

# ST.THERESA PARISH

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, February 15, 2015



Belize Mission Trip, January 2015



## BELIZE MISSION TRIP 2015

Our 2015 mission trip to Belize this year was a very rewarding and spiritual experience. We had many projects planned, and with God's blessings and the Holy Spirit's guidance we were able to complete all of them. We were mainly involved with St. Benedict's School and Church, a Mayan community in Punta Gorda. At the school we constructed 2 sidewalks including pouring the concrete, replacing 4 windows with louver windows, and working with the school children (230+ students) practicing 5 songs with the children in preparation for their 1st children's mass in their new church. At St. Benedict's Church we painted the inner walls and helped get the church ready for the Church Dedication. We were able to attend the dedication which was officiated by the Bishop of Belize and attended by 300+ people from various villages.

We tried a new project this year, after seeing the need from our 2014 trip. It was a vocation retreat for teens. It turned out to be an awesome experience and success for not only 51 teens from various villages within the Toledo District but also for us. It was a learning day for them filled with lots of fun and good food. We concluded the day with a Mass officiated by Bishop Glancy.

Another very rewarding experience, and one of my favorites, is spending an afternoon with the elderly at the HOPE Center. We've been working on the center for the past 3 years. For us to see how far this center has come, was truly amazing. We were able to spend 2 afternoons with about 50 seniors each time—singing songs, doing craft projects, doing exercises, and playing bingo with them in their new HOPE Center.

The people in Belize, though very poor, are gentle, hardworking, and happy. After having the opportunity of spending time with these beautiful people for 2 weeks, one thing was very clear to me. Their priorities are God, family, and a hunger for education for their children. They all come together and make it happen—a wonderful example of a strong Christian community!!

Interacting with the people, the Nuns, the teachers at St. Benedicts, Zach (youth minister), Fr. Derek from St. Peter Claver, and all of the other faith-filled people is the most rewarding and humbling experience of this year's trip. They couldn't thank us enough for all that we did, but it is us that thank them for giving us this opportunity to walk the path of Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit.

*Linda Klingler*

What a wonderful fulfilling experience I had in the city of Punta Gorda. Some of my highlights were as follows: Meeting Fr. Lucas, the Polish Priest at the Nazareth Retreat Center who made some Polish food for us; Helping to paint the walls of St. Benedict's church in preparation for the upcoming Sunday dedication and participating in the dedication service; Enjoying meals with two native families in their house; Getting to know and work with Fr. Derek and the two future priests; Participating in a Jamboree with teenagers from outlying communities who came to hear about vocations – priests, nuns, catechists and Eucharistic ministers; Teaching songs to all the students at St. Benedict's and getting many hugs in return; Finding out that Sr. Mary had taught 5 young girls a couple of dances, one of which they performed for us one evening; and last but not least all the bumps in the unpaved roads! I'm so thankful I was able to return to Belize. The memories of the trip won't soon be forgotten.

*Barb Jatczak*

My husband and I heard about the mission trip a few years ago and had an interest in serving the people of Belize. We finally got that opportunity this past month. The experience was very rewarding and I believe that we helped carry on the mission to help this group of people. Yes we did physical work... digging up solid ground and pouring cement for a sidewalk at St Benedict's school, painting the interior of St Benedict's church for the church dedication that the Bishop of Belize attended plus working in the senior center plus in a food pantry at the retreat center. We worked with the 260 school children of St Benedict's teaching them some songs for church and working on a "Vocation Day" that was attended by 50 teenage kids! Most important was the connection both physically and spiritually that we all felt and the presence of the Holy Spirit that guided us and we truly believe made things happen...not always on our time schedule but in Belizean time!

*Kathy and Dale Marciniak*

### Belize: Holy Poverty

My first trip to Belize was truly a blessing beyond words. The sights, sounds and smells were a feast for the senses! However, I have to admit, the poverty at first overwhelmed me. After the first full day in Belize, my only reflection that evening was--"I can't believe the poverty, doesn't it bother you?!" We have all seen pictures on the evening news showing struggling countries, but to me, the poverty was everywhere. No matter what village we saw coming and going from our base at the Nazareth Retreat Center, all I saw was the poverty. To say it was sobering is an understatement.

While that plunge into poverty never left me, slowly another face of Belize began to emerge. As we moved into the communities of Punta Gorda we began to make connections with the women, men and children of Belize, and the teachers, catechists and the Pallottine Sisters--who just last year celebrated 100 years in the country -- and several from the Jesuit order, all who are living and serving in the country. A new picture slowly started to form in my consciousness.

During this week I was reading a biography of our new saint, Pope John XXIII. He was born to a working-class family that did not even own the land they farmed; at the supper table each evening were his parents, nine siblings and an aunt and uncle with ten children! While they were poor and humble, they were not destitute, they had well-tilled land, cattle for sustenance, and many hands to make light work. He saw this simple life as a blessing, indeed he referred to it as "holy poverty." Pope John knew that the simple life is a form of poverty that makes the soul noble and enriches one's spiritual life.

This is the understanding I now take away from Belize. Yes there is poverty, and we all need to do our best to eradicate it. As a rich country and community here in the United States there is much we can do to help secure clean water, education and improved conditions in their schools. But we must remember that by living simply and sustainably we are connected in a special way, in solidarity with the poor, especially in Belize. And we will all be the richer for it.

Marian Lamoureux  
Director of Adult and Family Ministry

For more information on the Belize Mission Trip, please contact  
Linda Klingler 262-495-4999 [linda.klingler@wi.rr.com](mailto:linda.klingler@wi.rr.com)  
or Bob Anderson 262-594-2768 [talofa1624@gmail.com](mailto:talofa1624@gmail.com)