

DIVINE WORD NOVITIATE

NKWATIA-KWAHU

NOVITIATE NEWS. CHRISTMAS EDITION



NEWS AND ARTICLES FROM THE NOVITIATE

DECEMBER 2022 EDITION



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we share with you this Christmas edition of our newsletter. We are grateful to God for His presence in our lives and for keeping us safe from all harm.

This edition is with the theme: ***Rejoice O Israel! For to Thee Shall Come Emmanuel*** (cf Mt 1:23). This is inspired by the spirit of new life in our communities, in our families and most of all in our own daily experiences of life.

Christmas is a season, which always help us to rejuvenate our spirit. A season that reminds us of the most important aspect of our lives, that is the continuation of life. As people, surely we differ in many things, like the color of skin, religion and so on, but we have one thing in common, the celebration of new life.

As we celebrate the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, we also remember that as individuals, peoples, as Christians, as community and as nations, we have to be reborn from all kind of unpleasant situations that separate us from our brothers and sisters.

We are so hopeful that in sharing some aspects of our lives through this articles written by the novices, you will be touched and your lives will be as expressed by the writers. We commit your inner intentions to our Lord Jesus, son of God and Son of Mary. May He always be present in your lives and in the life of your loved ones. Let us rejoice for our savior (God is with us) shall come.

From the Novitiate community, we wish you a merry Christmas and a prosperous New year.



“BECOMING FLESH FOR THE OTHER IN OUR WOUNDED WORLD”

cf. Matthew 1:22-23

Season comes and season goes, that is just to confirm ‘nature’ which is creation. This is highlighted in Ecclesiastics 3. Christmas season is here once again and soon it will be over. The Salvific event of the birth of Christ is a mysterious action of God with humanity. Emmanuel-“God –with-us” became flesh and assuming human nature, dwelt among men.

Thanks to God for the gift of our interculturality most especially in our community with God blessing us with 8 different nationalities namely, Kenyans, Togolese, Tanzanians, Congolese, Mozambican, Madagascans, Ghanaians and an Indian. We are living together as people of many faces but of one Heart (cf. 15th General Chapter)

Friends, the presence of Christ is what we celebrate during this joyful season and this joy is a gift of God to the novitiate community, 2022/23. Indeed, interculturality is our DNA. The novitiate community of 2022/23 is blessed with people from different parts of our World. These people have come to bear witness to the mission of Christ and also become flesh for one another and in the wounded world at large. How does this happen?

In our community, in spite of our differences, challenges and struggles, we live together with joy and hope. This reflects in our slogan for the year “***One In Christ.....One in Brotherhood***” (Ephesians 4:12) In our wounded world which is full of abuses and scandals, we try to enrich our living by becoming flesh for the other in the community. In achieving this, we try to work on our ego-humanness, by letting go some aspects of us and working on ourselves and eventually learning

Merry Christmas

and

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Prosperous New year.

new ways of living our lives in spite of our cultural differences and perceptions about life.

One becomes flesh for the other by becoming a catalyst to the other in the community and the wounded world at large. A catalyst is a chemical substance which causes change in a reaction and also speeds up the reaction. So, in our community we try to help one another as companions on a journey.

Also, we live by the famous Greek word “Kenosis” which means self-emptying. We try to empty ourselves of pride and biases for the growth of the community by letting go and letting God in. We try to live as human beings first and just as at Christmas, we celebrate our humanness in God. We celebrate this daily in our community in the Liturgy, office works, sports and many areas of our lives in the community. We live to respect each other dignity and acknowledge our giftedness in spite of our weaknesses.

For our community we celebrate Christmas in becoming flesh for the other just like Christ became flesh and made his dwelling among us. His birth was to accomplish what the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary and so he did become flesh and later died for our sins. That is what we celebrate.

In spite of the crises in our wounded world and in our communities, our oneness in brotherhood and faith in Christ is what can sustain us. We must try to be Existentialists by surviving with the little we have and helping one another than being Functionalists

Functionalists who only show off at public places and do not live as human beings with practical lifestyle and ideas but living in the ideal world or in an unpractical world.

The season of Christmas is here again and we know that God is with us and we shall sail through. As we welcome Christ, let us hope for a new birth and change of heart and attitude towards one another.

Also as we gradually come to end of the first part of the Novitiate year and with the joy of Christmas, we remain forever grateful to the entire Society Of the Divine Word, the various superiors and their councils of the Provinces, Regions and Missions, most especially Very Rev. Fr. Cyprian Kuupol, SVD for his fatherly support, all confreres, all our Sisters-SSpS and SSpSAP, our collaborators, benefactors and benefactresses, parishes and all people of goodwill. May your kind gestures of becoming flesh for the Novitiate community remain blessed by *Emmanuel-God-With-Us*.

May the Word made flesh live in our hearts and lives as we become flesh for those whom we meet especially in our wounded world. May the joy of Christmas remain with us all.

Merry Christmas
Feliz Navidad
Joyeux Noel



Heris njema ya krismasi

Feliz Natal

Arabaina. Nahatratry ny Noelye!

Afehhiapaaaaaaaaa oooo!



FR. TITUS TUOYINTIR, SVD.
(NOVICE DIRECTOR)

THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a season of joy and merry. We are joyful because a Savior has been born. The presence of our savior gives life that brings joy with the promise of eternal happiness. No one is shut out from this joy; all share the same reason for rejoicing, no matter our color or race. For through Christ our savior, *God wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Tim. 2:4-NJB).

In a sermon by St. Leo for Christmas, he writes; ‘*Let the saint rejoice as he sees the palm of victory at hand. Let the sinner be glad as he receives the offer of forgiveness. Let the pagan take courage as he is summoned to life*’.

THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

Times are really tough and all facet of life is affected. But Christ is our hope. Emmanuel-God is with us. In the midst of these challenges and difficulties of this world, we are assured in the words of the psalmist, *even were we to walk in a ravine as dark as death we shall fear no danger, for the LORD is on our side* (Psalm 23:4-NJB).

Let us join with the choir of angels as we sing in joy: **Glory to God in the highest and Peace to His people on earth.**

May this season of Christmas fill us with the joy that brings hope, peace, serenity, fulfillment and courage.

SHOUT FOR JOY, YOU HEAVENS; EARTH, EXULT! MOUNTAINS, BREAK INTO JOYFUL CRIES! FOR YAHWEH HAS CONSOLED HIS PEOPLE, AND IS TAKING PITY ON HIS AFFLICTED ONES. (Isaiah 49:13 NJB).



CLEMENT NARTEY ASARE

Christmas comes in order that we discover that greatest gift we can give to our families, friends and the world. We learn how to develop the divine attributes as we express our God's nature in human form. The four Advent Sundays proclaims aspects of our gifts that are hope and faith, peace, love and joy. Hence, we achieve these aspects through meditation, prayer and affirmation to contemplate ways, to share our deepest gifts: hope and faith, peace, love and joy. As novices we pray that our families, friends and the world at large may receive these gifts and even among ourselves. Indeed, these are the weeks of advent and their gifts below.

A) Hope and Faith

Think of it as hope and faith having a continuous structure. Hope arises when we glimpse a new possibility. This glimpse can inspire us to make a positive change. As Christians, we are called to embrace change during this period, hence to adopt a new way of thinking and behavior. Increase your hope in this continuous structure and enter the realm of belief. Thus, in the domain of faith, in this season we are to experience faith as a deeper inner knowing arising from divine intelligence.

B) Peace

As Christians, we need to affirm the peace of God as our welcomed companion. Just live like Zachariah whose question whether paternity is possible,

he was chastised for doubting, then struck mute for the duration of his wife's pregnancy. "All manifestation of life originate in silence." (Unity Trait, 1902). "The thoughts that rise in you and come to the surface in deed and act, are they not from the silence?" Muting is the perpetual cycle of thought, is a gift that brings greater peace. We are called to mute our own thoughts with quiet minds and to open our hearts during this period in order to find rest in the peace that surpasses all understanding.

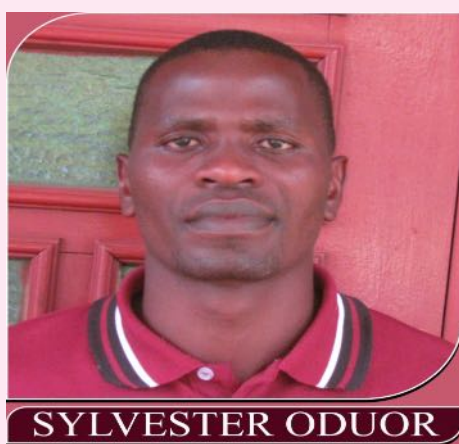
C) Love

As Christians, we have received love graciously and we have to reflect on the whole world as at this time. Jesus taught that we should love everyone: black or white; rich or poor thus any caliber of human being that exists in this planet Earth. "We are one in God's love" and this summarizes Jesus' teachings for us. It is a view of unconditional love that defines Christ consciousness quite succinctly towards our attitude for our fellow brothers and sisters during this season. Love is who we are, and no season can contain it, "this is affirmed by Sara Baraille in her evocative song "Love is Christmas" It's true about each of us, and everyone else too.

D) Joy

As we light the Advent's candle for the Joy, we have to remind ourselves of the spiritual truth of this season thus unto us a child is born. We relax and enjoy the wonders of the present moment. When things seem darkest, joy can come in unexpected places and small packages.

When we celebrate Christmas, thus the birth of Christ, it occurs all the time, every minute of every day. As we draw near to this day, when darkness seems to close in, we have to light the candle of joy to remind ourselves of the power within us. Let us bring forth this joy to our brothers and sisters in war torn countries or those that are stricken by calamities that they too may say *Joy to the world, the savior is here and has been here all along.*



AWARENESS OF THE PRESENT

Being in the present means being in the no-present to what is. It involves being totally present to the reality manifesting itself here and now. In this case, it means a total absorption with your words and your actions, just as you are in the present moment.

I drew a hasty conclusion about a book I read one day. When I opened the first page of the book and read some few sentences, I concluded that the book was not interesting. This is because I compared the contents of this book with a the book I had read

before.

The first book was more interesting to me than the second one. My thought was full with the first book rather than the second. This means I was not aware of what I was doing at that moment but living in the past. Therefore, my awareness was not in the present but in the past.

Sometimes our past experiences prevent us from being in the present. Our anxieties about the future can also prevent us from experiencing the present. Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself (cf. Mt 6:34). Let us be in the present.

If someone tells us today, we are celebrating Christmas, what comes to our mind? Is it a thought of today's Christmas or the thought of the experiences we have had from a previous Christmas? Often we experience and react to memories rather to the current reality. Let us not allow our past experiences or our anxieties prevent us from being in the present.



EMMANUEL: GOD IS WITH US

I Am There- When You Are Alone

I Am There -When you are full of consternation

I Am There - When They Reject You and Cast You Out

I Am There - When You Cannot see any Progress

I Am There - When You Despair and Are Saddened

I Am There -When You Are Anxious and Afraid

I Am There - When No One Likes You

I Am There - When There Seems To Be a Wall between You and Your Friend

I Am There - When You Worry and Cannot Sleep

I Am There - When Someone Hurts You

I Am There - When You Are In Grave Danger when You Are Sick and Need Help

I Am There - When You Cannot Hear Your Sorrows Alone

I Am There - When Your World Falls Apart

I Am There - When You Need Love and Are Ready To Confide

I Am There - When You Are Suffering Great Pain

I Am There - When No One Listens To You any More

I Am There - When You Can No Longer Stand Upright From Exhaustion

I Am There - When You Have a Bad Conscience

I Am There - When You Call Me

I Am There - When You Die

I Am There - Like an Angel Who Protects You in Great Needs

I Am There - Like the Sun That Gives You Warmth and Joy

I Am There - Like a Father Who Makes You Feel Secure

I Am There - Like a Mother Who Feels With You

I Am There - Like a Heart That Is Always With You

I Am There - Like an Eye That Always sees you

I Am There - Like an Arm That Supports You

I Am There - Like a Cloud That Envelops You with Love

I Am There - Like a Hand That Shows You the Right Way

I Am There - Like a Light That Inspires You

I Am There - Like a Voice That Tells You That I Shall Be With You Always



SOMETHING IS HAPPENING AROUND YOU

One of the greatest gifts we have as human beings is a gift of understanding. Understanding what is happening within ourselves and most especially what is happening around us. This gift has its complementarity in our physical senses.

Something is happening around us and within us. This statement seems to be easy to be understood but the most

challenging thing is to live it. Surely, to get what is around us is easy when it affects us directly especially on our survival as an individual beings. For example, when we are thirsty, hungry, feeling cold or feeling hot, we know the next step to follow. We will look for something to eat, to drink, and to cover ourselves with and so on.

However, the challenge comes in when the issue is out of our “borders”, when we have to combine the gift of understanding and interpreting the “signs of the time”, when all the things mentioned above are happening far from us.

In the gospel of Matthew (cf. 25: 35-48), it is clear that even in the time of Jesus, these issues were present among the people who surrounded Him. In the passage, Jesus Himself spoke about the danger of closing our eyes, ears, hands, mouth, nose, etc. The danger of living like everything is happening outside of us is that, someone will ask or demand from us an account of whether we were able or unable to do so.

Many things are happening around us with our fellow human beings and non-beings. If we look attentively, we will see a brother or sister looking for something to eat, drink and wear. If we observe deeply around us, someone is seeking for a friendly word, an encouraging smile, a sincere hugging, and a healing brotherhood.

Something is happening and someone will demand from us an account. That “someone” -

may be God or human. Our own selves can demand it from us, when we fail to look into ourselves and see what is happening within us. It is not a matter of position or importance in the society or in the church, rather it is a matter of having received the gift of understanding that all human beings have received. Now the challenge is to put into practice, using the means that each and every one has in his/her context.



THE HOLY FAMILY, CONTRIBUTOR TO JESUS' LIFE IN FORMING THE CHURCH IN THE APOSTOLIC ERA AND NOW.

Ora et labora.

Jesus Christ was presented at the temple on the eighth day after his birth according to the Jewish custom. This commenced his enculturation into the Jewish way of life. Every event in the life of Jesus is a call to prayer. We find most of the prayers that the church has presented to its faithful in the life of Jesus. Jesus always went aside to pray after ministering to his people. Jesus' life can be said to be *contemplative active*. Solitude and silence enables one to connect on a deeper level with others, for we

are put in touch with the deepest part of ourselves – God. And in coming to know God, we are better able to find God in others and are freed of our loneliness. (James Martin. *The Jesuit Guide To (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality For Real Life*. Harper Collins Publishers. New York. 2010)

The Gospels tell little about Jesus' life between the time he was presented in the temple and the time he was thirty years at the start of his public ministry. The only thing the Evangelist Luke has to say is, "Jesus increased in wisdom and in years" (Lk 2:52). From our day to day lives, we can try to visualize what He did during His hidden life.

Jesus followed His foster father in his trade as is captured in Greek as *tehton* which is usually rendered as carpenter or craftsman or even as some modern scholars would say day laborer. This would mean he was working with wood, building walls and tilling lands as a laborer. But for now I will stick with carpentry. The main point I would like to emphasize is that Jesus worked.

The gospel according to Matthew "take my yoke upon you..." (cf. Mt 11:29) were the words Jesus. Is it by coincidence that Jesus used these words or by experience? Jesus would have learned about the art of making a yoke because he was brought up by a carpenter. His whole childhood was spent under the instruction of the master craftsman, Joseph. The Creator placed himself under tutelage of a creature. Working as a carpenter includes activities such as selecting the right kind of wood, negotiating prices of wood

and furniture, being called for repair works by clients which involved travelling to different towns and others. We can allude to this because His parables talked about farmers, fishermen, farm managers, day laborers and others. Jesus knew what work is

Living a community life.

Jesus learned from Joseph how to live a community life. This is exhibited among his disciples and himself despite differences in temperament and background. We know from the gospels that Matthew was a tax collector, and Peter, James and John were fishermen. Jesus took them through a brief but intense three years of formation that forged their faith and personality into a force to reckon with.

In any human environment resentments can creep in. People can hold grudges which can ferment to become a highly explosive methane gas and relationships can turn into a frozen ice. The young Jesuit, Saint John Berchmans once said *vita communis est maxima penitentia*. The best translation would render it in English to mean "life in community is my greatest penance." Avery cardinal Dulles once remarked about Berchmans, "I wonder what the community thought about him."

My elder brother once told me that any group (family, business organization, etc.) can be a source of joy and grief.

Imagine the pain and disappointment Jesus might have felt when He asked His disciples "you could not even be awake with me in prayer for one hour? (cf. Mt 26, 43)". Jesus had learned from the Holy Family, and taught His disciples to live compassionately with love, patience and wisdom. The teachings of Jesus through his disciples and apostles have been handed down to us. we continue to live on though with challenges and difficulties. St Ignatius of Loyola says this about a community, "beware of condemning any man's actions. Consider your neighbor's intention, which is often honest and innocent, even though his act seems bad in outward appearance." (James Martin, *the Jesuit guide to (almost) everything*, p. 235).



A "GARDEN" AS A FORM OF INTERCULTURAL LIVING

The word "garden" can be understood in different ways. It can be referred to as a public park or an area with a lawn or flowers. I would like to define the word "garden" in a different way. "It is a place having different types of green vegetables for human consumption. Those vegetables contain different types of minerals

and vitamins.

The care also depends on the individual type of vegetables, some do well in an alkaline soil while others in acidic soil. Some needs a lot of manure while others do not.

As Divine Word novices, our way of life is based on intercultural living. We are like these vegetables in a simple garden. We come from different backgrounds, with different cultures, talents, different levels of education, etc. but we come together for a common goal. We are under the care of the gardener who is the Novice Master and his team. They humbly accepted to take care of us regardless of our different backgrounds and the way of understanding things.

We receive the care through the Novitiate routine or program, which consists of monthly recollection, daily spiritual reading, monthly spiritual direction and accompaniment and most important is the Holy Eucharist. The additional programs of the year show the types of manure that is added on our souls to improve our own personalities in order that we become better SVDs in future. These gardeners know how to take care of each type of vegetable according to their needs.

The interpretations above show how we our intercultural and international uniqueness as SVDs. The Society of the Divine Word is our garden, and we are the vegetables. St. Paul says it rightly, “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God

and father of all, over all, through all and within all”. (Cf. Eph. 4:4-6 NJB)

Our diversity becomes an opportunity rather than a threat and it brings about richness in our lives as members of the same community.



PETER ELIAS PETER

DUAL CITIZENSHIP CHRISTIAN

‘A good citizen is someone who could live in harmony with the constitution, and has sufficient leisure time to devote himself to the tasks and responsibilities of citizenship’, said Aristotle. By this, citizenship is regarded as a bond forged by the intimacy of participation in state affairs which demand the sense of belonging.

A Christian is a dual citizen. He possesses a body and a spirit. Jesus lived among us and he possessed the same dual citizenship. He lived as both Divine and Human. As Divine, Jesus Christ witnessed the kingdom of God, the center of his mission. As human, He belonged to a family, He bore a citizen’s identity and exhibited this when He cautioned the Jews to be conformed to the duty of the state “give to Caesar

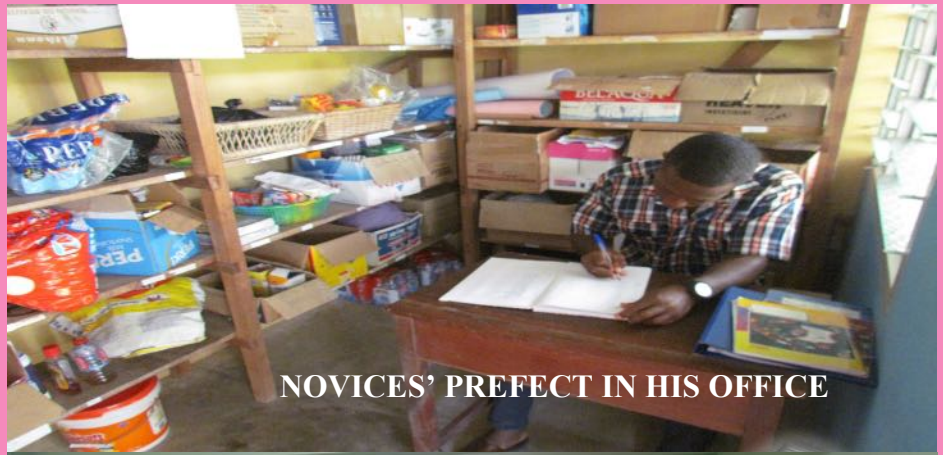
what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Lk 20:25). Therefore, the dual citizenship for a Christian is his/her physical and temporal body on earth and the eternal one by his/her spirit which is heavenly.

By his/her first citizenship, a Christian belong to a human state, enjoying right to share deliberative or judicial offices and exercise secular right effectively. By this, a person possess moral goodness that helps him/her to realize his cooperative life and ownership of properties as a necessary condition. Therefore, the achievement of this goal calls on a Christian to live in harmony with the constitution of his/her state which enables him/her to devote himself/herself to the daily tasks and responsibilities.

By the second citizenship, a Christian acquires this membership by the sacrament of Baptism. He/she takes full participation in the heavenly state through an active commitment to spiritual activities and living in harmony with the dictates of the Bible through his/her spirit, the interior life or living from within. Such commitment postulates eternal life as the greatest earn. In fact, the King of this celestial kingdom is God surrounded by the glorious and eternal creatures: archangels and angels.

In conclusion, these lines reminds us as Christians to live an authentic identity knowing that the earthly citizenship prepares us for the heavenly state. Indeed, living in harmony with the constitution of the state leads to

living in harmony with the Bible and a patriotic life portrays the spiritual commitment. The ownership of the earthly properties shows the earning of the eternal life, hence, a good earthly citizen is a good heavenly citizen.



NOVICES' PREFECT IN HIS OFFICE



BENJAMIN MOLAPI LOBE



INVESTITURE OF NOVICES

Merry Christmas and Prosperous New year.



SECTIONS OF SOME COMMUNITY ACTIVITES



NOVICES AT ST. PETERS SHS CAROLS



PERFORMANCE OF NOVICES



COMMUNITY MONTHLY SOCIALS



THE NOVICE DIRECTOR HAVING ACCOMPANIMENT WITH A NOVICE



FARM WORK



NOVICES AT PRAYER

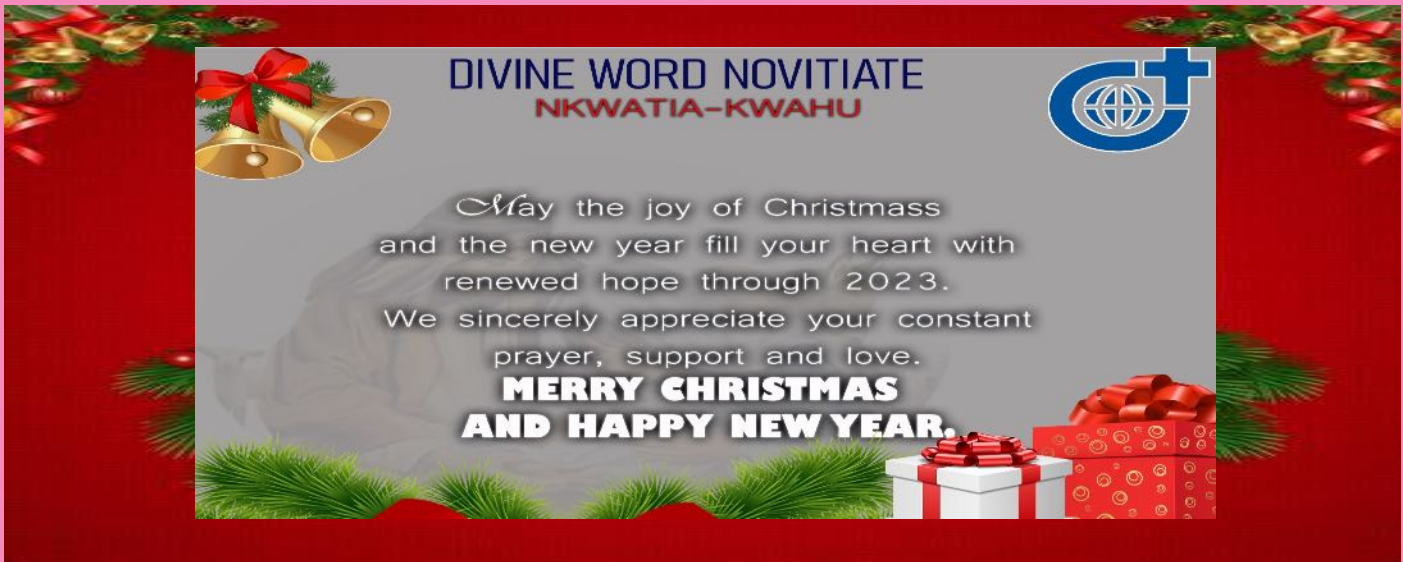


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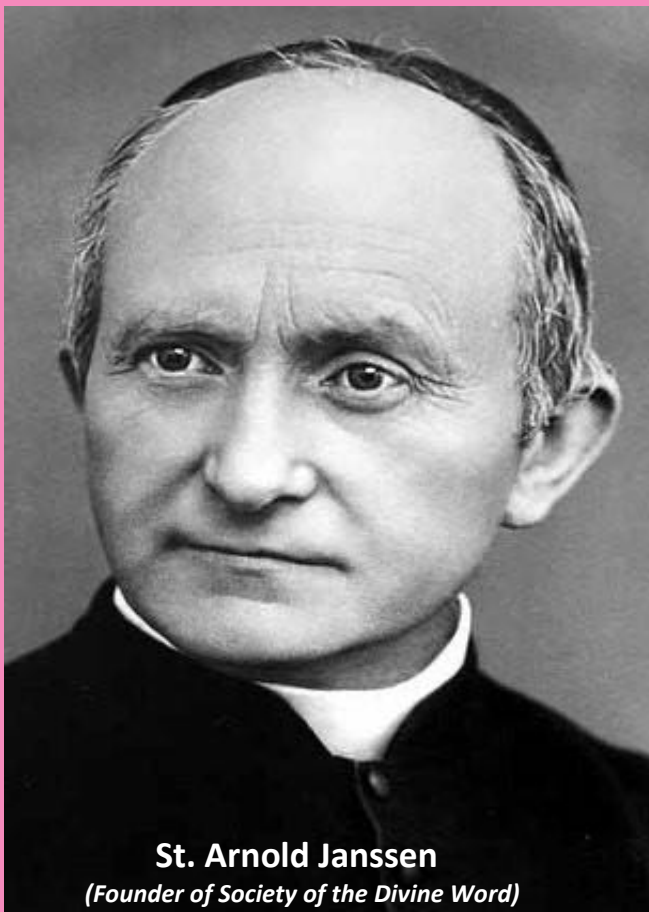
NOVICES BAKING BREAD

Merry Christmas and  Prosperous New year.

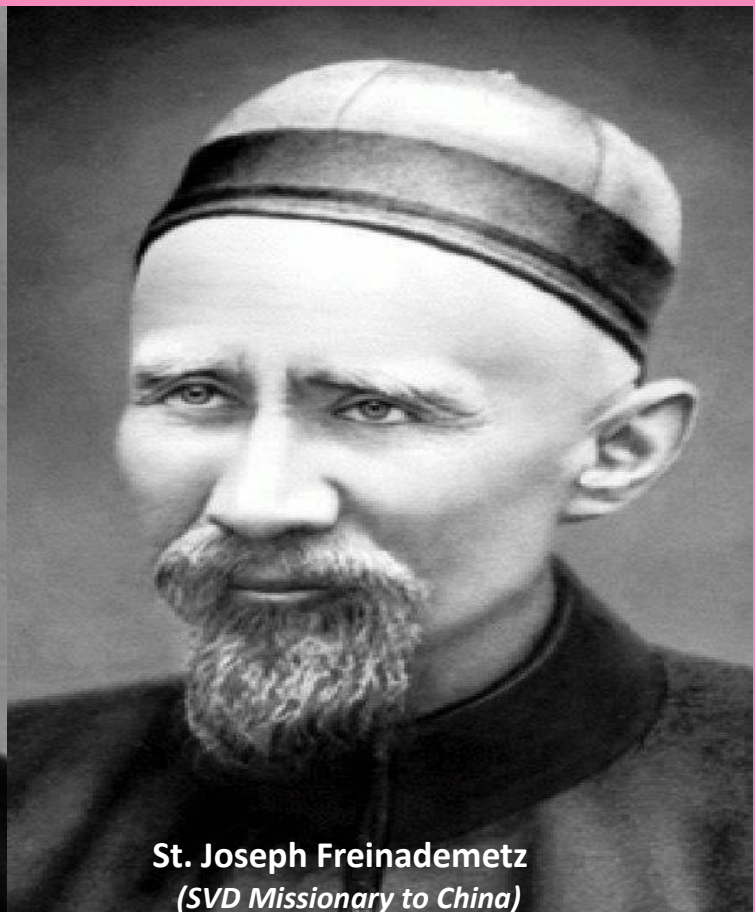


UP—COMING EVENTS IN 2023:

- » THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE SVD WILL BE CELEBRATING THEIR **FAMILY FEAST** IN JANUARY 2023.
- » THE NOVICES WILL HAVE THEIR **THIRTY (30) DAYS RETREAT** IN FEB— MAR, 2023.



St. Arnold Janssen
(Founder of Society of the Divine Word)



St. Joseph Freinademetz
(SVD Missionary to China)

“MAY THE DARKNESS OF SIN AND THE NIGHT OF UNBELIEF VANISH BEFORE THE LIGHT OF THE WORD AND THE SPIRIT OF GRACE, AND MAY THE HEART OF JESUS LIVE IN THE HEARTS OF ALL PEOPLE. AMEN!!!”

(St. Arnold Janssen)

DIVINE WORD NOVITIATE

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Merry Christmas and



Prosperous New year.