



mission

magazine

WINTER 2018



A Message from the **GENERAL PRIEST SERVANT**

In July 2018, the SOLT community will be holding its general chapter – a convocation of SOLT members from around the world that takes place every five years. The primary purpose of the chapter is to safeguard the spiritual patrimony of the community, elect leadership, and determine matters of greater importance for the community. Our upcoming chapter will also be quite unique in that it will be our first time convoking these important meetings without the consoling presence of our founder, Fr. James Flanagan (+2016), and our co-founder Fr. John McHugh (+2017). Given the importance of the chapter to the life of our community, I would like to ask for your prayers for a very successful and fruitful general chapter!



Above: SOLT members gather for the American Regional Assembly in 2017.

Opposite page: SOLT founder, Fr. James Flanagan and co-founder Fr. John McHugh.

On the Cover: Students at the SOLT mission, Santa Maria del Mexicano, in Colón, Mexico.

As the term of office winds down for the current general administration for the SOLT priests, sisters and laity, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you profoundly for all of your support. Among our benefactors, we have some amazing volunteers who are ready to assist whenever called upon, some very kind and generous donors who support our mission financially, some wise counsellors advising us in their areas of expertise, and



some prayer warriors who lift up the community with their prayers and sacrifices. Incredibly, there are even some who belong to all four of the above categories! Without your assistance, our community would not be able to serve, evangelize, and support all those we encounter in our missions.

Throughout the last five years serving as General Priest Servant, I have always been very conscious and aware of the kindness and generosity of all those involved in sustaining and supporting the SOLT mission. As a result, at every Mass, I intentionally pray for all of those who support our community and ministries in anyway. Notwithstanding the possibility of re-election for those members of the general administration who are still eligible, I wanted to take advantage of this opportunity to once again thank you and assure you of our prayers.



FR. PETER MARSALEK, SOLT

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

Volunteers at Santa Maria **MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

After a few years of restructuring, the Colón mission renewed and restarted its missionary program at Santa María del Mexicano. In its first year of reopening, it has 12 missionary volunteers from different areas of the United States and one from our SOLT mission in Belize. Some of our volunteers are graduates of Carroll College, Montana, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, Mount Carmel High School in Benque Viejo del Carmen, Belize, and St. Gregory the Great Academy in Elmhurst Township, Pennsylvania.

The different areas of service include:

San José:

home for boys
grades 1-6

Santa María, Casa de Muchachos:

home for adolescent boys
grades 7-12

Casa de Niñas:

home for girls
grades 1-6

Casa de Jovenes:

home for adolescent girls
grades 7-12

Home for the elderly and
administrative offices



Santa María del Mexicano was founded in 1975 to serve the youth and elderly of Mexico. Santa María has been under the administration of SOLT since 2009. It offers spiritual, educational, moral, vocational, and human formation to the youth and elderly in most need in Mexico.

The mission is directed by Fr. Dan Estes, SOLT. Other members of the SOLT Ecclesial Family team include: Fr. Jeremy Davis, Sr. María Reina, Sr. María Angelica de Jesus, Sr. Guadalupe, Sr. Scholastica, Sr. Maria Ilumina de Corazón, as well as Br. Timothy Burnham who is on his pastoral year. This summer Br. Javier Ebertowski and then-novices David Snow and Uriel López (now Brothers) were able to visit and serve at the mission.

Andrew Rowedder, a graduate of the University of Maryland in College Park who volunteered for two years at Mount Carmel High

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*Santa Maria
del Mexicano
currently serves
222 residents.*



Above: Grade school boys and girls from Casa de San Juan and Casa de Ninas participate in class. Opposite page: Volunteers encourage students in a fun game of basketball.



Students from Casa de Jovenes focus on their studies.

School, our SOLT mission in Benque Viejo del Carmen, Belize, is now currently serving at our mission in Colón. He described it, "The Colón mission is a home that requires lots of patience and love for adolescents. I really like it here. I actually love it here." When asked about the children at the mission, he answered, "The kids are great. They are like you when you were young. They want attention. They want to have fun. And they are too cool for you sometimes. They are hilarious, really intelligent, short-sighted, noble, and travieso

(mischievous) all at the same time. They are boys who want to be men and are trying to figure it out." Gian Guerra from Belize added, "They are the best. I am loving it." Noting the diversity of the volunteer community, Andrew commented, "The volunteer community is a mixed bag. We have two married couples. One old and one young. We have guys who just graduated college and those who just graduated high school." Summarizing the group he noted, "[They are] fun and thoughtful. We get a long very well."

Submitted by **BR. DAVID BROKKE, SOLT**

In our community of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa,

God Almighty has manifested His great power and love for a little girl. Seven years ago, Giawndra Martel of St. Michael the Archangel Church in Dunseith, ND was a three year old with a tumor. The doctors had been working with her for many years with different medications but despite their heroic efforts, the tumors kept growing. Giawndra was tired of the side effects of the medication and decide to stop taking them. Her



God's Healing Touches

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The doctors had been working with her for many years with different medications but despite their heroic efforts, the tumors kept growing... [her grandmother] was encouraged to go public with Giawndra's need for prayer.

grandmother, Gail, approached me about the need for a miracle. She was encouraged to go public with Giawndra's need for prayer. We made a poster of Giawndra and placed it all over the town, in churches and work places. The poster had Giawndra's school picture with her dazzling pink hair. The poster encouraged people to pray for the healing of Giawndra through the intercession of Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity. It was our

Above: Giawndra smiles for her school picture



The adoration chapel at St. Ann's Catholic Church, on the Turtle Mountain Reservation, is a peaceful place of prayer.

hope that Blessed Elizabeth would intercede with God to give this little girl a miracle.

Giawndra received permission and was prepared to receive Confirmation and First Holy Communion a year earlier than her age allowed. Her faith grew with frequent visits to her home by sisters and priests, who shared the faith with her. She was regularly visited with the Blessed Sacrament, the Anointing of the Sick, and Confession, especially prior to her many trips to the doctor. She was encouraged in faith by the story of Bartimaeus the blind man of Jericho in Mark 10:46-52. Bartimaeus heard about Jesus' miraculous cures. He thought to himself, if I ever meet Jesus, I will see. He was excited when that day came and Jesus was walking by. He screamed out to Jesus, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus called him over. He asked him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" Bartimaeus said, "I want to see." Giawndra was told that Jesus' next words to Bartimaeus were very important. Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you." Giawndra was told that she was to have faith in Jesus like Bartimaeus. He would cure her if she truly believed He could. She was reminded of this story many times.

In April 2016 we mourned the death of our SOLT Founder, Fr. Jim Flanagan. At his funeral, we gave our fellow SOLT members the posters of Giawndra. Her poster and prayers went global, for these missionaries serve in thirteen countries. We encouraged people to place the posters in their churches and storm heaven with prayers for Giawndra.

In October of 2016, we went on a pilgrimage to Rome. By God's grace, it happened to be the same time when Blessed Elizabeth would be canonized a saint. After the canonization Mass, we met the Holy Father and asked for his prayers for the Native American people. Giawndra now had the prayers of Pope Francis. Upon our return

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The Holy Father at the canonization Mass for St. Elizabeth of the Trinity

home, we heard that Giawndra had received a cure. The doctors considered a year without the tumors growing as a cure. I met Giawndra in the church one day shortly afterward and she ran

up to me with a hug. I told her, "I hear that God is doing some incredible things in your life." And she agreed by saying "He is!" Then we praised God together. God's healing touch reached this little one in need. Her need for prayer was raised to heaven by many people of faith - by our community of believers here in the Turtle Mountains, by Fr. Jim Flanagan, by SOLT missionaries, by Pope Francis, by the new St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, and the prayers of a little girl in need. And God saw her faith and smiled upon our prayers and made a new Bartimaeus in our Giawndra.



FR. DENNIS MARY DUGAN, SOLT

Fr. Dennis Mary is currently serving in Belcourt, ND. He is the pastor of St. Ann's Catholic Church and friend of Giawndra.



Ministry OF ACCOMPANIMENT

The day I met Joseph is a day that is etched in my memory.

Every Tuesday, a group of us SOLT Sisters would visit the local high school during lunch period to spend time with the students. On this particular day, we met a young man named Joseph. As he stood in line for food, I asked his name and struck up a conversation. Near the end of the conversation, I invited him to join our confirmation program, at which he said he would be there. To my surprise, on Sunday morning he was there, despite having had to walk a mile to the church. Within moments he asked the question, "Um Sister, how can I get baptized?"

It is incredible to be a part of everyday stories that resemble those of Scripture. On that day with Joseph, I felt as though I was living in a story that reflected the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch in the Acts of the Apostles. The Eunuch was on a journey when he encountered the Apostle Philip, who instructed him about the faith. In the story the Ethiopian begs the question, "Look, there is water.

What is to prevent my being baptized?" (Acts 8:36) Often in parish ministry people ask a similar question. The questions may vary in terms of the objective goal (such as baptism, confirmation, communion, etc.), but ultimately they are seeking an encounter with the love of Jesus Christ.

Joseph went on to receive Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation. It was a long process, and one of which took tremendous amount of sacrifice, but he persevered. He persevered, in part, with the help of many people who accompanied him along the journey.

Joseph's story also speaks to the day-to-day apostolate of a sister serving in parish ministries, which is one of accompaniment. Throughout the week, many people come to the church with specific needs and wants, and over the years I have



Sr. Caritas with a family at the SOLT mission in Mora, NM.

found that it is an invitation to accompany them along the journey. Whether it is the little boy who wants to learn more about Jesus, the adult seeking baptism, someone returning to confession, a group high school students, people being led on a retreat, or catechetical leaders seeking instruction, the life of a parish sister is one of accompaniment, journeying with a person as they encounter more deeply the love of Christ.



SR. MARYAM CARITAS SPARKE, SOLT

Sr. Caritas is originally from Troy, Ohio, and entered SOLT in 2005. She professed her perpetual vows in 2014 and currently serves at Christ the King Parish in Corpus Christi, Texas.

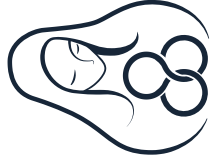
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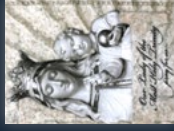
God Bless You!

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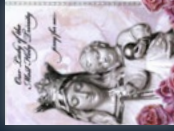


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