



# DIVINE LIGHT

“May the Heart of Jesus live in the Hearts of all people”

December 2020

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Year - XII

No. 20

## THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS: MAKING HOME AMONG PEOPLE

The story of Christmas draws our attention to the declaration of the evangelist St John – “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14a). This significant verse from the prologue could be considered as the summary statement on the doctrine of Incarnation. It is the supreme theological expression of our Christian faith which unfolds the story of Christmas. Obviously, it reveals the purpose of “Word becoming flesh” as to “make his home among people” on earth. The true Spirit of Christmas lies in the fact that we too learn from the “Word” the art of “making home among people.”



The concept of “making home among people” in the prologue of John's Gospel could be better understood with the help of analysis of the important verb used in the text and its background. The proper Greek verb used here in Jn 1:14 is *skēnoō*, which literally means “to live in a tent.” The cognate noun is *skēnē*, which means tent or tabernacle. This etymological derivation does not make much sense unless we analyse this term from Jewish religious background.

In the Jewish Scriptures it is the tabernacle or tent that provided the special location for a divine dwelling. It was in this tent or tabernacle God met the people of Israel before the temple was built. The book of Exodus reveals God's command to Moses – “let them make me a tabernacle, that I may dwell among them” (Ex 25:8). The next verse (25:9) provides us the information on how to make this tabernacle. The people were to make this 'tabernacle' or 'tent' and all its furnishings in accordance with the pattern provided by God. The Hebrew word used in this text is *miškān* which is translated in Greek as *skēnē* and this is translated in English as tabernacle or tent. These references of the Old Testament give us clear understanding of God's choice to dwell among his people in a more personal way. He desires to make his home or dwelling place among people. The exodus event too makes this point clear that God literally was present among the people and in their wanderings in the wilderness. God was present not only in the tent or tabernacle which housed the ark of the covenant and the tablets of the commandments (Ex. 40:34-38), but also all throughout their journey in the wilderness until they reached the promised land.

In the context of Exodus event, the command of God to Moses to make a tabernacle in order to dwell among them, firstly, expresses the initiative of God to be with his people; secondly, the acceptance of God by the people and their realization of his presence among them. Both these aspects are important for an effective fellowship. Based on the dynamic response of the people, God reveals them his plans, offers continual assistance, performs miracles, and promises to teach them many things about his presence and about their lives. Yahweh's action of making home among them in Exodus enabled the people to have liberating experience in their lives.

Another corresponding Hebrew verb for 'to dwell' or “to make home” is *šākan*, It is used to convey the concept of God's 'dwelling' or 'making home' with the people of Israel (Ex 29:46; Zech 2:13). This Hebrew word *šākan* is equivalent with the post-biblical term *šekînā*, a word that means “dwelling” and

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is used of God's dwelling among his people. This word also most commonly refers to the glory of God who made himself present in the tabernacle and the temple. There are several references in the Old Testament to support this claim such as “the bright cloud of the presence of God settled (*šākan*) on the tabernacle, or “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” etc. (Ex. 24:16; 40:34-35). The prophetic literature too continues to emphasize this theme. In Ezek 43:7, 9 we read that Yahweh, who “will reside among the people of Israel”, promises an unconditional divine presence. All these Biblical references emphasize an important point that Yahweh's coming to dwell among people as the demonstration of his assertion that he is their God. People confessed, asserted and celebrated the presence of Yahweh among them. They asserted His presence and His holiness even in the nature, foodstuffs, vestments, and the altar. This gives us the understanding of God as the one who chose to make his home among his people and he wanted them to know that he is their God who will save them and lead them to eternal life.

Through the several Old Testament texts and through the analysis of two verbs – *skēnoō* and *šākan*, we come to know that God was ever present among the people, heard the murmuring of the people (Ex 16:12), saved them from the hand of the Egyptians (Ex 14:30), showed mercy and compassion (Ex 34:6) etc. Although invisible, Israelites experienced God's glorious presence among them always. He had made his home among people through tabernacle or tent which provided a location of a divine dwelling. Now, with the act of incarnation, God's presence is not limited to tabernacle or tent. By becoming flesh and taking the form of a servant, God has subjected himself to all the conditions of human existence such as the weakness, dependence, temptation, suffering and mortality. Yet, knowing the purpose of his making home with his people, he lived a real and perfect human life to teach human beings how to become divine as long as we continue to live our human life on earth.

The humanity of Jesus Christ with the purpose of making his home among people was not a mere appearance. He took on all the essential attributes of humanity and St Paul endorses this aspect in one of his letters where he writes that he was “born in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7). The author of the letter to the Hebrews explains that “he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people (Heb 2:17). Though he was sinless, he had a real human body, mind, and emotions. All the four evangelists help us to paint a picture of perfect humanity of Jesus who always gave space for others to grow and glow, especially the least and the lost.

The Gospel of Luke records the first event in which the shepherds find the rightful space in the plan of God's salvation. God in the form of a babe in the manger draws shepherds who were despised and neglected by the society. The message of an angel – “to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord” gave them good news of hope that Jesus, the Saviour will remain with them, make home among them in order to unite them under the banner of God's children. The synoptic Gospels present a long list of disadvantaged people such as sinners, poor, gentiles, outcast, tax collectors, sick, women, etc. who found liberating space in the life and ministry of Jesus. Making home among people is a challenging task. Jesus, while making home among his people experiences homelessness, helplessness, powerlessness which is a way of life for all those who take up the responsibility of making home among people. He sacrificed and shared everything so that others find space to live, grow and glow.

St Paul brings in similar teaching with different terminology to convey the message of the selflessness of Christ while making home among people. He speaks of a kenosis model (act of emptying oneself) practiced by Jesus. In a single sentence, Paul writes to the Philippians (2:7) the purpose of Incarnation as “emptying oneself” by taking the role of “a slave”. This kenosis aspect is seen not only during the birth and death of Jesus, but throughout his life and ministry. By doing this we are all given a call to involve ourselves in similar self-sacrifice for the sake of one another. At the same time, by upholding kenosis model, Jesus teaches us a supreme lesson on the divine selflessness: God is not an acquisitive, grasping and seizing being, but self-giving for the sake of others.

The prologue of the Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Word rightly emphasizes the special dedication of its members to the Divine Word and His mission. We are called to make “His life our life, His mission our mission” in order to bring fullness of life to others. It is a call basically to make home among people wherever we are sent as Divine Word missionaries. St. Joseph Freinademetz, the first missionary to China is the best and the perfect example for us to show how an ordinary human being can become an extraordinary missionary by sacrificing everything for the sake of making home among people. He literally practiced the words of St Paul and became “all things to all people” (1 Cor 9:22). His efforts of making home among people gave him success, but we should not forget the consequences and difficulties he faced from his

enemies. It was a time of persecution of Christians in China; many in authority resented foreigners of any sort, and others were openly anti-Christian no matter who followed the faith. St. Joseph Freinademetz and his co-workers together with his flock were chased from place to place, arrested, routinely beaten. He was ready to face any sort of suffering for the sake of leading people to Christ by making home among them. During the time of difficulties, he relied on Christ who called him to continue His mission and thereby, experienced truth of the assuring and consoling words “my grace is sufficient for you”.

In today's context where we are faced with the outbreak of Covid19 pandemic, making home among people is the need of the hour. Pope Francis in his recent encyclical letter on fraternity and social friendship – “*Fratelli Tutti*” emphasizes the need of being with the people and make home among them. For this, he draws inspiration from St. Francis of Assisi and says about the saint that “wherever he went, he sowed seeds of peace and walked alongside the poor, the abandoned, the infirm and the outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters”. Due to the pandemic, the world which looked like a global village has suddenly become so distant. Every aspect of human life and activity is deeply affected. Besides Covid19 pandemic, Pope Francis also expresses in a metaphor of dark clouds over a closed world, and many other dark realities which hinder the manifestation of universal fraternity. At this juncture, Pope Francis through his encyclical letter shows his genuine care for the unfortunate, the abandoned, the weak and the outcast and gives us a call to make home among them in order to bring justice, peace, love, unity, fraternity and harmony.

Following the footsteps of our founder, St. Arnold Janssen and the first missionary to China, St. Joseph Freinademetz, every Divine Word missionary is called to practice the spirituality of the “Word dwelt among us” i.e., making home among people. Christmas is the right time to foster this. It is not enough that we limit our Christmas celebration only to decorations, singing of carols, cakes, parties, good wishes etc., but also reaching out to many people. By being with God's people and sharing His love, we become living instruments of God's continual presence and accompaniment to them. We too have a responsibility to strengthen this spirituality and this new way of life. It is possible only with our constant communion with the Lord, participation in the sacraments, continual reflection on the Word of God and the attentiveness to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. May God who willed to dwell among us, who made his home among us in the person of Jesus Christ continue to guide us in our every endeavour of making home among people!

**Fr. Victor Rodrigues, SVD**  
**Rector, Divya Jyoti Seminary, Sason**

## FORMATION AT THE TIME OF COVID-19

The word 'Novel Corona Virus' (Corona Virus Disease: COVID-19) has become the word of the year 2019, in fact the word of the 21<sup>st</sup> century even. Though this virus is invisible to our naked eyes yet its ill-effects are vivid in all walks of life and all sections of the society. The present precarious situation and volatile state of affairs compel us to confess our human limitations, propel us to profess faith in God, and call us to reflect on the purpose of the creation of the universe and our life itself. The main cause of COVID-19 is that the humanity failed to listen



to the cry of the nature and failed to protect and preserve the universe, ultimately we have failed to protect the humanity. The impact of COVID-19 on our life has brought in us the realization that there is nothing permanent in this world. The words of Jesus resound in our hearts, “for what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?” These words of Jesus remind us of the impermanency of the world and all in it. The scientific developments are not a solution to all the problems and over greed and exploitation of the natural resources lead to mass destruction.

In spite of the great harm done on humanity by the unwarranted and uninvited quest 'Corona', one cannot deny the reformative and transformative impacts of the same in all walks of life. There is spiritual, cultural, religious, social, economic, individual and community transformation taking place all over the world.

We, the members of Divya Jyoti community at Sason, Odisha, India, having known for its contextualised theological formation, have involved actively and wholeheartedly ourselves in the reformative and transformative process of oneself and community. With the tremendous spirit of enthusiasm and under the enriching guidance and assiduous care of our loving formators at the seminary, we were able to

perform acts of charity and solidarity, reform our way of life and transform our lives at large. As SVD community, being rooted in the Divine Word and His mission, we have helped the poor families, destitute and migrants with the ration (food materials) and basic things. In order to feel one with the helpless and abandoned migrants, we have involved ourselves everyday some hours of manual work that helped us feel the pulse of the poor migrants who were left helpless and jobless and walked miles and miles to go to own homes and even many lost their precious life on the way.



Rom 12:12 says, “Rejoice always, patient in suffering and persevere in prayer”. Having inspired by the Word, we as a community held special community prayers everyday for the recovery of COVID-19 patients and healing of the world from Corona, and for the rehabilitation and welfare of the migrants, refugees, daily wage labours, marginalised and downtrodden.

We were in a lockdown but not knocked down. With the help of our formators, our community members were able to make the best use of the long lockdown period for learning new skills and training oneself to become more effective and efficient priest. We had innovatively proclaimed the Word of God through digital means. We had attended a number of webinars that enlightened us on various relevant topics to update and upgrade ourselves. The catastrophic evil effects of Corona made us realise the supremacy of God and the frailty of humankind. As a community we were able to live with an enthused spirit of unity and brotherhood. We are indebted to our formators who cared and guided us throughout this tough time of crisis and inspired us to go and grow through the pandemic

- Dn. Arul Stephen

## UNREFLECTED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING



We, the DJS community began our spiritual journey with the Annual Retreat on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2020. The retreat preacher was Fr. Luis Ronald Pereira, SVD, the National Mission Secretary. He inspired us with his talks on different dimensions of spiritual living and how to become an image bearer of Christ in our life. The sessions helped us to introspect on our life and set us on the inward journey to renew our covenant to God and amend the sinful ways. This retreat affirmed our commitment to the Lord and renewed our evangelical counsels. The retreat ended with the renewal of the vows of the seven confreres during the Holy

Eucharist presided over by the Provincial of INE Province, Rev. Fr. Petrus Kullu SVD.

- Dn. Arul Stephen

## MARIAN GROTTA IN LOVING MEMORY OF LATE FR. THOMAS V.S. SVD

On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2020, the Divya Jyoti Seminary community had the inauguration and solemn blessing of the newly constructed Marian grotto in the seminary campus. It is built in loving memory of Fr. Thomas Vadackumkara SVD, the former rector of the Divya Jyoti Seminary who left for eternal abode on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017. The grotto was inaugurated and blessed by Rev. Fr. Petrus Kullu SVD, Provincial Superior of INE Province in the presence of Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD, Rector of Divya Jyoti Seminary, staff members, students and many priests from neighbouring communities. We gratefully acknowledge the financial help of Solothurn community from Switzerland and the hard work of Mr. Binoy, the contractor and his workers. After the inauguration and blessing of the Grotto, we had a solemn Eucharistic celebration presided by Rev. Fr. Petrus Kullu SVD.



- Dn. Rakesh Ezekiel D'Souza

## TRIPLE CELEBRATION

The Divya Jyoti Community had a memorable day on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2020. On the occasion of the feast of St.



Thomas, we had the triple celebration i.e., the bestowal of Mission Cross to the newly ordained priests Fr. Joji Raju and Fr. Ignatius Soreng; the beginning of the Second Novitiate by the third year brothers Frts. Hanson, Ajeesh, Deepak and Parash and welcoming of the first year Theologians Frts. Conel Correa, Sunil Kujur and Vinod Bhuriya. We began with the Holy Eucharist which was presided by Rev. Fr. Petrus Kullu SVD, the Provincial of INE Province and Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD, the Rector of DJS. Fr. Provincial in his homily highlighted the importance of 3D's in our religious life namely Deepening the Faith, Discernment and Dedication to the Word of God.

After the Mass, we had a short felicitation program followed by fellowship meal. We are indeed grateful to the Almighty God for having blessed this beautiful day and keeping us safe in the midst of COVID19 pandemic.

- Frt. Shann Joseph Fernandes

## ENLIGHTEN AND BE ENLIGHTENED

As part of the Second Novitiate program, the novices of the Divya Jyoti Seminary got a chance to present their seminar paper presentation on various topics related to our congregation. Frt. Ajeesh presented his paper on the topic, "The Spirit of the three vows according to SVD Constitution" and Frt. Deepak on the topic, "Interculturality in SVD" on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020. On 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020, Frt. Hanson put forward his ideas on the topic, "Eucharistic Encounter with the Lord" whereas Frt. Parash spoke on "The Spirituality of St. Arnold Janssen". We thank the moderator's Fr Luvis Ronald Pereira SVD and Fr. Lancy Rodrigues SVD who evaluated the sessions and contributed their valuable insights. It was a wonderful opportunity for the above mentioned four candidates for the Second Novitiate to enlighten the community with their ideas on the important aspects of the society.



- Frt. Parash Prasan Kujur

## RECOLLECTION FOR TRANSFORMATION

It was a great privilege and opportunity given to four Deacons of Divya Jyoti family to preach two recollections to the members of the community. The first one was on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> August preached by Deacons George and Rakesh on the topics 'Homecoming' and 'Loneliness' respectively. The second recollection



which was held on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> October was preached by Deacons Stephen and Linu on the themes 'Relationships' and 'Call to Holiness' respectively. The members of the community were very appreciative and encouraging. It was an opportunity to grow and gain confidence in preaching. The community was very much touched by the personal sharing and effective use of multimedia. As someone rightly said, "This is the time to change. It's not tomorrow but NOW."

- Dn. George M. Joseph

## INDEPENDENCE DAY 2020

The Divya Jyoti Community celebrated the 73<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day of India by remembering and paying homage to all the brave freedom fighters on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020 within the house premises. We began the day with the solemn Mass presided over by Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD, the Rector of Divya Jyoti Seminary. After the breakfast, we gathered at the seminary portico for the flag hoisting ceremony. The chief guest for the day, Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD motivated and inspired every one of us by his insights and inspirational words about the freedom fighters because of whom we take pride to call ourselves as liberated and democratic people. Due to present COVID19 pandemic, we had a short program which consisted of hoisting the flag and singing national anthem as well as



patriotic song. We also remembered and prayed for all the doctors, nurses and other personnel who work day and night catering to the needs of the COVID19 patients.

- Frt. Vinod Bhuriya

## A DAY WITH THE DIVINE WORD

The members of the Divya Jyoti community celebrated the Bible Day on 22nd August, 2020. We began with the solemn Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr Albert Xess, the spiritual director of Khristo Jyoti Mohavidyaloyo. In his homily, he stressed on the importance of Divine Word in our life and highlighted the veneration of the Divine Word. He also pointed out that we, the SVD missionaries need to live out the theme, "OUR NAME IS OUR MISSION" in our day to day lives. Later in the day, Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD, the Rector of the Divya Jyoti Seminary along with the staff conducted Bible quiz competition for all the students to increase their Biblical knowledge. It was a meaningful day for all of us as it increased our



love and devotion to the Divine Word.

- Frt. Ajeesh Peter Sahai

## HAPPY B'DAY MAMA MARY AND SVD

September 8, 2020 was an auspicious and graceful day for our Divya Jyoti community, as we celebrated the birthday of our Blessed Mother Mary along with the Foundation Day of Society of the Divine Word and 'Monti fest', the cultural feast of the Mangaloreans. The day began with a creative morning prayer at the Grotto followed by solemn Eucharistic celebration presided by Rev. Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD, the Rector of the DJS. In his homily, he highlighted some of the inspiring characteristics of Mother Mary and our founder St. Arnold Janssen and the significance of the monti fest and its relevance for today. In the evening, we had a very meaningful prayer service in the presence of Rt. Rev. Bp. Niranjan Sualsingh, Bishop of Sambalpur, Bp. Lucus Kerketta SVD (Emeritus) and our neighbouring community members. The day ended with the sumptuous meals prepared by our brothers.



- Frt. Nandeti Rajesh

## SPORTS DAY – A DAY TO RELAX, REJUVENATE, AND REUNITE

October 2, 2020 was the dawn of a beautiful day which we the Divya Jyoti community cherish as it was our Sports Day. Soon after the breakfast all the community members gathered together at the hall and



were divided into two groups. Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD, the Rector of the seminary welcomed all the members to the special day. We actively participated in various creative and surprising games organised by Dns. George, Linu and Rakesh. It was a new initiative of the community which increased the love, fellowship and unity of all the members of the community. Indeed it was a memorable day for all of us to relax, reunite and rejuvenate our minds after the hectic exams.

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**Dn. Linu. E.P. SVD**

## A DAY OUT IN BARGARH

On 3rd October 2020, we, the members of Divya Jyoti community set out to Bargarh for a day out with the confreres and other communities. Keeping in mind the COVID19 and taking all precautionary measures, we wore our masks and carried sanitizers along with us. Fr. Peter V. SVD, the parish priest of Bargarh welcomed us and gave us information about the parish and mission. It was an inspiring moment for all of us to see an aged missionary still having tremendous love for mission. Later we visited Vikas Deepti, a home for the differently abled children. Fr. Anuranjan Dungdung SVD, the director of the institute welcomed us and gave a detailed information about their work. The campus was full of different type of plantations, fish pond, poultry farm and greenery which delighted our hearts. At noon we gathered together for the fellowship meal and enjoyed the delicious food prepared by Bargarh community. After having fun and games, we thanked all the fathers for their hospitality. With sweet memories and broad smiles, we returned to our house.



- **Fr. Pradeep Mohata**

## A TIME TO BID FAREWELL

Someone rightly said, "Time flies fast but it flies faster when it comes to the parting ways from those who have touched our hearts." After having lived for three and half years at Divya Jyoti Seminary, the four deacons George, Ezekiel, Linu, and Stephen were given a heart-felt farewell by the members of the community. It was a moment of happiness and pride that our deacons have completed their studies and are ready to take a leap forward in their vocation to priesthood, and yet a moment of sadness that they will be no longer a part of DJS community.



November 28, 2020 was the day set aside to spent time together as a community for bidding farewell for our deacons. We began the day with a solemn liturgical celebration with Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD, the Rector as the main celebrant, asking for God's blessing on those being sent out into the vineyard of the Lord. At 10:15 a.m. we reached a familiar place which we fondly call "The Bamboo Bush" to spend time together. At noon, we came together for a small program which had games for the deacons and the community. On behalf of the students, Frt. Hanson D'Souza

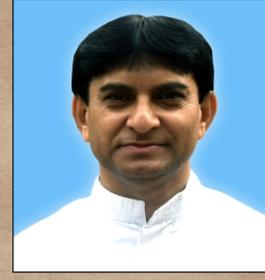
expressed the feelings of gratitude and appreciation for the outgoing deacons. They too expressed their gratitude and gratefulness to the community members. All of them expressed that they were lucky to be been a part of DJS family. Finally, Fr. Victor thanked the deacons for their contribution, commitment and being exemplary models to the community. The program ended with a fellowship meal.

- **Fr. Conel Correa**

# CONGRATULATIONS



**Fr. Victor Rodrigues SVD**  
appointed as  
Vice-Provincial of INE Province



**Fr. Sunil Damor SVD**  
appointed as  
Provincial Councillor of INE Province



**Dn. A. Arul Stephen**  
Ordination: 27<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020  
First Mass: 28<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020  
Place: Tirukalli, TN  
Appointed to INH Province



**Dn. Linu Edassery Pauly**  
Ordination: 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2020  
Place: Kanjoor, Kerala  
Appointed to IDT Province



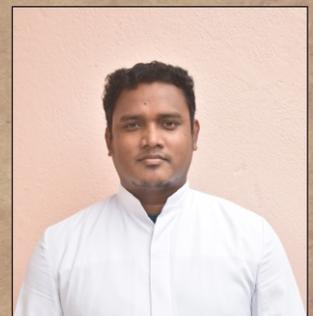
**Dn. Rakesh Ezekiel Dsouza**  
Ordination: May, 2021  
Place: Kuriyala, Mangalore, Karnataka  
Appointed to INM Province



**Dn. George Joseph M.**  
Ordination: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
Place: Moolamattom, Kerala  
Appointed to POL Province

## *Final Vows and Diaconate Ordination*

*We are delighted to let you know that Frts. Deepak W. Dsouza, Hanson Dsouza, Ajeesh P. Sahai, and Parash P. Kujur will profess their final vows on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021 and will be ordained as Deacons on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021 by Most Rev. Niranjan Sualsingh, the Bishop of Sambalpur.*



# Divya Jyoti Seminary - One heart Many faces

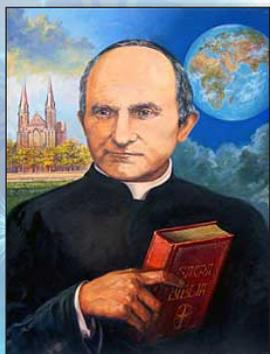


## OUR VISION

*"Enlightened, inspired, guided, and formed by the Divine Word, we radiate Christ to transform the world."*

## OUR MISSION

*"Guided by the Spirit, we endeavour to have a deeper encounter with God and ourselves for a holistic formation. We achieve this by academic excellence, inspirational relationships, loving community life, and striving towards formation in order to witness Jesus in the footsteps of our Founder, St. Arnold Janssen."*



**St. Arnold Janssen**



**St. Joseph Freinademetz**

*Merry Christmas  
&  
A Happy New Year - 2021*