



MATTHEW 25

The Life, Charity & Justice Newsletter of St. Mary's Catholic Center | College Station, Texas
"WHATEVER YOU DID FOR ONE OF THESE LEAST BROTHERS OF MINE, YOU DID FOR ME."

September 2016

Called to Mission

Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii Gaudium* that "In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). . . we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples." (#120) The Pope urges us "to go out and not to remain indifferent to extreme poverty, war, violence in our cities, the abandonment of the elderly, the anonymity of so many people in need and the distance we keep from the least among us."

This issue of Matthew 25 explores our call to mission and the life changing experiences of students who went to the St. Mary's Mission Trips in spring 2016.

Missionary Church, Witness of Mercy

Excerpts of Pope Francis' Message for World Mission Day, Sunday October 16, 2016

The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy invites us to consider the *missio ad gentes* as a great, immense work of mercy, both spiritual and material. ... All of us are invited to "go out" as missionary disciples, each generously offering their talents, creativity, wisdom and experience in order to bring the message of God's tenderness and compassion to the entire human family. By virtue of the missionary mandate, the Church cares for those who do not know the Gospel, because she wants everyone to be saved and to experience the Lord's love. She "is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 12) and to proclaim mercy in every corner of the world, reaching every person, young or old.....

This merciful love, as in the early days of the Church, is witnessed to by many men and women of every age and condition. The considerable and growing presence of women in the missionary world, working alongside their male counterparts, is a significant sign of God's maternal love. Women, lay and religious, and today even many families, carry out their missionary vocation in various forms: from announcing the Gospel to charitable service. Together with the evangelizing and sacramental work of missionaries, women and families often more adequately understand people's problems and know how to deal with them in an appropriate and, at times, fresh way: in caring for life, with a strong focus on people rather than structures, and by allocating human and spiritual resources towards the building of good relations, harmony, peace, solidarity,

dialogue, cooperation and fraternity, both among individuals and in social and cultural life, in particular through care for the poor.

In many places evangelization begins with education, to which missionary work dedicates much time and effort, like the merciful vinedresser of the Gospel (cf. Lk 13:79; Jn 15:1), patiently waiting for fruit after years of slow cultivation; in this way they bring forth a new people able to evangelize, who will take the Gospel to those places where it otherwise would not have been thought possible.....

All peoples and cultures have the right to receive the message of salvation which is God's gift to every person. This is all the more necessary when we consider how many injustices, wars, and humanitarian crises still need resolution. Missionaries know from experience that the Gospel of forgiveness and mercy can bring joy and reconciliation, justice and peace. The

mandate of the Gospel to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20) has not ceased; rather this command commits all of us, in the current landscape with all its challenges, to hear the call to a renewed missionary "impulse", as I noted in my Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*: "Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel".

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."
(Mt: 28:19-20)*

Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.

(Pope Francis, The Joy of the Gospel, Nov 2013, #127)

St. Mary's Mission Trips

By sharing in the faith, work and culture of those we meet during our mission trip, this becomes a life-changing moment in a student's spiritual, educational and personal formation. St. Mary's offers three mission trips (two during Spring Break and one in May). Following are brief descriptions of each mission trip and some comments of St. Mary's Aggies who participated.

"Being the Salt and Light in the Honduran Mountains"

This will be our seventh year to have an international mission trip over spring break (March 11-18, 2017) to Honduras and work with the Missioners of Christ based in Comayagua. The group of 20 students and staff will accompany the missioners in several mountain villages in the southern part of Honduras. Each day starts by home visits, sharing the Gospel with the families and inviting them to participate in different programs. The group runs a children's ministry in the afternoon and leads ministry nights for youth, teens, and the adults.

"I experienced the simplicity, the hospitality, the more pure and genuine ways in which the Hondurans show love. I was probably most affected by how little they have and how much I am blessed with: hot water, drinkable tap water, heaters, soft bed, an education, diversity in diet, daily mass, the sacraments at my fingertips; they are so many things I never thought twice about and now I think about them every day. Being able to incorporate that 30 min of personal prayer each morning truly allows me to invest in my personal relationship with God."

"This Mission Trip really opened my eyes to the different ways God works through people's lives. I realized simplicity is not always a bad thing, and we had a lot to learn from the Honduran mountain villagers."



*"Stay where you are. Find your own Calcutta. Find the sick, the suffering, and the lonely right where you are - in your own homes and families, in your workplaces, and in your schools. You can find Calcutta all over the world, if you have the eyes to see. Everywhere, wherever you go, you find people who are unwanted, unloved, uncared for, just rejected by society- completely forgotten, completely alone."
(Blessed Mother Teresa)*

"Find Your Own Calcutta: Domestic Mission Trip to San Antonio"

There are also spiritual and physical needs within our own borders. This year the group of 20 will go on mission to San Antonio during spring break (March 11-18, 2017) and serve the poor with Catholic Charities, as well as other organizations like Habitat for Humanity. Regardless of the work they do, their goal is to spread joy and the Gospel to the people of San Antonio.

"The best part was seeing Christ in everyone we met. These people were no longer just a statistic; each is a soul loved into existence by the same God who created me. We are so much more alike than we are different." (Penitas, South TX Spring 2016)

"This mission trip was a call to bring this extraordinary experience to the ordinary of my everyday life. How can I minister and serve those I encounter on a daily basis? This call to mission isn't a one and done thing. It is a daily adventure with Christ." (Penitas, South TX Spring 2016)

"Bringing Christ's Presence to the Mountainous Forest of Costa Rica"

The group of 20 will go to Costa Rica from May 17-26, 2017 and work there with St. Bryce Missions for the third year. St. Bryce Missions exists to put faith, hope and love in action and bring Christ-centered transformation to the world's most vulnerable communities. They minister to the needs of the Cabécar indigenous peoples, the largest and most isolated Indigenous group in Costa Rica, living in reservation land in the remote mountains and cloud forest. Many small communities in the reserve are only accessible by foot after hour-long hikes and have not been exposed to many basic items, including health care and education. The group will share in St. Bryce's mission of evangelization by running activities for diverse age groups.

"The impact each person can make with one another reflects the profound way Christ impacts the people in the Cabecar reserve. Each of us has the ability to strengthen or weaken one another whether through our words, actions or expressions. Knowing this, it is best to learn one's own gifts to understand how they can transform those we encounter and ourselves. Each of us is a complement to one another and brings about a different, intimate reality of who Christ is and what he does for us."

"The Holy Spirit has truly moved me. I have done so many things in the week that I feel I would've never done if I have said no to God's will. I have learned so much about the Cabecar people and they have a piece of my heart. I have learned so much about myself and what I want to do in life. I saw Jesus Christ in every single person I met. Even the people who didn't talk to me at all and simply listen. This mission trip has opened my eyes to what God might be calling me to do."

"The mission opened my heart to the overwhelming needs of my brothers and sisters in Christ across the globe and taught me to be more compassionate in the US through solidarity."

Activities in Life, Justice and Charity at St. Mary's

Voters' Coffee House

Monday October 3 at 8 pm
in the Activity Center

Come and learn what it means to vote as a Catholic citizen and the guidelines to faithful Citizenship with Father Charlie Banks. (An event of SMAPL, ACT and Aggie Cat, hosted by SMYRT.)

St. Mary's Mission Trips

Applications are available online at www.aggiecatholic.org/missiontrips.
Deadline: Oct. 9 (Honduras) and Oct 23 (Costa Rica and San Antonio)