



mission

magazine

WINTER 2020



LOVE IN ACTION:

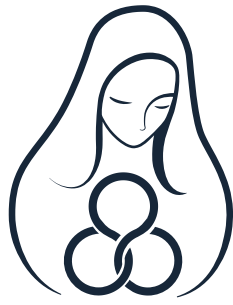
Fr. Antonio Anderson, SOLT

THE JOY OF SERVING:

Sr. Mary Emmanuel Schmidt, SOLT

FOLLOWING GOD'S CALL:

Drew Kanne



SOCIETY of OUR LADY

of the Most Holy Trinity

A message from the GENERAL PRIEST SERVANT



Missionary Volunteers

In this edition of the Mission Magazine, you will read a few stories regarding our missionary volunteers. Indeed, I must confess that in reading the articles, it very quickly brought me back to many fond memories from my own time serving as a missionary volunteer in Belize back in 1997-98.

I suppose it is very easy when one hears the expression "missionary volunteer" to immediately think of serving in a mission faraway from one's home. This was certainly brought to mind in reading the stories contained within this magazine. However, I think the term should also be envisioned in such a way that we all aspire to live as missionary volunteers regardless of our current location.

The term "missionary" is rooted in the Latin word missio which refers to the act of sending. In the Christian context, it refers to the great missionary mandate that Jesus entrusted to His apostles when He sent them to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations...." (Mt 28:19) We too have received this same missionary mandate by virtue of our baptism. However, the location of our living out of this mandate can greatly vary. For some, they are called to go make disciples in far off places, but for others, their call is to make disciples in their own homes, among their own families, and in their own neighborhoods. After all, as any parent can tell you, it is no easy work to make disciples even out of one's own children!

The term "volunteer" is obviously related to the word voluntary, and is a reference that one performs the activity out of one's

Each year, young adults from around the U.S. take part in a week-long mission trip to Belize where they share their gifts and serve their brothers and sisters in Christ.





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

own free will, without receiving proportionate monetary compensation for it. There is indeed a great satisfaction from laboring in the vineyard of the Lord without the motivation of financial compensation. Thinking a little bit outside of the box, I suppose in many ways this can remind us again of a family situation where parents labor on behalf of their children without thought of any recompense – they do it freely out of love; or even as underpaid staff at parishes and Catholic schools who turn down more financially lucrative positions in order to work in an environment of faith.

Putting the two terms together, the missionary volunteer is one who freely invites others to come to know Jesus through the witness of their life, their words, and their service on behalf of others in need. While this description is certainly met by those who venture to faraway countries to labor freely in the vineyard of the Lord by assisting others and proposing Jesus to them, it is also beautifully met by

the parents who dedicate themselves completely to their children in a free labor of love that is ordered toward discipleship of Jesus, or by dedicated volunteers in the local parish and community who tirelessly work to spread the Kingdom of God.

In the current lingo of the Church, to be a missionary volunteer is really equivalent to being a missionary disciple – one who joyfully and freely follows Christ to the point that their own words and actions become invitations to others to become missionary disciples themselves. Let us earnestly pray for one another that we would each respond to God's call to be missionary volunteers, or missionary disciples, in whichever part of the Lord's vineyard that we find ourselves at this moment.

FR. PETER MARSALEK, SOLT

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

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Where do SOLT Missionary Volunteers serve?

UNITED STATES

TURTLE MOUNTAIN
RESERVATION,
BELCOURT, ND

MEXICO

QUERETARO

BELIZE

BENQUE VIEJO



Love in Action

To the degree that you are a missionary, then to that degree you are authentically Christian – that’s St. John Paul II’s teaching on Jesus’ call to all Catholics to evangelize. It is true. When we get to know Him and His amazing Way, we cannot but share that beauty and truth with those around us. To know the Trinity is to love Him. To know the saints is to love them. To know the Church is to love her, and once you love them, then you can’t help but erupt in prophetic witness and in loving service. As Fr. Jim Flanagan, SOLT founder, put it: daily we must touch the souls around us in a “burst of joyful generosity!”

For the vast majority of Catholics, to be missionaries does not mean changing zip codes, let alone countries. All Christians are called to be disciples, to follow Jesus closely, and all disciples are called to evangelize, but most are called to be missionaries to the mailman and the lady at the cash register, to the boss at work and to the fellow student.

To leave one’s comfort zone geographically – one’s own culture, family and country – is, however, a particularly beautiful way of living that universal missionary vocation, and that is what we do in SOLT. Here in the Belize mission of SOLT, we have priests, sisters, seminarians, and a deacon and his wife serving the Lord in permanent international commitment. We also have twenty-seven missionary volunteers from the United States serving here for a period of one to three years





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At first glance, to be an international missionary would take heroic courage or extraordinary trust in God. But really, all it takes is a call from God and a simply appropriate reaction.

(and lately two young families have joined us!). They have found Him. They have loved Him, and that love has freed them for uncommon service.

Some folks work for money, others for fame. You can live for the weekend or knock yourself out to retire early. On the other hand, we can also direct all our efforts and human faculties for the service and glory of the Divine Majesty. These lay missionaries in Belize do the latter. They won't be in the foreign missions forever, but their lives will never be the same, nor will the world.

At first glance, to be an international missionary would take heroic courage or extraordinary trust in God. But really, all it takes is a call from God and a simple, appropriate reaction. St. John of the Cross compared God to the ocean. We are tempted to visit the beach and wade up to our ankles. We are tempted to relate to God in a safe

and comfortable way – a way which allows me to say I am a Christian, but not in a way that would allow Him to interfere with “my” life. To dive into God completely, however, to get in over our heads, to put out into the deep, is truly the logical thing to do – once you learn that God knows you better than you know yourself and He loves you more than you love yourself! To relate to God in a way that is “safe” is not to relate at all to the Lion of Judah, to the Adonai of time and space.

C. S. Lewis writes that we are like honest but reluctant tax payers in relationship to God. We pay to Him what we must, the minimum, but we hope that taxes never go up. As if we had to protect ourselves from God! Instead of protecting ourselves from God, let us joyfully put out into the deep.



FR. ANTONIO ANDERSON, SOLT

Fr. Antonio Anderson, SOLT was ordained by St. John Paul II in 1991. After serving in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico for almost twenty years, he is now the pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish in Benque Viejo, Belize.

Previous page: A student takes up the offering during Mass at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in Belize, Sr. Maria of Merciful Love, SOLT joyfully serves at Mt. Carmel High School in Benque Viejo. Clarissa, a former SOLT Missionary Volunteer, teaches at the mission. Above: SOLT Missionary Volunteers share a meal in the common area.

The Joy of Serving:

*The Friendships,
the Graces and the
People of the Turtle
Mountain Reservation*

I recently had the happy opportunity to return to the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation where I served ten years ago. The landscape was very much the same with its fields and rolling hills, complete with snow covered roads. It was there that I lived out the first nine years of my religious life as a professed Sister of SOLT. Those busy, hectic days were what shaped my vocation, gave me a deep appreciation for serving on ecclesial family teams and provided the tremendous privilege of serving alongside many volunteers and, most importantly, the people of the Turtle Mountains.

My time in the Turtle Mountains was marked by many firsts and friendships. It was there that I made an Ojibwa native flute with the help of Dan Jerome (the first Native American elected to the ND State Senate), and where I attended my first Pow Wow. It was there that I enjoyed my first taste of 'bullets and bangs' (a Metis soup of meatballs and traditional fry bread). It was there that I was given the complete joy of professing my final vows amidst family and friends in 2006. It was there that I first taught in an elementary school, became a catechist, taught RCIA, and served on a parish council and St. Ann's School Board. It is where I also served as Vocation Servant for our



Volunteer in the Turtle Mountains

solt.net/summercamp

St. Ann's Summer Camp has served the youth of the Turtle Mountains since 1999. SOLT Missionary Volunteers and SOLT priests and sisters provide an environment where youth can develop a relationship with God and make new friends all while having fun. Through a variety of activities; camp counselors help youth to develop new skills, including archery, canoeing, arts and crafts, survival and camping.

Along with these fun activities, youth have the opportunity to grow in their Catholic faith by attending Mass every day. Other faith building activities include learning about the Mass, Saints, Holy Bible and the Catholic Faith.

Left: St. Kateri Tekakwitha (1656-1680), called the "Lily of the Mohawks," is the first Native American to be canonized. She is special to the people of the Turtle Mountains, who have a long Catholic history coupled with their own Native American culture.



Sisters and led the SOLT Sisters' Aspirancy Program. And it is where I experienced the gift of the hospitality of the people that invites you into the very heart of their homes and graced friendships.

Every year, St. Ann's Indian Mission and Catholic School is served by numerous volunteers. I will be forever grateful to Jeannie and Greg who mentored me when I taught 2nd grade. There was Dave who came for St. Ann's summer camp and brought along his accordion. And I'll never forget Katrina, a youth minister, who had the ability to explain the most profound mysteries of the faith to any person. She cared deeply for the people and I often witnessed her sitting and talking with parishioners known to be lost or confused. There was also Linda and Ben



Previous page: Sr. Mary Emmanuel, SOLT travels to World Youth Day in Germany with youth from the Turtle Mountains, 2006; Kayla Keplin at World Youth day, 2006.

Above: Sr. Mary Emmanuel, SOLT with the SOLT ecclesial family team in North Dakota, 2007; SOLT Missionary Volunteers in North Dakota teach youth about Catholic saints, 2018.



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We've had so many unique people come to our mission in North Dakota, single, married, discerning - all ready to lay down their lives for Christ's sheep.



who were like parents to the young teachers at St. Ann's. Linda was the principal, who graciously led the students and staff and Ben was like St. Joseph, quietly working on various projects around the mission.

We've had so many unique people come to our mission in North Dakota, single, married, discerning - all ready to lay down their lives for Christ's flock. Each of these people are held within the memories of the Turtle Mountain people. They come into our lives, our mission and become more than just volunteers. They become a part of our ecclesial family team, a part of the people, and a part of the great mandate of Christ to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19).



If you or anyone you know has every considered giving a year in service to the Church, encourage them to check our mission amidst the Peoples of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. It will be an unforgettable experience!

Above: Sr. Mary Emmanuel Schmidt, SOLT with Turtle Mountain local, Dan Jerome, 2008; traditional Native American flute; Sr. MaryAnn Richwald, SOLT at St. Ann's Summer Camp, 2018.



SR. MARY EMMANUEL SCHMIDT, SOLT

Sr. Mary Emmanuel Schmidt lived in the Turtle Mountains from 2001-2010. She currently lives in Corpus Christi, Texas and serves as the American Regional Sister Servant.



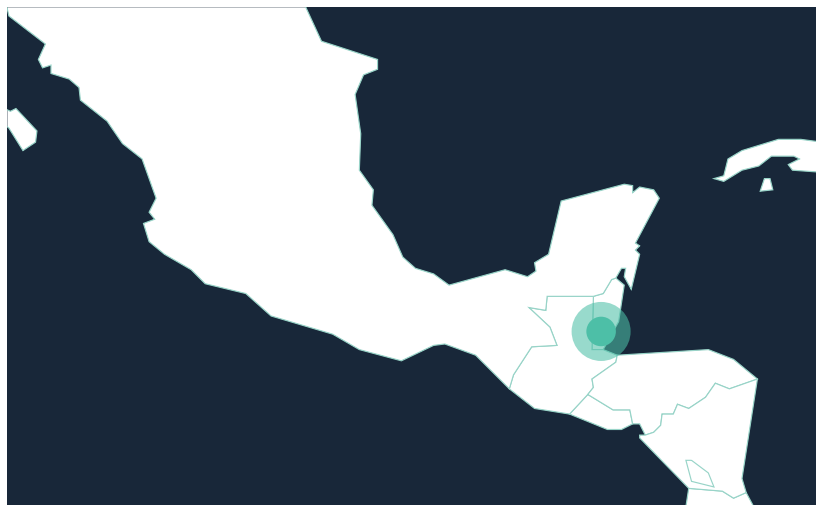
Following God's Call

My life changed in a major way after the SOLT Belize Mission Trip, and it was a trip I almost didn't go on. My passport had come in the mail and I was mentally preparing for the quick packing I would have to do. It was the end of my sophomore year at the University of Kansas and one week before I was to fly into Houston where the mission group would stay for a night before departing for Belize.

It was Tuesday of finals week when I received the news. One of my best friends, Dylan, had just been killed in a car accident. Dylan was a faithful Catholic and part of a tight knit group. Needless to say, my friends and I were dumbfounded and

heartbroken. I thought about emailing the SOLT team to let them know I couldn't make it after all, as the funeral was on the same day that I had to fly into Houston. Instead of bowing out, I found myself changing out of my suit in the car on the way to the airport. In Houston, I received such a tender reception from the priest and sisters on the trip, and I was able to jump right in.

As many people who have served in Benque will tell you, it has an indescribable quality to it. I still remember turning a corner in the road and being greeted by the Mopan River flowing past us on one side, teeming with people washing clothes



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The relationships I was able to make with the mission team were deep and life-giving.



Previous page: The bridge to Calla Creek, Belize; 2019 SOLT Mission Trip participants gather for a photo..

Above: Mission trip participants serve in a variety of ways while in Belize.

and going for a swim, and all the brightly colored buildings on the other side. From the first moment, Benque enchanted me.

The next two weeks were incredibly beautiful. The relationships I was able to make with the mission team were deep and life-giving. All of us were amazed by the joy and charity in the people of Benque. In the midst of this time of grief, I was finding something new, a joy that I hadn't experienced, and a community to share it with. It was in Belize that I experienced a concrete moment of prayer where I knew that the Lord was calling me to enter formation with SOLT. I talked to the SOLT vocations director and applied to return to Benque as an aspirant two months later. I knew that the turnaround was quick, but I was ready to follow wherever God was calling me. After some time spent in formation here in Belize, I have been able to recognize the beauty of God's hand in my whirlwind experience. He ended my time with my spiritual family at KU with tragedy and a funeral, yet immediately he delivered me to my new spiritual family, marking it with the incredible joy found in service to others.

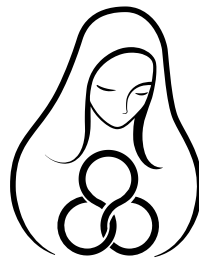


DREW KANNE

Drew Kanne is originally from Naperville, Illinois and majored in Secondary Education at KU. After participating in the SOLT Belize Mission Trip in May 2019, he applied to the SOLT Priests' community and was received as an aspirant.



Above: Fr. Dennis Mary Dugan, SOLT celebrates Mass for SOLT St. Ann's Summer Camp on the Turtle Mountain Reservation in Belcourt, North Dakota.



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On the front cover: 2019 SOLT Belize Mission Trip participants visit the poor in Belize, Central America.

Right: A mission trip participant works with students in the classroom, only one of many ways in which participants serve on the mission trip.



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