

"God has sent me for the right purpose"
By Adriana Lema

The memories and the knowledge gained throughout my experiences make up the person I am today. I have always perceived every person, no matter their background, as a child of God. The reason I was compelled to go on the Red Lake Mission trip was to gain further insight into the culture of the Native Americans. The Native Americans had a rough past but through it all they have held on to their valuable traditions and culture. When I saw the Virgin Mary and Joseph dressed in traditional outfits I realized the close resemblance to my own Ecuadorian culture.



Adriana Lema goes to St. Louis Park High School and attends Church of the Holy Name Parish. She was on the 2011 Red Lake Trip.

people of Red Lake. Since I spent most of my time with the children at Vacation

"When I saw the gleaming smiles in the children's faces I knew God had sent me for the right purpose."

Bible School and Kids Club I was able to talk to them about their life. Some children came from broken homes but when they were with the mission group their hearts glowed with glee. I enjoyed helping out the children with their art activities as well as planning games for them to play in the gymnasium. When I saw the gleaming smiles in the children's faces

I knew God had sent me for the right purpose. When I went on the mission trip, I did not set any expectations. I went with an open mind and heart. My memories from the mission trip are unforgettable and

very close to my heart. The new insight I received from the mission trip has allowed me to correct the negative perceptions some people have of Native Americans. God made us humans to cherish and care for one another. I have always had a humanitarian heart and wish to help the disadvantaged. I did not go on this mission trip to try to change their way of life;



I went on this mission trip to serve them in any way possible. I was able to fulfill my desire to serve others and returned with a new appreciation of Native American culture."



CENTER for MISSION
Serving the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

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Fall 2011

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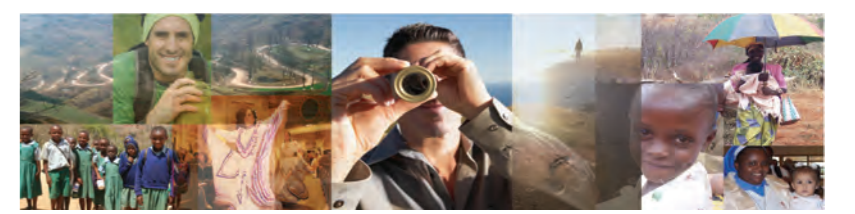
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Create a legacy that reaches around the world



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Inspired



Fall 2011 *Stories of sharing and discovery from people in global communion*

Making God's Love Visible
By Deacon Mickey Friesen
Director, Center for Mission



A couple of years ago I received a Christmas card from a bishop in India that I have kept to this day. On

the front of the card are no words, just pictures of faces. These are the faces of refugees living in camps because they had to leave their homes due to a tsunami, food shortages and war. Hidden among the faces is the image of

the infant Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes. When you open the card, it reads, "When Jesus was born, he had nowhere to lay his head. Today, Jesus is a refugee still seeking a home." I couldn't help but wonder how this bishop could see Jesus in the faces of these people in pain.

Jesus reveals the face of God, and yet came among us as a refugee and a stranger. God became one of us to free us from poverty of sin and injustice that enslave us. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...to bring good news to the poor." Jesus came to make God's love visible to the world - to heal those impoverished in body, mind and



spirit. The Church continues this mission to serve Christ in the "least of these" and to witness God's reign which reconciles poor and rich, slave and free, women and men.

How is Christ revealed in the face of the poor today? He is shown in the faces of those suffering drought and hunger. He is shown in the faces of the millions of migrants and refugees still looking for a place to call home. He is shown in the faces of those trapped in the spiral of addiction or

searching for meaning. He is shown in the faces of those traumatized by the horrors of war. The Lord hears the cry of the poor. We can continue Christ's mission to bring good news. When we hear the cries of the poor and say yes to God's call to the needy, we are led to surprising places and faces. God is born again in our hearts. Blessed are the poor, for they shall see God!



This issue of our newsletter has articles about individuals who have heard the cries of the poor and acted upon them, many by taking the personal initiative to go and serve in solidarity with the poor.

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35 years of challenges in Africa By Eric Simon in a conversation with Liz Mach

Liz Mach, originally from Pine City, MN, is a Maryknoll missionary who has spent 35 years as a nurse in Africa, mostly in Tanzania and Southern Sudan. She has delivered babies, treated victims of bomb blasts, cared for AIDS orphans and rescued girls at risk for genital mutilation. Many people are alive today because of Liz.

In a phone conversation, I asked Liz to share occasions that come to mind when thinking about pivotal moments in Africa, moments that personally touched her.

"There are so many, especially after 35 years, but there are two that immediately come to mind. I have been very busy working with Sister Germaine of the Sisters of Charity to deal with the incidence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), which is the total or partial removal of female genitalia.

This symbol of female repression and control is a painful experience for girls. Often young girls are then married to older men, some with many wives.

The Church has been an outspoken critic of FGM and the Bishop of the Diocese of Musoma, Michael Msonganzilla, is very supportive of the work the Sisters of Daughters of Charity do in an attempt to educate and help girls who choose to avoid FGM and create a future other than teenage marriage.

It is tremendously rewarding when a girl chooses to follow a path

different from the traditional one. I remember a girl named Ghati who made the decision to avoid the traditional path of FGM and early marriage. Ghati graduated from college and returned to the Diocese of Musoma to counsel other girls. That is the way it should be!

The second life-altering experience occurred while I was in the southern Sudan. I happened to be there during the bloody and violent civil war that produced the reported atrocities in Darfur.

I was in a village that was bombed and attacked. I cannot tell you how frightening that event was, it is with me even today many years later. This attack has created a tremendous sense of compassion for others experiencing violence.

I remember a young woman who came to see me claiming she needed medical care. She was shaking uncontrollably. After a thorough exam, I could find no evidence of a physical issue. I asked about her family. She told me that she had three

children that were killed – two were killed in refugee camps and the third was killed running from a camp while it was under attack. Frustrated that there was nothing I could do and feeling her pain, I began to sob.

Entire countries have individuals who have suffered from warfare and are emotionally wounded. Sudanese need emotional help and there is none available.

I have learned that we do not always have to 'do' but to just be there in solidarity and share their emotional pain. 15 years later, this encounter is still with me."



My El Salvador experience by Dianne LaScotte

Last summer I had the privilege of traveling with eleven other pilgrims to El Salvador on a Friends Across Borders Immersion Trip. I was initially drawn to the experience because I teach the novel *The Weight of All Things* by Sandra Benítez, set in El Salvador, and I thought that travel to the country would give me more background information to bring to class, as well as provide me with renewal units for re-licensure. What I was unprepared for was the overall impact the visit to El Salvador would have on me.

The ten days that we were in El Salvador were very meaningful. We visited places significant to the country's recent history and heard the stories of its people. We toured a Fair Trade coffee cooperative, spent time with children in an orphanage, visited the homes of the poor, and interviewed members of a Christian-based community who

strive to live
the Gospel
in a



relevant way. We met with North Americans and Salvadorans who are working together for a better future by developing a nutritious soy program for those who cannot afford meat, educating people about AIDS prevention, and working with youth to combat the attraction of gang membership. Most important, we reflected each evening on what we had seen and heard during the day, taking from every experience a lesson for our lives.

Of all the visits and events, the one that touched me the deepest was our visit to the humble apartment in which Archbishop Oscar Romero lived and the chapel in which he was assassinated. The sister who addressed us the day we visited spoke of Archbishop Romero's conversion and his subsequent choice to live more simply and to be a voice for the poor. As I listened to her, I thought about the cost of conversion, fully lived.

After ten days, I returned to the States and completely redesigned the novel course for my students, incorporating presentations on the country, a pre-unit research activity, and a post-unit group discussion on the meaning of solidarity. I also brought home something even more significant for me – a new way of looking at the material comfort I enjoy; I am also mindful of my obligation towards others less fortunate and make choices as a consumer that are more socially relevant.

A trip to El Salvador is being planned for spring 2012 for educators. If you would like information regarding this trip, contact Mike Haasl, haaslm@archspm.org, or 651.291.4504

Forming Seminarians in the Diocese of Kikwit, Congo

The Global Mission Leadership Fund is a Center for Mission grant offered to Dioceses and projects to foster overseas vocations to priesthood, religious life and formation of lay leaders. Applicants request grants through formal proposals which are reviewed and rewarded by the Global Mission Leadership Fund Committee. A grant was awarded to the Diocese of Kikwit, Democratic Republic of the Congo, to help with forming Church leaders and seminarians. Since 1998, the Congo has suffered from a devastating civil war that has caused the death of millions, starvation and poverty creating greater need for evangelical efforts of the Church. The Diocese is responding to the "cries of the poor."

Last year, the Diocese of Kikwit, Congo requested a much needed grant to expand their Major Seminary Preparatory capacity. The Diocese of Kikwit fosters pastoral vocations and humanitarian activities to help with spiritual care, financial support, equipment, health care, and education, all with the intent to improve living conditions for its population.

The Diocese of Kikwit is located in the city of Kikwit which is the largest city in the Kwilu Province with a population of almost 300,000. Kikwit is located in the southwestern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Diocese of Kikwit includes over 850 villages, with a population of 2.6 million. 56% of the



population is Catholic. The Diocese of Kikwit serves all these villages but needs additional priests to administer the sacraments and home visits.

The Diocese of Kikwit requested a grant from the Center for Mission in order to expand their Major Seminary Preparatory capacity to help form additional priests for the needs of the diocese. They receive about 160 applicants a year and would like to admit most of them. The Diocese was awarded \$50,000 dispersed over three years.

Expansion has begun and dormitory renovating is underway. The capacity of the seminary is growing quickly to serve the needs of their community. "With the funds received from the Center for Mission...the bishop can now admit about 70 seminarians per year instead of 20," states Fr. Jean-Pierre Bongila, "The support we have received is well appreciated as an indication that God is blessing his people..."

It will not be long before the Diocese is better able to bring the life-giving presence of Christ among those in the Diocese of Kikwit, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Fr. Jean-Pierre Bongila is from the Diocese of Kikwit and is teaching at the University of St. Thomas this year as Director of the International Leadership Program



The Center for Mission can help you extend your legacy of faith to the ends of the earth well beyond your lifetime.

As you have read in this issue, mission experiences touch us all as we hear and respond to the "cries of the poor." They are truly bridges of grace that transform both the host and the missionary. These transformational experiences of grace are powerful enough to transform the world. It is through financial gifts that we can continue to offer these experiences to individuals in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minnesota.

Bequests and estate gifts are an important way to help. People leave bequests for many reasons:

*In thanksgiving for the blessings of life and love
To honor a deceased parent, spouse, or child
In praise of God for the gift of faith
As an act of spiritual and social justice
As an example of Catholic charity for the next generation*

Touch the lives of others with the Gospel message of Christ by helping us build bridges of grace, faith and solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. Your bequests of faith for the next generation mean life itself for others.

Please consider adding gifts to the Center for Mission in your will or trust. They will be a lasting hymn of praise to God.

If you would like more information or have questions please contact:

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Upcoming Events

Maryknoll Friends Across Borders

*Cambodia Immersion Trip:
February 25 – March 8, 2012*

*Tanzania Immersion Trip:
March 16 – 31, 2012*

*El Salvador Immersion Trip:
June 15 – 24, 2012*

Contact Mike Haasl,
haaslm@archspm.org,
651.291.4504

GATE (Global Awareness through Experience)

*Guatemala:
March 10 – 17, 2012*

*Guatemala Holy Week:
March 28 – April 5, 2012*

Go to www.gate-travel.org
for details

