



mission

magazine

SUMMER 2022



NEW LIFE TO MORA VALLEY:
Fr. Dale Craig, SOLT

SOWING SEEDS IN DETROIT:
Sr. Mary Lauren Adderly, SOLT

REJOICE IN THE LORD:
Mona Lisa Biberstein



SOCIETY *of* OUR LADY
of the Most Holy Trinity

A message from the
**GENERAL
PRIEST
SERVANT**



Missionary Volunteers

There are some very laudable elements to be found in other religions, notwithstanding of course the fullness of truth to be found in the Catholic faith. One particular aspect I am thinking of at the moment is the sizeable volunteer missionary force of men and women aged 19-26 from the Mormon church who go out into mission for two years of missionary service. Some sources report that 30% of young Mormon men volunteer for the two-year missionary service term. Can you imagine the impact if 30% of Catholic young men and women from age 19-26 would volunteer for two years of missionary service at Catholic missions? I would be willing to bet that any vocation crisis felt around the world would

be solved for both the priesthood and religious life.

In SOLT, from its very beginnings in Holman, New Mexico in 1958, our founder Fr. Flanagan encouraged and welcomed lay missionaries to come and serve full time in mission. Throughout the 64 year history of SOLT, the lay missionary volunteers have led to many vocations to the priesthood, religious life and fruitful marriages. I count myself among that number as well, having served as a lay volunteer at the SOLT mission in Benque in 1997/98.

When I consider the year in mission and the conduciveness for finding one's vocation while serving in mission, I would point to three critical factors. The first and most



2021 SOLT
Missionary
Volunteers in
Belcourt, North
Dakota serve
at St. Ann's
Summer Camp.



Disciples of Jesus through Mary living in Marian-Trinitarian communion, serving on Ecclesial Family Teams in areas of deepest apostolic need

important is that, when lived well, life in mission is a concrete experience of the great message of the Gospel that in losing one's life for the sake of Christ, one ultimately finds it. The missionary volunteer typically leaves behind many other opportunities, puts career pursuits on hold, and sometimes even has to disappoint people they care about by their decision to go off into mission. It is often a leap of faith that requires overcoming different kinds of fear. However, when the leap of faith is taken, it definitely leads to an experience of the Gospel that is captivating. The lesson learned is that God's generosity is never outdone, and the one who gives themselves completely to Him will never be disappointed.

The second factor has to do with living in the midst of a community of disciples. Jesus formed His disciples in a community setting and sent them out two by two. The support, communion, encouragement and accountability of serving together in a community of disciples is a beautiful experience that inevitably assists one in their journey of faith and discernment of their vocation.

Third, I think the final crucial factor is the example of the full time missionaries serving in mission. I know in my case, we were very blessed to have Fr. John McHugh and Fr. Anthony Blount as the two priests serving at the mission. The example of their lives of dedication, faith and service was inspiring and easily led one to the conclusion that this was indeed a marvellous life to live. Not because it is free from challenges and difficulties, but because it is filled with Gospel joy.

I am not sure if we will ever succeed in having 30% of Catholics aged 19-26 go and serve in mission for two years, but I am sure that missionary volunteer service is a worthwhile endeavour that leads people to finding fulfillment and joy in life through the service of the Gospel. Please pray for our missionary volunteers, and please pray that more young men and women would be disposed to hear the call to volunteer for service in the missions.

FR. PETER MARSALEK, SOLT

Fr. Peter is the General Priest Servant of SOLT.
He resides in Corpus Christi, Texas.

CONTACT INFO

Director of Mission Advancement

Sr. Mary Mediatrix of All Grace, SOLT
P.O. Box 4116, Corpus Christi, TX 78469
(361) 654-0054 ext 101, srmarymediatrix@solt.net
Website: solt.net

VOLUNTEER

Sr. Maryam Caritas Sparke, SOLT
soltvolunteer@gmail.com
www.solt.net/volunteer

VOCATIONS

Priests & Brothers Vocations

Fr. Beau Schweitzer, SOLT
vocations@solt.net

Sisters Vocations

Sr. Mary Elizabeth Albers, SOLT
soltsistersvocations@gmail.com

Lay Vocations

Rosalie Buergler
solt.net/laity

New Life to the Mora Valley



Above: The Pecos Mission Church; SOLT founders, Fr. James Flanagan and Fr. John McHugh

From the earliest beginnings of SOLT,

the presence, life, and work of the lay faithful were central in the mind, heart, and vision of Fr. Jim Flanagan, our founder. He invited lay faithful, both single and married, to the Mora Valley. Today, many of our older parishioners still remember and affectionately call them “Lay Apostles,” the name used by Fr. Jim.

As a young man, a month of formation with Fr. Jim and a year of life and service with SOLT co-founder Fr. John McHugh in Belize deeply reprioritized my life. That experience of joy, living and serving as a young lay volunteer on an ecclesial family team, was central to Our Lady calling me to her Society. As I experienced Our Lord and Our Lady calling me to priesthood within the Society, I also found within my heart a call to serve lay missionaries.

This brings us to today, many years later, here in the Mora Valley, the birthplace of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity. I am very grateful to our community leaders for encouraging lay missionary volunteers. When Sr. Maryam Caritas contacted me last fall to ask if I would be willing to welcome lay missionary volunteers to the Mora mission, I was elated. She asked me, “What would you have them do?” and I said, “I don’t know, but Our Lady does.” Fr. Jim gave me such certitude that the lay faithful are called to serve along with the sisters, priests and brothers of that I had no hesitation in saying yes. If there were lay missionaries ready to come, I was certain



“

If there were lay missionaries ready to come, I was certain our Blessed Mother had a plan for them.

our Blessed Mother had a plan for them, which she has shown to us.

Today, we have four wonderful missionary volunteers: Nicole, Hope, Kristine, and Jared. The work of God here is in parish life, which is a work of evangelization that needs self-motivated people. The foundation of the Body of Christ is built on families and family life. We have focused the ministries and activities of these eager volunteers on that which forms this crucial foundation: youth ministry, young adult ministry, catechesis, retreats, and family activities. This work has been modest in numbers but deeply blessed. The parishioners have welcomed and wholeheartedly embraced these young people. As we move forward, we are always looking for mission oriented laity who desire to give of themselves with generous hearts.

The gift and joy of serving with these enthusiastic young men and women reminds me of a statement that Fr. Jim made in my early days, “When I was young I didn’t think I needed anyone, and now I need everyone.” I need these young people on our ecclesial family team. They bring joy, eagerness, a renewed zeal, and prayer as well as provide generous service. It has been a tremendous year serving with these lay missionaries, and I look forward to many more missionary volunteers as we move forward.



Above: Group photo of the SOLT ecclesial family team at the Pecos Mission; picture of the entrance to Santa Gertrudis Catholic Church in Mora



FR. DALE CRAIG, SOLT was ordained to the sacred priesthood for SOLT in 1997. He began serving at St. Gertrude’s in March 2021.

Testimonies of Service

FRUIT OF THE MISSIONARY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

I taught second and third form Biology and Chemistry at Mount Carmel High School. I also helped out with campus ministry and created a girls' basketball team. My year spent in the missions of Belize was truly life changing for me and allowed me to accept the vocation to which the Lord was calling me. It was the night of Holy Thursday when Sr. Mary Katherine told me, "You have a vocation, and you must return to the States to discern it." I still hear those words from that most sacred night! It wasn't until I saw the third world country around me, that I was able to embrace the third world country that lived within.

During my year there, I fell in love with the beauty of Our Lord and the simplicity of life. I don't think I would be a sister today if it wasn't for the year that Our Lord had me spend in Belize. My religious name, Sr. M. Maris Stella, is the fruit of my time there. I fell in love with the beauty of Christ and desired a religious name to reflect what had spoken so deeply to my own heart! I am now called to carry His Light.

SR. M. MARIS STELLA LARKIN, FSMG served in Belize after graduating from Benedictine College. She is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Martyr St. George and serves in healthcare in Peoria, IL.



Above: Sr. M. Maris Stella enjoying time with an elderly resident.

Right: Sr. Joy, local volunteer Shamir, and Molly at the bridge to Calla Creek, one of our village missions.





GREATER SOLT FAMILY

The most important thing I learned from serving with SOLT was that family matters. My husband and I met while serving at the Turtle Mountain Reservation in Belcourt, North Dakota. Charles served for two years as a maintenance man, and I came with a mission trip from Franciscan University and returned many times. It was the feel of a family that accepts you as you are, lifts you up in failure, and draws you closer to God. In the short period of time we were there, lifelong faith-filled friendships formed. We have six children, and of the twelve godparents, six of them are from the SOLT mission. We live in Cody, Wyoming and are involved in a family group that is led by former lay faith formators for SOLT. Wherever we go, SOLT finds us. Psalm 139:7 "Where can I go from your presence? Or where can I flee from your presence?"

CHARLES AND ANGELA are originally from Iowa and Texas. They have six children: Patrick, Francis, Felicity, Killian, Leonie, and Daniel. Charles works for a contractor and Angela homeschools their children, and both are active members of their parish, St. Anthony's.

MISSIONARY LIFE

I served at the Benque Mission from January 2018 to June 2021. I am one of four Belizeans who have so far joined the SOLT missionary volunteers. I tried to study at the University of Belize for one semester after graduating from the John Paul II Junior College, but that did not work for me. Providentially, I received an invitation from one of my past junior college professors to join the community. Upon speaking with Fr. Beau about my situation, I moved into the shack right across from the rectory. The beginning of my time volunteering at the mission was filled with guidance, support, and love from the community. I struggled to love, but I could begin to see how others outpoured their hearts into the community. That changed who I was. A desire grew in me to be a gift for others. The Sacraments of

Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist built a life centered on encountering Christ, both in the joys and struggles of life. Prayer brought me into a deeper conversation with God. There were many times when I could listen to His voice. This happened either through playing chess with students, reading novels and encyclicals with missionaries, doing liturgy prep on Saturday mornings, or even having silence in the mountains of Pine Ridge. Today, not much of the missionary lifestyle has changed except that I now work as both the parish assistant administrator and as an English Literature teacher at my high school alma mater. I remain calm and joyful in times of uncertainty and doubt, a reaction I seldomly came across before being in mission.

DANIEL RIVERA is originally from Benque Viejo del Carmen and continues to serve with the SOLT members at Our Lady of Mount Carmel.



Sowing Seeds in Detroit

Above: Sr. Mary Lauren tending the garden with her students at Holy Redeemer Catholic School.

If you're driving down Junction Street to come visit us at Holy Redeemer in Southwest Detroit, you probably won't be thinking much about the Garden of Eden. However, if you park in view of our church's glorious copper dome, step out of your car, take in a deep breath of air from the panadería (cinnamon-sugar) and taquería (carne asada), walk across the blacktop that doubles as our playground, and arrive at the far back corner of our school, then you might start to think differently.

Five metal beds, salvaged from a 1950s era Detroit automotive factory, are filled to the brim with compost and unruly rows of vegetable plants. My middle school students and I tend this garden with much love. We planted seeds in the winter when there was still snow on the ground and the mornings were dark. The seeds sprouted, spring came, and we planted them outside. Soon, our lettuce will be ready to harvest, the radishes will be pink and bulging, and the beans and squashes will be blossoming.

I grew up watching my grandfather coax tomatoes and basil out of tiny cinder box planters in the middle of South Philadelphia. The process takes gentle effort, patience, and reverence at the mystery of God's work:



"The seed sprouts and grows, he knows not how" (Mark 4:27). It brings me great joy to watch this little school garden spring into life, transformed with God's help. Each sprout reminds us of Eden and gives us hope for redemption. If you find an eighth-grader working in the garden, they might tell you about our dream of housing chickens and a goat there someday. We spend plenty of time together and have shared many dreams.

When I'm not outside with the vegetables, I'm upstairs in my second-floor classroom—a garden too, of sorts, where seeds in hearts are planted, tended, and begin to grow. The real lessons are about perseverance, confidence, and friendship with God and each other. We learn those every day while it looks like we're learning about fractions, geometry, and equations.

The others on the team here are busy tending gardens too. Sr. Gianna teaches

fifth grade; Sr. Kateri is the principal; Sr. Helen does pastoral work; Sr. Mary Peter sees clients for counseling; the priests serve the parish; the brothers work; and the seminarians study. We come together for prayer, meals, support, and encouragement.

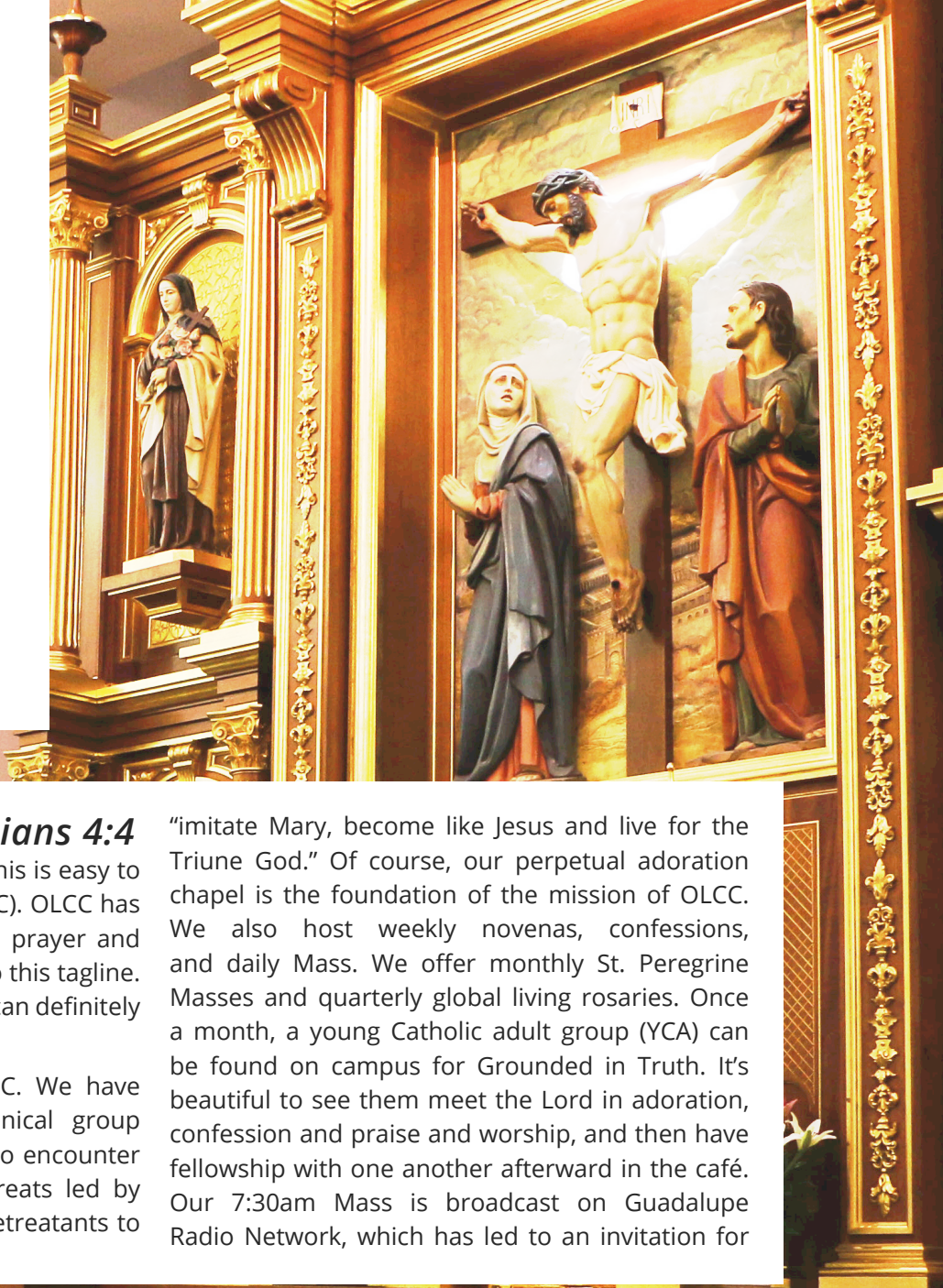
The team is preparing for our garden to triple in size. This summer, as part of the Archdiocese of Detroit's plan to group multiple parishes and pastors together or combine parishes under a single pastor, SOLT will take charge of a "Family of Parishes" that includes Holy Redeemer and two neighboring parishes. We are looking forward to the opportunities for discipleship and new life that this change will bring. Before you get in your car to leave our little corner of God's new creation, be sure to come across Junction Street and knock on our door. We'd love to share some salad with you!



Above: Seedlings sprout in Sr. Lauren's classroom; students enjoy working in the garden.

SR. MARY LAUREN ADDERLY, SOLT is from New Jersey. She studied Biology at Villanova University, and professed first vows in 2020. She currently teaches middle school Math and Science at Holy Redeemer Grade School in Detroit.

Rejoice in the Lord



St. Paul tells us in Philippians 4:4 to "Rejoice in the Lord always!" I find this is easy to do at Our Lady of Corpus Christi (OLCC). OLCC has been described as a place of silence, prayer and peace, but joy could easily be added to this tagline. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and you can definitely see the Holy Spirit at work here!

I am the event coordinator for OLCC. We have around thirty diocesan and ecumenical group retreats a year that use our facilities to encounter the Lord at work. We also offer retreats led by SOLT members, who encourage the retreatants to

"imitate Mary, become like Jesus and live for the Triune God." Of course, our perpetual adoration chapel is the foundation of the mission of OLCC. We also host weekly novenas, confessions, and daily Mass. We offer monthly St. Peregrine Masses and quarterly global living rosaries. Once a month, a young Catholic adult group (YCA) can be found on campus for Grounded in Truth. It's beautiful to see them meet the Lord in adoration, confession and praise and worship, and then have fellowship with one another afterward in the café. Our 7:30am Mass is broadcast on Guadalupe Radio Network, which has led to an invitation for

“

OLCC has been described as a place of silence, prayer and peace, but joy could easily be added to this tagline. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and you can definitely see the Holy Spirit at work here!





“

What gives me the most joy is to be able to serve as an ecclesial family team here at OLCC.

Fr. Sam Medley to host a daily radio show during the Divine Mercy hour entitled “A Life Lived Joyfully.”

What gives me the most joy is to be able to serve as an ecclesial family team here. A particular joy for me has been to be able to serve as a liaison between friends of OLCC and the SOLT community. Our priests are always willing to hear confessions for the parish retreats. OLCC leadership has contributed different gifts over the years. Fr. Dan repaired buildings and fixed plumbing and Fr. Sam updated technology throughout the campus, while maintaining their priestly duties and running the OLCC campus. God provides exactly what we need at the right time. Our sisters portray Our Lady's peace on campus while also serving in bookkeeping, at the bookstore, leading retreats and providing

spiritual direction. Our brothers and deacons assist at Mass, take care of our suffering servants when they are sick, have administrative duties, and serve where needed. Our SOLT laity, including my husband Joseph, provide counseling, serve in the bookstore, cook meals, and serve at the retreats in many ways from giving talks to housekeeping. In these ways, our ecclesial family team lives out the SOLT vision, mission and charism.

God knew I needed joy so He brought me to OLCC in 2010. At night, when I am preparing for a retreat or an event, I sometimes walk in the rosary garden and marvel at all God has done here, both for me and the countless people who have attended Mass, retreats, adoration, special events, or just happened by because they, too, needed to “rejoice in the Lord.”



Previous page: Inside the perpetual adoration chapel at Our Lady of Corpus Christi (OLCC); adoration is accessible 24 hours a day. **Above:** Group photo of the team at OLCC from December 2021.

MONA LISA BIBERSTEIN serves as the event coordinator of Our Lady of Corpus Christi, where she has worked since 2010. She and her husband, Joseph, have been members of the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity since 2000. They have four children and four grandchildren.



Above: Inside St. Gertrude Catholic Church in Mora, New Mexico.



SOCIETY of OUR LADY
of the Most Holy Trinity
PO Box 4116 • Corpus Christi, TX 78469

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Robstown, TX
Permit No. 774

INSIDE

NEW LIFE TO MORA VALLEY:

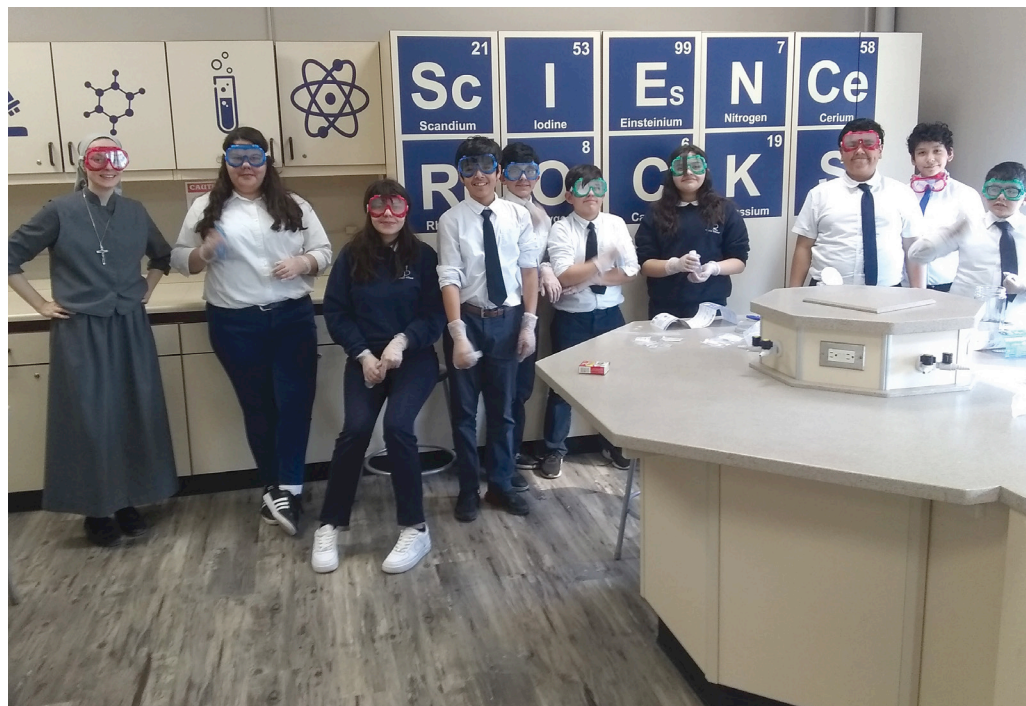
Fr. Dale Craig, SOLT

SOWING SEEDS IN DETROIT:

Sr. Mary Lauren Adderly, SOLT

REJOICING IN THE LORD:

Mona Lisa Biberstein
SOLT Lay Member



On the front cover: Students learn about the love Our Lady has for them at St. Ann's Summer Camp in Belcourt, North Dakota..

Right: Sr. Mary Lauren with her students at Holy Redeemer Catholic School in Detroit, Michigan.



mission
magazine
SUMMER 2022