- St. Arnold Janssen Spirituality – by Fr. Fred Sanial, SVD
- SVD College Faculty and Administration Persons As Co- Missionaries – by Samuel Yap
- The Philippine Economy and Medium Term Development (to alleviate poverty) – by Dr. Ernesto Pernia, NEDA Secretary
- Vision Urban Plan for the Philippines (to safeguard the environment) – by Architect Jun Palafox.

(Note: All of abovementioned are available upon request)

E. WHAT QUALITIES AND ATTITUDES NEEDED

The Lay Partners Members are expected to continually develop and form qualities and attitudes needed for doing mission as laity. We note that these qualities similarly characterized the person of St. Arnold Janssen himself, and must have been envisioned by St. Arnold Janssen for Lay Missionaries and Lay Partners. Furthermore since we are laity, we are expected to be adept and experts in the chosen secular career we are in, which are useful in doing mission; plus positive personal and group laity qualities we have acquired in our family and work environments.

1. CORE VALUES

LSSAJ has incorporated in its Constitution the following Core Values in the choice of advocacies and conduct of activities:

- a. Respect for human dignity;
- b. Service driven by moral incentives not by self- serving profit;
- c. Honesty, integrity, transparency and accountability;
- d. Professionalism with positions grounded on credible research;
- e. Non-partisanship in political affairs;
- f. No activity that would compromise the reputation of the SVD, the SSpS or SSpSAP;
- g. Collaboration, not subservience, condescension or presumptuousness;
- h. No conflict of interests in business relations; and results-orientation in all our activities.

2. PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Analytical
- Coaching
- Compassionate
- Coordinating
- Correcting
- Courageous
- Good family life
- Humble
- Humorous
- Initiating
- Inspiring
- Leading by example
- Listening
- Networking
- Objective
- Patient
- Persevering
- Persuasive
- Prayerful
- Preferably speaker
- Preferably writer
- Protocols aware
- Reader of Bible, and Social Encyclicals
- Professional and expert in one's career
- Resourceful
- Respectful
- Results oriented
- Systematic
- Visionary

F. CHALLENGES, HOW TO FACE THEM

Like all lay organizations, LSSAJ encounters challenges that need to be addressed. We see these as opportunities for further growth and strength. Indeed LSSAJ practices preventive, risk management and good governance methods, such as written hereunder. It is also noteworthy that many members are professionals thus using best practices tools to meet these situations and issues. Most of all, prayers and charity are effective to face these challenges.

1. FUNDS: Honesty and transparency, accountability, complete and periodic documentations and financial reports, thrift, dual controls and signing in processes, resourceful in raising funds, strict collection of dues. (LSSAJ has an Accounting and Cash Management Manual).
2. CLERICALISM: Lay members decide on secular matters and organizational issues; persons need to have confidence in deciding and acting. SVD priests' advice or guidance is sought, but the decision is made by the members. (Our Spiritual Adviser considers himself as Spiritual Enabler in his recognizing our autonomy).
3. INACTIVE MEMBERS: Constantly invite to meetings and events, initiate exciting challenging projects, involve with assignments linked to talents, send greetings on special days, give praises and encouragements, get to know reasons of inactivity which could be resolved.
4. DISCUSSIONS: Timed limits, respect and objectivity, everybody speaks so there's reason to limit; once agreed, limit discussion and proceed to actions.
5. DIFFERENT VIEWS: Respect, once agreed, do actions; facts and objective research.
6. PROJECTS PRIORITIZATION: Prioritize per resources and manpower.
7. SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES: Criteria are per our Constitution - objectives of rule of law, good governance, human dignity, citizenship, poverty alleviation, anti-political dynasties; and using our core values of facts and research, respect, and non-partisanship.

G. FRUITS OF MINISTRY

The Lord gives rewards to those to whom mission is done and to those who do mission.

1. To those who are ministered to:

- Harmonies, peace and goodwill in the families communities and country;
- Life transformations inspired by faith;
- Spiritual grace received from God;
- Spiritual benefits and growth;
- Material benefits and growth;
- Generosities that are engendered in the communities, by supporters, sponsors, donors;
- Visions of LSSAJ and Catholic Social Teachings that are realized, i.e. poverty alleviation, peace, justice, environment care, human dignity, common good, etc.;
- Establishment of the Kingdom of God the Father, Jesus the Divine Word and, Holy Spirit, where people love one another.

2. To the Ministers, Lay Partners:

- Fulfillment personal and social;
- Joy and happiness in doing mission;
- Friendships which support each other;
- Accomplishment of programs and projects;
- Exposure to other cultures and ways of life;
- Learnings that enhance our lives and service to others;
- Being part of St. Arnold Janssen family.

CONCLUSION

As we look back on our first decade and embark on our next decades of fulfilling our role as SVD Lay Partners in mission, We, The Lay Society of St. Arnold Janssen Philippines, humbly thank God our Father, Jesus the Divine Word, God the Holy Spirit, our Blessed Mother, our patron Saint Arnold Janssen and St. Joseph Freinademetz for giving us abundant graces and joy.

We also give thanks to our directors, officers, members, donors, supporters, as well as beneficiaries of our missions. We have been formed as a Mission Team by the grace of God; we give and receive from each other as children of God. With new Directors and Officers elected periodically, LSSAJ continually learns, improves and performs its Mission for the benefit of people, especially the poorest in our country.

We express our gratitude to the Society of the Divine Word priests and brothers, SSpS, SSpSAP, other SVD Lay Partners worldwide as we are now all Arnoldus Family members, and as we all commit to collaborate, fulfilling our part for the mission of God. LSSAJ has received much support encouragement and inspiration especially from the SVD Central Philippine Province, and the SVD Generalate. Strengthened by the Divine Word, truly the harvest of God's mission awaits us all, "may the Heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all people."