



S O L T

missionary volunteers

2021 NEWSLETTER

Three Years with SOLT



For the past three years I have had the great joy to serve as a volunteer with the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity in Benque Viejo, Belize.

My first two years were spent with a fellow missionary at St. Ignatius High School in the neighboring town of San Ignacio, and it was the first time St. Ignatius had received full-time SOLT missionary volunteers. The experience was incredibly challenging and beautiful. The students were full of energy and boldness, and they would ask deep questions and share about their relationship with the Lord. They had experienced a lot of brokenness, and vulnerably trusted us to lead them closer to Christ. They not only shared their hurt but they praised the Lord in adoration.

My time at St. Ignatius came to an abrupt halt when the country went into Covid lockdown in March 2020. I remained in Benque Viejo, Belize

from then until the end of June. During those three months we ran a food program for families in need. We would pray with each person and then give them rice, beans, and masa (corn flour). This ministry stretched me in many ways, and opened my eyes to the goodness of God in others.

As my third year of mission began, I transitioned to serving as a full-time campus minister at John Paul II Junior College. For most of the year our campus ministry events had to be conducted online. We held online prayer meetings and at Easter we were able to return to in-person ministry. It was a joy to meet Christ in these young people.

I had one student in particular who was a great witness to me and a great joy to walk with during my time at JPJII. She attended the first Zoom discipleship session and attended almost every discipleship session,

Mass, adoration night, and Bible Study for the year. She shared with me that she had enjoyed going to adoration in high school but that she was not as familiar with the Word of God. Throughout the months of our Bible study she would share how her faith in God was growing and how much she was learning. She expressed that God was touching the deep parts of her heart and was transforming her life anew. I know that she desires to go wherever He will lead her.

I have learned so much from my time in mission with SOLT. The most important thing I've learned is that God loves me completely. I have also learned that He pours His love out on all those around me, especially the most in need. To God be all the glory.

Bella Asci

Summer Camp

IN THE TURTLE MOUNTAINS

During the weeks of June 21st - July 2nd, eighty children busied the fields, playground, and campgrounds at St. Ann's Mission for St. Ann's Summer Camp. Thirty camp counselors and support staff came from seventeen different states and two Canadian provinces to provide a loving, fun, and faith-filled environment for the children of the Turtle Mountain Reservation. Camp songs and archery arrows filled the air while canoe paddles cut through the waters of Father's Lake as children scurried to their various stations with excitement and enthusiasm. The camp day was filled with arts and crafts, big games, daily Mass, and religion class.

The theme for the two weeks was "He Came for Me," focused on the heart of the Gospel message, known as the kerygma. The kerygma states that God loves us and has a plan for us, but sin affected this plan and thus death entered the world. To save us from sin and death, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to suffer and die for us, to give us eternal

life. Through this we receive the gift of eternal life by responding in faith, becoming members of His Body, the Church, through the sacraments.

There was a deep desire for faith and spirituality in these kids. Some of these youth had never been to church before. Many children requested to be baptized or to receive their First Holy Communion. One child, when he heard that another group was going to spend time in Eucharistic Adoration, asked his counselor if he could go again instead of going to the playground. Another child, when asked what he wanted to have painted on his face and everyone else had a shark or a lion or a tiger, responded, "Jesus' blood" and the phrase "Jesus loves me." Daily Mass and daily prayers were quite moving as the children sang in worship. 2021 SOLT St. Ann's Summer Camp will forever be etched in the heart of these young children of the Turtle mountains.

Fr. Dave Brokke, SOLT



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IN BENQUE



*H*ow do the SOLT missionary volunteers impact the Belize mission of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity? They make things happen! There are five hundred teens at Mount Carmel High School and fifty in our newly-minted junior college, John Paul II. These schools were born of the Holy Spirit even though there was no money to financially support such endeavors.

Thanks to the selfless teachers and faith-filled energy of our SOLT missionary volunteers, the schools have succeeded. We have had missionaries who were nurses, who were artists, and we have had decades full of lay missionaries who have taught high school and college. There are thousands of Belizeans who are better Christians and better citizens because of the missionaries' service. Benque Viejo and other parts of the Cayo District of Belize are marked by

their efforts. All the current missionaries attend daily Mass.

The SOLT missionary volunteers put God first in their lives and thereby give a powerful witness. They are prayer warriors and invite the community of people to join them in prayer and in charitable works. Prayer warriors forming prayer warriors.

Benque is on the border of Guatemala and Belize, a border town in poverty-stricken Central America. There should be more illicit trade, drug abuse and violence here than there is. I think the reason that Benque remains a peaceful town is that the Gospel is lived here. There are local members of the parish that show us how to live the Christian faith as well. Jesus says we should be the salt of the earth. Here SOLT is salt!

Fr. Tony Anderson, SOLT



MISSION MOMENT REFLECTION

Andrew Collart – Virtue of of Perseverance

Read James 1: 2-18.

“Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness ... and if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him ... but let him ask in faith with no doubting” James 1: 2-5

In thinking about perseverance, it is helpful to first of all go to a place where you have felt fear, lack of control, exhaustion, and are tempted to give up hope. Go there in your memory. Most likely, one of your greatest fears was a fear of failure or that what you had to give would not be equal to the task you found yourself engaged in. To be honest, the Christian is not always immediately or apparently “successful” in the eyes of the world. However, we are not called to be successful - but to be faithful. God is with you in these times. Your heavenly Father is holding you in His arms. Jesus is you and you are Jesus when you accept the chalice of the Divine Will of God. (The preposition “in” melts away in describing how close you and He become.) He is closer to you than you are yourself! He understands your worries and fears better than you yourself even do - and not just in a “factual” way. Rather, His Sacred Heart is intensely sensitive to every ache of your heart. Reject the lie that you are alone. Turn to Him and find rest and strength in His company. You can take on any challenge with a good and noble friend by your side!

I encourage you to read the seventeenth chapter of John’s gospel. In this chapter, Jesus has just celebrated the Last Supper with His apostles. He has just told them something of the emotion He is experiencing foreseeing the Passion he is about to undertake, but they don’t really understand His meaning. So he turns to His Father in prayer and intercedes for them. His prayer is that they remain strong and that they persevere in faith. This prayer of Jesus is possibly the most beautiful moment in scripture, where from all Salvation History, God cries out to His Father in exultant intercession for his beloved friends as He is about to redeem the world. Jesus prays this prayer for you specifically.

And these challenges we undergo are necessary. As St. James writes, “the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” When, in the gospel, Jesus declares that Satan has demanded to sift his apostles like wheat (Lk 22: 31), He warns us that the devil wants to cause our goodness and our faith to fall away through shaking, shocks, and confusion -- leaving nothing but chaff. But fear not! Jesus has prayed that you remain firm (Lk 22: 32).

Know that He is pleased and proud of you for holding firmly to Him and to your mission. He prays, “Holy Father ... I gave them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. “Holy Father ... I gave them your word, and the world hated them, because they do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one” (Jn 17: 11, 14-15).

MISSION MOMENT REFLECTION CONTINUED

Andrew Collart – Virtue of of Perseverance

Spend the next ten minutes in silence pondering the scripture passage (James 1: 2-18). Then, answer the following discussion questions.

(If it is possible, begin this reflection by listening to the song “Good to Me” by Audrey Assad)

1. What are some of the lies that the devil plants in your spirit to steal your joy away?
2. Think back to some experiences of prayer in the midst of your trials. Where and when did you feel close to God and feel Him drawing close to you? Walking and talking to Him at night or in nature? In Eucharistic Adoration? Through a friend’s love? Remember these times.
3. How do you think you can distinguish when you should give up on a project because it is outside of the will of God, as opposed to holding firm because you know it is His will you are united to?



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