

in a
WordTM

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Holy Family Sisters Celebrate Jubilees

Photos by: Rev. James Pawlicki, SVD

HIT YOUR RESET BUTTON AT LEAST ONCE A YEAR

by

Father Jerome LeDoux, SVD

As I lay in bed about to fall asleep, Monday, June 2 was fading into midnight when my memories were jogged by the bass booming of a bullfrog in the stream 100 feet away. With the verdant landscape and brilliant flowers attesting to abundant rain, that bullfrog was part of a magnificent setting for the SVD Southern Province annual retreat of our brothers and priests.

Remembering the time-honored advice from many decades, sleep and prayer were the only items not to be neglected under any circumstances. And the environs of the lush Mississippi Gulf Coast are indeed conducive to rest, prayer and meditation. Even more apt are the hallowed grounds of onetime St. Augustine Seminary – now Residence – replete with black history.

A last-minute entry tapped by the Provincial Council to be our retreat master, Irish-born Father Michael Somers, SVD, veteran missionary team member of the Arnold Janssen Spirituality Center (AJSC) in Steyl, Holland, consented to lead our retreat when no one else was available.

Despite deep misgivings, he did yeoman duty, first presenting a slide lecture on the life of Arnold Janssen, the founder of the Society of the Divine Word. Discerning an acute need for a seminary to educate missionaries for foreign lands, Arnold inquired high and low for someone to start such an institution. **“He is either a fool or a saint!”** people began to say of him.

Various priests and others engaged in biting criticism of his rough, clumsy personality, weaknesses and sparseness of talent. “He is the last person one would expect to found a mission house!” they said. One signor said, “I gave him 10 D-Mark just to get rid of him!”

Ironically, those who called Arnold a fool were playing into the hands of the great St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:10, *“We are fools for Christ’s sake.”* In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul says of weakness and insults, *“I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and constraints for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”* Nail-tough Paul actually practiced the spiritual approach of the same Little Way practiced by the dainty Little Flower, Saint Therese of Lisieux. Thus, Arnold could not have been in better company with all the insults and debasing remarks about his annoying personal traits, seeming lack of special intellectual gifts and his inaptitude for making his case for a missionary institute.

But how well we know from the lives of the saints that nothing good happens until we empty ourselves of what Paul calls human wisdom and our own selfish agenda. Once we have managed that, God fills our spiritual vacuum with grace and power that accomplishes everything.

Romans 8:28 bundles up all Arnold’s doubts, faults, foibles, weaknesses, deficiencies and human failures in his frustrating presentations and other efforts, *“We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.”*

Compounding Arnold’s personal shortcomings, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck initiated the Kulturkampf (culture struggle) that limited the role and power of the Catholic Church in Germany, thereby poisoning the atmosphere for the founding of a mission house. So Arnold simply crossed the Meuse River to Steyl in Limburg, Netherlands on the right bank where he founded the Society of the Divine Word free from the dangers of the “Iron Fist” of Bismarck.



Divine Word Missionaries at Annual Retreat

Father Somers concluded his retreat conferences with a slide lecture on the life of Father Joseph Freinademetz, the most outstanding of all SVD missionaries. He, too, followed the cross-laden, bumpy road of Saint Paul and Arnold Janssen, beginning with a distaste for the Chinese and ending with

total identity, even in looks, with the same people for his entire life. He and Arnold were canonized together in Rome by Pope John Paul II on October 5, 2003.

The passing of the torch from incumbent Provincial, Father James Pawlicki, to incoming Father Paulus Papa Kahan – just call him Paul – was flawless. **For the first time, a non-American, an Indonesian no less, was elected to the highest slot of servant in one of the three American provinces of the Society of the Divine Word, heralding an historic shift in SVD ethnic makeup.**

In his acceptance speech, a beaming, maturely-youthful chief touched all the bases after slamming a home run. Representing an SVD population shift from a mainly European-stocked 5,000-odd members, as we always jokingly said of ourselves, our total is now approaching 7,000 and, for the first time, our majority hale from fast-developing China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Latin America and Vietnam.

Feeling the moment, Father Paul reflected on the powerful statement we make for the Good News as a united multiethnic, multicultural, multinational, family bound by faith in God and a single missionary purpose to share the Good News with everyone. In from Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas, 38 of the 60 present are from developing countries.

Exhorting us to remain steeped in the Faith and strong tradition while keeping our minds open for whatever can assist our ministry, Father Paul charged us to help each other rekindle the fire within us and together as family to bring this Pentecostal fire to the community we serve.

NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE FOR LIFE

WITNESSING THE GOSPEL OF LOVE AND THE GOSPEL OF LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITY

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News Release

May 28, 2014

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

***June 2014 marks the
17th Annual
“Abortion and All Acts of Violence Awareness Month”
in the African American community.***

Franciscan Father James E. Goode,
President of the National Black Catholic Apostolate for Life and the
National Board of Consultants,
stated the following:

Our message is powerful and prophetic:
Pray for the end of abortion and all acts of violence in our communities.

Go tell it in

OUR NEIGHBORHOODS,

CHURCHES, SCHOOLS,

ON OUR STREETS.

YES, EVERYWHERE!

ABORTION IS NOT AN OPTION BUT LIFE IS.

ACTS OF VIOLENCE ARE NOT OPTIONS,

BUT GOODNESS AND MERCY ARE.

We are expecting miracles.

in a word or two



Sister Joseph Angela Parker, SSF celebrated 75 years in vows

DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT

These were the words Father Bernard Assenyoh, SVD used to describe the Sisters of the Holy Family on June 14, 2014. The Sisters were celebrating their Jubilee of Vows and Father Assenyoh in his homily paid tribute to the Sisters who have done so much for so many over the years. "It is their dedication and commitment", said Father Assenyoh, "that undeniably has touched so many lives".



Former Students from St. Mary's Academy with Sisters at celebration



Sister Carmen and her sisters from Opelousas, Louisiana



Jubilarian Sister Rita Darensbourg, SSF with Father Bernard Assenyoh, SVD



Jubilarians Sister Leona Bruner, SSF with Sister Alicia Costa, SSF



We love our Sisters of the Holy Family!



Jubilarians Sister Carmen Marie Bertrand, SSF with former students she taught in 5th grade

The Sisters who celebrated Jubilee years of 50, 60, 70 and 75 years brought a combined total of 475 years of service to the celebration. With a full Church present, numerous priests and Bishop Carmon in attendance at St. Maria Goretti Church in New Orleans, Louisiana the Sisters happily renewed their vows. The photos here point to the joy and impact the Sisters have given to so many. FACEBOOK comments were numerous as person after person expressed the influence the Sisters have made in their lives.

May God continue to bless these wonderful women who follow in the footsteps of Venerable Henriette Delille in serving with Dedication and Commitment to God's people.

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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