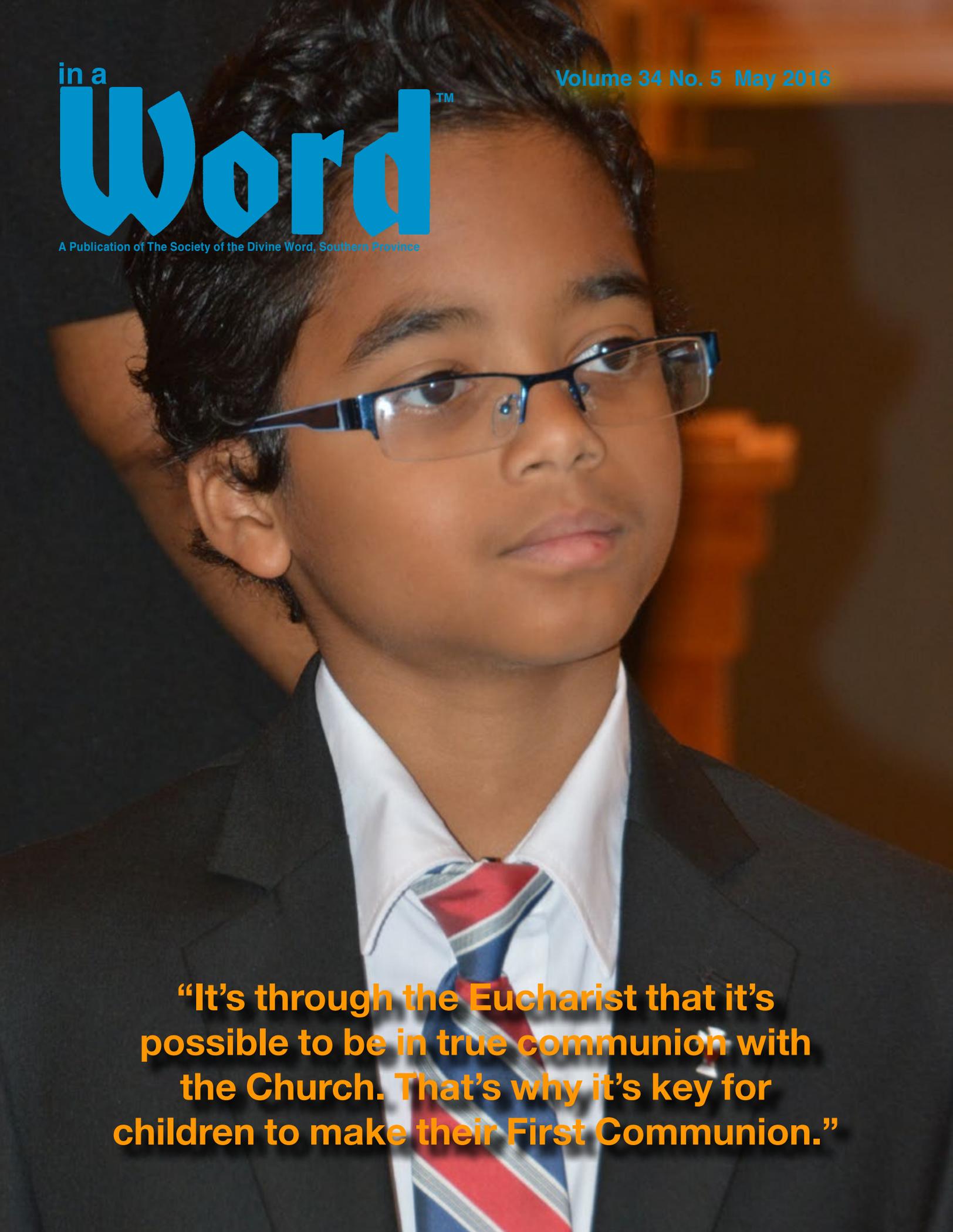


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# Word™

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**“It’s through the Eucharist that it’s possible to be in true communion with the Church. That’s why it’s key for children to make their First Communion.”**

# Precious is the life given for Mission

*This is a tragic story of a Holy Spirit Missionary Sister who was a medical doctor in the Sudan that should not go unnoticed. Please remember in prayers the work of Missionaries such as Sister Veronica.*

Sister Veronica Rackova, a member of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit (SSPS), who was shot and seriously wounded in South Sudan, has died. Sr. Veronica was allegedly shot by Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) soldiers on Monday May 16 at 1.00 am East African time while on her way back to the convent after taking an expectant lady to another health center to deliver.

She died on Friday May 20 at the Nairobi Hospital in Kenya, where she had been flown on Monday morning for specialized treatment following the shooting incident.

According to Sr. Nancy a member of her congregation who accompanied her to Nairobi, Sr. Veronica had suffered serious injuries on her hip bone as well as numerous perforations on her intestines and other internal organs.

At around midnight on Monday, Sr. Veronica received an emergency call from a woman who had complications giving birth, which could not be dealt with at the health center that the sisters run. She used St. Bakhita's ambulance to drive the woman to Harvester's Health Center, a more specialized facility for women and children. "The facility is more or less 10 kilometers from our place. She was midway on her way back when the incident occurred," Sr. Nancy explained.

At the time of the incident, Sr. Veronica who was 58 years old was alone in the ambulance because the driver had gone home. "The incident happened near a factory and luckily she was able to scream and attracted the attention of factory workers who came and took her to the same Harvester's hospital where she was coming from."

She suffered two cardiac arrests and was in a coma for four days. Sr. Veronica who is a native of Slovakia has been working in South Sudan for the last six years. She is among the pioneer members of the congregation in Sudan where currently they were only six members from Argentina, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and the late Sr. Veronica was from Slovakia.

Sr. Veronika was born in Slovakia on 08 January 1958. She made her first vows in the Mission Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit in 1987 and final vows in 1994. She was a medical doctor with specialization in tropical diseases. The Late Sr. Veronica previously worked in Ghana, before coming to South Sudan. According to Sr. Maria Jerly, SSPS, the Regional Superior for South Sudan and Ethiopia whom the incident found in Nairobi, the

congregation is shocked.

Meanwhile Yei Catholic Diocese Secretary General Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Sebit has said that the shooting of Sr. Veronica was a very isolated case. "Yei is quite peaceful as opposed to other parts of South Sudan where the conflict has been going on," Speaking to *AMECEA Online News* on phone from Sudan Fr. Sebit said the unfortunate incident happened on the eve of anniversary celebrations to mark 30 years of the formation of Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

"Because of the celebrations, the army had been deployed in major towns for security reasons and they were mounting road blocks on major high ways; otherwise Yei is quite peaceful hence the shooting of Sr. Veronica has shocked to the whole nation," Fr. Sebit explained.

So far three suspected SPLA Soldiers have been arrested and are being held by the police as investigations continue.

May the Soul of Sr. Veronica Rest in Eternal Peace

*By Pamela Adinda, AMECEA Online News*



Sister Veronica Rackova, SSPS  
1958-2016

Photo Credit: La Croix - Urbi&Orbi Africa

# May is First Communion Time



First Communion in New Orleans

An event of great importance that takes place in just about every Catholic Church during the weeks of May is a child's first communion.

First communion is a special time not only for the child but the family as well. Families turn out armed with cameras and gifts to celebrate this special day in the life of a child. Why do we make such a "big thing" about first communion.

Pope Francis explains the importance of the Eucharist. He said:

*"The Eucharist is more than just a mere feast. It's a way to remember Jesus' Passover, a mystery that's central to our salvation. But when we talk about 'remembering' that doesn't mean that it's just a memory. It means that every time we celebrate this Sacrament we become part of the Mystery of His Passion, Death and Resurrection. The Eucharist is the peak of God's Salvation."*

*"It's through the Eucharist that it's possible to be in true communion with the Church. That's why it's key for children to make their First Communion."*

*"It's important for children to properly prepare for their First Communion, so that there's no child without this Sacrament. The Eucharist is a firm step towards Jesus, along with Baptism and Confirmation. Eucharist comes*

*from the Greek eucharistia, meaning thanksgiving. Ever since Pentecost, when the Church, the People of God, began building a church, they were sustained with the spiritual food in times of trials and in time of celebration. Eucharist is that food, the real presence of the risen Lord.*

The First Eucharist for children has meaning for the whole community. We smile at the children in their first Communion finery-not just because they look cute, but because they are joining us at the table of God's family.

A child's move from high chair to the family table is a momentous event. A seat at the table acclaims a new status: big boy or big girl. First Communion is just such a momentous experience. A child, baptized as an infant into the family of God we call Church, at last takes a place at the Lord's table with the grown ups. Grandparents, aunts and friends join the youngster's immediate family in celebrating the event.

Pope Francis told a group of children who would be making their first communion that they should never forget this day. *"You, who will make your First Communion, always remember that day your whole life: the first day that Jesus came in to us. He comes, makes himself one with us, makes himself our food, our nourishment to give us strength."*

Adding that they should also remember the catechists who taught them. When the Sister who prepared him for Communion died on Oct. 17, 1987 the Pontiff said, *"I went there and was there with her corpse and I prayed so much, because that Sister brought me close to Jesus. Don't forget the catechists, all right? Don't forget the date, ok? And every year, on the date, go make a good Confession and Communion: all right?"*



First Communion in St. Louis

Looking back on the month of May we remember the graduations, end of school, first job offers, confirmations, that spring wedding.

**But how many Catholics remember the day they received first communion in the month of May?**



First Communion in New Jersey

# in a word or two



Father Tony Clark, SVD

**Father Tony Clark, SVD died on Wednesday, May 18, 2016** in Charlottesville, Va. He was born in Washington DC on July 29, 1944. Brother Tony (Valentine) professed perpetual vows as a Divine Word Missionary at East Troy, Wis. on May 19, 1973. After working in formation at East Troy, he began studies for the priesthood and was ordained in 1985. He served in vocations ministry, as rector at

East Troy, as pastor at St. Rita's in Indianapolis and at St. Joseph Parish in Memphis. At the time of his death, he was the pastor of St. Augustine and Holy Names parishes in Memphis.

Father Tony's exuberance and always present smile will be missed. Rest in Peace Father Tony Clark, SVD.

## **The Black Catholic Convocation for the Archdiocese of Washington Parishes sponsored by the Josephites was held at the end of April.**

There were over 200 attendees, clergy, religious, lay leaders and parishioners.

25 parishes in the Archdiocese were represented, as well as parishioners from the Dioceses of Arlington, Delaware, Denver, Harrisburg, New York and Richmond.

The spirit-filled presenters, Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN, Fr. Joseph A. Brown, S.J., Fr. Maurice Nutt, CSSR, Mr. Kevin Winstead and Fr. Freddy Washington, CSSp challenged participants to take ownership of their responsibilities as Catholics.

The purpose of the Convocation was to utilize two key foundations of the Catholic faith, protecting the dignity of human life and social justice teachings, to.....



- 1) take ownership of our personal responsibility to respond to the needs of others,
- 2) "Rediscover" our baptismal call to evangelize,
- 3) discern & respond to the social justice issues relating to black and disadvantaged persons, and
- 4) develop action items for ourselves and recommendations for parishes and diocese.

As the life span of men and women is increasing it is important that individuals plan for the times that they may need someone to care for them. With this in mind St. Paul the Apostle parish in Baton Rouge, Louisiana held a workshop to address these concerns. On May 5, 2016 St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church's pastor, Fr. Rick Andrus, SVD along with parish Nurse, Mrs. Maxine Watts in cooperation with the Southern University's Elder Law Outreach Services presented a very successful workshop entitled, *"How to Put Your Affairs in Order for a Better Peace of Mind"*.

This workshop was designed to assist all parishioners, family members and friends in understanding the important and necessary steps we need to take in documenting our personal choices and desires regarding the kind and extent of health care treatment we would want in the event that we are incapacitated and are not able to make decisions for ourselves and end of life care choices. The workshop emphasized the importance of planning ahead. This must be done to make sure one's financial and medical wishes are clearly documented legally, addressed with family members and medical professionals and carried out according to one's desires so that a person's overall well-being is ensured.

Medical and legal documents that were addressed were: Living Wills, Power of Attorney for Health Care, Health Care Directives and Last Wills. Most people don't think about end-of-life care until they reach a point where the issue can no longer be ignored. We need to be prepared for the possibility that bad events will occur, even if we don't expect them. Congratulations to St. Paul for addressing this very important need.



Divine Word Missionaries is an international missionary community of over 7,000 brothers and priests. In 1905 the SVDs began working among African Americans in the Southern United States. Today, Divine Word Missionaries work in over 35 parishes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Arkansas.

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