

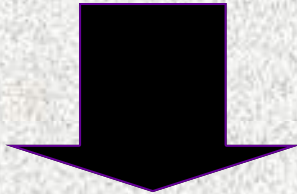


# DIVINE WORD NOVITIATE NKWATIA-KWAHU GHANA PROVINCE

NOVITIATE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER, PENTECOST EDITION, 2012

ISSUE NO. 4

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## From The Director's Desk

### An Outpouring of Gifts



On the eve of the Solemnity of Pentecost, the time at which this issue of our newsletter is scheduled to “come out of the press”, taking a look around the novitiate and also, of the events herein recorded, I feel very much that they are all a manifestation of the Great Pentecost!

Indeed, in the past few weeks, a number of initiatives have been carried out on the compound and in the community to indicate this. I recall that we were going to try to place orders for more bee hives. I had actually made the contact when one of the novices made known to me that he could produce the hives. We had wood recently harvested from our farm for the needed materials. This was indeed good news!

An article tells of the Jubilee Hut constructed to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the present residence of the novitiate. Knowing that Friends of the SVD and our confreres in one of our SVD administered parishes in Accra helped us achieve this is also indeed, sharing in the giftedness of all the people involved. The final paintings and artistic decorations of this hut are also made by other novices. And indeed, the recent 30 Day Retreat Journey undertaken by the novitiate community was found to be principally the acknowledgement and relishing of the great gift of the Triune God in our personal lives – his unbounded unconditional Love! When you or others visit us, you share your giftedness with us also. And again, in the theme *From Many Nations, People and Languages ...* of the upcoming XVII General Chapter of the SVD, isn't it another reflection on our giftedness to one another?

With this Pentecost issue, therefore, the whole novitiate community wants to wish you all, a rich experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and that the diverse gifts with which we have been blessed, would truly be always generously put at disposal of our communities and families, and making the world experience through us, the love of the triune God, and thus making the world a better place for us all! Enjoy reading and have a blessed feast of Pentecost!

Fr. George Angmor, SVD  
(Director of Novices)



## *From Every Nation, People and Language.....*



*The Novitiate Community pose with the Friends of the Novitiate.*

This year the community went agog when we celebrated the Cultural Day from Sunday, 8th to Monday, 9th January 2012. The day also coincided with the solemnity of the Baptism of Jesus Christ. This was the second of its kind. The Novice Directors instituted the cultural day last year to promote our diverse cultures. The theme for this year's celebration was taken from the SVD 17<sup>th</sup> General Chapter: ***From Every Nation, People and Language: Sharing Intercultural Life and Mission.***

On Sunday morning, the novices dressed in their traditional costumes during the Eucharistic celebration. Fr. Nicholas Aazine presided over the Mass and the concelebrants were Frs. George Angmor, Rafael Mesi and Alfonse Amanor.

In his homily, Fr. Nicholas said by virtue of our baptism which we share with Christ, we are born into

a community, or family larger than our natural family.

This also brings us a lot of responsibilities because of the different elements we take on during baptism; priestly, prophetic and kingship. He added, "Looking around, we are from different countries and culture and its through our baptism that we have gathered here and called ourselves brothers and this should make us live out our baptism as priests, prophets and kings." He therefore urged us to cherish each other's culture as a gift of God and live together as one.

Later in the afternoon, the novices prepared their traditional local foods: Fufuo and Eto from Ghana, Chapati served with beans stew from Kenya, Nshima with soup from Zambia, Gari Foto from Togo and Amiwo from Benin. In the evening, the community met to share on our cultures.

The "Nene of the House" Fr.

George Angmor welcomed us and urged us to take keen interest in learning about other cultures.

He urged us to reflect on our culture especially this year as we have the General Chapter with its main concern on culture.

The Guests of Honour was Mr. & Mrs. Matthias Kudiabor. Present at the programme were our brothers and sisters from the adjoining Divine Word Language and Cultural Centre.

Later that evening, Mr. Matthias Kudiabor, the Headmaster of St. Peter's Senior High School, Nkwatia, together with his wife, were presented a Certificate of Honour as special Friends of the Novitiate for their concerns, supports and encouragements to the Novitiate community.

On Monday, novices together with the two directors shared deeply on their cultures, concerning rites of passage like naming ceremony, initiations, marriage, death, burial rites. Fr Nicholas on his part shared his missionary experience in Australia highlighting some cultural elements.

### ***Founder's Day at Blessed Clementina Parish***

This year the Novitiate community celebrated St. Arnold Janssen Feast day at Blessed Clementina Parish, Ashaiman in the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra. The main celebrant was Fr. Nicholas Aazine and the concelebrants were Frs. Rafael Mesi, Andrew Quaye-Foli and Sondry Matondo.

In his homily, Fr. Rafael Mesi said St. Arnold Janssen was a man who knew, understood and shared his faith with others. To share his faith with others, he established three international religious congregations to proclaim the good news to all.

He said: "People before and after St. Arnold Janssen's time believed that *"Extra Ecclesia Nulla Salus"*- Outside the Church there was no salvation, there was only darkness." "So, St. Arnold's dream was to make Jesus known to every person in every nation, language and Culture.

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## *We are doing well Parents!*

Time stood still in the novitiate this year during the parents' visit from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February, 2012. As it has been the custom for some years now, the parents and guardians of all the novices from Ghana, Togo and Benin came to the novitiate to interact with the formators, superiors, as well as novices to see how we are doing in the Novitiate. In all, 45 parents and guardians were present for the three day event. The parents and guardians arrived on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February. On Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup>, a conference involving all the parents, the novices, formators as well as invited guests was held.

The Kwahu District Superior, Fr. Rafael Mesi welcomed all the parents, guardians and all gathered after which Fr. Nicholas Aazine elaborated on the SVD Formation Journey in AFRAM. He explained to them that the novitiate is a place where the novices and the Society get to know each other. He further urged the parents to support their children in whichever way possible.

As part of the programme, one of the novices introduced the parents to the daily activities undertaken by the novices in the novitiate. Fr. George Angmor, the Novice Director, used the occasion to thank all the parents and guardians for all they have done and continue to help the novices.

The conference ended with question time



during which the parents asked several pertinent questions as well as expressed their gratitude for all that is being done for their children.

The Mass on Sunday was presided over by Fr. Rafael Mesi, who is also the Assistant Novice Director and was celebrating his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Anniversary. In the homily, he shared his vocation story with us and urged us to persevere in the vocation we have chosen. The occasion was also graced by some Indonesian Priests and Religious working around here, the Christian Mothers from Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Kwahu- Tafo, Friends of the SVD, Dansonman Branch; Fr. Provincial Thomas D'Mello and Fr. Fred Timp (Provincial Secretary) who were on their way to the north.

### **WORKSHOP FOR SVD-HDR NOVICES**

This year's inter-novices workshop of the South-Eastern Sector of the National Association of Religious Formators (SES-NARF) came off from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April at our premises. It was on Human Sexuality and the topic was *"Human Sexuality as an access of fidelity to the Vows."* It was to help us novices preparing to embrace the evangelical counsel of chastity, poverty and obedience. The workshop was facilitated by Sr. Mary Theodoret Madu, IHM. Sixteen novices attended the workshop; 13 of us SVD novices and 3 sister novices from the Hand-

maids of the Divine Redeemer (HDR). Br. Emmanuel Osei, a member of the Franciscan Friars of Africa (FFA), sat in for the formators of the sector as the coordinator of the programme.

The novices were taken through the origin of sexuality; the human being as a sexual person; types and barriers to sexual orientation, the spiritual life of a celibate and ways for a joyful celibacy. At the end of the workshop, the novices were happy and grateful to have the privilege of having the workshop and promised that they would live by what they have experienced.



## WHAT IS NOVITIATE? RESPONSES FROM THE NOVICES

**Godwin G.K Valentine: Brother Candidate; Ghana**

Novitiate is a quiet and solemn place where one can be able to know whether he/she is really called into the vineyard of God and to be ready to work in that vineyard for the rest of his/her life time. It is a place where one can find his/her real vocation with the help of the Holy Trinity.

**Cyriaque Sounou: Clerical Candidate; Benin**

Novitiate is a quiet place where in solitude we can find both oneself and God. Prayer and work are very useful guidelines to discern our vocation and to develop a deeper relationship with God and with others.

**Anthony Musonda: Clerical Candidate ; Zambia**

Novitiate year means nothing, but the year of prayer and work. This is a training of a young religious how to integrate deep prayer life in the day-to-day life. That work is equally imperative in the life of each person. It is a period of self-discovery and discernment.

**Matthew Koudada: Clerical Candidate; Togo**

Novitiate is a place, which serves to mature and clarify a vocation. It helps a novice to know more about his/her congregation and the constitution of that congregation. Briefly a novitiate helps a novice to know him/herself more and clarify the vocation so that one may make a mature and good decision about his vocation.

**Samuel Aboo: Clerical Candidate ; Ghana**

Novitiate is a holy place where one searches and finds the Lord in prayer and other works. Here the life of the religious congregation begins to shape the novice to know and to purify his/her divine vocation, and is formed body, mind and in the Spirit of Christ as suitable to the institute he/she is aspiring to live for the rest of his/her life through the profession of vows.

**Frank Kwasi Quainoo: Clerical Candidate ; Ghana**

Novitiate is a stage in formation when one makes the conscious effort to have a personal experience of God, which would become his/her foundation and fountain from which he/she will draw strength for effective and efficient apostolate.

**Daniel Tengue: Clerical Candidate; Togo**

Novitiate is the place where we likened it to be the base of our religious and priestly life. We learn about our constitutions and the community life. We also learn how to follow Jesus through the example of our founder and early missionaries' life.

**Wisdom Agbovi: Brother Candidate; Ghana**

Novitiate seems to be very simple but not. It is once, in each and everyone's lifetime to find transformation (*Metanoia*) in his life. A time for deeper reflection and a process of shaping, chiseling seasons as one to proclaim Christ.

*Continued on page 8*

## A WORD OF APPRECIATION! A WORD OF APPRECIATION!!

For your Donations and gifts to support us we say thank you:

**Cash Gift:** Friends of the SVD, Dansoman Branch supported us to put a magnificent Jubilee Summer hut. Mr. & Mrs. Bempong of St. Dominic's Hospital, Akwatia.

**Altar Cloth:** Mrs. Magdalene Kudiabor, wife of St. Peter's Headmaster, and Madam Hannah Okyere donated a Kente Altar cloth for our Liturgy.

**Foodstuffs:** Our Confreres: Fr. Alex Chandy, Donkorkrom, Br. Apollo of Kukurantumi brought us tubers of yam and a lot of mangoes.

### WHAT ELSE CAN WE SAY?

Our novitiate community would like to express our heartfelt and sincere gratitude to you our confreres, sisters, friends and relatives who are supporting us in diverse ways to make our formation thrive on in a happy and serene atmosphere.

We appreciate all your gifts and prayers, which always nourish and sustain us. We also promise our continual prayers and intercessions for you and your intentions. Kindly forward your prayer intentions to our email address:

novitiate.ghasvd@gmail.com

Or Tel.: +233-28-9100966



*"In the designs of Providence, there is no mere coincidence." Blessed John Paul II*

It was with these papal spiritual words that, on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2012, Fr. Andrews Obeng, SVD, launched the 30 DAY-RETREAT JOURNEY at the Divine Word Novitiate, Nkwatia Kwahu. On that evening, thirteen (13) of us novices congregated at the chapel, full of apprehensions, expectations, as well as anxiety and fears of the long time 30 days of retreat. The theme was based on: *"The Trinitarian Mission Spirituality of the Society of the Divine Word (SVD)."* Everything started with a master brand introductory meeting under the aegis of the Retreat Director, Fr. Andrews Obeng, SVD. With him were three other SVDs namely Frs.: George Clement Angmor, Raphael MESI, Br. McDaniel Acquaaah; and Sr. Adeline Ayivor, SSPS. After an insight on what were the expectations of each retreatant, novices met their respective Retreat Guides, whom they had under

the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the presence of the whole congregation. The Retreat spread through four phases: Phase I from 3<sup>rd</sup> March-11<sup>th</sup> March; Phase II from 12<sup>th</sup> March- 20<sup>th</sup> March; Phase III from 21<sup>st</sup> March-25<sup>th</sup> March and Phase IV; 26<sup>th</sup> March-3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012.

In Phase I, we experienced God's LOVE. We came face to face with the God who loves us from all eternity. In our journey, there were stages through which God guided us gradually. In the vein of God's LOVE for us, each retreatant went on to receive a personal LOVE LETTER from God, based on biblical quotations.

Phase II led each person to have a unique experience of God (encountering, touching and feeling Him.) At the beginning of this phase, we watched a documentary entitled: *"TERRA SANCTA."* Our retreat Director told us at the beginning of it, that TERRA NONSTRA

was intended to open our minds visually to the historical moments of Jesus; so that we may know that the "Jesus" we are experiencing is not an abstract reality. He had settled down, pitched His tent on the earth, and had been touched by many. In other words, through that short video of the Holy Land, we were given a picturistic view of the places where Jesus lived in and walked on, sojourned and journeyed. Those places include Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ain Karim, Qumran, Cana in Galilea, to name but a few.

During the Phase II, we could know that experiencing God is not a matter of mind or intellectual impetus. To experience and know Jesus more from the heart and not from the mind was the goal of Phase II. And by doing so, we could become radically connected to Jesus. St. Thomas AQUINAS called it *"Fides quaerens intellectum"*, that is "Faith seeking understanding" and not the reverse.

It is obvious therefore that THEOLOGY will not give us "experience of Jesus;"

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*Founder's Day at Blessed Clementina Parish*

*continued from pg 2*

He therefore built a mission seminary to train young people to become priests and religious brothers and sisters to bring the Light of the Word and make Jesus known to everyone across the world." he said.

He urged the faithful to emulate the life and examples of St. Arnold Janssen, to know, understand and share their faith with others.



## UNITY IN DIVERSITY

*"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same spirit, there are different forms of services but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone."* (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Indeed these were the exact words said by Apostle Paul to the Corinthians about 2000 years ago but keep bearing a great depth of impact in our society today. This was brought to reality when the SVD novices paid a visit to the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) novices at the S.D.B Novitiate at Odumase in the Sunyani Diocese from 5th to 8th February, 2012.

S.V.D novices, who were freshly introduced to the spirituality of our founder St. Arnold Janssen and his great aspiration to spread the good news of the Divine Word to all especially to the poor and the marginalized members of our society, proudly explained our charism to our dear Salesian brothers.

They in turn, could not wait to reveal to us their burning zeal to reach out to the youth of the world, consoling and recreating in them a new hope of better world built in the love of God. All these rich missionary and apostolic zeal were fully exploited through various scheduled interactive activities. Together we travelled and visited the Catholic University at Fiapre, the Notre Dame Sisters' Novitiate and the Holy Spirit Sisters' (SSpS) House of Study. This trip further diversified the gifts of the spirit to include the Notre Dame Sisters teaching and SSpS hospital ministries.

Later back at the SDB novitiate, the two novices' communities had a one on one interaction where the novices each shared their vocational and formational experiences.

The encounter had to be forced to an end by a continuous blowing of the horn amidst huge protests among the novices asking for more time. This extra time was only later awarded to the novices not only to interact but also challenge one another in games. We the S.V.D novices jubilantly won the volleyball by 3-2 sets, after a match we played for the first time at night about 9pm. When asked

how we did it, we simply said we allowed the darkness of sin to be brightened by the lamp- light of the Word and Spirit of grace. However, it seems we did not put enough oil in the lamp-light for it went off the next afternoon when the S.D,B novices thrashed us to a clean 5-2 win in a football match depicting the skills they have gathered in their oratory apostolate. At the end, each team had a win to boast about! Other indoor games were also organized and well participated and celebrated by all the novices who at least each won a prize at the end of it.

The closing social gathering was sad indeed with friends parting ways again each assigned to their own ministry. We both said our own farewell with a promise that the two novitiates will again unite as each year but perhaps next time with Jesus physically present in our midst! The horn was blown this time for the last time to bid colleagues goodbye. On our return trip we visited SSpS Novitiate and Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus (HHCJ) Novitiate all in the Sunyani Diocese.

**By: Alex OMONDI**





## VISITS

We are glad you came to us:

## JANUARY:

31<sup>st</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup>: Fr. Eric Oduro Wiafe & his German friends: Mariana Thurau & Clara Moltrecht.

2<sup>nd</sup>: Dr. Elias & Mrs Catherine Aklaku with their son Jonathan Aklaku, KNUST, Kumasi.

6<sup>th</sup>: Mr. John Acquah, Director of Social development, Donkokrom Vicariate.

7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>: Fr. Alfonse Amanor, SVD

11<sup>th</sup>: Frs. Benjamin Asare, Prefect, Philosophy House & Fr. John Alphonse Asiedu, Prefect, CFC, both in Tamale.

20<sup>th</sup>: Brs. John Lengari & Bria Apolonius

28<sup>th</sup>: The Parish Youth Council from Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, Kwahu Tafo for Recollection with Frt. Franklin Adosii, SVD.

28<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>: Sr. Grace Okon, SSND- The Vice-Provincial of School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND)

31<sup>st</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> Feb.: Fr. Ireneus Boli-Lolan & Br. Antonius Hibur

## FEBRUARY:

15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>: Fr. Thomas Betuyre, former Chaplain of Kamina Barraks, Tamale.

17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>: Sr. Rosemary Tameah, HHCJ, Postulant Mistress, Obuasi.

19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>: Sr. Dinah Ofosua, SSsP, for Personal Retreat

## APRIL:

18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>: Fr. Francis Allah, SVD, a Ghanaian missionary in Zambia.

23<sup>rd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>: HDR Novices: Srs. Stella, Paschaline and Dominica; workshop on Human Sexuality.

## MAY:

10<sup>th</sup>: Fr. Lawrence Coblavie, a Franciscan Ghanaian missionary working in Israel.

12<sup>th</sup>: Fr. Peter Accoley, SVD, Provincial Superior of Togo/Benin.

We also hosted our Confreres who passed by: Bishop Gabriel Kumordji, Frs. Thomas D'Mello, Fred Timp, Alex Chandy, and Francis Mastan; Frts. Eugene Asante, Rodrique Ongong, Jean-Bertrand Tchekpi, Jerome Asidigbe and Francis Bakilatop.

Thank You for coming, please come again.

## A WORD OF APPRECIATION

We of the Divine Word Novitiate Community, Nkwatia-Kwahu, Ghana, are most grateful to the following personalities who facilitated various courses and retreats for us:

\* 30<sup>th</sup> January - 4<sup>th</sup> February: Most Rev. Vincent Sowah Boi-Nai, SVD, - Workshop on Religious and the Families and directed February Recollection.

\* 15<sup>th</sup> February: Sr. Jana Pavla Tothova, SSsP from Holy Family Convent, Nkawkaw for sharing on her life and SSsP in Slovakia.

16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> February: Br. Pius Agyeman; Workshop on Sacred Liturgical Music.

\* 3<sup>rd</sup> March - 3<sup>rd</sup> April: 30 Day Retreat Journey

\* Fr. Andrew Obeng Aboagye, SVD, Retreat Master

\* Br. McDaniel Acquah, SVD, Retreat Guide

\* Sr. Adeline Ayivor, SSsP, Retreat Guide

\* 23<sup>rd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> April: Sr. Mary Theodoret Madu; IHM: Workshop on Human Sexuality

\* 5<sup>th</sup> May: Mrs. Olivia Osei Pomaah; Input on Boy Girl relationship

\* 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> May: Sr. Mavis Mensah, OHP, Anglican Sister from Sunyani; Input on Anglican Religious Life

\* 17<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> May: Monsignor Alex Bobby Benson, Director, Matthew 25, Koforidua with your team on an Input on HIV/AIDS.

\* 25<sup>th</sup> May: Srs. SSsP: Maria Erwina & Tarcildis Westerhoff for directing our May Recollection.

## WHAT THANKS CAN WE RENDER YOU:

Our SSsP sisters in Kwahu Tafo and Nkawkaw for all the services you have been rendering to us.

We say thank you and may God replenish your efforts.

## Profession of First Vows

The profession of First Vows is slated for 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2012. The details will be communicated to you in due time.

### The New Novitiate Residence @25 Silver Jubilee Celebration: 1987-2012

The Divine Word Novitiate, Nkwatia-Kwahu invites you for the celebration of its Silver Jubilee in September, 2012. The proposed theme for the jubilee is: **"Whatever is noble: Quality Formation to meet the challenges the Religious missionary of today and tomorrow."**  
Phil. 4:4ff

You are all invited!!!



**IN THE DESIGNS OF PROVIDENCE, THERE IS NO MERE COINCIDENCE.” Blessed John***Continued from pg 5*

but we meet and experience Him through PRAYER. It is an act of heart and not of mind. We needed to get closer to Jesus; otherwise, we would not have appreciated in the right measure the next Phase.

In fact, although it was the shortest one, Phase III came out to be the climax and pinnacle of our spiritual exercises in the 30 Day Retreat Journey. It was all about the PASCHAL MYSTERY. Actually, the truth that Jesus should suffer is referred to as the “Scandal of the Cross,” and the so-called scandal prepared the way for his glory. Unless we face that truth, we would not be happy. Have you ever seen an Easter Sunday without Good Friday? “*Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*” the good book tells us. That is the core issue of our Salvation culminating in the Easter Celebration. St. Paul gives us the license to say: “...If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain. (1 Co 15:17). Consequently, novices and retreat guides celebrated the Paschal Triduum in a really Jewish way, with a SEDER EUCHARISTIC MEAL worthy of recounting, but for lack of space.

Phase IV of the retreat coronated the precedent phases in a good trilogy of:

- \* The Apparition Narratives/Ascension
- \* The Person of the Holy Spirit and
- \* Sending to the Mission.

At the end of the Retreat, each retreatant was given the opportunity to witness to the experience he got from the 30 Day-Retreat Journey, through a symbolic object/material. The diversity and richness of all the testimonies proved that during 2,592,000 seconds, 43,200 minutes, 720 hours, 30 days, 4 weeks, not to say one month, the word of God, in all its richness, dwelt in the hearts (Col 3,16) of all those who stayed faithfully, prayerfully, attentively and longing for the Holy Spirit to come and quench their thirst. To concretize this, our Retreat Director offered two of his latest published books to each retreatant. There were namely: “*The Miracle of the Seed*”(2011) and “*Be led by the Spirit*” (2012), both of which are not only effective masterpieces of our Retreat Master, Fr. Andrews Obeng, SVD, but also a must have for everyone.

By: *Valentin LISSASSI*

**WHAT IS NOVIATE? RESPONSES FROM THE NOVICES** *Continued from page 4***Valentin Lissasi: Clerical Candidate; Benin**

Novitiate is a blessed period in one's life, which period is made up of self-awareness, self-betterment both spiritually and humanly. Generally speaking, the calm environment and the remoteness of the novitiate contribute a lot, under God's grace, to give us a good and deep spiritual foundation for all our life, whether we become religious or not. To put it briefly, novitiate is a unique chance in one's life for strengthening spiritual, human and community life's capacities.

**Alex Omondi: Clerical Candidate; Kenya**

Novitiate is a place of learning. In schools, we learn things but in the novitiate, we learn about ourselves. This is discernment; we discern how we are spiritual children of our heavenly Father through his commission to serve through work, to relate through charity and community. To grow through encounter with an institutes

spirituality and way of life and finally to live through prayer.

**Stephen Nyantey: Clerical Candidate; Ghana**

Novitiate is a place of discernment; it is a place of knowing better the life; mission of the society and where one is prepared to join the Society.

**Evans Wamalwa : Clerical Candidate; Kenya**

Novitiate is a home away from home, where one experience love and support. If taken seriously, it is the pillar of one's life. It is the best place to be. Personally, since entering novitiate, I have seen transformation-taking place in my life.

**Stephen Osei Asante: Clerical Candidate; Ghana**

Novitiate is the time to clarify one's motivations of entering the religious life; it is through earnest prayer, reflection and meditations that one will be able to discern God's will and to build a solid foundation for a religious missionary life with a difference.



### MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE NOVITIATE

Having now experienced almost a full year in the novitiate, I thought it might be useful to share what I have learned in the novitiate. It is important to note that these are my personal reflections, and do not represent the community as a whole.

One year can seem like a very long time to figure out if SVD life is for you or not. Instead of viewing the novitiate as a prison sentence, it is better to trust the decision that you have made, accept your situation, and live each day as it comes. The programme makes a novice gradually enter into detachment from everything not connected with the kingdom of God, the practice of chastity, poverty and obedience, prayer and habitual union with God, in order to be available for future mission. With the right attitude, I have found myself even enjoying the small things of everyday life, such as farm work, feeding the cats and rabbits. With these small things, I live in the simple trust that I am growing as a person and that I will receive greater charity in the way of life that is meant for me.

Because the very nature of our religious life requires apostolic action and service, the novice is guided to dedicate himself to activities in keeping with the purpose of the community while developing that intimate union with Christ from whom all apostolic activity flows.

The Canonical Year is a year of greater exclusion. The focus is heavily on prayer, workshops, classes/ inputs. One begins to take a more active role in liturgy.

These programmes help to draw one away from attachment in the world and also help those in the world lose some of their attachment to you. Here I mean family and friends.

There are so many challenges in this way of life, or we can call them opportunities to grow, it can be very easy to give up when the going gets tough, but it gets you nowhere. I have found that the greatest moments of personal growth have come from facing my challenges head on. You embrace the tensions that you feel everyday, learn from your experience and notice yourself becoming more fully alive.

There is no way that you can live this life on your own. You need to make new friends. Our life is constantly changing, you have to know new faces, and you have to be open to new friendships. You stop holding on to the past, become opened to new people and new experiences and enjoy the gifts that each new person brings into your life.

Without a growing commitment to your faith, you will find that this religious life is impossible. Your work will be shallow and uncreative; you will start pointing fingers and look for other ways of running away and you will become dead inside. From my own experience, I have found that being a prayerful man and by remaining fully open in heart and mind, I can maintain the energy, enthusiasm and spirit that help to keep the sense of adventure in my life.

In conclusion, I would say that this precious time passes quickly. It is a period of growth, although you may not tell this at the time, but at the end, when you look back, you can see how much you have changed.

By: Evans WAMALWA

### Jubilee Hut



*The front view of the Jubilee Hut*



*The inside view*

Last year when the community planned to put up a Jubilee hut, all of us brought our different gifts and talents on board to make it a reality. Work started in December last year and has been completed. The first mass was celebrated on the 21st of April this year to thank God. Earlier, the Provincial Council had its March meeting here.

We thank all who supported this initiative to come to realization especially, the Friends of the SVD and confreres of St. Margaret Mary Parish, Dansonman, whose token of donation to us at our Mission Sunday visit in October last year helped to cater for half of the cost.



## ***ALL RELIGIOUS AND PRIESTS HAVE SINNED FOR THEY DO NOT MARRY***

Not correct. There are millions of people who are not married. Some out of choice, while others as a result of circumstances, such as death of a partner, disappointments, culture, sickness and the like.

In fact, since time immemorial, there has always been three vocations; that is: the Religious, marriage and the single life, and every human person is called to one or the other at every point in time. By freely embracing the celibate religious life-priest and religious have not sinned; for that, state is highly scriptural. For instance, in (1Cor 7:8) St. Paul recommended celibacy except for those who cannot control themselves. However, this does not also mean that married people are not disciplined. Far from that! What that text suggested is that when one opts for the state of celibacy it is incumbent upon him/her to respect it as such without trespassing.

A lot of people especially protestants and even some Catholics disapprove of what they termed as “mandatory celibacy” as though the church was imposing a discipline against the will of prospective priests and religious. Among some of these arguments against celibacy is that celibacy is not natural based on the claim that God in Gen 1:28 commanded all to marry when he said “Be fruitful and multiply”.

Well, be fruitful and multiply is a general rule for the entire human race. However, it is not binding each individual. Were it, every man or woman who is not married but of marrying age would have been in state of sin and this might have included Jesus Christ himself for he never married. Even if one exempts Christ as a result of his state of divinity, others like John the Baptist and a whole or a lot of apostles will still be sinning by not marrying.

Yes, do not forget that Paul an ardent promoter of the word of God and the Christian faith who never married, once said to the single “Now to the unmarried and to the widows; I say; it is a good thing for them to remain as they are, as I do, but if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with lust. (1 Cor 7:8-9).

Other critics also normally push forward the fact that a man is supposed to marry by drawing support from (Gen 2:24) which states “this explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife and the two are united into one.

My dear friends just read what Christ said about those who will not leave only parents but give

up even the chance of a wife and children: “... everyone who has given up house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or land for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more and will inherit eternal life.” ( Mt. 19:29); interesting. Isn’t it? At this point, let me humbly make one issue very clear. The Catholic Church does not prevent any body from marrying.

Period I can hear someone saying that “but the church ordains people”? Yes, that is perfectly true. However, out of their own free will, people have chosen to dedicate themselves fully to the service of God through ordination and religious life. As a result of this free will for me for instance, in the formation of priest and religious in the Society of the Divine Word-SVD, a candidate is expected to apply out of his own free will before an admission into any stage such as the postulancy, novitiate, profession of the first vows and so on.

Friends it is my fervent prayer that the Holy Triune God will touch the hearts of many young men and women and initiate in them to dedicate themselves to his service.

***By: Stephen NYANTEY***