

SERVE

SUMMER
2013



LUIS AND FRIENDS IN COTUNDO, ECUADOR



UPCOMING EVENTS

MISSION
FORMATION
WEDNESDAYS
6:30 PM
OUR LADY OF THE
BAYOUS RETREAT
HOUSE

INTAKE 2013
SEP 16-DEC 11

PROCLAIM
CONFERENCE
OCT 18-20
LAFAYETTE, LA

UPCOMING TRIPS

PICOTA, PERU
AUG 2-11

GENERAL CEPEDA, MX
NOV 23-30

GENERAL CEPEDA, MX
JAN 2-9

THE MISSION IS URGENT

by Luis Blanco

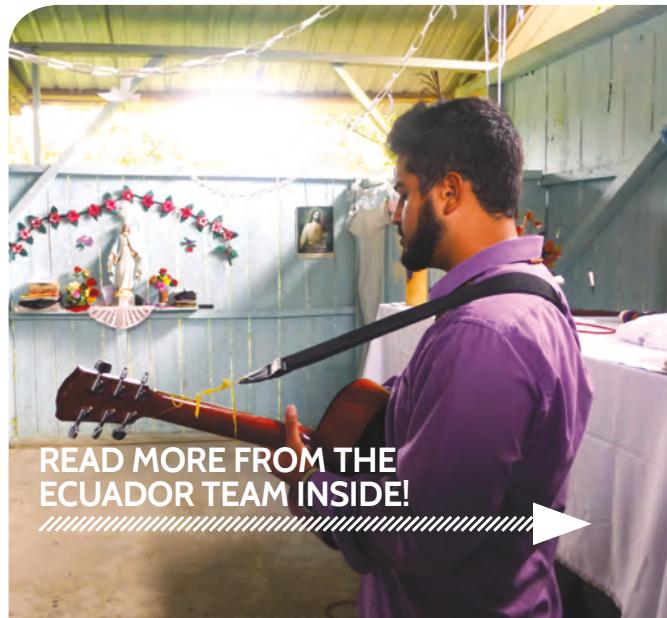
I have been thinking about writing this article for quite some time now. Today seems like the perfect time. I have been back in the States for a week now. I was in Ecuador for five and a half months. My time in Ecuador really opened up my eyes to the urgency of missions and being back home confirmed this urgency. The Mission of the Church is more urgent than it was in the past. Today the harvest is greater, and the laborers are fewer (Luke 10:2). Today there are 7 billion people out there that need Jesus. If a person dedicated themselves to evangelizing two people everyday, it would take them more than a million years to reach everyone!! Simple math makes it easy to see how urgent this mission is. I invite everyone to take a look at their lives and ask, "How am I working for this laborious and hard mission?"

During my time in Ecuador, I saw the need for people willing to take responsibilities in the different basic ministries a parish must cover. Since there were only a few laborers, Father, Ryan, Matthew and I had to lead four youth groups, prepare for the sacraments in the home parish and in the 70 surrounding communities. We would visit the sick and the families. We had a children's group and we also went to the communities for Mass. In all these different ministries we were the main guys. If for some reason we could not go, the people would not have the formation or the talk that they needed to hear.

I want to stop here and make a point. If we did not go then no one else would. How many other parishes are suffering for lack of workers? What is stopping us from going to proclaim the Kingdom there? Is it work or a place we are too attached to? People are waiting for the

proclamation of the Kingdom. There is nothing more important than this. I am sorry, but there is not. Our brothers and sisters need us and Jesus has commissioned us to go out.

Since returning to the States, I have been reminded of a common question, "Why do you go on foreign missions when there is so much need here?" While that is true, the Church must be missionary and the best way to renew the Church here is to be in contact and constant service to those in greatest need. The Church is the community of Jesus and it is always being sent out and welcoming new people. I remember the words of our Holy Father Pope Francis recently when he was talking about the sending out of the 72: "This is very beautiful! Jesus does not want to act alone. He has come to bring to the world the love of God and wants to spread that love with a style of communion and fraternity. For this reason, he forms immediately a community of disciples, which is a missionary community."



THE MISSION IS URGENT

(CONTINUED FROM COVER)

He tells us that the basic form of evangelization is the witness of a community. I think of all the prayer groups and different groups that engage in ministries. And how important their work is in the mission of Jesus. But, Pope Francis also warns us about closed communities and how they can kill the life of the Church. We are always being sent out "the purpose is not to socialize, to spend time together. No, the purpose is to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and this is urgent! There is no time to waste in small talk, no need to wait for the consent of all; there is need only of going out and proclaiming." I love

our new pope! The time is now! The work is becoming greater and only a few are working. Many are just being part of the movement. We need to step out. Our guide is His Word. The work is to proclaim the Kingdom and show it through our community, to walk in faith with everyone, and help one another grow closer to Jesus. He is our light. He is our Lord. He became man and died on the cross for us. Today is the day to repent and believe in the Gospel. Live by it and proclaim it to everyone. It is urgent that we go out into the whole world! Especially to the poor in our communities. May the Lord Jesus bless everyone.

FAITH IS CONVERSION

by Mark Eckstine

"Faith, tied as it is to conversion, is the opposite of idolatry; it breaks with idols to turn to the living God in a personal encounter. Believing means entrusting oneself to a merciful love which always accepts and pardons, which sustains and directs our lives, and which shows its power by its ability to make straight the crooked lines of our history. Faith consists in the willingness to let ourselves be constantly transformed and renewed by God's call. Herein lies the paradox: by constantly turning towards the Lord, we discover a sure path which liberates us from the dissolution imposed upon us by idols."

Lumen Fidei – Pope Francis

I can't tell you how many times I have wanted to put my faith into action in a more real way, to really live it. Would people ever say, from looking at my life, anything that I profess in the Creed each Sunday? "He believes in God, the Father, the Almighty and his life reflects that belief and trust." I doubt it, but I know I want my life to reflect that. I know that ultimately it does not matter how others

judge us, but what I am talking about is the fruit of our lives. Do I have good fruit?

For me and my family, life in missions has been that opportunity, the opportunity to really live out our faith and conversion. This conversion is to have our hearts enlarged with the love of God and neighbor. In the places we have served, poverty is very obvious and we try to embrace poverty as much as we can (compared to most we serve we are still rich). Our budget is sufficient but what is left never seems to be enough to help all those we encounter and our hearts desire to help. This leaves our hearts asking questions, "Do we really need all we buy?" and "Can we do with less?" The answer is usually "No" and "Yes" respectively, but even when it is "Yes" and "No", faith is deeply involved and our Lord shows up, because He is really needed.

A life in missions, even for just 2 years, is a precious gift that a man can give to God, that a husband can give to his wife, that a father can give to his children. It is one that will have eternal dividends!

MARK WITH A FILIPINO FAMILY PROUD TO OWN A BIBLE, FUNDED BY FMC SUPPORTERS



FMC INTERNSHIP

by Katy Swink

This summer I was blessed to have the opportunity to be the first summer intern for Family Missions Company. As an intern, I helped with painting at Big Woods and Our Lady of the Bayous Retreat House, promoted the Proclaim Conference, and assisted with Faith Camp. Although I went to a Catholic university, this was the first time I got to live in a real Catholic community. My faith and knowledge have grown so much being surrounded by people who love the Lord so much and are so open to doing His will. It is such a blessing to pray with these people every morning during morning prayer and just hang out with them during our free time.

Coming from southern California, this was my first time in the South. It is so much fun! Almost everyday I play with the horses that live here on the property and go on walks with some of the most breathtaking views. One major reason I applied to be an intern was to find a place to fully discern and focus on where God was truly calling me. Through my discernment this summer, I have finally said "YES" to God's plan of missions and hope to be at Intake 2013!

INTAKE 2013 BEGINS SEPTEMBER 16!

This year we are blessed with our largest Intake yet! Please pray and sacrifice for all of our missionaries in training as they prepare to be sent out!

FAITH CAMP 2013

by Madi Dold

I'd like to begin sharing about Faith Camp by telling a bit of a Camper's testimony. On the last day, Campers stand up in front of everyone and share about the fun they had and the ways God moved in them in the past week. One boy stood up and said that after Faith Camp last year, he was joyful and felt a spiritual high from the week. The day he left Faith Camp, he tried to play with his siblings and talk to his Mom, but was completely shut down and ignored by them. He said, "The day I got home from Faith Camp, I was completely crushed." His story brought me and many others to tears. He ended his testimony by sharing that even though he arrived at Faith Camp with lowered expectations this year, He felt God move in him and strengthen his faith. He said that he will go home knowing that his family and everything in the world is unpredictable, but he knows that God will always be there for him and love him. Stories like this are why Faith Camp exists. God shows up at Faith Camp!



"Faith Camp is literally the best week of your life!! Next year I'm bringing even more people!"
- Bethany, 12, Camper

During the week, campers and staff experience what it's like to live every second for God and others. Daily prayer time, living in Christian community, working together, serving one another, and having way too much fun with people who accept you and love you is the Faith camp norm. God works miracles at Faith Camp! We witnessed miracles of healing, transformation of hearts, and even miraculous weather. We needed clear weather for Carnival night, and in the midst of a torrential downpour, we told the campers to pray. We told them that God hears and answers our prayers, and when they began praying, the weather immediately began to clear! The whole week was filled with beautiful testimonies that teens would share and repeat, and the camp was filled with praise for the King of the Universe!

Faith Camp was an extreme blessing this year! I felt completely overwhelmed by God's love shown to me by everyone there. Faith Camp is THE best place in the world, and I was very fortunate to be a part of it. There

THE BEST WEEK OF MY LIFE!

The theme for Faith Camp 2013 was RISE UP. This is a prayer that the Holy Spirit will RISE UP in each one of us and give us the strength we need to live for God. This is a challenge to each of us to RISE UP and evangelize the world around us. EVERY person who left Faith Camp was visibly changed. It seemed as though everyone was walking taller, speaking louder, smiling brighter, and carrying themselves with more confidence. This is the future of our Church!



MADI & THE CAT IN THE HAT

FAITH CAMP HAS NEVER TURNED ANYONE AWAY BECAUSE THEY WERE UNABLE TO PAY. THIS YEAR FAMILY MISSIONS COMPANY WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE MORE THAN \$10,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS!

- WWW.BESTWEEKOFYOURLIFE.COM-



This week was fantastic and I thank God for everyone there!" - Michael, 17, Staff

really is no way to sum it up, and all I can say is that it changed my life! I've got my priorities down, and I'm ready to serve; ... I'm already counting down the days until Faith Camp 2014. All glory be to God! - Emily, 16, Staff

RISE UP!

SOLID GROUND

by Lindsey and Sammy Romero

For the past nine months, "Floors for the Poor" has been providing concrete floors to poor families in Isla Bonita, a small community in Malaybalay, Bukidnon, Philippines. Thanks to YOUR GENEROSITY, we're happy to report that we're quickly approaching our goal to give every family in Isla Bonita a concrete floor! We're at 85 floors and going strong!

Meeting these families and sharing in their joy as they receive their floor has been such a blessing! Their homes are safer, cleaner, and more livable when the floor is upgraded from dirt to concrete, but that's not all! God is using Floors for the Poor to bless Isla Bonita in ways we never expected. Neighbors are working with each other, for each other; and a deep sense of community is forming. Old conflicts and rivalries are disappearing. People are beginning to take greater pride in their homes after a new floor is laid. Flowers are planted, walls are painted, and roofs are repaired. It's like the floor gives them the inspiration and motivation they need to continue to work to improve their quality of life. Best of all, their faith in God is strengthened! In the hand-to-mouth existence these families live, many have long been praying for a miracle that they could improve their homes. Floors for the Poor is infusing HOPE into this little community; hope for tomorrow and hope in the Lord! \$70 is all it takes to sponsor a family, you can donate by check or online, and put FFTP in the memo.

Thank you! Salamat kaayo!



"I'm so very happy that God hears my prayers and now I have a floor in my house. Before, I was very afraid if my daughter is playing inside the house. Maybe she will get hurt. But now, I'm not afraid anymore if she is in our home." -Melisa Zayas, mother of 2

"Thank you so much to the missionaries and to the one who give the money for this floor. It's very important for my family and to my kids." -Delia Vertudes, mother of 5

"My kids ask me, who gave this floor to us? I tell them, the missionaries! They are so happy because now it's not dirty, especially their feet, and they can sleep properly. Thanks Lord!" -Annalie Torres, mother of 6

"Now I have a floor and my son does not get dirty inside the house. It's very good and I'm very happy." -Margie Siacor, mother of 2



LINDSEY AND DAUGHTER MAGDALENE WITH ONE OF MANY FILIPINO FAMILIES WHO RECEIVED THE LIFE-CHANGING GIFT OF A NEW FLOOR

GIVE A HOME

BY JONATHAN AND TERESA KIEHL

Living in the United States, it can be hard to imagine the utter poverty that our brothers and sisters in other countries live in each day. In Mexico, we are surrounded by homes made out of dirt. Roofs are collapsing because their beams are eaten through by termites, or the water has seeped through so badly that the wood is nothing more than a ticking time bomb, ready to collapse on the unfortunate family below. Often whole families are living in a cramped, one room house with a dirt floor and no bathroom. When it is cold here, it is really cold, and when it is hot, it's really hot.

Bugs and rodents not only come in through the gaps left by missing windows and doors, but also make their homes inside the adobe walls. This could be avoided by cementing the walls, but who has the money for that? Diseases, lice and infections are rampant in the poorer areas and much of this could be avoided if a family could actually clean their house and themselves. Imagine the difficulty of keeping your children clean when your floor is made of dirt, you have no bathroom. Please, help us to give these blessed poor worthy HOMES!



GOD'S NOT PRACTICAL

by Teresa Vraelz Kiehl

It's interesting to me how practicality and desire are not often one and the same. Practically speaking, becoming a missionary with my little ones is an awful idea. Children need to be taken care of and they need all the attention parents can give. How can you minister if you have a family? And isn't it dangerous? What if they get sick? We can talk ourselves out of just about anything because of practicality. But, praise the Lord, He can speak louder than our attempts to be practical. Sometimes all we need to do is listen, and say "yes"! I had felt called to missionary life for most of my life, but when I got married, I thought that missionary life would have to wait until after my kids were grown. I couldn't deprive them of all the things we Americans enjoy, of all those things we need. But God had other plans for us, and here we are....

My husband, Jonathan, and I, along with our six children are now living in General Cepeda, Mexico. Since our move down here in January, I have seen many lives changed, especially those of my own family. I have experienced my children laying hands on crying women and praying over them, without any prompting from me what-so-ever. I have had my children say to me, when one of their siblings gets hurt, "Mom, we should pray for them," and then immediately start praying. I have heard my son, after being bullied say, "The Lord loves you. God bless you," and not strike



JONATHAN AND TERESA KIEHL WITH THEIR CHILDREN: MOSES, ELIJAH, MICAH, ISAAC, GEMMA, AND EZEKIEL IN GENERAL CEPEDA

back in anger. I was shocked to see genuine joy and thanksgiving when one of our children received nothing more for his birthday than one chocolate bar and two hot wheel cars. I have witnessed a child, by his own initiative, go every morning up to our chapel to read the Bible. I have seen genuine LOVE grow between every member of our family and even between my husband and myself!

We have not sought these things, they have been just a few of the fruits of this life. We have grown in love of God, and our neighbor. We have become more and more detached from the things of this world. In short we are growing in HOLINESS! To some, witnessing your family grow in holiness may not mean very much, but to me it is our ultimate calling. I hope and pray that at the end of my life I can say, in all honesty, that I lived my life serving the Lord to the greatest extent possible! And the greatest blessing I could ever receive is to know, while I lay on my deathbed, that my children were witnesses to it, and hopefully, imitated my example.

THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY, WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN ABLE TO GIVE:

8 roofs, 12 floors, 1 completely new house, 22 houses painted, and 1 bathroom with a shower for a community of families who had nothing more than a bucket and the side of a hill to service all their needs. Thank You!

THE NEED IS STILL GREAT

We have made great progress with your help, but there are many more families in need. Below is a breakdown of costs for simple projects that can have a big impact on quality of life:

\$20 - Paint the inside of a home

\$30 - Paint the outside of a home

\$50 - Cement the walls of an adobe house

\$120 - New concrete floor

\$65 - Door

\$120 - Bed

\$500 - Build a new roof

Donations in any amount are a tremendous blessing! Extra funds are used to employ workers, maintain tools, and provide for any extra project costs.

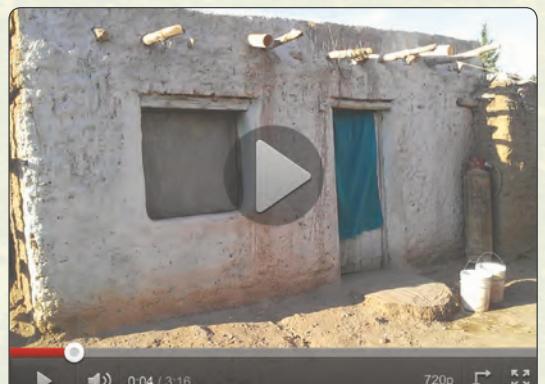
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WWW.FMCMISSIONS.COM/HOMES



FILLED WITH GREAT JOY!

by Jennifer Dold

My daughter, Lindsey Romero, her husband Sammy, and my three grandchildren live in Malaybalay, Philippines, as FMC missionaries. When they joined Intake in 2011, I was stunned. It's not easy for a parent - especially a grandparent - to accept this decision and the changes that come with it. A confusing barrage of shock, anger, sadness, and excitement hit me in the midst of their giant garage sale and preparations to move across the globe. It was so hard for me to think of my grandchildren living halfway around the world that, during their first year in mission, I stubbornly refused to visit them in the Philippines. But during Holy Week this year, I was at church every day and God began a mighty work of softening my heart. I felt God's Peace return to me in a way that I had been missing, and I ended up traveling back to the Philippines with Lindsey's family and staying with them in missions for a whole month this past June.

During my first week in Malaybalay, God took me on a journey through my wrong mindset about my family in missions. The very poor community of Isla Bonita, where Lindsey's family had spent a great deal of their ministry, rallied around them for a hearty "Welcome Home" reunion. The Joy of the Lord was on every face at this gathering and there were hugs and tears all around. In the States it is sometimes difficult to find a loving community when you move somewhere new, but with God doing the work it can happen much quicker! My grandchildren were running around playing with their friends and everyone wanted to meet me, "the Mother of Lindsey." The love and care that Lindsey and Sammy had invested in each person became a tangible reality to me. I finally comprehended the very real call that they had obediently answered and understood that they are "at home" wherever God places them.

God brought me face to face with a woman whom Lindsey had asked our family and the Romero family to donate enough money to build a house for. This wonderful Filipino woman would not let go of me, her "American Sponsor." She brought me into her new house and showed me the view from the little balcony upstairs. It was the most amazing view of mountains and banana trees! She hugged me our entire visit, and I kept thinking that I didn't deserve this gratitude and that I could have

given more to help. Looking around at the Floors for the Poor that had been donated and the piggeries that the community was beginning to build, I kept thinking that I could have done more ... for years and years past. I wasted time and money that God had blessed me with on things that did not matter, instead of building floors and roofs that really mattered. My first week in the Philippines I felt heavy carrying all this around, but God knew it. A priest friend of the missionaries came for dinner and stayed to hear confessions. Jesus met me in front of the tabernacle, in the form of this priest, in one of the most blessed confessions I've ever experienced. God is so merciful! I returned home with His GREAT joy in my children and grandchildren's call to missions!

Parents and grandparents like myself can go through a tough range of emotions when a child becomes a missionary. For this reason, the Family Support Ministry began. Family members and close friends of missionaries often need support and encouragement themselves, in order to better support and encourage their missionaries. We would love for you to join us at the very first Family Weekend at Big Woods, March 28 – March 30, 2014, for all family members and friends of missionaries to fellowship and learn more about the formation and lifestyle of FMC missionaries!



JENNIFER (RIGHT) AND DAUGHTER LINDSEY ON A VOLCANO,
CAMIGUIN ISLAND, PHILIPPINES

FAMILY SUPPORT MINISTRY

The Family Support Ministry was started by Jennifer & Kent Dold and Donald & Cheryl Romero out of their need for prayerful support and information about the mission life of their children, Lindsey & Sammy Romero. We offer support and encouragement to family members of FMC missionaries by:

- Attending a daily Mass every week to pray for the families of missionaries
- Providing informational packets to family members during Intake
- Hosting a Family Weekend at Big Woods to fellowship and learn more about the formation and daily lives of our missionaries

If you would like to volunteer or join us in prayer for family members, contact Jennifer Dold at jcdold@gmail.com, or call the FMC office for more info!

1ST ANNUAL FAMILY WEEKEND!

MARCH 28 - 30TH 2014
BIG WOODS MISSION BASE
ABBEVILLE, LA

TO RSVP OR FOR MORE INFO
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A truly Catholic conference, PROCLAIM is unlike any other conference you have ever attended! Beyond inspiring you to embrace God's mission for your life, PROCLAIM will reach hearts and lives around the world! This is how PROCLAIM is making an eternal difference:

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THE PROCLAIM EFFECT IN ACTION!

THE LORD HAS CALLED US AND WE ARE GOING FORTH!

by Ramon and Kring Leano

"Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." -Proverbs 25:25

Maayong adlaw kaninyong mga igsoon namo kang Kristo!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!,

Last year, we were invited to an Easter Sunday event by a group of FMC missionaries. We didn't realize that God had planned that day to change our lives forever.

Before that day, we were so far from God. Both of us come from broken families without any Catholic foundation. I grew up exploring other religions, and Ramon never practiced any faith.

That same week we started attending a Bible study with the FMC missionaries. For the first time, we felt the Holy Spirit and we realized that God's words in the Bible are powerful and alive. We realized that it wasn't too late to accept Jesus as our Savior and to invite him to rule over our lives. After that, we couldn't stop praising Him and loving Him. We reconciled ourselves with Him, got our babies baptized, got confirmed, and got married all within a couple of months!

For the past year, we have been helping the FMC missionaries in the Philippines. Many of them have gone on to other missions, but we are always here to continue God's will. We started Floors for the Poor with the Romero family, completed building and livelihood projects with the Eckstine family, and ministered in the jail and in the community with the Alvarez family. We also started a kids and youth ministry in our parish. We offered our family to God's service however we could. Working in our hometown of Malaybalay has always been a blessing for us, but soon we realized that God was calling us out of our comfort zone to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel" (Mark 16:15). We prayed a lot about it and we have said YES!



We recently participated in FMC's Summer School of Missionary Evangelism, and are now preparing to attend Intake 2013 starting this September, together with our two children, Rham (age 2) and Laress Vianney (age 11 months). We've been preparing our visa application for six months and will travel to Manila for our interview at the US Embassy on August 13!

We ask you to please be a part of our journey towards becoming full-fledged FMC missionaries, through your prayers and financial support. We are confident that this is God's will for us, so we know He will provide, and maybe He will use your generosity to make it happen!

"As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

1 Peter 4:10-11.

God bless you! Ramon, Kring, Rham, and Laress Leano

100% of the profits from PROCLAIM will be used to train, equip, and support Asian missionaries like the Leano Family! To support the Leano's directly, donate by check or online and put "The Leano's" in the memo.

ECUADOR



MATTHEW, RYAN, FR. JOSE, & LUIS

THE CALL TO MISSION

by Ryan Lawless

Wow!! I can't believe we have already been in Ecuador for 6 months. Matt, Luis and I are serving in the small town of Ahuano. Since we arrived, our desire and goal for the people of Ahuano has been to raise up missionaries, to make disciples for Jesus (Mt. 28:19). And being the first time FMC has been in this mission post, I am beginning to understand the importance of forming relationships.

My first thought soon after we arrived, was: How can we, as foreigners, come into their 'home' and teach them about Jesus? Why should they listen to us?

This had been one of the greatest struggles in my life: forming and maintaining relationships with people. The Lord was calling me out of my comfort zone. We are called to live a simple life that is completely dependent on the One who made us, and to love Him with everything that we are, and to love our neighbor selflessly. If we can do these, showing the people that we are not just tourists passing through and that we are truly here because the love of God has drawn us to them, then God-willing, they will accept the message we bring.

How important it is to give your complete self with patience, trusting the Holy Spirit to water the seeds that are being planted. We have been incredibly blessed to form relationships with different families and some of the teens. We frequently visit with one particular family, Francisco and his wife, Mariela, who are in their 70's. The greatest generosity I have been shown is to be lovingly welcomed into someone's home. We arrive with our Bibles and open hearts. Francisco tells us stories of Ahuano. His wife, describes to us the intensity of her faith in the healing power of Mary. They tell us how through Mary, Jesus healed Francisco of his cancer. It is a miracle! We always finish our time by praying over them for continued health and abundance of faith.

We have come to be close with another family, Marci and her 5 little girls. When we visit with them, they bring such joy to our day. Marci gives her life every day to her girls,

struggling to provide for them without any regular income. Despite this, and the many other hardships she endures, she is so joyful. "Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 5:3). We talk to her about faith and perseverance. She has a strong desire to know the Lord and to be vigilant in her faith. They do not have much, but you can see they love so much more. It is in their laughs and smiles.

Matt and I have two youth groups, one in Ahuano and the other in a small community, Union Lojana. This is one of our toughest ministries. We are so blessed to have those youth who are regularly committed to coming to the group. We talk about missions, and our call as Christians to preach the Gospel. We talk about Scripture, the Sacraments, and many areas of catechesis. We talk to them about their dignity, and how God is calling them on to holiness in their own lives. Again, I am learning that forming relationships, especially with the youth, is crucial to gaining trust so that they open their hearts to you and the Lord.

One of our favorite ministries is visiting the patients in the hospital in Tena. We go once a week and visit those who do not have any family at their bedside. One particular woman, Rosa, has shown me what it takes to persevere through suffering. She was badly burned and broke her arm. When we first met her she was in so much pain, crying and desperate to leave. She graciously welcomed our prayers. When we were able to see her again one month later, she was doing so much better and healing well. We read Scripture and prayed over her. Now her tears are tears of joy. Jesus offers hope and true healing.

We have done so much in Ahuano. Please pray for us, the mission and all of our brothers and sisters in Ecuador. There is so much more to do. Pray that many will answer God's call to be foreign missionaries, for "the harvest is abundant but the laborers are few" (Mt. 9:37). Consider this for yourself: What is God calling me to do with my life? Is He calling me to deny myself and give up everything, and go into the whole world to proclaim the Gospel? In the words of Blessed John Paul II: Be not afraid!

LOOKING BACK

by Matthew Holland

Looking back on my last six and a half months of missionary work here in the beautiful country of Ecuador, particularly the orient of Ecuador, I am constantly shown the love of our beloved LORD in the poor, middle class, rich, and even the occasional tourist! There are many stories I want to share with all of you back home, picking the right one was quite the task!



MEETING SAUL - When we first arrived at Ahuano, I remember distinctly the priest here, Padre Jose, kind of throwing the youth group he was taking care of onto us. Letting us lead it, and basically take charge of it. At first I was not too enthusiastic about leading it because leading young people means really being dedicated to them, and constantly inventing new activities for them. Being a young person myself (only a few years difference), it was hard for me to accept myself as their leader. Then I realized they needed me just as much as I needed them. We all need to be challenged to go further each and every day.

That first day I remember seeing one of the youth who kind of kept to himself, had piercings everywhere, and was just an outright rebellious guy. His name is Saul, he is 18 years old. Getting to know him over these past months has really been a challenge but a pleasure! Seeing him come from smoking, drinking, and being out in the streets until all hours of the night, to coming to youth group every time, to Mass, to communities with us, and to helping us work around the mission has really changed me a great deal. Recently he received his First Confession, Communion, and Confirmation all in a matter of a week. That was the most exciting to see and witness!

Working with the youth has really changed me dramatically, and for the better to be sure. We continue to move forward with all of our ministries, especially with our Youth Group in Union Lojana. We have really done a lot with these kids: I purchased over twenty Bibles and gave them to all of our kids. Also we recently purchased over twenty t-shirts that the catechist and kids designed. We visit the youth group every fifteen days- which is not all that often but we are doing what we can for the moment. GOD bless all of you for your support with prayers and finances.

RISK & REWARD

by Sidney Savoie

"None of the trials which have come upon you is more than a human being can stand. You can trust that God will not let you be put to the test beyond your strength, but with any trial will also provide a way out by enabling you to put up with it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

Sometimes when I go on a mission trip, my American mindset comes right along with me. A mindset that is obsessed with "convenience" and "comfort". A mindset that cringes at the notion of any kind of sacrifice, and is hard-pressed to be able to link sacrifice and reward in any sort of meaningful way. Please don't misunderstand me. Missions has PLENTY of enjoyable and rewarding moments. If it didn't, then I don't think I'd have become a missionary. It's just that I frequently lose sight of how valuable the tough times are.

On my recent mission trip to Ecuador, God taught me a lot about how He gives us the strength to endure the trials that come our way. One time we had to endure a grueling ascent up a slippery, rocky path. Our reward was an absolutely gorgeous waterfall setting where we had our Desert Day prayer time. Another day we had to hike three hours up a muddy mountain trail in the Amazon jungle. This time we were rewarded with an amazing opportunity to evangelize some of the locals and a chance to visit with them.



Another challenging aspect of mission trip ministry is somehow meshing together different personalities. This trip was no exception. What was different, however, was my reaction to said challenge. In the past I would have stuck my head in the sand and hoped for the best. This time around, I was amazed at what was done through the power of prayer, patience, and the determination of the participants. I saw wounds healed, friendships forged, and lives changed. God made a way where there was no way. He opened a door where there used to be a brick wall. It was nothing short of joyful and miraculous.

Thank you Lord for how much you changed my life on this mission trip. I pray that you would give the same opportunity to all those who are discerning any type of missionary work!

SELF-SACRIFICE FOR THE LORD'S KINGDOM

by Abbey Travis



ABBEY (LEFT) WITH FMC MISSIONARY ABI ECKSTINE & VILLAGE KIDS

When the popular vote of our senior class was to go to the beach and do the typical party trip, a hand full of kids were left wanting to spend their senior trip doing something else. It wasn't long before the idea of a mission trip came about, and people decided to jump on board. Our week in Ecuador was beyond blessed: full of laughter, children, hikes, different food, testimonies, community, and love. One day specifically, we hiked over 6 miles up and down a mountain in knee deep mud with rubber boots to reach several communities within the jungle that are not normally reached. Hiking so far, I figured there would be a mass of people to greet us.... It was quite the opposite. When reaching one of the communities, we had to look for people, wait for them to gather, and even once they had, there weren't that many. Regardless, I was shown Jesus in the face of every person there.

But, at the end of our hike I lost my joy. I found myself becoming terribly aggravated and tired and was unable to take a step without becoming completely stuck in the mud. Once we reached the end and the missionaries began singing songs, God was giving me a hug, patting me on the back, shaking my shoulders. He was telling me how delighted and overjoyed He was that I put forth all that I had for His glory, to show the people His love, to literally live out Jesus' command to go to the ends of the earth proclaiming the Gospel. Even if just one person was at the top of the mountain, He was telling me it was worth it. After that, I received an awesome realization that God had chosen me for the job, and how being able to hike for hours was a privilege - to be used for his Kingdom. My trip to Ecuador taught me a new level of self-sacrifice and service, both physically and spiritually - which God has called me to bring back home!



HARDCORE IN ECUADOR

by Janson Delaney

This summer God granted my fellow classmates and I an opportunity beyond any other senior trip available. My good friend Abbey Travis (fellow high school classmate and Faith Camp Staffer) and I went to St. Lucia in the Caribbean a year ago during Easter break to serve on a short term mission. Just sharing our love for missions started to inspire some of our fellow classmates to become interested, and we ended up taking 10 seniors from my high school along with 10 parents and my older sister on a senior mission trip!

Ecuador was a totally different experience for me. Funny how I had expected God to fill my spiritual needs in the same way. In St. Lucia, I experienced a very peaceful mission. Ecuador on the other hand really challenged me to trust God's plan. I experienced altitude sickness, but God was calling me to something greater. I came to realize that following His will is not always a walk in the park. In my pain, however, I found God's love through the people I ministered to. Being fed literally by some of the poorest of the poor just blew my mind. They offered all they had out of love. Too often I have been selfish by only seeking God's love when it came easy to me. Now I realize that it is not always about a "spiritual high". If we only seek to love God when it feels good we become selfish. God calls us to find His love through serving others. When I was helping others, I soon found out that I was the one being served by their love.



JANSON AND VILLAGE KIDS

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GOOD NEWS FOR THE GENERATIONS

by Frank and Genie Summers



With the resignation of Pope Benedict the XVI and the election of Pope Francis, God's mighty hand confirmed the Year of Faith and the New Evangelization. Pope Benedict declared the Year of Faith, and Pope Francis is demonstrating by his life what living faith looks like. Praise the Lord for POPE FRANCIS!! Follow his words daily! Pray for his well-being and success in bringing about the changes the Lord is calling all of us to – that we may be a Holy Church, with zeal for missionary evangelism, and dedicated to serving the poor, everywhere! Go Pope Francis! Lead us on!

Genie and I have been building the Kingdom and loving the fact that our Children and Grandchildren are doing the same. We stand in awe of all we see the Lord doing. Our children are engaged in speaking and serving: Sarah and Kevin and family in missions; Sue and Mike and family in Installation of the Sacred Heart and the Pro-Life Ministry; Mary and Chris, Theresians, Men and Women's ministry, and Medical Service at Covecrest; John Paul teaching at John Paul the Great Academy; Beau commenting on Faith issues on Social Media - all faithful to the Sacraments and our faith.



Glory! Glory! This year we celebrated our **50th Wedding Anniversary**, attended by our seven children, our five sons-and-daughters-in-law, and our 17 grandchildren (2 more due this year). We were so blessed with the special Mass attended by our family and many friends. Then our family spent a long weekend together in 6 cabins at a nearby state park: swimming,

fishing, crabbing, boating, games, bar-b-queuing, and especially giving thanks to the Lord together in prayer for the amazing gift of our fruitful lives lived for Jesus. It was a wonderful, happy, peaceful time for all.

We are loving our smaller house at Big Woods Mission. Our former house is now the FMC Community Center.

Our granddaughter Alyse, graduated with honors from John Paul the Great Academy. She has received a full scholarship to attend Mount Saint Mary's University in Emmitsville, Maryland. She will study Philosophy and hopes to become a full time missionary after university.

We kept busy attending the honor ceremonies of our grandchildren as the school year concluded. We, ourselves, were so honored to witness the recognition of their achievements. Soren Spiehler, our oldest grandson, was named the outstanding student of the elementary school at John Paul the Great.



FMC is flourishing under the leadership of Joseph and Brooke. The Lord is using their fidelity! Joseph and Frank gave mission appeal talks at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana. They were graciously received and spoke at 5 Masses; the average age of the congregation was 29 - lots of families with children.

Genie, Martha Gaynoe, Laura LaHaye and Sally Dubroc, all ladies in ministry, had a unique and fabulous time of R&R with prayer and fun at Lake Martin in Alabama. Simon-Peter went to two summer camps this year, for handicapped persons. One camp was attended by over 60 persons with Pader-Willi syndrome (like Simon). Simon learned a lot, and his friendliness and faith in Jesus were appreciated by others. We were told he was a "Star" at the Christian camp.

Genie was interviewed for Ralph Martin's EWTN program - the episode airs soon. Genie is plugging her new book: *Our Family's Book of Acts*. Read it and believe that the Lord will work through you to proclaim His Gospel to all creation.

Faith Camp is in its seventeenth year! Over 250 Junior High and High School students and young adults gathered to live out the theme of this year's camp – "RISE UP!" The Holy Spirit showed up with all His power and it was amazing! John Paul Summers, who has run the camp for almost a decade, turned over leadership to Sarah Summers Granger, his sister, and

Alyse Speihler, his niece, and Melissa Frentz, a seasoned leader. The music ministry led by Kevin Granger was excellent, and testimonies to changed lives and experiencing God in Adoration abounded. Our Mom's team served up love and great meals.

We zealously pray for our full-time missions in General Cepeda, Mexico; Pune, India; Malaybalay, Philippines; and Amazonia, Ecuador. We are sending out more short term mission groups to farther places than ever before and we see exponential increase in the fruits of our foreign missionary evangelism and services to the poor! Our stateside missionaries conducted numerous retreats, seminars, talks, and an outreach into New Orleans again this year - all reports were that the short-term missionaries from Georgia did a great job.

We've had several "Come and See" visitors interested in considering full time mission service - and the results are inspiring. Our annual Intake for receiving new full time missionaries will have more new missionaries than ever before. Missions is HOT!

We have a full time FMC Media Ministry. People all over the world are challenged and called on to holiness through this outreach. Check out our website, you will love the blogs, info, past SERVEs, special campaigns, invitations to our events and much more - www.fmcmissons.com.

FMC is working to put on the Proclaim Conference this fall in Lafayette. Archbishop Robert Rivas, Dr. Ralph Martin, Deacon Poyo, and our missionaries will proclaim God's word, exhorting attendees to really go forth in the New Evangelism. Dynamic "breakout sessions" will equip and inspire building the Kingdom at home and abroad. The Proclaim Conference will be October 18-20th, 2013. Check out the website - www.proclaim2013.com

Again this year, Our Lord Jesus has been faithful to provide financially for our humble, but successful ministry, Family Missions Company. Thanks for your support. Keep on being our partners in winning the World for Jesus. Come Holy Spirit!

BLESSED BEYOND BELIEF

by Melissa Seilhan

These past few weeks have flown by. It seems like just yesterday we sold our house and packed up to move out to Big Woods. But it's actually been almost two months since we left behind our old life and began our new life. Yet, at times it seems as though we've lived out here forever.

From the moment we unpacked and set up the house, it has felt like "home." Yes, I know that your "home" is where your family is and that the location doesn't matter. But each time we've moved in the past, I have felt that sinking homesick feeling in my stomach at least a few times in those first days or weeks. Here, I'm lying in a strange bed in a strange house and haven't had that sinking feeling once. It's very weird to be perfectly happy in a strange place. I know that this is only a "baby" step compared to the move we will be making in January after Intake, but it is such a huge blessing so far.

Living at Big Woods in community is awesome! Gathering every morning with the community for Praise and Worship and Morning Prayer has got to be the absolute best way to wake up and start your day. This is what has probably blessed me the most living out here. The joy I feel when I leave the community house each morning surpasses anything I ever imagined. I'm light on my feet on my walk back home and feel as though I can conquer the world. I'm so blessed to be able to have this little glimpse of Heaven each day.

It was hard to leave behind our friends and family, but we didn't really lose anything when we moved out here. Instead, we gained a whole new family. Everyone welcomed us with open arms---literally. The hugs received upon arrival, which I continue to get each day, were so genuine that we knew this was exactly where God wanted us to be. Our kids have gained a few little "brothers" to play with and have some amazing and holy young adults to look up to. Travis and I have a support system like no other. Anytime we have a question or concern about the journey we are about to take, there is always someone around to talk to.

But besides the awesome community out here, another HUGE part of this smooth transition is all the prayers and support that we are getting from back home. All of the prayers that have been said for us, all of the encouraging words, notes, text messages, emails, and calls have blessed us so much! I know that these last two months would not have been so easy and the transition so smooth without all the prayers from our friends and family. The grace God has poured out on us through those prayers and sacrifices is unbelievable.

The number of donor/pledge cards that have come back to us is absolutely overwhelming. Some days I walk back from checking our mailbox at the FMC office in tears and disbelief at the generosity of our friends, family, and even strangers. It is a huge blessing to have so many awesome people joining our mission "team". We are in awe of the generosity that people continue to show to us. I love watching our prayer list grow each day. Since there is no way to fully express our gratitude or to ever repay all of you, praying for you and your intentions each day helps us feel like we're able to give something back.

We still have a long way to go in our journey, and sometimes the road ahead looks pretty bumpy. But God continues to confirm this path to us each day through the blessings He sends our way, through people like you. We have truly been Blessed Beyond Belief, and you will be too for your support of His work through FMC. He confirms that in 2 Corinthians 9: 6 - 11.



THE SEILHAN FAMILY

WHAT THE NEW EVANGELIZATION IS NOT!

by Joseph Summers

“And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins.” Mk 2:22

It is an exciting time to be a Catholic! Even more so a Catholic missionary evangelist! All the buzz surrounding this Year of Faith and the New Evangelization is truly encouraging. This is certainly a crucial moment in the life of the Church. We Catholics are being challenged to evaluate our lives, examining them through the lens of the Gospel.

Evangelion is Greek for “Gospel,” and so the New Evangelization could rightfully be called the New Gospelization. It is time for us to get Gospelized and to Gospelize the world!

As simple as that sounds, the reality is that getting from where we are as a people of God to where we need to be is going to involve some epic maneuvering; heck, it might even involve some about-faces in certain areas of our lives as individuals and as a Church. (By the way the Biblical term for that is Repentance!)

You see, you can’t just slap a “New Evangelization” bumper sticker on the same old methods, practices and models of Catholic living, and pretend like that is enough to get the job done.

If the old/current approach were enough, we wouldn’t need a New Evangelization, and there wouldn’t be Catholics sitting on cushioned pews, stacking up bundles in the bank, while the souls of billions, the great majority of humanity in fact, are in jeopardy, wandering in darkness without ever having heard the Gospel.

If our present system were hunky dory, then we wouldn’t be renovating church after church here in the United States, while other Catholics around the world literally starve, or have no access to the teaching ministry of the Church. Jesus says new wine deserves new wineskins, which means the NEW Evangelization needs new methods and fresh commitment.

BACK TO THE BASICS

It is time for NEW! Actually, we need to be re-NEWed. The New Evangelization is not a new message. We don’t need a new Gospel, we need to live the Gospel! It is time to get back to the basics, to the faith and proclamation of the first Christians when the Gospel truly was new! The Good News was so hot off the press that it burned like fire in the hearts of the early disciples. As the Church founded on the Apostles, it might benefit us to pay attention to what the Apostles preached.

If you open the book of Acts you will not find Peter and Paul talking about First Saturday devotions, the Novena to St. Joseph, or even the do’s and don’ts of liturgy. (This is not an assault on pious practices or Catholic doctrine which I value, it’s just an observation of Apostolic preaching). Their message, or kerygma, sounded something like this: “God loves us, even though we have sinned and offended God, even though we deserve punishment for our rebellion against Him. The Father sent His Son to die and bring us new life. You can be reborn, you can be saved through Jesus!”

IGNITED BY THE FIRE OF PENTECOST

The early Church was fixated on JESUS. They couldn’t stop talking about Him, they couldn’t stop thinking about Him, they couldn’t stop trying to live their lives by His Words. In fact, no one could stop them! St. Paul expresses the unconquerable attitude of the first Christians in Philippians 1:21: “For to me to live is Christ and death is gain.”

Death wasn’t enough to stifle the bold evangelization of the Apostles and company! Far too often this Apostolic fervor is starkly contrasted when compared to my faith and the faith of most of my fellow parishioners! But before we give too much credit to the Apostles, let’s not forget where they were when Jesus was being executed.

Even the Resurrection was not enough to get them out of the upper room and onto the corner of Jericho and Main in downtown Jerusalem; it was not until Pentecost that we see the profound metanoia of the Apostles, ignited with the very fire of love. The Holy Spirit fueled the engine of evangelization that was to transform the known world.

It can happen again, but we first need to beg God to send a New Pentecost for this New Evangelization, that we too might be transformed by the awesome power, gifts, and charisms of the Holy Spirit. In fact, to take a cue from Jesus’ advice to the Apostles before ascending into heaven, we shouldn’t be doing much of anything before being filled with God’s anointing Spirit.

THE NEW WINE OF THE SPIRIT

We (individuals, families, parishes, & dioceses) need this new life, this new wine. We need a new paradigm because the new wine of the Spirit will burst complacent Catholicism. To see the New Evangelization bear the fruit the Father undoubtedly wants to see in the world, we must drink deeply of the new wine of the Spirit.

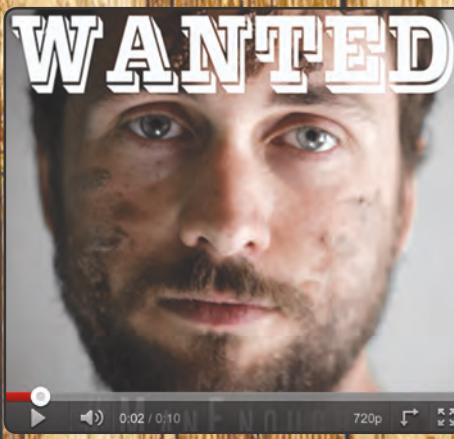
In order to Gospelize the world, we must be steeped in praying and reading the Gospels. Intoxicated by the Spirit, and a love for the Gospel, incarnate in Christ Jesus, we must put off the old wineskins of a faith that is content to be a part of our lives, instead of our very lifeline.

We must shatter ideologies that leave the Sermon on the Mount, on the mount two millennia ago. We must renounce a model of church that allows us to invest all our resources in maintaining buildings and the status quo, while the primary service of evangelization which the Church must offer humanity goes unattended and unfunded.

We can’t pretend that God doesn’t care if I keep adding cute new outfits to my wardrobe while Jesus hungers, thirsts, and waits in the least of our brothers. The New Evangelization doesn’t mean getting Catholics to feel good about hanging crucifixes on their walls, it means tearing down walls, taking up our crosses and following Jesus, even to death.



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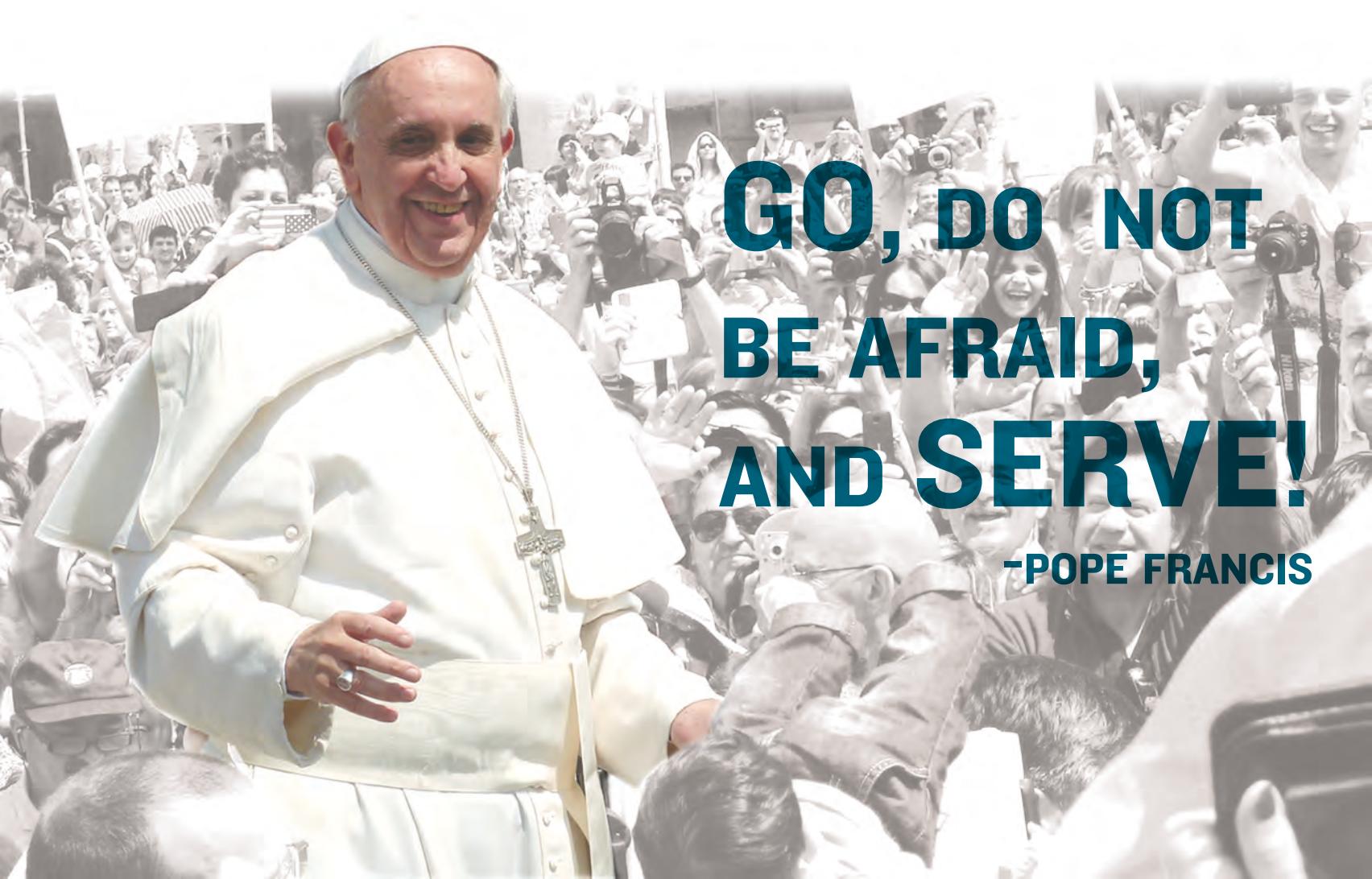


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