

# SERVE

To be engaged in missionary evangelism is “the greatest and holiest duty of the Church.” (Vat. II, *Missionary Activity*, 29)

Winter 2007  
Family Missions  
Company

## Our Missionaries Travel to India

### Surprised by God’s Goodness

by Sarah Summers Spiehler

Having been a missionary for most of my life now, I guess I didn’t really expect for India to be the surprise that it has been to me. In some ways, India had a comfortable familiarity about it. All the missionaries have commented that we felt at home in Mumbai, and it is true. The warm humidity feels like a South Louisiana summer; the spicy food, though different, is comfortable to our Cajun palates; the motorcycle “rickshaws” are similar to the “motorelas” I grew up with in the Philippines; and the harmonious voices of the children’s choir singing “Amazing Grace” at Sunday Mass remind me

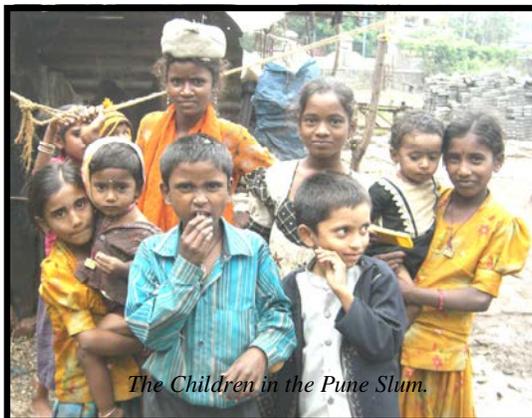
saris, lush greenery, a roaring ocean minutes from our accommodations, tall luxurious hotels surrounded by muddy streets where beggars sleep huddled with their children, naked babies gazing up at us with big brown eyes and shining smiles.

Finally, I have been surprised, once again, by how we can’t out-give God. When we brought food to Anil, a young crippled man begging in front of the Pastoral center, his smile and graciousness more than repaid our small charity. One morning, after Mass, we stopped to share our loose change and pray with a lovely elderly woman who had lost her foot to leprosy. As we visited in front of the church, she lovingly gave us all that she had – a blessing to each of us on our foreheads - smiling and making the sign of the cross with wizened hands. Yes, our God is an awesome God! When we say yes to Him and His love, then His people here in India and everywhere fill our lives with joyful surprises!

After a very blessed and fruitful week, we left Mumbai for Pune. Our visit at the end of the week to St. Catherine of Siena orphanage for street children was so moving. We were able to play with 240 kids, hug and kiss them, tell them that Jesus loved them, that their Father is the King of Kings and that we are one family. The love we received in return brought us to tears.

Mumbai was so amazing that I didn’t think God could make the last part of our mission – our time in Pune - even better, but He did. Praise Jesus! One of my favorite verses in the Bible, Jeremiah 29:11 begins “For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord.” We went on the mission to India trusting in the truth of that verse, having no real plans of our own, and God used us in beautiful ways.

As we walked along the bridge leading to our accommodations in Pune from the train station, my heart was crying out to the Lord. I was longing to



*The Children in the Pune Slum.*

that I am always at home in our universal Catholic Church. Nonetheless, I was continuously surprised from the moment of my arrival in Mumbai. Surprised by Lenny and Nizel, young men who greeted us at the airport with incredible warmth and joy on behalf of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and moments later respectfully talked police officers out of asking us for a bribe, explaining that it was

against our Christian morals - what a brave example to us they are! I was thrilled by the crazy, mixed up beauty of this place: brilliant



### CALENDAR

Mission Formation  
Big Woods  
Every Wed.  
6:00 pm

2007 Intake  
Missionary Training  
Sept—Dec 10, 2007

Missionary  
Year End Review  
Dec. 4—8

Family Missions  
Company  
Donor’s Dinner  
December 9

### Short Term Missions

Medical Mission  
General Cepeda  
November 17-24

Guadalupe Trip  
General Cepeda  
December 11 - 19

Spring Trips:  
Thesians  
St. Pius X  
Covington

Summer Trips TBA



Pune Slum with Prienkha

(cont'd)

work in a slum, and had not yet even had the opportunity to visit one. Just as I finished my prayer, I looked down and saw a small group of lean-to huts built of tin and tarps in a dump area at the side of the bridge. I felt God calling me to minister to that little group of people.

That night at prayer before we headed out to speak at a charismatic prayer meeting, I suggested it to our mission team and they responded enthusiastically. We bought bread and cookies and made bags to hand out to the families. We imagined that few more than 6 or maybe seven families could live in so few huts, but thankfully Joseph thought to make twenty bags. God

is good, because when we arrived, there were exactly 20 families living there! We walked up and were warmly greeted by some men sitting with their sons. Slowly, the women and children also began to approach us. We handed out the bags of food and they were generous to one another in ensuring that each family received one bag. We said simple phrases in Hindi like "Jesus loves you," and gave out holy cards and miraculous medals. They were so happy to receive it all. The children gathered around us excitedly, and we gave each a cookie and were repaid with beautiful smiles and giggles. After almost all of the cookies were handed out, a little girl about 11 years old came, and I gave her the last cookie. She divided it and shared it with her little friend who hadn't received one. Tears came to my eyes at this generosity.

That night, we went on a shopping trip and made more bags of food, which we distributed to the families the following day. Joseph was able to speak through a translator and tell them that Jesus loves them and that He sent us from the other side of the world to give to them and to love them. We taught the kids to sing "The Alleluia Shuffle" and they responded enthusiastically. The children hugged and kissed me joyfully and walked us to the gate waving goodbye.

The weight of the desperate need for the Gospel of Jesus remains in my heart since leaving India. Please pray for those families in the slum, for our friends in Mumbai and Pune and for all the people of India, that they will come to know the fullness of the truth and power of Jesus and His overwhelming love for them.



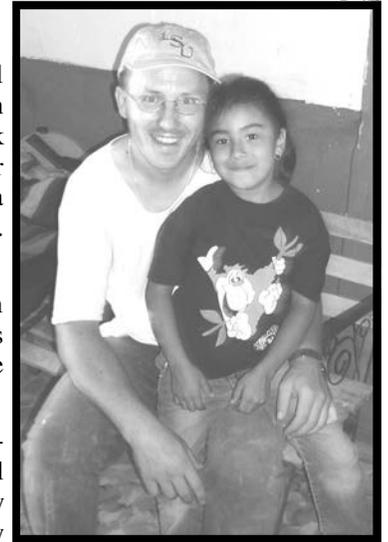
## Meet one of our new missionaries in training, Albert Zalewski from Czestochowa, Poland

### *Praised be Jesus Christ!*

I'm Albert Zalewski from Czestochowa city in Poland. I'm 31 years old, and I feel called to be a lay missionary. In order to realize this call, I have come to Louisiana to join FAMILY MISSIONS COMPANY. As a religious in the past, I had the opportunity to work among the poor in Czestochowa, and Italy, and the Philippines. Working among the poor and being involved in an evangelistic work for 12 years, I realized that my call is to be a missionary. I was searching for a lay Catholic missionary organization and I found FMC. Reading about them and their activities I realized they were exactly what I was looking for.

The thing that attracted me and convinced me to join them is that FMC focuses on PERSONAL HOLINESS and on PREACHING THE GOSPEL to the poor. After two years of communication with FMC and all the necessary preparations (documents, visa) I have finally come to the USA.

Now after almost half a year of being here, I do not regret my decision. I have already had an opportunity to go to Mexico on a short term mission, and I had a wonderful experience. From the very beginning God has been with me and He is giving me so many graces and blessings. HE IS GREAT!!! Right now I want to dedicate my life to missionary work, but before I will be sent, I will complete three months in Intake formation at Big Woods (ending early December).



Albert in General Cepeda, Mexico.

As a missionary, I must raise my own funds, so I am currently looking for benefactors. Please keep me in your prayers and if you feel God is asking you to support me in this work, I would greatly appreciate it.

You can contact FMC, or me personally at [zalewskijozef1@yahoo.com](mailto:zalewskijozef1@yahoo.com).

## Jacobo's Letter to His FMC Supporter

*(Jacobo is a seminarian in the Diocese of Coatzacoalcos in the state of Veracruz. He was first befriended by our missionaries in the year 2000. One of FMC's benefactors has helped him with his support ever since.)*



My dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

I greet you in the hope that you are all very well, enjoying the same happiness that the Father in heaven grants to me.

At this time, I want to share the happy news that I am already in the first year of theology. I want to acknowledge that you have been a part of this journey, attending to me in each moment.

All that I have been able to accomplish is by the work of the *Hand* that forms Its pupils. I am His pupil, and He knows that we are one as the Father and Jesus, are one.

I want you to know that all the sacrifices you have made on behalf of my spiritual journey has also been effort given to Christ. Jesus said "when they help one of the least of my brothers, you help Me". I have not lost hope that some day I can come to meet Mrs. Sylvia and her husband, Mr. George (Jacobo's benefactors), to be able to give them a big, strong hug of affection and love. I can't wait to tell them the great fruit that their kind attention, fixed on this poor person, and small lamb of the Good Shepherd, has borne. I want to tell them that I never cease asking God to meet their needs. I beg God to fill them and Family Missions Company, with overflowing love and grace.

I am one of five siblings. Our family struggles every day to respond generously to God, who has called me to His service to become a priest. I hope to bring the Gospel to be heard by those who don't have the opportunity to know the enormous heart of love that God has for them in Jesus Christ. If I were not in the seminary, I could work to contribute to the needs of my family. Now I have to rely on God, and they are happy to live more basically to offer me into God's Service

Now, I ask you to unite with me in prayer for my aunt who has a tumor in her lung. Her life is slipping away. I pray that God uses her suffering and gives her the courage each day to unite her sufferings to Christ's cross.

I close this letter sending a very big hug to everyone. May God bless you abundantly, may Mary, our Mother, cover you with her mantel and keep you strong.

*Your servant and God's seminarian,,  
Jacobo*

## Just Promise Me You'll Be There.

by Eric Baquet

For all who don't know me, I am Eric Baquet from Ville Platte, La. I came to FMC two years ago and have lived and served in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, India, London and Mexico. We learn when we are trained that when we become missionaries of Christ we must give up home, family and even give up having a place to lie down and rest: "*Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the son of man has no place to lie down and rest.*" (Mt. 8:20) Man, this year has showed me the truth of that!



In my first year I was blessed to have a long time to spend in ministry when I lived in the Philippines. I made great friendships and was blessed to see a lot of God's works being done there. I also got to do ministry in Malaysia and Singapore in that time. But all in all I had a lot of time to get to know the culture, the people, and just

be able to have a routine. At the end of the year I got to stay at Big Woods for the new Intake, to help out. It was a good time for me. I was able to study and build new friendships. It was great.

Now here I am near the end of the year and all I can say is WOW!! At the beginning of the year the Lord promised me a busy year but I had no idea. I fell like a bounce ball that the Lord just picked up and threw out at the world. In January I went to school for Spanish in Zacatecas, Mexico. After a month there I went to Allende, Mexico. I stayed there for three months, then the Lord called me to India. First we go to London and spend a week there helping St. Patrick's parish, then off to India. In two months, we went from the west side of India to the



east, stopping all along the way to minister to the poor and needy. MAN!! After that we got back to the US. I went to see my family for a week. Not even two days after I got back to BW (Big Woods), a friend and past mission partner emails me and asked me and another missionary if we could help with her youth group there in St. Louis, Missouri. So a week later we found ourselves there helping with the youth. When we got back it was time to go back to Mexico with the new Intake group, but because Sarah was leaving four days later and she would be alone, they asked me if I could go with her. So I did. Because I stayed back I got to go to Florida and go sailing. WOW!! After the trip to Florida we went to Dallas to see Sarah's sister, Susanna, and after that we hit it for Mexico, and here I am in Mexico.

In all the places I have been this year before I would go I would always have a lot of questions: Why am I going? What will I do? etc. And what the Lord told me was "*I will give you what to say, and what to do, JUST PROMISE ME YOU'LL BE THERE!!*"



*"...and she gave birth to her first born son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn." Luke 2:7*

***“How great his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, his empire endures age after age!”*** (Daniel 3:33)



## WHO WILL GO?

by Joseph Summers

I met a young man named John this summer in India. John was the night watchman at the small apartment in Pune where we stayed. There were two things that stood out to me about John: his contagious smile and the small cross that hung from his neck. Slowly, over the few weeks we were in Pune, Eric, Neil (my mission partners) and I began to build a relationship with John as we came and went on our evening and night ministries. Our relationship developed slowly because John’s English was very limited, and my Hindi and Marati (the vernacular tongue) are laughable. One night, as the mission team was coming in from one of our outreaches, we began to speak to John about Jesus. John was raised in a Hindu village outside of Pune. He rides his bike to the Rhadika Empire apartment complex every night for work and makes the hour-and-a-half return journey by bicycle every morning.

There are no Christians in John’s village, and to most in John’s community (and in all of India for that matter) Jesus is just another god among the pantheon of deities. But the Holy Spirit is at work in all places, cultures and times, and He had begun to work in John’s heart. The Spirit had given him a hunger to know who Jesus was and the beginnings of a faith to accept Jesus as the One True God (which explained the cross around his neck). That night as we began to share with John about Jesus with excitement in our hearts, he asked: “Who is Jesus? What was He like? Where was He born? What was His life like? I want to know everything about Him!” John wanted to *meet* Jesus. We arranged for an opportunity to share with him while he was off duty, and relayed to him the saving truth of our God, His Son Jesus .and the glorious beauty of God’s love for man.

In the world today there are over six billion people, most of them are non-Christians. Many of them, like John, are waiting to meet Jesus. Maybe they have heard stories about Jesus, or even interacted with Christians, but as yet have not received a genuine invitation to meet the Lord; and nothing can replace the primacy of that invitation. St. Paul urges the Church in Rome to recognize this reality: “For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring (the) good news!’” (Rm. 10: 13-15). This summer I had the special privilege of being that invitation

for many in India. Our mission team was blessed with many opportunities, from direct preaching on the streets, to reaching out to beggars, through volunteering in Mother Theresa’s centers in Calcutta, and even in animating prayer groups and youth groups to reach beyond the confines of the Church to spread the Gospel in their own societies.

In India this summer I experienced the authentic joy of responding to the urgent demand of the Lord to “Go make disciples of all nations,” and returned with a conviction that the time is **NOW**. The Father’s heart aches for His children in India, He has sent His Holy Spirit to prepare their hearts for the sowing of the seed of the Kingdom. I can testify that the harvest is ripe, but it begs for laborers.

## WHO WILL GO?

*“Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shown around them and they were struck with great fear.”* Luke 2: 8 & 9



Youth Group in Pune



*"The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid for behold I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the City of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord." Luke 2: 10—11*



## Speaking Up

by Kristen Istre

Over the summer I was given an opportunity to go back to language school, this time in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Even though I was not in my mission base, I was still able to be a missionary! I took to heart the teaching of Mr. Frank about bringing the love of Christ into all conversations, and showing your love

for Christ in your actions.

I was asked about my work almost every day, from the people I least expected to be interested. They asked questions to make conversation, which is the best opportunity to say, "Hey you know what? God loves so much that He died for you: Now what are you going to do about that?"

Often times, I found people that want to talk to you for hours about how God changed their life, and they want to know how God changed yours.

One day, on my way home, I ran into a woman on the street that was asking me if I knew where the Jehovah's Witness Temple was. I said that I did not, and as she started to walk away. I stopped her to remind her that Jesus is our Lord and Savior, our King. She just smiled and said, "Oh...okay." That may not have done much, but that little seed could turn into something great. God can do amazing things! All you have to do is speak up and let people know the truth. Even if it is someone you have just met for the first time, or the person you say good morning to everyday. You don't have to leave your house or your town to be a missionary, all it takes is a little courage and love.

Thank you so much for all of your love and support. Your prayers are what get me through the days and keep me going through the night. I thank all those who have made donations to my missionary work.

**Speak of Him in all you do!**

# Luke Prejean, Brother to All

A local religious community, "Community of Jesus Crucified" had been Luke's spiritual home for several years. He was already surrendered to the service of the Lord with a full heart. Although he lived in community, taught catechism, and shared his faith with all, he still longed to be a missionary to carry the Gospel to those who were still waiting for a Savior.



After three months of training with Intake 2006, Luke lived and served with his missionary companions, Eric and (later) Neil in Allende, Mexico in the Diocese of Piedras Negras. He has understood the charism and call of FMC to be open to the itinerant lifestyle, to go where he is needed most, led by the Spirit to be "Jesus" in every situation. He has served happily and faithfully the many short term groups in General Cepeda, Allende, and Coatzacoalcos. George Holland very much needed a mission partner to participate in the mission while he prepared to take leave of Coatza, return home, and then find a new mission in Cuatro Ciénegas. He found Brother Luke to be a big help.

Luke also devoted several months helping a family move into a new home in Kansas City during his Summer furlough. Because of his background in missions and his ability to speak Spanish, Luke was able to work in the Hispanic Ministry near Kansas City. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Luke takes this example and finds people who need help. He cares for them. He gives one hindered percent of the time and effort to his projects. He shares his faith, finds new friends among the poor, he speaks God's Word, and sows the seeds of the Gospel.

He is a missionary, a brother to all.

# Jesus fulfills My Childhood Dreams

by Sheila Agresta



The streets of Calcutta are crowded and busy. There is a constant whirr of traffic, as pedestrians weave in and out of passing cars and taxis, bikes and rickshaws. And the ceaseless noise

of beeping horns and ringing bells echo through the roadways all day and into the night. But not in the early morning.

In the mornings, just after sunrise, the streets are calm and quiet, still sleeping. At this hidden hour the five of us missionaries would rise each morning, and walk the 15 minutes to the Missionaries of Charity Mother House. We would begin our day with the celebration of the most holy Mass.

I have long had a deep desire to travel to India, and particularly Calcutta, as a missionary. As a child, I was greatly inspired by Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, a saint of our day. Actually, I attribute much of my missionary calling and zeal to this childhood heroine, and her total gift of self as a missionary to the poorest of the poor. Hence, when the opportunity arose for Bridget and me to join Joseph, Eric, and Neil for the last part of their mission in India, and travel with them to Calcutta, I knew it

to be a gift to my heart from JESUS. He who knows my heart so well wanted to bless me and change me, and encour-



age me in mission. I was warned by friends and strangers alike what to expect in Calcutta, and to be sure, the poverty was unlike any I have yet seen in my missionary journeys. But nothing could prepare me for the great joy and beauty I found in India.

Our typical day began with Mass, followed by a simple breakfast of bread, banana, and chai tea, provided by the Missionaries of Charity for their volunteers. We would then catch a bus to *Prem Dan (Gift of Love)*, a home for around 400 sick men and women, where we scrubbed floors, washed clothes, and mostly attended to the patients themselves in their everyday needs. This daily service required a lot of energy, patience, and a sincere, deep love. But I believe by beginning our days in this way, we oriented ourselves to the Indian people in the way that Christ Himself would have it. After all, “the Son of Man

came to serve and not to be served,” and we want to imitate Him. Though exhausted by our full mornings, we were rewarded by meeting Jesus in “His distressing disguise of the poor” (as Mother Theresa was known to say), and by a life-giving joy. With this joy we were able to go into the streets each evening to spread the Gospel and speak the Name of Jesus.

Jesus told His disciples, “No greater love has one than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” And the Lord Himself

showed the depth of His love by doing exactly that, by giving His life freely for you and for me. As we walked the streets of



India, and especially as we went out in the evenings to evangelize, I was struck by this awesome reality: Jesus loves and longs for each one of the Indian people PERSONALLY. And with this came the conviction that there is no greater gift that I can give than the Gospel, free of charge, without strings, expecting no reward. Each night, we were amazed as

crowds gathered to hear us sing praises to the Lord, and then share the basic message of Salvation. We were met with many varying responses, as some dismissed what we said, and others were hungry to know more. But what I saw in the many faces collected around us was an eternal truth etched by the Creator... Who made us for His own pleasure that we might know, love and serve Him with our lives.

Our mission in India, in both our works of charity and evangelization, confirmed in me my own mission, as a baptized believer, to make Jesus known to the ends of the earth. As a friend of Jesus, I am being called to lay down the life I would live, and to give my life instead to the preaching of the Gospel. There are so many people living in the world today who do not yet know with what great love they have been created, and to what a great height they

have been invited by Jesus. In the thronging streets of India there is a plentiful harvest. That the Lord would count me among His laborers there was a blessed



gift; I was deeply humbled and grateful. I pray that many more missionaries would be called to India, and that, God willing, in time I may return to this beautiful mission field.

## BIBLE READING (Lectio Divina)

by: Frank Summers



Time and again I realize that an authentic and fruitful spiritual life for people in our world today requires Bible reading and study. We insist that all FMC missionaries establish a daily habit of personal quiet prayer, with Bible reading.

Nothing speaks to us as fully as the Book written by God Himself. He mentions everything, and the Spirit has a way of letting us read just what we need to know, just when we need to learn or remember it.

The Bible teaches what the Bible means. To understand the Bible, keep reading — read every part—ponder what it says in your heart and look for answers.

We teach our missionaries to use a Bible Concordance, and Bible Commentaries and Dictionaries. We do a careful study of *The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* (Vatican II), and sections in the Catholic Catechism dealing with Sacred Scripture. (And we ask our missionaries to read the entire Catechism, and to be prepared to refer to it when studying and teaching Church doctrine.)

We understand the Bible when we read a passage in our family and community prayer times, and each of us shares what we hear the Lord saying to us. It is astonishing what truths are revealed and what encouragement we receive from “breaking open” the Word of God and sharing its “bread of life”. We learn what Jesus wants to teach us, and we learn to share God’s word with others. Our faith, grows and we become able to minister and serve the Lord, each according to his/her gifts and preparation.

Catholic laity are called to evangelize and sanc-tify our world today, everywhere. This apostolate requires that we turn to the Holy Bible and engage in Lectio Divina.

The Word carries in Himself the grace to transform the reader and hearer, to transform the lives of all God’s children, and to establish God’s Kingdom on earth.

**Read it! Meditate on it prayerfully, as in dialogue with the Lord. Learn it! Live it! Speak it! Pray the Psalms!**



## Intake 2007

(L-R) Front: Sarah Kosnosky, from De Pere, Wisconsin; Colby Dupré, Vinton, La; Ashley Hebert, Ville Platte, La; Center: Albert Zalewski, Czestochowa Poland; Jen Sonnier, Branch, La; Holly Luczak, Austin, Texas; Top: Chris Alexander, Austin, Texas; Anthony Luczak, Rocky Hill, Ct.

On September 8, the birthday of our Blessed Mother, missionaries began FMC’s Intake 2007 Formation. They arrived eager and zealous to proclaim Jesus to the ends of the Earth. This year, six singles and one family entered our formation of three months. These three months include three weeks of missionary service at our training base in General Cepeda, Coahuila, Mexico and nine weeks of intense prayer, study, community, service and evangelism at our Home Base in Big Woods Mission, Abbeville, LA. For Frank and Genie Summers, and other staff leaders, it is always a blessing to see the transformation that takes place in the lives of these aspiring missionaries. Their surrender and commitment inspire us. By the time December 8th rolls around, the Intake 2007 group is prepared to start their lives in foreign mission service. We see their hearts become missionary hearts, and their lives filled with zeal for the Gospel. We confidently send them forth in Jesus’ name.

Quotes from some of them about Intake 2007.

**Sarah Kosnosky:** “Intake has been an amazing blessing to me! Through it, Jesus has confirmed His call to a life in missions, taken me back into the center of His heart, and begun to train me as His soldier! Praise You, Jesus.”

**Chris Alexander:** “I used to think mission was impossible, but, now, going through Intake 2007, I know mission is possible.”

**Jen Sonnier:** “Intake has been such a blessing and God has truly revealed His plan for me.”

**Albert Zalewski:** “Intake has been a huge experience of God’s love and joy, resulting from our mission friendship.”

**Ashley Hebert:** “Intake has been the most amazing experience of finding myself and living out my vocation while growing deeper in knowledge and faith of our awesome and mighty God. All the while, He is using us to be a bright light to His people!!!”

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” Luke 2:14



## One Lord

by Neil Doherty



*"One LORD. One Faith. One God and Father of all."* (Eph 4:5-6) This is what we proclaim. To a world suffocated in its search for an endless number of new and better things, we proclaim one thing: an unchanging, eternal, mad-deningly wonderful

God. A God whose vision brings fascination, a Consuming Fire before Whom we must take off our sandals and be still - the only God worthy to be called God.

I began proclaiming our one, holy, Catholic and apostolic faith as one of General Cepeda's full time missionaries this past March. The privilege was given to me to share the name of Jesus with our brothers and sisters in faith there and to speak of "that salvation which is greater in its marvels than the creation of the entire world" (First Prayer during the Easter Vigil paraliturgy). It was a joyous, exciting and blessed 3 months of ministry among the treasured people of Mexico. Almost every night I would step into one the small *capillas* (chapels) in General's desert landscape and immediately be at home because of the One Faith that makes total strangers beloved sons and daughters of the One God.

While I was there, I felt the Lord moving me in times of prayer toward the thought of doing work in India, and sure enough, within two days of asking the Lord to confirm that wildly irrational sense, Joseph Summers called me to ask if I would join him in his summer mission to the people of India. The state of Goa, where I find myself now writing this article is the place in which St. Francis Xavier, co-patron of missionaries, spent the majority of his time in zealous, sacrificial service of the Gospel. One thing had gripped the heart and soul of this man - a burning love for Christ Crucified that after college launched him into a lifestyle of kissing the poor, casting out demons, and crying out in fervent prayer for the Indian subcontinent to know the one true God. His one life, spent in near-constant service to those in Asia whom Christ died to redeem, bore the fruit of over 30,000 people receiving baptism at his hands.

In our own outreach here in India, the mantra of those we have spoken to about Jesus has been "All gods are one." By this people mean to inform us that "All religions are equal; worshipping Jesus is one option but it really doesn't matter what you believe" - startlingly similar to what one hears when they share the Gospel with North Americans. Yet in contrast to the self-contradictions the world calls wisdom, those of us who are in Christ proclaim a different message: "There is no god but One." (1 Cor 8:4) He is the only one who is Good (Matt 19:17) - not only by essence, but by comparison. Alongside Him, every other good, every other beauty is dust blowing away into nothingness. All the motion and force in the universe is a drop of water spinning wildly in the tornado of His divine might. He is gloriously, fully GOD - the only one who ever could be - and our faith proclaims His radical supremacy over

everything else that would set itself up as a substitute for Him.

I have believed in and declared my belief in one God ever since I encountered Christ in my teenage years. The church parishes I have been a part of, despite their occasional shortcomings, have never come out in favor of worshipping other gods instead of the one who is truly God. Yet, since arriving in India, I have come to fear that the Hindu people will see in us ("the Christians") that we have monotheism on our lips but polytheism in our hearts. I fear they will recognize that while we claim to worship one God, the consummate love that is due Him *alone* finds itself prostrate before a pantheon of other desires that steal the vibrancy of our devotion to Jesus. I'm afraid that the seed of Christianity has fallen on good soil around the world, and even grown into large numbers of church-attending faithful, yet a multitude of "the cares and pleasures of this world" (Mark 4:19) are slowly, ever so slowly, choking the Word within us and preventing it from bearing the fruit of the whole world coming to know Jesus in a personal way.



Whether we live in the States or in some foreign land, we are forced to choose whether Jesus will be the "one thing necessary" (Luke 10:42) or whether He will fade into the background as just one god among the many that define how we live. The task of truly missionary living (and by "missionary" I mean "Christian") is not just to put Jesus above certain things but to put Him as **Everything**. No one can honestly claim to be missionary if he lives in the fuzz between serving God and serving his own self-interest. Ultimately, we are either for Him or against Him; being gathered into Him or blown away from Him (Matthew 12:30). Yet, to so many, the idea of actually seeking just one thing (Psalm 27:4) - **Jesus**, not popular recognition, not perfect health, not a promotion, not a lifestyle of gluttony for personal entertainment - seems radical and foreign, even unrealistic. Many times we are given the impression that it isn't so costly to follow Jesus, that our "little gods" of worldly cares are compatible with Christian living and that we can serve Jesus Christ while fulfilling the vast majority of our own desires and whims. I found myself saying to my mission partners while we were still on our way to India that I felt like God wanted to give us a crash course in what Christianity really is - precisely because if I'm honest, many times I've settled for something less than the real thing.

Our Holy Father and heavenly intercessor John Paul II wrote to us at the turn of the century: "*Since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity.... The time has come to re-propose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction.*" (Novo Millennia Ineunte, n. 31) The simple Gospel **is** that high standard of ordinary Christian living, and it must be proclaimed and proposed anew if man is to

## One Lord (continued)

have "life, and life to the full" (John 10:10), the eternal life summed up in knowing, in an intimate relationship, the one true God and Jesus Christ who was sent to reveal Him (John 17:3).

I for my part don't want to pass away the life I have been given or live according to the minimalist ethic of giving everything to Jesus until it's uncomfortable," or doing just enough to keep my conscience at bay and no more. I want to really know the one, true God who is the song sung by the martyrs in their final agony, who is the delight of the mystics in prayer, and who is now the eternal ecstasy of those brought into their heavenly home.

Could anything be worthwhile that limits us in any way from catching a glimpse of this God who is Love and Beauty and Goodness itself? Could anything stop us, once seeing Him, once

tasting of His Goodness (Psalm 34:8), from living in such a way that the world would be intoxicated by his incomparable glory?

We who believe in "*one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all*" (Eph 4:6) need to open our hearts in this season of "Ordinary Time" and allow the high standard of the Gospel to challenge us once again. To "*live only, all for Jesus,*" as Mother Teresa would say, is demanding, but there can be nothing more rewarding than to give all for Him who is All.

Neil Doherty is currently serving the LORD and His people in northern Mexico with Eric Baquet after spending the summer in India. The two are praying about starting a new mission outpost in Sabinas, Mexico, but are presently in General Cepeda assisting with the formation of this year's missionary Intake. He wishes everyone knew the joy of giving their lives to Jesus.

## Moving Mountains - Faith Camp 2007

by Sarah Summers Spiehler

This summer at our Big Woods mission base, Faith Camp celebrated 11 years of bringing Jesus in a powerful way to Junior High and High School students. I served for the first time as co-coordinator of Faith Camp, thankfully with the experienced and inspiring help of John Paul, who has coordinated the camp for many years. As always, we had a full house with over 150 campers, from grades 7-9, and staff, ages high school and up. At Faith Camp, fun, games, and fellowship are enjoyed side by side with inspiring teaching and sharing in small groups about Jesus and His call on our lives.

The theme for this year was "Moving Mountains," a theme John Paul and I were inspired to use because of the promise that Faith can overcome any obstacle. Youth in America today are constantly presented with an unprecedented number of worldly temptations, misleading examples, and false information about who they are and should become. Only the power of Jesus can move those mountains in their lives and call them to reject sin, choose holiness, and follow Him with their whole hearts, souls, and



lives. What

a blessing it was to watch as the Holy Spirit showed up and touched the campers and staff, helping them to grow into more mature Christians, ready to confront mountains in their lives, and be like Jesus.

Faith Camp would not be possible without the generous support of many donors, speakers, and volunteers. We are so grateful for all of you! Please keep the campers and staff in your prayers as they try to live the faith they so excitedly embraced this summer.

**Faith Camp** is available for: Campers (grades 6-9), Disciples (10th grade), and Staff (11th grade & up). For more information please go to our web site.

[fmcmissions.com](http://fmcmissions.com)



*“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son and they shall name Him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’” Matthew 2:23*

## The Testimony of A Foreign Missions Survivor

by Monica Bollich

When some people hear about foreign mission trips, they come up with instant images of horrible living conditions, terrible diseases, sleeping on the dirt floor with no blankets, being chased through a jungle by wild savage beasts or angry natives. The list goes on. But those who get this picture must believe me that not all mission trips are like that. In fact, very many mission trips turn out to be the complete opposite of what I have just described. I, Monica Bollich, have been on not one, but two mission trips, so I can testify to this truth. I am 14 years old and I have just been on an extremely fun and rewarding mission trip down to Coatzacoal-



back from the work site (they were building a house all week), things got really fun because we had a youth group gathering at the church.

We watched a movie called the Cross and the Switchblade (I highly recommend this movie just in case you haven't seen it yet), and then just hung out. Tuesday the men went to work on the house that they were building, while Madison and I got them drinks. That night a guy and his friend came to fix little

George's drum. They ended up staying to visit and also to play the drums. That night was really nice because we just relaxed and watched them play music and sing. Also, a little dude got up and started dancing for a little while, so that was pretty cool as well. (Just to mention it, that little dude is also very good at break dancing. So if you are ever in Mexico and want to see something cool, look him up.) On Wednesday, while the men were at work, Madison and I made signs that would announce that we were having praise and worship on Thursday. That night the guy with the drums came again to visit and to tighten the drum. On Thursday, we had another Praise and Worship night and also gave our testimonies. That wasn't exactly fun since you are supposed to get up and talk in front of everybody, but it is still cool.

On Friday, our week there was coming to an end so we had something called *Dessert Day*. Dessert Day is when you go to some naturey place to spend time with God, and try to understand what He wants of you. For our Dessert Day, we got to go to a waterfall! I will just say right now, that if you ever want to hear God saying something, go to a waterfall. He speaks so clearly there that it is just amazing. While we were there, we ate lunch and then

played around in the water, after that we went off by ourselves and listened to God. After about an hour, we met together, and shared what we had gotten out of our hour of waiting. When we were done with sharing, we packed ourselves back into



the car and drove to the house to get ready to leave on Saturday.

Now although this may not sound like much of a mission trip, there is much more that happened than what I can put down on paper. The Holy Spirit was really working in our group of men (plus me and Madison). I think that we have all been changed in some way. I for one, got something out of Dessert Day that makes me think that God is calling me to stand out in the crowd. He is calling me to be more than the girl who just follows along. I believe He is calling me to be a leader. And now I am ready to go on another mission trip.



cos, Mexico. The mission trip was for men and boys only and it lasted one week. Now, I am not a man, so don't start thinking that. The only reason that I was able to accompany the men on this mission trip was because the Holland family, who are missionaries there, have a daughter named Madison, and since her mother was in the US in preparation for another baby, Madison would have been the only girl there. Since we couldn't let this happen, I was the kind and loving friend who happily volunteered for the job of feminine support.

We started the mission trip very well with no problems from customs officials when our plane landed. And when we got to the Holland's house, what do you know, I didn't have to sleep on a hard dirt floor. In fact, I got to sleep in a remarkably comfortable bed and I have never slept better in all my life, despite the fact that they didn't have AC.

Of course, I don't want to bore you with every single detail of my trip, I will just tell you some of the most interesting things that happened. First on Sunday, I sang in Madison's youth group choir for Mass, but I didn't sing very loud because I didn't know the songs - and they were in Spanish! Then on Sunday night, we had a Praise and Worship night. By this point I had song sheets so I could follow along with the songs we sang. It was very fun even though only a few people came. On Monday after the men got

## What It Means To Truly Serve In Missions

by Madison Holland



Sometimes I catch myself thinking, "What does it really mean to be a Missionary?" I know the common ideal that people associate missions with is preaching the Gospel to Indian tribes or giving medical aid to African children. Sure, that's one aspect of the bigger whole. But there is more. I believe what it truly means to



serve God in missions is surrendering myself to His will and just doing whatever He has me doing to the best of my capabilities: Welcoming a person that I don't particularly like and being kind to them; accepting chores and tasks that need to be done with a good attitude; looking for the way in each moment to

serve God in the best way possible.

I think to be a missionary I need to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit; too often have I felt the urge to befriend someone, say a kind word, or help someone, and done nothing. If I do not participate fully in what God has called me to do, am I really fulfilling my vocation? I think the best way to be a Missionary, in foreign lands or in our own country, is to be open, aware of the world and people surrounding us, and ready to do whatever it takes to serve God in every moment. A willing spirit! I pray for a willing spirit for all God's missionaries, for all His servants. Amen.



**M**y heart is with missions  
**I**t's the main part of me  
**S**owing the seeds that God tells me to  
**S**inging His Praise all day through  
**I**n His Name we go to the world  
**O**n the adventure to get His Name told  
**N**ailing all the evil down  
**S**o that God's justice can be found  
 -Anonymous Mission Kid

## Meet our Newest Missionaries!!

**Paul Gabriel Holland**

**August 22 at 2pm**

**10 lbs 7oz**

**22 inches long**



**We thank God for blessing us once again and for sending another miracle for us to love and raise.**

**Peace and Love,**

**George and Elizabeth Holland**

**Madison, Matthew, George, Joseph, James, Stephen and Margaret**

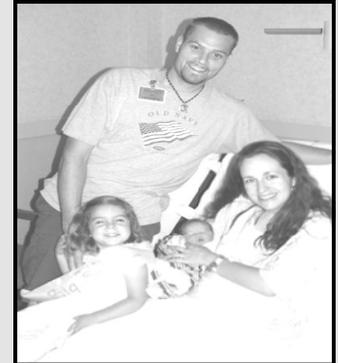
**Anthony Joseph Brown**

**August 30, 2007**

**Happily Welcomed By**

**Kevin and Andrea**

**Big Sister Maria**



**Anthony is a special blessing, our newest missionary!**

## Keep our Babies on the Way in Your Prayers:

**Cecila Hindelang — Chris and Mary Hindelang**

**Baby Luczak — Anthony and Holly Luczak**

**Baby VanVickle — Michael and Susanna VanVickle**

**Baby Zalewski — Miriam Zalewski (Albert's sister)**

**Baby Alexander — Lauren Alexander (Chris's sister)**



"When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage" Matt 2:1

## Our Path to Family Missions Company

By Lori Harvey

My husband, Russ, and I were first introduced to the missionary life of FMC last April when we were blessed to go on a short-term mission trip to Allende, Mexico with Father Randy Moreau and Our Lady Queen of All Saints Catholic Church in Ville Platte, Louisiana. I had heard of FMC when I attended the Lafayette Charismatic Conference about 5 years ago. Russ heard about them when Dennis and Florence Crain came and gave an update on the work they were doing in Allende with the support from our church. When my husband asked if I wanted to go on the trip for Easter, I was excited. I had secretly wanted to be a missionary ever since I heard about FMC. (I have also been supporting Maryknoll Missionaries for more than 15 years.)

I don't think anyone is ever prepared for the Graces God has in store when you go on a mission trip. Everyone says that you always receive more than you give to the Mexican people. I just wasn't prepared for the ways in which the Lord lavished me with His Graces. My most memorable moment from that trip was when I was praying over several of the elderly at the Nursing Home. I came to pray over this one man and as I knelt down to pray over his feet, after a few moments, he bent over and placed his hands on top of my head. The revelation was instantaneous!! I knew I was at the feet of Jesus!! I felt like Mary Magdalen washing Jesus' feet with my tears. The joy and love I felt was indescribable!! I not only felt Jesus' love for me but also His love for the people in that nursing home. As I prayed over each person He revealed to me the kind of healing that person needed. I went from just a casual observer to being intertwined with these wonderful people in Jesus' Sacred Heart. To this day I still have a special place in my heart for all of them.

I so enjoyed my first mission trip that I was excited to be able to go back for the week of Thanksgiving. My husband didn't go because the previous mission trip had been very difficult for him to handle. He told me that every moment I was gone he wanted to be there but just didn't think he was being called to mission life.

After the Thanksgiving trip, Russ and I went to FMC's Wednesday night Mission Formation at Big Woods. Russ enjoyed it so much he said he wanted to go every week. While I have joined several prayer groups over the years, he has never found one that he felt comfortable attending (except our monthly couple's meeting at Our Lady Queen of All Saints). I was so excited!! I wanted him to experience the spiritual growth you experience when you share the Word with others in a community. So we started to go to Mission Formation on a weekly basis.

As time went on Mr. Frank and Ms. Genie asked us what we thought the Lord had planned for us and FMC. Both of us felt that due to our many health problems a foreign mission post would be impossible. So we told them the only thing we were sure of was that for right now, Wednesday night Mission Formation was where we needed to be. We did have our house up for sale and were planning to buy a RV and travel around the US for a while before our health became too difficult for this to happen.

Our joy and spiritual lives grew and we hardly ever missed Wednesday nights. Russ and I would often share with each other how we wanted to live at Big Woods, strengthen our

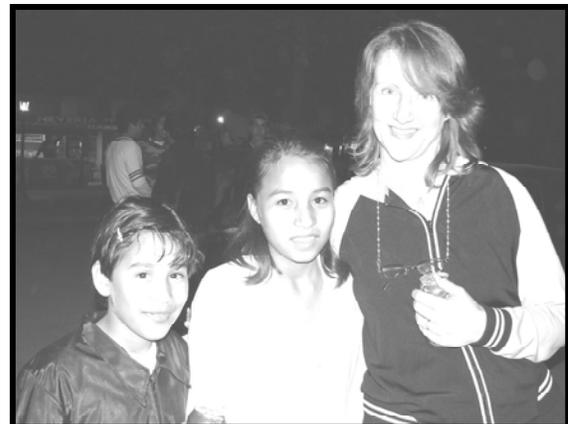
prayer life, and daily participate in such a loving spirit-filled life. We just didn't know how to ask Frank and Genie, who we had known only a few months if we could move on to their property and live there? In prayer one day I said to the Lord, "Well, Jesus, if it was their idea for us to live there, maybe that would make it easier for us."

I am sure most of you know how AWESOME OUR GOD is, because the very next week, Frank asked if he could talk to Russ and me. He said that he and Genie had talked and wanted to know if we would want to park our RV on their property. I could help in the office and Russ could help with cooking and around the yard. Russ and I were speechless!!! Inside I was saying, PRAISE GOD. Of course we'll come!!! But we told him we would pray about it and give him an answer the next week. Russ and I were so excited!!!

Needless to say, the next week we told the Summers that this had been our greatest desire and prayer. We would commit to coming, but we needed prayers to sell our house. We had put our house on the market on August 2006, and it was now the end of April, 2007. So we all prayed and Frank specifically asked that we would receive a good price for our house. This was on a Wednesday, and three days later a man who had looked at the house previously came back for a second look. On Monday, we had a contract for our asking price!! Praise You Jesus!! We then prayed that this man would sell his house in Suffolk, Virginia, and for all of this to take place so Russ and I could move to Big Woods as soon as possible. Yes you guessed it, not even two weeks later he sold his house in Virginia. This was a true miracle because he did not have it on the market yet, and the Northeast is experiencing a soft real estate market!! Everything could not have gone smoother, and we closed on August, 3.

The way in which God is answering our prayers in such an intimate and personal manner will hopefully encourage you to ask God for whatever it is that you desire. He tells us that He will answer all of our prayers. And if your desire is to serve Him there is no limit on the possibilities your life can have. I would never have dreamed that Russ and I, after 25 years of marriage, would be selling all that we have and moving into a small RV to help with Catholic Missionaries. But I can not think of anything else I would rather be doing. Jesus really knows our hearts. I wish I would have depended on His Will earlier in my life, but I know that now I am where he wants me to be.

So when you call or come to Big Woods, you will see two new faces, ready and willing to Serve Him however he wants us too!! We both pray that you will Listen to His Call, for He Does have a Specific Call for each of us!! Our Love goes out to all of you!!



**Summer  
2007  
Missionary**  
By Ben Niland

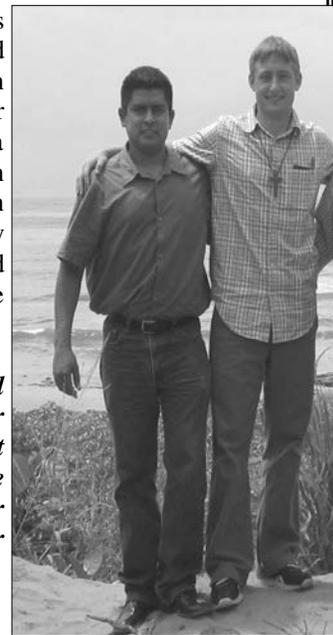
This past spring I found myself making summer plans before graduating from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Originally, my plans were to spend the summer in Colorado where I would find work, vacation, and have a time of discernment as to what professional school I would enter in the near future. However, just before graduation I felt the call of the Lord on my heart to spend some time in service to Him and His people in Mexico. Through a homily at Sunday Mass, I was reminded that as a Christian I find most fulfillment in my life through giving myself, especially to the poor. And so within a matter of a week or two I found myself preparing to spend the month of July in Coatzacoalcos, Mexico with Mr. George Holland and his four oldest children. After being here for only one week, I can say with all my heart that it is well worth it and I am exactly where I am supposed to be. My time here has been filled with blessings and the Lord's presence in so many ways.

On the trip down and in our service here in Mexico, I have had time to contemplate my life as a Christian, and simply as a human being. I find a resounding theme running through my thoughts: I can feel this desire within myself to satisfy my own natural appetites for comfort, pleasure, ease of life, and being surrounded by people who can give me companionship and love. At the same time, I feel this desire to rise above the natural appetites for pleasure and happiness and find deeper and more lasting fulfillment through the gift of my life and myself. And I would say that this desire is supernatural, or divine. Being in Mexico, where on hand I see the lives of the rich and privileged in the Mexico City airport, and right beside them I see the lives of the poor and the missionaries who serve them, I cannot help but feel this rift that I experience between the natural and the supernatural, between the horizontal plane that we sometimes live on and the vertical plane that we strive for. And my short time here in Mexico has helped me to order these natural appetites in view of my call to be both natural and supernatural. I know that earthly pleasures and satisfactions are momentary and will pass away, but the fruit that is born through true service and the sowing of the Gospel will last forever.

But living this out daily is not always easy. And what I have experienced here in missions is that many times it can be pretty difficult. Sometimes I would much rather be in a comfortable place (with an air conditioner) with all the people that I love, enjoying good Cajun food and having a good old time. But Jesus has not called me to be "comfortable". And I know it is when I am holding the hand of a poor, crippled man in his warm Mexican home praying with him and his family that I truly find fulfillment in doing what I was created to do: serve the Lord with all my heart, soul and strength. It is in this present fulfillment and in light of faith, hope, and eternal reward that I hear the message of the Psalms, "Those who go forth weeping...will return with cries of joy."

My time here shows me that to truly live out our Christian faith, we must have a sure hope of heaven and contemplate eternity; thus does our work find its meaning and energy and love. I hope to return home after this month with a greater zeal and dedication to my call to be a saint, to work out my salvation "with fear and trembling". I hope to return with a greater openness to losing my life for the sake of the Kingdom and with a great appreciation for those who do.

***"Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?" – Matthew 16: 25-26***



Greetings and Blessings to all!

## Blessings for the Browns

The Browns are currently in Maryland, celebrating the arrival of our newest little missionary, Anthony Joseph! Anthony was born on August 30th and is a sweet, healthy and happy baby. Maria is very excited to be a big sister and helps Mommy and Daddy a lot with her baby brother. We are all enjoying the blessing of being near to family and friends at this special time.

While in Maryland, we have had the chance to help our local parish in various aspects of their Hispanic Ministries, including initiating a merge between LIFETEEN and Hispanic youth groups. Andrea has had the opportunity to speak at various events on missions awareness, and Kevin even traveled to Mexico with another parish to help lead a mission trip.

We anticipate returning to missions in January, once Anthony has had his initial vaccines and receives his passport. Please keep our family in your prayers and know that you are in ours as well!

...and behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them until it came and stopped over the place where the child was...on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh...- Matthew 2:9

## The Warmest of Greetings to Everyone!

by: George Holland

Before updating you on our mission work, we want to extend a special THANK YOU to everyone who has responded to our annual financial appeal. Your support is greatly needed and appreciated. There are many worthy causes to support, and we are honored that you consider our efforts among them.

Now for the update...It has been a month since we arrived in Cuatro Ciénegas de Caranza, Coahuila, Mexico (referred to here most often as Ciénegas). We did not know much about this area before arriving, but Ciénegas is turning out to be a great place to live and to be in missions.

Ciénegas (pronounced see-en-a-gus) is a beautiful little town set in the Sierras of northern Mexico with a population of about 20,000. The surrounding countryside is home to some amazing natural springs (called *pozas*) that attract a few tourists, both from Mexico and abroad, making this town a little more prosperous than some. The climate is dry and arid, and the annual rotation of seasons should be more like that of Louisiana, just a lot drier and a little cooler - a big climate change from Coatzacoalcos. The desert landscape is accented by beautifully contoured mountains which we can see from three sides of our house.

Speaking of Coatza, the people there and in the neighboring state of Tamasco are currently undergoing tremendous hardships due to the heavy rains and a break in the dike of a main river. Please keep them in your prayers and if possible consider supporting any aid programs you might encounter to help those people (one good one is Catholic World Missions at <http://www.kintera.org/TR.asp?a=bhKM3OMLjISKeJ&s=cgIT13MFKjKNIYNFLrF&m=frLQJ4NKljJZH>).

Our community here and others throughout Mexico are collecting and sending aid to their countrymen in the south.

We are living between two wineries on the northern edge of town. Our place is small, just two bedrooms and a bath, but very comfortable. As in Coatza, we are blessed with water challenges again. Apparently it is just our sector of town. The good news is God blessed us with some great neighbors who, with just the 2 of them and an extra water tank and a pump, are generously keeping us supplied with enough water for the 10 of us.

Our parish is called San Jose, the same as in Coatza, and there are 16 rural communities to serve in addition to Ciénegas. So between two priests, one who just recently arrived, a small congregation of sisters (4 of them), and an assortment of other volunteers and ourselves, we have a lot of ground to cover. Our work will be mostly in the rural communities, called ejidos, which are poor and isolated. Initially we will be working in four ejidos, two of which are about an hour away, one that is an hour and a half, and the fourth is a two and a half hour drive into the Sierras over some rough terrain.

After meeting with Padre Cesar, our pastor here, our initial work will be to take a census of all the Catholic families in these communities so as to come to better know them and their needs. We will then conduct classes needed to prepare the people for the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, and Marriage. We will also be distributing monthly teachings that include Bible studies and catechesis. We will be visiting each community about once every two weeks to carry out our work and will hold communion services when we are there. Because of their physical isolation and the lack of manpower within the Church, many of these people feel abandoned in their faith. We will do what we can to love them and show them the way to the Lord - the One who never abandons His children.

In addition to our neighbors, Cachito and German, we have made some instant friends in Baldemar and Leti and their daughter Sylvia and her husband Fernando. Balde and Leti were once very active in the church, but Balde's work of buying and selling horses and burros has kept him too busy to do much more than go to Mass. However, he is trying to work his way back into doing some ministry. Fernando has become a good friend of mine and is accompanying me some to the ejidos when he can. He is the church Sacristan and eager to do more work in ministry. Sylvia has a government job and they greatly desire to have children, although have



been unable to. Please pray for them.

All in all, it appears that the Lord has again brought us to a place where we can work with some amazing people and be a part of seeing a situation in great need made better.

Last week Matthew, George, and I went for a two day trip to Cuates de Australia, the furthest ejido. We left Monday morning and got back Tuesday evening. We were able to visit every family in the ejido and completed our

census. We also held a Celebration of the Word, which is an abbreviated Mass without communion. We sang, prayed, read from Scripture, I gave a reflection, and we prayed and sang a little more. We also distributed some clothes that Padre Cesar sent with us.

This week I went by myself for two days to another ejido, Las Palomas, completed the census, and again held a Celebration of the Word. Although my experience in these communities is limited so far, I have some initial impressions to share. Cuates has about 20 families and Palomas about 40, and there are a number of vacant houses in each ejido, although I have been told that the number of families has remained about the same in recent years. As the children grow up, it looks like maybe one out of 4 stays. The rest move to the bigger towns. All of the men in these two ejidos harvest a plant called Candelilla. All the women work in the home. The plant grows wild in the desert and the mountains and is harvested and processed and used in a number of ways - from food additives to industrial applications. The men leave early in the morning and return in the late afternoon, gathering the Candelilla by hand, and bringing it back to the ejido. There they extract the *cera* from the plant by submersing it in boiling vats of water. The *cera* rises to the top of the water and is skimmed off and put to cool and harden. It is then packaged and held for a buyer who comes once a month.

There are small school houses in each community for grades 1-8, staffed by two or three teachers who arrive on Monday and leave on Friday. All of the houses are made of adobe and are very modest. Most have 2-3 rooms. One is the kitchen. There is a community store stocked with some non-perishables and someone comes every 1-2 weeks with produce and other goods to sell. There is no electricity. Most, but not all, houses have small solar panels that provide them with enough power to run lights for a limited period of time in the evening and maybe a radio during the day. Some houses have gas stoves, but all of them have wood burning stoves to cook. I have broken bread with several different families and the meals are almost the same: Handmade flour tortillas (yum!), beans, and jalapeno peppers. At every meal. There is a little variety beyond that, but not much. They rarely have meat. They say beans are their meat.

Water is scarce but adequate. They have *estanques* (like a small pond) that receive rain water from the surrounding mountains, when it rains that is. Then they have a pump and water lines. The pump is turned on once a week and people can filled barrels, etc. Otherwise, they can haul water by hand. In Palomas they have a purification system to produce clean drinking water, but not in Cuates. Some people get drinking water from town and others drink the water from the *estanques*.

Outsiders are accepted cautiously. There have been too many people that either come and leave and never come back, or that come and take advantage of the people and then leave and never come back. So while I have encountered some that are friendlier than others, it will take some time to gain their trust. They are not hostile in any way. In fact, they are very peaceful. There appears to be very little drinking among the men, due to a great extent to the lack of access to beer and alcohol, and I have not encountered any single parent homes.

We are all well.

[hollands@createpoint.com](mailto:hollands@createpoint.com)

### *In Loving Memory of*

- |                              |                             |                     |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| ~ Captain Sean Lyerly        | ~ Bill Stonecipher          | ~ May Duhon         |
| ~ Sam Emerson                | ~ Claudia Morton            | ~ Clovis Duhon Jr.  |
| ~ St. Joseph Catholic Church | ~ Edward and Editha Hollier | ~ Gerturde Plochman |
| Their deceased parishioners  | ~ Janet Hoffpauir           | ~ Gladys Harson     |
| ~ Michael & James Reek       | ~ Remy Hebert               | ~ Lorraine Sirmon   |

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

### **Give to FMC for Christmas**



**Remember us in your Christmas giving. Our insurance and administration funds are dangerously low.**

**Merry Christmas and God Bless you during this most holy time of the year.**

*Staff & Family of FMC*

***In Honor of***  
*~ Peggy and Mike Melancon*

### **Do You Need Speakers?**

***Conferences, Retreats, Seminars,  
Parish Missions:***

Family Life, Holiness, Mission, Lay Apostolate  
Contact Frank and Genie Summers

### **Some Family Missions Company Statistics:**

- Over 330 short term missionaries are sent out each year
- 5000 + hours of mission instruction and formation are given each year
- 31 full time missionaries serving this year
- Over 5000 hours of volunteer time donated to FMC this year
- Hundreds attended retreats and conferences where FMC ministered
- Thousands of prayer hours by FMC missionaries for the spread of the Gospel
- The circulation of Serve is over 5000 in all 50 states and some territories
- Scores of houses for the poorest of the poor repaired and built
- Hundreds of families fed, clothed, and assisted with medical needs

### ***Prayer***

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

Remember:

***Jesus Loves You!!!***

### **CONTACT US:**

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

Visit our Web-Site:  
**www.fmcmissions.com**

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frank@fmcmissions.com

### **Big Woods Mission Staff:**

Frank Summers—Executive Director  
Genie Summers—Development Director  
Elizabeth Edwards—Bookkeeper/Database  
Elizabeth Hollier - Executive Secretary  
Lori Harvey—Missionary Coordinator



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



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*May the love of Christ be with you during this Christmas Season,  
and may you keep Him close to you all the year through.*