

in a

WordTM

A Publication of The Society of the Divine Word, Southern Province

Volume 34 No. 4 April 2016

Fr. Albert J McKnight, C.S.SP. 1927-2016

“When I die, I hope to be still speaking the truth as I believe Jesus taught the truth to be when He said to take care of the least ones.”

Photo by Father James Pawlicki, SVD

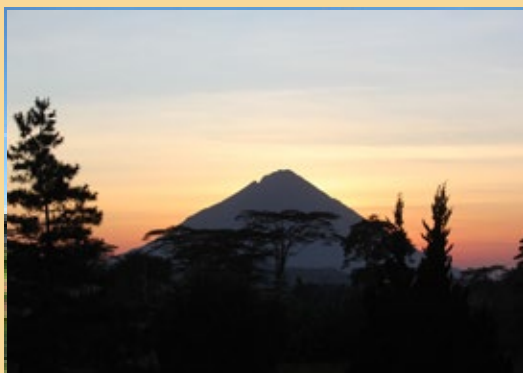
Mission Experience Worldwide

Travel with Purpose!

Join us for a faith journey you will never forget!

We create faith filled experiences that enrich our Catholic faith, offer opportunities to serve God's people, and actively share in the growth of our Church

Flores, Indonesia - October 2016



Our journey will bring us to the most exotic and beautiful lands of Bali and Flores Indonesia.

Together we will celebrate the sacrament of ordination. We will learn more about the Divine Word Missionaries by taking part in some of the day-to-day activities of the missionaries & seminarians. We will experience the beauty, language, people and the culture of these stunningly beautiful and distinctly different islands of Bali and Flores.

St. Paul Major Seminary Ladalero in Maumere, Flores is the largest Catholic seminary in the world that educates and forms the Divine Word Missionaries for our Catholic Church. Grow your faith with us on our Indonesian adventure!

Mission Indonesia

The Society of the Divine Word (SVD) popularly known as Divine Word Missionaries, participate in a great diversity of ministries with the poor and marginalized. The SVD's are the largest international missionary congregation in the Catholic Church with 6,000+ members in over 70 countries. Our missionary priests and brothers invite you to join them in their ministries – to get off the sidelines and no longer be a spectator, but be an active minister of God's love.



Say Yes Today!

Please contact:

Gretta Bowman
Mission Coordinator
Society of the Divine Word
228 467-4322
grettabowman@yahoo.com



Dates/Schedule

September 26 - October 13, 2016

Sept. 26:	Departure U.S.
Sept. 28:	Arrival in Bali
Oct. 1:	Depart Bali for Flores
Oct. 2:	Pre-Ordination liturgy
Oct. 3:	Ordination
Oct. 4 - 11:	Mission Flores
Oct. 12:	Depart Flores
Oct. 13:	Arrive U.S.

Cost and Accommodations

In Bali, Hotel Kumala Pantai will be our initial experience of Indonesia. Where we will rest and take in Bali's splendor and grandeur before our mission begins in the Catholic enclave of Flores where we will stay at Hotel Sylvia. The cost of the mission experience will be approximately \$2,800/per person, which includes air travel; airport transfers, accommodations, all breakfasts (while in Indonesia) and transport to hotels and mission activities.

Participation Criteria

The Mission Experience trip is planned principally with Catholics in mind, but can accommodate people of other faiths under special circumstances. In addition, those wishing to participate must:

- Be 18 years or older
- Have medical insurance
- Have a valid passport
- Obtain necessary visas and immunizations
- Sign a liability waiver
- Reference from your Pastor

A WARRIOR FOR JUSTICE

Fr. Albert McKnight, C.S.Sp., a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, died peacefully April 17, 2016 at Marion Manor, Greentree PA. He was 88 years old. He was born August 18, 1927 in Brooklyn, NY. He professed his vows as a member of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit on August 15, 1947 and was ordained to the Priesthood June 6, 1952.

No words can describe his passion for justice and equality. No words can adequately convey his drive to better the lives of those called “have nots”. It is his own words that summarize the life of this dynamic revolutionary priest.

“When I die, I hope to be still on the battlefield struggling against racism and the inequities of the capitalistic system. There’s a big gap between those who have and those who don’t.”

When I die, I hope to be still speaking the truth as I believe Jesus taught the truth to be when He said to take care of the least ones.

When I die, I hope to be still never compromising values, following the dictates of my conscience and demanding justice — now.”

Yes, Father Al McKnight was on fire with the Holy Spirit. His zeal for the gospel of Jesus Christ was at the forefront of his efforts to build up the lives of the mistreated. In 1969 he organized and led a peaceful economic revolution among low income families in the rural South by teaching them how to help themselves by working together in cooperatives and establishing a widespread system of credit unions. With ingenuity and persistence, he developed sources of financial and technical assistance for cooperatives such as the Southern Cooperative Development Program and the Southern Cooperative Development Fund. He served on many national financial philanthropic and human rights committees including being the Executive Director of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus.

In 1982 he was made pastor of Holy Ghost Catholic Church in Opelousas, Louisiana. This is the largest African American church in the country. Father McKnight set about bringing African American spirituality to the church. He said in his autobiography titled **“Whistling in the Wind”**

“Since 1966, there has been a revolutionary change in Black consciousness. There has been a true revolution in Blacks’ thinking about God and themselves. This revolutionary thinking has not yet begun to influence Black Catholic parochial life. I had hoped to develop Holy Ghost Parish in Opelousas into a teaching parish, a model of what a Black Catholic Parish needs to be today in order to be truly Black, Christian and Catholic

and relevant to the critical needs of the Black Community, which must become a reborn community.”

“I wanted to develop a Faith Community which was truly and authentically Black and truly and authentically Catholic — a Faith Community, who saw their calling through baptism to be about the task of Jesus Christ, the task of liberation of the total person and of the total community.

The vision was to develop a Black Catholic Parish which was truly and authentically Black and Catholic by recruiting several very talented Black priests to minister at Holy Ghost.

We dreamed of developing the best of Black culture in art, music, preaching and teaching and to have liturgical celebrations which were spiritually uplifting and emotionally satisfying. We dreamed of challenging the Faith Community to be both a teaching and a learning community and doers of the word. In this way, young Blacks would be exposed to the best of what was truly Black and Catholic. Exposure to various personalities and styles of ministry would hopefully attract young Blacks to pursue the priestly ministry.”

His fervor got him in trouble with many people who did not wish to change the status quo. Then when outright racism within the local school board surfaced he was part of the protests against the overt racism. He was arrested twice and spent time in jail. In the end he had to leave Holy Ghost at the request of the Bishop who was pressured to do so. His dreams were dashed but he would continue to preach the gospel. His life has been a testament that real economic and social change occurs only after the “inner change,” the cultural change, which comes with emphasis on spiritual growth and sharing.

“People say that I enjoy confrontation and conflict. That is not true. I dread confrontation and conflict. But I believe and live by the words of Pope Paul VI: “If you want Peace, work for Justice.” But justice is not only equality. Justice is about paying debts, the ones that the rich owe the poor. The earth belongs to the Lord, and therefore, the basic needs of all people of society should be provided for. In my concept of God, the earth is not owned by the clique, the few.”

Thank you Father McKnight. Thank you for your passion, your suffering, your sensitivity and willingness to work for justice as Jesus would. Rest in peace.



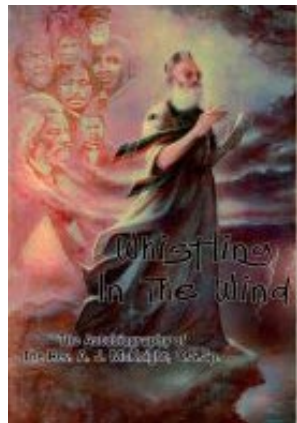
in a word or two

The front cover photo and others in this issue were taken on January 15, 1981. The occasion was a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. service at the Cathedral in Lafayette, Louisiana. Photos of a testimonial honoring his achievements were taken August 23, 1979. and appear at the bottom of this column.

Father Al McKnight was a good friend to us here at **IN A WORD**. We admired the man who in hindsight today was ahead of his time.

Father McKnight was first appointed to St. Paul Church in Lafayette, Louisiana. He then served for many years in various parishes in Louisiana including Our Lady of Lourdes in Abbeville, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Lake Charles, St. Martin de Porres in Scott and Holy Ghost Parish in Opelousas. He was a novice director in Texas for four years until he asked in 2005 to retire in Haiti as the Saint-Martial College chaplain and to teach courses on cooperative development in rural areas. In 2012, Father returned to the Spiritans' retirement home in Casa Laval and was in residence at Our Lady of the Valley in Hemet until he came to Libermann Hall in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania in 2015.

His autobiography titled *"Whistling in the Wind"* is a must read for those interested in his life. He chronicles his life journey and how he became involved in the cooperative and credit union movement. His stay in Opelousas is explained in detail. Also of interest is the talk he gave at that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration in 1981.



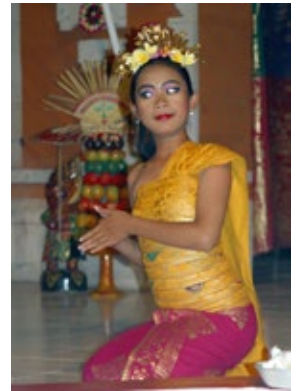
To read the autobiography you can do by going to the epubliher at www.smashwords.com Cost for download is \$2.99. Well worth the investment.



Father McKnight and his mother at testimonial 1979

Please do read about the proposed Mission experience in Indonesia on page 2. The Major seminary at Ledalero in Maumere, Flores is the largest Catholic seminary in the world that educates and forms Divine Word Missionaries for our Catholic Church.

The experience is well worth the journey. To see the large number of young men taking vows is something that will stay with you for a lifetime. Furthermore the people of Flores are a joy to be with. As photos below show you will never forget their warmth and hospitality, songs and love of God. Do contact Gretta Bowman at: grettabowman@yahoo.com



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.

IN A WORD is a publication of The Society of the Divine Word's Media Production Center. Rev. James Pawlicki, S.V.D., Director and Editor; Cathy Green-Miner, office manager; Father Brendan Murphy, SVD consultant.

Correspondence to Media Production Center, 199 Seminary Drive, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520, Phone: 228-344-3166..

Electronic messages to our Internet address, editor@inaword.com.

IN A WORD is not published during July and August.

Web page can be found at <http://www.inaword.com>