



mission

FALL 2018

magazine





SOCIETY of OUR LADY

of the Most Holy Trinity

A message from the
**GENERAL
PRIEST
SERVANT**

Return to the Source

Often times, when we think of the gift of faith, our minds can turn very quickly to our parents, teachers, youth ministers, friends, priests and religious who taught us about God. In fact, because these are some of the first thoughts that come to mind, it can be easy to presume that the most important dimension of faith is the communication we have received from other people. However, this isn't the case.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, faith is "the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself." (CCC #1814) The definition reveals that faith is all about God! Faith originates from God who communicates it to us as a free gift; the content of faith is what God has said and revealed to us in Jesus Christ and preserved by the Church (which of course has Jesus as its head); and faith is guaranteed, not because another human being shared the message with us, but because God Himself is the formal cause of faith and He is truth itself, incapable of deceiving.

*On the Cover:
Sr. Stella Maris,
SOLT with young
parishoners, Louisa
and Emma, at the SOLT
mission in Benque
Viejo, Belize*

*Opposite Page:
Procession during the
Feast of the Trumph
of the Cross in Calla
Creek, Belize*

The notion of faith being derived through the mediation of other people highlights the amazing privilege God has given to us in being able to participate in the salvation of one another. God wills and allows us to play a role in His work of salvation. Unfortunately,

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overemphasis on this mediation also leaves us susceptible to be severely shaken when those who assist in the communication of the faith reveal that they have fallen far short of living the message they preach.

Conversely, the concept of faith described in the Catechism reminds us that no matter how badly we may be shaken or even devastated by the actions of others, we are always called to return to the fact that our belief in God and His revelation given to us in Jesus Christ, is not about other people, but is primarily between us and God. The heroic lives of the saints are edifying and encouraging; the abominable sins of others are deflating

and discouraging; but neither formally constitutes the essence of the gift of faith! In these times where the very troubling sins of some members of the Church are brought to the fore, I am reminded that the best response is not distance and disconsolation of spirit, but a return to the source – our relationship with God in prayer! In these challenging times, let us renew ourselves in treasuring the Word of God and growing in our personal relationship with the Lord, knowing that He is the subject and object of our faith, and He is the source of our happiness and salvation! As St. Paul tells us, there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:39)



FR. PETER MARSALEK, SOLT

Fr. Peter is currently serving as the General Priest Servant of SOLT. He resides in Corpus Christi, TX.



Adventures of a Missionary Family

Above: Miss Ginny, center, poses beside Wendy Jimenez, beloved student of Mt. Carmel HS with other SOLT members. Miss Ginny has been at the heart of the Benque mission for over 40 years.

My mother told me that at my birth

she saw a vision of our Blessed Mother, certainly a miracle of grace, as this woman had a strong dislike for the Catholic Church! So my life has seen the imprint of Our Lady's hand from the start! Thankfully, my parents decided to send me to the Catholic school, which required me to be baptized.

Two events that impacted my life at this time were the diagnosis of my mother's cancer and the kindness of a Dominican sister that I had in school. With this impending diagnosis, I didn't know where

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In fact, during confession, I felt that I had experienced Christ as perfectly as possible on this earth!



Deacon Cal first met Fr. John McHugh, SOLT (pictured above) while traveling to serve as a missionary.

to turn and naturally felt drawn to Our Lady. After asking her help, my mother was given another twenty years to live!

After high school, I attended St. Benedict's College in Atchison, Kansas. I really did not know what to do with my life after college and while speaking to a holy priest, he responded, "Why not become a missionary?" I left the visit full of excitement, knowing it would be an adventure! Little did I know I had just received my life's vocation.

Following college, I joined the Papal Volunteers with the intention of going to Brazil for three years. This is where I first met Fr. John McHugh, SOLT, who had a profound impact on my life. In fact, during confession, I felt that I had experienced Christ as perfectly as possible on this earth! While in mission, I experienced some health problems and was sent back home. Thankfully, though, I met my wife Ginny during a meeting with the Lay Mission Corps during this time.

We had a deep desire to serve the Church with our family. Providentially, we met SOLT in 1964 when a friend told me that a Catholic missionary community that accepted families just moved to Kansas City, Missouri. We knew we were home when we heard the founder, Fr. James Flanagan, teach about the faith. After a period of formation and discernment, we became definitive members in 1968.



Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish in Benque Viejo, Belize.

Fr. John McHugh invited us to join the new mission SOLT was opening in Belize, Central America. We have been serving in Belize since 1976. Most of our six children grew up in the mission, attending local schools. We've been blessed to serve on teams with priests, sisters, and other lay members who have been part of our own family. I am very grateful for their presence in our lives through births, deaths and even the celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary.

Our life with SOLT has truly been an adventure and gift of Providence. Our lives have been filled with countless "graced friendships."



DEACON CAL CATHERS

Deacon Cal and Ginny Cathers serve in Benque Viejo, Belize through offering printed materials to schools and serving single mothers in the area. They are celebrating their 50th Anniversary as SOLT members this year.



An Instrument of the Lord

I often practice organ at Catholic churches, and I love it because I get to spend so much time with our Blessed Lord in the tabernacle. However, Catholics love to be with our Lord as well. It is sometimes hard to find blocks of practice time where I am not disturbing someone who is praying, whether it be someone making a Holy Hour before or after Mass, dropping in to pay a quick visit to our Lord, or praying for a loved one who is suffering. On the other hand, Protestant churches have large amounts of time where their sanctuaries are not used, and they welcome organists who wish to practice. As a result, I practice regularly at the Mennonite church, as well as a few Lutheran churches in town. Most churches are very proud of their organs and eager to have people play them.

*Left: Sr. Mary of Holy Hope, SOLT
practices the organ.*



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I have come to understand that evangelization usually happens through relationships.

When I go to a Protestant church to practice, I often get a few strange looks when I first come, but after a few visits, the staff becomes comfortable with my presence. That's when the questions and conversations begin. I always thought that I would evangelize as a musician by playing fabulous music and thereby sparking conversions of heart. I suppose that is possible, but I have come to understand that evangelization usually happens through relationships. As I form relationships with people at these churches, I offer them the gift of friendship and prayer. I am asked many questions about the Catholic faith that usually begin with, "Is it true that Catholics...?" Most often, though, I am asked to pray for different people and situations and they are consoled by my promise of prayer.

I was practicing early one morning last year, when the pastor of the Mennonite church came into the sanctuary. I stopped playing, afraid that I was infringing on her prayer time, but she had come into the sanctuary to be soothed by the music. It turned out that she had been dealing with a difficult situation in her church community which had ended in the suicide of one of the members. I promised her my prayers, and then offered to have a Mass offered at our convent for the soul of the deceased. Not only did she accept, but she and five members of her staff all came to the convent for the Mass. What a unifying occasion that was, for us to share in prayer, and to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for a Christian soul.



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A few weeks ago, the same pastor asked me if I would mind if she brought the youth group by while I was practicing. Imagine this: a Catholic Sister was invited to address the Mennonite youth! I was not too sure of what I was supposed to say, but I was assured later that they were enthralled with knowing the difference between a sister and a nun! Consecrated life is a true witness of a radical response to God's love.

I am continually surprised by the way that Our Lord uses me, even when I am least expecting it, to do His work. I have been able to share so many of the treasures of the Catholic faith with our Protestant brethren, especially the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Rosary, and spiritual reading. They love receiving these gifts. I, too, have come to a deeper appreciation of the depth of faith of our Protestant brethren, and I pray continually for our unity someday soon under Holy Mother Church.



SR. MARY OF HOLY HOPE, SOLT

Sr. Holy Hope is currently pursuing a Master's degree at the University of Kansas in the Church Music program. She also serves at Our Lady's Montessori School in Kansas City as the preschool music teacher.

He Makes All Things New

The human heart is a beautiful mystery.

Within each of us is a captivating story of hope, sorrow, trial, and triumph. Our interior world is full of dreams and visions, setbacks, and stumbling blocks. Yet, in it all, we each have a deep desire, if only “seen dimly as in a mirror” (1 Cor 13:12) for an abundant life of eternal communion, joy, and love.

For the past 10 years or so, God has opened the doors for me to be able to speak to audiences of all ages and backgrounds and to bear the message of mercy, authentic love, healing, and conversion. It’s a profound blessing to be able to speak to people and with them. I am always deeply touched at the response to His love as people pour out their pain, hopes, and deepest desires as they share their stories in return.

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***“You have been called
to heal wounds, to
unite what has fallen
apart, and to bring
home those who have
lost their way.”***

- St. Francis of Assisi

To listen to another’s story is to tread on sacred ground and to behold someone’s intense sorrow and joy is an incalculable gift. So often in life all we really want is someone to listen to us, to behold our hearts, and to remind us of who we are - that we are not alone, that suffering is not the end of the story, and that our deepest identity is that we are sons and daughters of God - a God who makes all things new. I am continually inspired as I see people revealing their hearts to God, sharing the honest truth of their story, and finding healing and restoration.

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From my own perspective, I find that the average person today holds a lot of pain within their hearts and often struggles with unanswered questions and unexplored chapters of their own story. We are connected via technology but often feel incredibly lonely within. The desire for deep and meaningful connection is part of what it means to be human and yet many times we do not know how to begin the process nor be appropriately vulnerable with the ones we love the most in our lives.

The area of deepest apostolic need is precisely the human heart where God dwells within,

speaking to us of His love, mercy, and freedom. God is for us and desires our lives not to be hidden in façade and shadow but to be lived transparently in the light of His love. As we begin the honest journey of opening up the chambers of our heart to Him and to people in our lives that we trust, new life begins to grow and bloom. This is what I witness as I see people encounter Jesus in their lives - new life, new hope even in the midst of suffering. Jesus shows us what it means to be human-a heart fully open to the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. May it be so for each of us.



SR. MIRIAM JAMES HEIDLAND, SOLT

Sr. Miriam, originally from Woodland, Washington, has been a member of SOLT since 1998. She currently resides in Corpus Christi, Texas, and is a member of the Sisters' General Council.

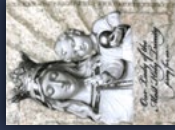
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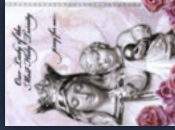
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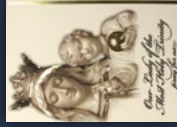
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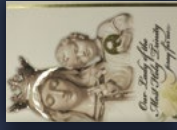
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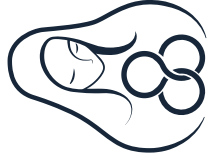
One Year
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Perpetual
Living



Perpetual
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