



## THE SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD (SVD) (Divine Word Missionaries)



In 1875 Saint Arnold Janssen founded the missionary order, the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), in Steyl, Netherlands. From humble beginnings, after 150 years the SVD has grown into the largest international missionary congregation in the Catholic Church, with about 6,000 priests and religious brothers serving in 79 countries worldwide.

Ordained in 1861 Saint Arnold was encouraged to create a German-sending missionary order. Since the political situation did not allow for a foundation in Germany, he purchased a former inn in Steyl, Netherlands, where he founded the missionary order on September 8, 1875, on the feast of the Nativity of Mother Mary, with the motto: "May the Heart of Jesus live in the hearts of all." In his sermon on the foundation day St. Arnold exclaimed: "What will come of this mission seminary we do not yet know; goals are not always reached that one aims for... If the seminary succeeds, we will thank the grace of God. If nothing comes of it, we will humbly strike our breast and confess that we were not worthy of the grace."

Fr. Janssen set to work with incredible trust in Divine Providence and everything turned to be in his favor. After four years, in 1879, he was able to send the first two missionaries to China. Later missionaries were sent to Togo (West Africa), and to the native tribes of Papua New Guinea. Teams of missionaries were also sent out to care for the spiritual needs of poor immigrants in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador.

Twenty years after founding the Society, Fr. Janssen dispatched Brother Wendelin Meyer, SVD to the United States. He arrived in Hoboken, NJ in 1895. Within a year, more Divine Word Missionaries were sent to the United States. The Society of the Divine Word presence in North American has been growing ever since the first pioneering missionary arrived. Today, the successors of that daring Missionaries are organized into three provinces—the Southern, Western and Chicago Province.

The Western USA province which consists of California and Arizona states began in 1964. The main ministries were a minor seminary in Riverside, staffing a high school in the Watts district of Los Angeles and serving the needs of Japanese and Black Catholics in the Bay area. Through the years we have increased our presence in parishes and ministries in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, Oakland, San Francisco and Phoenix dioceses.



WITNESSING  
TO THE  
**LIGHT**  
FROM  
EVERYWHERE  
FOR  
EVERYONE



## The Divine Word Missionaries, USW Province

Today the members of the Society of the Divine Word, who are popularly called as Divine Word Missionaries work in 79 countries. It is imperative to know that the Society of the Divine Word is the sixth major male religious congregation in the Church.

Over the past 150 years the Divine Word Missionaries have contributed to world-wide mission through the four characteristic dimensions: Biblical Apostolate, Mission Animation, Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), and Communication. SVDs have members from 76 nationalities, serving in 79 countries, with 45 Provinces, 7 Regions, and 7 Missions. The SVD Congregation has 49 Bishops, 4129 priests, 1321 Brothers in Perpetual Vows, and 255 Novices, the sum total of which is 5754 SVDs.

We extend our services through parish ministry, education apostolate, retreat ministry, biblical ministry, Christian advocacy, counseling, social work, justice, peace, and integrity of creation (JPIC), print media and communication, health care, migration, and formation.

Father Janssen knew that women were just as important in the missions as men and founded the Congregation of the Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit. Convinced of the need for prayer as one of the “tools” of mission, he also founded a cloistered community, the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit of Perpetual Adoration.

We also work in collaboration with our SVD Lay Partners and Associates. In 2024, there are 70 officially recognized SVD lay associate groups with a total of 7153 members and 169 SVD lay partner groups yet to be recognized with a total of 20520 members in initial formation.

The Divine Word Missionaries continually nurtured by the Trinitarian Mission Spirituality has survived the storms of this world for 150 long years. Beginning on September 8, 2024, the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) is immensely joyful to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of its Foundation.



**5754** Missionaries  
Misioneros

from

**76** Nationalities  
Nacionalidades

sent to

**79** Countries  
Países



**St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish, Mission Churches of Barona, Viejas and Sycuan is Administered by Divine Word Missionaries**



**Fr. Herman Manuel, SVD**