

SERVE

January 2010
Family Missions
Company

CALENDAR

Mission Formation
Big Woods
Every Wed. 6:30 pm

Short Term Mission
Trips:

Mardi Gras Mission
February 12-20
Gral Cepeda, MX

St. Mary's@Miami U.
March 6-14
Gral Cepeda, MX

Franciscan University
of Steubenville
March 13-20
Gral Cepeda, MX

St Pius X
April 1-9
Gral Cepeda, MX

Short Term Mission trip
Info
Call: 337-893-6111

Events

Valentine Dance
February 10th

Shoot With A Mission
Fundraiser
March 27

Come and See
For Missionary Appli-
cants
April 19 - 22
June 21 - 24

For more Info. Or updates
visit our website
www.fmcmissions.com



Missionary Families

The Church has entered upon a new era of appreciation for marriage and family life. Yet we carry with us some notion that in order to serve the Lord over the long term a Catholic needs to be a celibate priest or religious. Well, you certainly don't need to be a celibate in order to serve as a missionary. There have always been married couples (Priscilla and Aquila) and families (Abraham) serving the Lord as missionaries. See, 1 Cor. 9:5 (RSV). The Protestants have sent out thousands of married couples and families to serve as missionaries to the ends of the earth. Pope John Paul II sent out scores of European Catholic missionary families to live and bear witness in the cities of northern Europe.

Genie and I, with our seven children, went about as the Holy Spirit led us, we gave a living witness, and preached and taught and testified everywhere we went – the Lord opened doors before us, and we saw a great deal of good fruit from our labors. Today, our children and grandchildren serve as missionaries. Indeed, there seem to be special graces

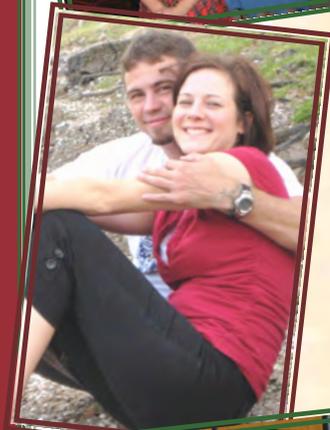
and charisms at work in a missionary family, blessings that God's People greatly need, and which only missionary families can bring.

When we founded Family Missions Company, we intended it to be a mission organization which would receive, train, send out, and support lay singles of all ages, married couples, and families with children of all ages. In the last fourteen years since we formed FMC, most of our full time missionaries have been singles, most just out of their university studies. Some have been older married couples and families.

Recently, we are seeing some of our single missionaries falling in love, and getting married to one another; and then serving as a married missionary couple, open to life. (In FMC, we say our children are the best missionaries.)

Catholic laity and families have an indispensable, fruitful, and holy vocation to serve in the Church. Families are called to "BE" Church, and all are called to participate actively in the APOSTOLATE.

God calls and the Holy Spirit empowers. Missionary life is a great life for families. Missionary families bring great and special graces into the mission work of Jesus today, and the Lord is sending them forth.



Counterclockwise from the top:

1. The whole Summers Family at Sarah & Kevin's wedding, Jan. 09
2. The Brown Family
3. The Baquets - married and pregnant
4. Joseph Summers & Brooke Ortego - to be married in March
5. The Garza Family - our missionaries in General Cepeda

Remaining Disposed to "Go" amidst obstacles that state-side living presents for foreign missionaries



By: Sarah Baquet

In an unusual turn of events this past year, a number of our foreign missionary families have found themselves Stateside for a lengthy period of time. Eric and I are among that group. Eric and I married in May of this year and found out shortly after that we were pregnant! This exciting news delayed our leaving for the foreign field when we discovered our son would be born several weeks after our intended departure.

Living in our homeland for an extended period of time poses special obstacles to foreign missionaries and even "dangers" to our unusual vocation that is hallmarked by the word "go." Some of these include: materialism and attachment to lots of "stuff," getting too "comfortable," becoming too "busy" to maintain a strong prayer life, simply "forgetting" the call to foreign missions as we get "caught up" in a fast-paced life in the States, lusting after a worldly career, getting caught in a job that won't allow one to depart when it is time, falling into debt, succumbing to a sedated state of individualism, and forgetting the poor altogether.

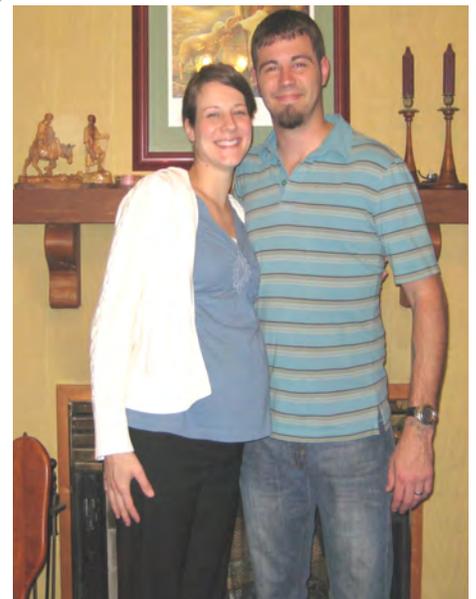
Some might note challenges in our state-side lives and think God is moving us "out" of our lay Catholic missionary vocation and into a more "normal" Christian life in the States. Many, with every good and sincere intention, will urge us away from our vocation with comments such as "Now it's time to 'settle down'" and "You should stay! There is so much mission work to do here." While the Lord calls many to holiness through "settling down" and while it is true that there is MUCH work to be done here, God has not called us as foreign missionaries to lives of holiness in those particular ways. And it is only in our disposition to "go" in OBEDIENCE to God's call that we will be truly fruitful for the kingdom.

Now, EVERY vocation requires a special courage, a special dedication, and perseverance in the face of obstacles. The holiest marriage, even in spite of vows, can be assaulted by temptations to forget or abandon one's original fervor for his/her spouse in option for a total counterfeit. A religious vocation, even in spite of vows, can undergo a period of darkness causing one to think "maybe I made the wrong decision" and consequently entertain the idea of abandoning the Divine Spouse. A lay Catholic missionary vocation is no different. Obstacles, however, must not be seen as God's hand moving us "out" of His original call, rather such obstacles are trials that build character and perseverance. In James we read: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. And let perseverance be perfect, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1: 2-3) Perseverance then is staying the course, ruddered by our conviction and certainty of God's call, while relying on God's grace to sustain us.

In order to guard our missionary vocation, Eric and I

have tried to live in certain ways that set up "hedges" to keep out that "prowler" (Satan) who seeks to confuse, dissuade, and destroy (1 Peter 5:8-9). One of the "hedges" that is important for me is not buying the furniture or house decorations that I pine after, because when it comes time to go I will not want to give them away. Scripture says "where your treasure is there your heart will be also." (Mt. 6:21) In knowing myself I understand that if I put my money and effort into my "choicest" furniture then my heart will be there also and not with the poor or with others. In a word, I become "attached." Another thing that Eric and I have committed to is not getting a pet. We "visit" pet shops all the time just to "look" at the cute kitties and puppies, but realize that if we get a pet we would have to give it away (or to the pound if we couldn't find a good home) and it would be one more thing that we wouldn't want to leave when it is time to "go." In order to remain disposed to go, we live in an apartment with a 6 month lease that we can renew month by month (this was a totally MIRACLE that God provided!); and we are both working in jobs that understand we intend to resign as soon as we can acquire the baby's passport so that we can fulfill our call to "go." Other ways that we seek to guard our vocation is by being faithful to our daily personal prayer time, living a vibrant sacramental life, remaining regularly connected to our missionary community, being "ministry minded", living simply and not trying to avoid inconvenience.

In closing, I urge all of us in the Church seeking to follow God in obedience to do our discerning in times of consolation, and to simply "hold fast" in times of desolation, temptation, and trial. (I can't claim this idea as my own, but read it in a commentary on St. Ignatius' spiritual exercises!) To foreign missionaries I say in union with our late Pope John Paul II: you are the lifeblood in the veins of the Church, and if foreign missionaries abandon their call to "go" then the Body of Christ is in danger of a heart attack. Be strong and courageous, God will sustain you! God will sustain you!



Home On Mission

By: Andrea Brown

So, what do missionaries do when they're stateside? Well... a lot! Of course, our family wasn't aware that God was going to make this change in our mode of operation, but we have adjusted well, and we are staying busy in the Lord's service!

One big change is that Kevin has had to begin working so that we would have the funding and insurance necessary for Andrea's braces and upcoming jaw surgery. For those of you who remember, the help that we originally thought we had eventually fell through (oh, well—God knows what He is doing!). We now live off Kevin's earnings, and only use our missionary donations for ministry and alms purposes.

Our work as missionaries is continuing to bless us in new ways. Kevin's ability to speak Spanish afforded him a good job as a bilingual Personal Banker at Chase Bank. We are thankful in the present economy for a reliable job, and we know that it was missions alone that made this job a possibility. Even though we never could have foreseen such a turn for our family—it is clear that God had it all planned out according to his Providence.

Kevin has been blessed to find that his work provides him with unexpected opportunities to witness as a missionary! When his Hispanic clients are surprised to find this blonde-haired, green-eyed gringo speaking to them in their native tongue, it stands to reason that they inquire as to his knowledge of the language. Of course, when he responds that he learned Spanish as a lay Catholic missionary in Mexico, it opens the doors for some wonderful conversations! Many such clients are very happy to hear of his work in Mexico, and Kevin is able to be a missionary in his place of work. God is good!

As a family, we have stayed active in the many

and varied stateside ministries of FMC, including speaking at Masses at local parishes, witnessing to youth groups, and serving at the local Christian Service Center.

When Kevin is away at work, Andrea stays at the mission base with the children. With kids in-tow she is able to be actively involved with the busy mission life at Big Woods. She helps with the pressing work at the mission office, which is sort of the "heartbeat" of all the missionary operations of Family Missions Company. She also works in the training and formation of new missionaries. She particularly enjoys teaching their study of the Acts of the Apostles, as it serves as an instruction manual for our missionaries. She also assists with other aspects of the missionaries' training, including participating in their Intake Retreat and hosting a workshop on seeking benefactors for their ministry.

Andrea has also been blessed by the opportunity to apply her musical experience in a new outreach of FMC called "The Ananias Project." In a nutshell, the Ananias Project is a combined effort of all the missionaries to express the importance of missions through the language of music. FMC has just released its first CD, full of original songs from our missionaries worldwide, as well as sound-clips from their various mission sites. The Ananias Project has already accepted several invitations to speak about missions and play our music for various audiences. Andrea is particularly excited to join the rest of the group as they travel to her home parish in Maryland to help host the St. John's confirmation retreat in January!

Another huge aspect of our stateside life has been the unique opportunity to live in community with other missionaries here at Big Woods. Never before had there been such a presence of both experienced and new missionaries gathered together for a "season" in community. Each of us was prompted to make our way back to our base for completely distinct and particular reasons. However, God seems to have had a hand in this unprecedented gathering of His servants. With so many willing and prayerful hearts living, working, ministering, and praying together as they share a spiritual home, the Holy Spirit is clearly moving powerfully at Big Woods.

While some of the fruits are already apparent, such as the ability to minister locally,

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

the chance for the seasoned missionaries to recharge their “spiritual batteries,” and the opportunity for the newest missionaries-in-training to benefit from the insight and experience of the seasoned missionaries, we feel that from God’s perspective there is even more going on. History has proven time and again that powerful things happen when people of faith unite themselves in prayer. One need only recall the gathering of the disciples in the upper room for nine days of prayer and fasting, which yielded the powerful outpouring of the Holy

Spirit upon them at Pentecost! Peter left that room, immediately began preaching boldly about Jesus, and that very day 3,000 people were converted and baptized as Christians! (Acts 2:38-42) Certainly, God is using our own time together in prayer and service as part of His greater plan for His Church, and certainly the missionaries will all reap the spiritual benefits of this time when we later go our separate ways back into the mission field.

So, here we live, “in the world but not of it.” We gather each morning for the Liturgy of the Hours, we share work, ministry duties, and some meals. We also

have weekly events such as men’s and women’s Bible studies, Praise and Worship, Lord’s Day celebrations (a tradition to welcome in the Sabbath), and our Wednesday night Mission Formation (a pot-luck prayer meeting open to everyone in the area who wants to be a part of the missionary activity and spirit here at Big Woods).

Community life is rich in opportunities to love more deeply, in challenges to serve more readily, and in the blessings of being surrounded by friends who love the Lord wholeheartedly. We know God is present here as we gather in His name. Please pray for us—and consider making a visit! Who knows... maybe you will encounter a missionary vocation of your own!!



*FMC's principal work is EVANGELIZATION -
Living the Gospel and speaking and proclaiming it to all people who
will listen and receive it.*

*We witness to Jesus and
evangelize everywhere, all the time!*

*FMC gives Catholic singles, married couples, and families an
opportunity to preach the Gospel to the nations.*

-Frank Summers

Hello from the Mission Coordinator's desk!

By: Sarah-Kate Rabalais



My name is Sarah-Kate Rabalais and this past October I took over as the full-time Mission Coordinator for Family Missions Company. It has been such a blessing to serve Christ's hands and feet in foreign countries from behind my desk here in Abbeville.

At the beginning of December seven new missionaries (Breanne Saldivar, Brooke Ortego, Erika Olson, James Franke, Lily Hannan, Teresa Reardon, and myself) were commissioned and will be at their posts by mid-January. Also in the beginning of December we were blessed to have some current missionaries (Colby Dupre, Sheila Agresta, Kristen Istre, Maria Moran, John-Paul Papuzynski and Jon Weiss) in from the field for brief visits, for our annual Donors Dinner and to staff a few of our short-term mission trips to General Cepeda. Here at Big Woods and in Lafayette we have the Baquets, the Browns, and the Grangers, all temporarily at home in mission.

God is doing many exciting things with our new and current missionaries. On January 11, 2010 four of our new missionaries along with Jon Weiss and John-Paul Papuzynski will fly to Europe for a 2 month "Mission Blitz" with the Spain team. During their time in Europe the new team of 10 missionaries will be working in our existing Cordoba ministries, taking a pilgrimage to Rome, and evangelizing in Dublin with a community anxious for our missionary presence. We are all excited to see what doors God is opening for our missionaries and to see what will come next.

Two of our new missionaries (Breanne and Lily) have heard the Lord call them to Ecuador. Breanne will attend language school and both will live in community at an orphanage in Olon. They will also be working in local church parishes and with the Diocese of Tena.

Colby Dupre has returned from the Philippines and is looking forward to what God has next for her. Brooke Ortego is here at Big Woods planning her upcoming marriage and working on the house she and Joseph Summers have moved out to Big Woods. She and Joseph are excited about God's call for them to work with our short term mission groups until He sends them into a full-time mission.

As I mentioned before, we are blessed to have many of our missionary families temporarily here on base or close to us in Lafayette. Our community life here at Big Woods is overflowing and our Lord's Day meals, weekly Mission Formation nights, and other special events have been full of missionaries.

Please remember our missionaries in your daily prayers - that God will give them ample opportunities to be His witnesses with their lives, and that He will set up divine appointments for them to speak His truth.





"The Scales Fell From My Eyes"

By: Sid Savoie



As you can see from the title I chose, I feel like St. Paul did when he met Ananias and the scales fell from his eyes. Life in the "real world" can be filled with a lot of worry and selfishness, and oftentimes I forget about those who are in need. What makes it worse is that I usually try to console myself by saying that at least I recognize my faults and that I want to struggle against them. Brothers and sisters, let me tell you that I have found a cure for my problem: it is none other than going on MISSION!

Ever since I've moved back to Lafayette after graduating from UL, I have struggled to find my place in life. Not being in the place where God wants you to be can often make it difficult to flourish and become who God wants you to be. To make a long story short, I've been blessed to be active with FMC the past few months, and felt the call to go on a short term mission trip. My problem was that it was only 3 weeks until the Thanksgiving week trip and I had no money at all. But a very wise man once told me, "Give God your Yes, and let Him do the rest". It wasn't easy, but I gave God my "Yes". Doubt and fear and contingency plans filled my head. But to make a long story short, God not only provided me with what I needed, he provided me with more! It was a tremendous blessing to learn that if God wills it, He will provide. Then of course, the mission trip itself was such a blessing. There are so many things I could talk about, but it was easily the people of Mexico, their poverty and simplicity, and most of all, their faith, that has blessed me and changed my life.

To go out to a rancho one night, with no prior notice, ring the bell, and have the chapel packed to capacity, just blew me away. To go out to another rancho later in the week, in the midst of cold and windy weather, and STILL have people show up to hear the Word of God, was amazing. There was one rancho where an older gentleman showed up early, only to leave and go back to his house to get his guitar so he could assist us in our music ministry. That same night, an elderly lady walked back to her house to get extra candles so we could see. In the eyes of the world, these were small sacrifices. But the people blessed me so much by their willingness to serve. Surely, in the eyes of God, these "small sacrifices" were really quite large!

There was another gentleman we met outside of the Cathedral in Saltillo during our pilgrimage day. His name is Omar, and he is confined to a wheelchair. When we encountered him, he was sitting outside of the Cathedral, with a jacket and one glove as his only protection against the cold. In his lap were some prayer cards that he offered to those passing by. We talked with him, prayed with him, and even brought him in to Mass. To see the joy on his face was a priceless gift. After Mass, as we were about to leave him to continue on our pilgrimage, he asked if he could get a hug from each of us. If I wasn't already humbled by his faithfulness, selflessness, and simplicity, then I definitely was after that. He wanted to thank us for what we did, but I felt like I should be thanking him for all that he taught me.

And you know what, that's the blessing of being a missionary. You do your best to bring the Word of God and the Joy of Christ to the ends of the earth, but you end up being blessed so much more than you could have ever imagined. Just from this one week of missions, I can see why people are so passionate about missions. It is such a blessed life, and as some would say, it's the best life! I liked it so much that I didn't want to go home!

I leave you with a request: please pray for those already in missions, and those considering going into foreign missions.

An Unexpected Joy

By: Breanne Saldivar

Arriving at Big Woods for Intake in 2009 was the second hardest thing I've ever had to do in my life. Leaving Big Woods to return home for the Holidays was the first. My name is Breanne Saldivar and I am proud to say that I am a Catholic Lay Missionary. But it wasn't always that way.

It was in the spring of 2008 that I first heard God calling me to be a missionary. It was too bad to be true. I did not want to be a missionary at all. You see, I had already planned out my entire life, and "foreign missions" was definitely not part of it. After visiting FMC I had decided that they were crazy and swore never to return to Big Woods again. I continued to "live my life" and I tried to ignore the call, but God was persistent. Finally, I decided to pray about it. So I went to Mass, sat down in the pew and said a simple prayer:

"Okay God, I know you want me to be a missionary but uh listen, I really don't want to. So if you really, really, REALLY want me to be a missionary, you gotta send me a clear sign. Okay? Great, thanks. Amen."

The priest giving Mass that day was a visiting priest whom I had never seen before. As soon as he stepped onto the altar he said, "I just want to offer up this Mass for all those who are discerning foreign missions and the missionary life."

It was a death sentence; the verdict was in. I froze and felt my heart sink. Immediately doubt, fear and anxiety rose up inside of me. But there was something else there; something that felt very pleasant. It

was peace. Amidst all the negative emotions I was feeling, there was this undeniable sense of peace in my heart. I thanked God for giving me a clear answer even though it was not the answer that I wanted.

I still wasn't sure why God was calling ME to be a missionary. I didn't want to quit my job or leave my family behind. I couldn't understand why anyone would actually WANT to be a foreign missionary. Nothing made sense to me. The only thing that was certain was that I wanted to do God's will.

So I showed up at Big Woods and something amazing happened. During the 3 months of missionary formation I fell madly and passionately in love with missions. I had been so sure that I was going to regret spending 3 months in the Louisiana swamp-land. Before I even left my home I had already made up my mind and decided I was going to be miserable the whole time I was in Louisiana. But God had other plans. Instead,



God blessed me with the happiest and holiest 3 months I could ever imagine. During that time God radically changed my life and called me on to a greater holiness. And He did it in the most loving way possible.

And so there I am one afternoon sitting in the living room with Ms. Genie. The final day of our 3 month train-

ing was drawing near and I had made it! Suddenly I realized that what was supposed to have been the worst 12 weeks of my life, had turned out to be the best. I had learned how to love. I felt like the Grinch, when (in the cartoon version of Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*) his heart starts beating rapidly and begins to grow and grow until it is so big that it actually breaks the x-ray. God had given me a new heart. It was a heart that loved God, loved people, loved life—but most importantly, loved missions! And as I sat there and thought about this, the biggest smile crept over my entire face. I turned and looked at Ms. Genie and said, "Ms. Genie, why is being a missionary so cool?!"

What I've learned is that God may ask me to do something that I don't have any desire to do. But what I've also learned is that it's not about me and what I want. Rather, it's about God and what He wants. Trust in His plan, follow His will, and I can tell you with 100 percent confidence that He won't let you down.



The Power of Words

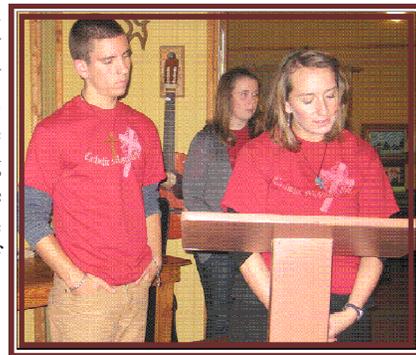
By: James Franke

What's in a word? Are words simply manmade expressions used to communicate an object or idea? Some may say so. However some, including myself, would posit that words are of much more value, are far greater than letters on a paper, than sounds spoken. Three simple words strung together, "I love you", can change a life, can fill one with confidence, can transform relationships, and transform how one views the world, views humanity. Change just one word in that phrase, "I hate you", and we can see the true power of words. Simply altering three letters can change joy to despair, happiness to misery, life to death. Words and letters are not just used to designate people, places, and things... but in fact can truly change people, places and things. Words are effective, that is they can cause real change. The gift of language, something so easily abused in today's world, is something to be treasured, to be respected, and to be used for God's greater glory.

God Himself showed us the reality of what a word can mean, what change a simple word can bring about. He did this when He Himself spoke, when He spoke that one single eternal word, the only word that ever needed to be spoken... the *logos*, the eternal Word, Jesus Christ. When God spoke, all that is came to be. When God spoke every good and perfect gift, every ounce of love came to be. It was only when words were abused that hate, sin, envy, greed, and every other sin and temptation entered into the world. Satan twisted words in the garden, Eve said 'yes' to his lies through her actions, then Adam was also deceived by the lies of the evil one.

We are each called to work together in trying to undo the fall, to undo the evil that was done in that garden. How are we to do this? One of the first steps is to stand strong as Christians in proclaiming the Good News, in speaking the truth. Can we live a true Christian life yet speak garbage and obscenities around our families and friends? Jesus tells us that "It is what comes out of you that makes you unclean" (Mk 7:20b) He is speaking of the desires of our hearts and the words that we speak. We must not live a divided life, a life where we split hairs and blur lines in regards to what is truly good or bad. Are we going to use our words as Hitler did, or like those of Christ? Will our words lead to hate and division or to peace and unity? I put forward that we must strive towards one of the two, for if we are content with doing nothing, saying nothing, we are in a sense throwing out the gift that God has given us, the gift of language, the gift of words. And a gift wasted is just as bad as a gift abused.

We will never be able to speak the eternal word in the same way that God did, but let us strive to use each and every word that we speak as a means of bringing the name of Jesus, of spreading that eternal Word, to each and every ear. Only then, only when we use our words for this purpose, will we see the transforming effect they have on the world. Only then will we see the true power of God's Word.



Your Faith Has Saved You

by Erika Olson

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is traveling through Samaria and Galilee when He meets ten lepers. They plead with Him to heal them, and He instructs them to go to the priest. Along their way, they are healed. Only one returns to give Him praise for healing them. Jesus says to Him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you" (Luke 17:11-19). While we were in General Cepeda, Mexico for our Intake, I met a woman who lived by these words.

During our three weeks there, a small group came during Thanksgiving for a medical mission trip. My group's role in the midst of this pediatric medical mission was to help take the vital signs, height and weight of all the children before they saw the doctor. Each day we saw about 30 patients. After awhile, it became a blur of thermometers, papers, pens, my broken Spanish, and tears from the kids over having to hold still. I learned that fussy children at the doctor really is universal.

There is, however, one family that stands out in my mind: the Torres family. Mr. and Mrs. Torres came over to our bench after waiting in the living room for quite some time. They approached us pushing a stroller with an 8 year-old boy bundled inside. He was one of the more serious cases we handled that week. Toño, a Mexican citizen and FMC missionary, explained to me with tears in his eyes that his own son had

passed away from the same disease. He said we really needed to ask God to help this boy.

As we did with all who came through the door, we prayed with this family, but I could tell that something was different. As I stood up again, all I could think to do was smile at Mrs. Torres. I expected the mother to smile weakly in return, tired and worn from taking care of her son for so long. But her smile was strong; it went all the way to her eyes. I realized then that she has resilient faith. St. Paul in his letter to the Romans exhorts us to "Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer" (12:12).

Mr. and Mrs. Torres brought their son to be treated for his condition. Am I certain that he has been healed? No, I am not. I AM certain that his mother is able to rejoice, endure, and persevere because her faith saves her. She is able to stand up and serve her son because her faith saves her. Through persevering in prayer, and having the courage to cry "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" we are able to hear Jesus tell us, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."





Plentiful Harvest in Philadelphia

By Sarah Summers Granger



Enjoying Fall Colors on
Our Trip to Pennsylvania

As followers of Christ, we are constantly reminded that the “the harvest is plenty” and that we, the laborers in God’s Kingdom, are called to work with all our strength at reaping that harvest. In the developing nations where we have been privileged to serve as missionaries, this plentiful harvest is abundantly evident – in

dusty ranchos in Mexico, busy families drop their evening duties at a moment’s notice to pray with us in the Chapel; in the jungles of Ecuador, mothers hike for miles carrying babies and small children to participate in Mass and catechism; in the slums of India, young people stand in the rain to hear the Good News that Jesus loves them. However, often times when laboring for the Gospel in the United States, I have felt that perhaps the harvest is not as plentiful here as elsewhere. With easy access to the riches of our Faith, we tend to take them for granted, and seem less eager to respond with interest to the ministry of missionaries. I am grateful to God for those experiences which prove me wrong in this regard; grateful when I see openness and hunger for the Lord’s call to service here in the United States; grateful when, laboring in my own country, I glimpse the plentiful harvest of Catholics eager to embrace the mission to which God has called us all.

Our family was privileged to have just such a glimpse on a recent trip to Paoli, Pennsylvania, to minister at St. Norbert’s parish there. We met Fr. Domenic Rossi, the pastor of St. Norbert’s, and Mark Griswold, the youth minister, when they brought the youth of their parish to General Cepeda on a short term mission trip in 2008. We were so blessed by their energy, enthusiasm, and love for mission. We felt honored to travel to Paoli this fall to speak at all of the Masses one Sunday on the need for mission, to participate in the parish’s 40 hours of adoration by giving talks on three consecutive evenings, and to make presentations to all of the classes at their parish school.

The response that we received was overwhelming! The openness of their parish to receive the call to serve, and to embrace whatever mission the Lord was calling them to, deeply touched our hearts. A family from the parish, the Stempers, hosted our family for almost a week with incredible generosity in their home. Many people came up and talked to us after every presentation about the ways in which they wanted to respond to God’s call - by working among the poor in their area, building stronger Christian community, or even going into full time foreign mission work! They also generously gave from second collections at the Masses, and other sources, enough monetary donations to keep our family in foreign missions for about a year.

As we look forward to another year of service in the United States, our family feels hopeful and encouraged by our experience at St. Norbert’s, hopeful that even in our native country there is a plentiful harvest of Catholics eager to respond to the Gospel’s call to become laborers in Christ’s vineyard, hopeful that God will continue to use us to reap His harvest. We are thankful to the Master of the Harvest that he has allowed us to see this generous response, and we testify to all of you, our fellow laborers, that there is no part of the world where we labor in vain when we work for His glory. May your work reap a plentiful harvest in this New Year, and may God abundantly bless you!



Kevin and Soren In
Philadelphia



Thanksgiving 2009. FMC's Quarterly Medical Mission, along with other eager short term missionaries, arrived in General Cepeda. We had announced that this time we were bringing a pediatrician, Dr. Mike Melancon. Dr. Mike and his

Miracles happen, everytime.

A two year old boy came in. When Dr. Mike looked in Jose's nose, he spotted something "white" way up. Mireya, his mom, was terrified at the thought of an object lodged in his nose. She was going through a traumatic domestic situation and Jose's distress seemed too much. We held his hands, feet and head still and a few attempts were futile. Dr. Mike suggested we send him to a specialist, but that would be near to impossible for that young housewife. The translator suggested we pray and try one more time. Dr. Mike bravely tried one more time and was able to grasp the white thing, it turned out to be a large white rubber band which could have caused serious health problems for the boy.

Mireya sobbed in relief and saw the extraction of the rubber band as a miracle and as a sign from Jesus that He had her domestic situation under control as well. Jose's little sobs were soon quieted by a tasty lollipop. We all praised God!

wife, Peggy, also serve on our Board of Directors and Medical Missions Board. The lines were long and babies were bundled up when we opened our clinic the first day. We were able to take their statistics, pray with them for healing, and in a week, see and treat more than 300 patients. We had also gathered from our medical friends back home and our benefactors, medicines for this group of families who did not have the resources to buy them. Their gratitude was deep and real.

Clothes, stuffed toys, eyeglasses, shoes, and genuine missionary love and dignity were distributed to the lines waiting to be seen by the doctor and the nurse. We always use translators, and we minister with prayer.



Missionary Gifts By: Elizabeth Edwards

While growing up in the Methodist church (my dad was a Methodist minister), it was impressed upon me that missionaries were important to the church. I can remember a missionary family who served in India coming to our church and making an appeal for funds. The congregation was told how important the work of missionaries was to the work of the church and the spread of the Good News to those who had never heard of Jesus. Of course, we had a covered dish luncheon after the service and the mother who was Indian showed my mother how to make *jelabes* – the first funnel cakes! So also, we were exposed to other cultures and to a missionary heart.

Another childhood experience taught me the importance of the church's service to the poor. My grandparents were from "strawberry country" in southeast Louisiana. My grandmother and her women's church service group saved up mountains of fabric scraps and turned them into quilts that were brought to migrant farm workers and their families who traveled around the country picking strawberries and other vegetables. My grandmother took me with her to hand out blankets and other collected things and spoke to me of the need of these families and God's desire for His people to help others with clothing, food, and housing.

When my parents moved to Abbeville – Cajun Country – and I started dating my Catholic husband to be, I was exposed to the open arms of the loving people here and their desire to worship God and pray for anyone's needs. They share their joys and their sufferings and expect others to rejoice and to pray with them. Put this together with the Summers' family missionaries and I

knew I was where God wanted me to be.

Family Missions Company feels that anyone we come in contact with is part of the family that God gives us. And as the staff and missionaries serve God in the work that He gives us, we are grateful for our donors. We depend on your gifts and your prayers. In the office, we are 6 people, as well as visiting missionaries, cramped into 3-1/2 rooms with inadequate space for desks, machinery, supplies and conferences. We are trying to do our best with what God gives us. If you can bless us with your monetary gifts, your prayers and your service in the coming year, we sure could use the help to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you know of someone who could help, please call Kevin Granger in our Development Office (337-893-6111).

Many times, Family Missions Company struggles with tight finances and not enough people to do what is necessary to keep us moving in the right direction. Can you help us this coming year to reach out to the poor and to preach the truth of God's saving power and love in their lives? We know that you will be blessed as you respond to the Holy Spirit. You will see that your donation to missionary service reaches to the ends of the earth!

Ways to donate:

- * Mail a check to FMC at our Abbeville address
- * Call our office with a credit/debit card donation
- * Visit our website to donate online
- * Visit us here at Big Woods and deliver your donation with a hug and a "Praise Jesus!"



Call our office to find out ways to volunteer or become a prayer warrior.

In Loving Memory of

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| ~ Beverlee Gremillion | ~ Jack Compton |
| ~ Justin "Jay" Broussard | ~ Flo Broussard |
| ~ Justin Broussard | ~ Jim Brogan |
| ~ Dr. Paul & Emily Shorts | ~ Bonnie Broussard |
| ~ Chris Hollier | ~ Juy Richard |
| ~ Revis Sirmon | ~ Charlie Watkins |
| ~ Dr. Ardly Hebert | ~ Gene Werner |
| ~ Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Mitchell | ~ Mary Clement |
| ~ Mr. & Mrs. Maxie LeMaire | ~ Dorothy Crain |

Christmas Honors

- ~ Clayton & Felice Hanks Family
- ~ Anthony & Margie Dardeau

Birthday Honors

- Family
- ~ Sue Pritchard

If you would like your loved ones to be written in our Memoriam Book, which is kept in the Chapel and remembered in our prayers and Masses, please contact us at (337) 893-6111 or email us at office@fmcmissions.com.

FMC Needs

- Volunteers and materials to build an entrance deck to St. Paul's House.
- Small tractor for mowing Big Woods grounds (or volunteer with tractor).
- Urgently needed:
 - Special Funds for missionaries' student loans
 - Help with Building Campaign for new office
 - Mission translators for short term trips
 - Cooks for events
 - Mail out volunteer squad
- Parishes that will invite the Ananias Project for conferences.

Send us your email address
To receive our email news updates

Do You Need Speakers?

*Conferences, Retreats, Seminars,
Parish Missions:*

Family Life, Holiness, Mission, Lay Apostolate
Contact Frank and Genie Summers—337-893-1440

CONTACT US:

Family Missions Company
12624 Everglade Rd
Abbeville, LA 70510
Phone: 337-893-6111
Fax: 337-893-6177
EIN# 72-1366886

Visit our website:
www.fmcmissions.com

Email:
office@fmcmissions.com
missions@fmcmissions.com
frank@fmcmissions.com

Go, You Are Sent (Book)
by Genie Summers—\$10.00

The Ananias Project

(Missionary CD)

\$10.00

Shipping and Handling will be added to each order

Contact us to order

SERVE is available on our website!
Check it out : www.fmcmissions.com

Prayer

If you are in need of prayer, contact us and we can include you in our daily petitions.

Remember:
Jesus Loves You!!!

Big Woods Mission Staff

Frank Summers II - Director
Genie Summers - Vice-President
Elizabeth Edwards - Bookkeeper/Database
Joseph Summers - Short Term Missions
Sarah-Kate Rabalais - Missionary Coordinator
Kevin Granger - Development Director
Hope David - Executive Secretary

*The time has come to commit all of
the Church's energies to a
new evangelization.
-Mission of the Redeemer*



Family Missions Company
Big Woods Mission
12624 Everglade Road
Abbeville, LA 70510-0384



U.S. Postage
PAID
Non-Profit Org.
Permit #222
Perry, LA 70575

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Oratorio Grande - An awesome evening of prayer with our Rancho friends of over 23 years