

ST. THERESA PARISH

First Sunday of Lent, February 14, 2016



Belize Mission Trip, January 2016

BELIZE MISSION TRIP 2016

Why a Kitchen? The major 2016 mission project was a kitchen building at the Santa Cruz elementary school. The Japanese and Belizean governments have constructed a greenhouse and will construct an open air dining facility at 14 different schools in the Toledo District, if the locals have an equipped kitchen facility. The purpose is to improve the nutrition of the school children and show the villagers things that can be done to improve their own diets. St Peter Claver also has an aquaculture program at one high school that will provide tilapia and another that will provide chickens for the lunch program. We were lucky to be a small part of a big cooperative program to benefit the students and their villages.

The following are comments from our parishioners that went on the trip.

Our 2016 trip to Belize was another rewarding and inspiring experience. As I reflect back on the last 2 weeks, we were the ones that were truly blessed by being able to be a part of our friend's lives in Belize, and to be able to experience what is truly important in life. This year we went to Santa Cruz, a village not far from Guatemala, and built a kitchen. Because this is a very hilly part of Belize, it was challenging to find enough level ground to put it on. The villagers took great pride in this project and joined the men every day to build their kitchen. While they built the kitchen, the girls traveled up the road to Palo Grande. We walked in from the road to this village of three families, and painted the inside of their church. The country was beautiful, and as we looked over the mountain tops we could actually see Guatemala. In both of these villages the people were so gracious and appreciative of our help. In the afternoons the girls were in the classrooms doing craft projects with the children or teaching them songs for them to sing at the kids Mass. The day before we left the principal, teachers, and villagers made lunch for us and had a little appreciation ceremony for us in the new kitchen!!! Father Derek resided at the kids Mass where the children sang the songs they had learned. Father later dedicated the kitchen with the help of the children. It was a very special day for the people of Santa Cruz, and for us a very special 2 weeks.

Linda Klingler

I've done several different trips to South America over the past few years, but this was my first in Belize, first in Central America, and first with this group of people – and I was astonished! The first few days I was truly amazed with how well the veterans of this trip knew the area and knew the people there, and how well the people there knew them! The sister parish relationship that exists is so well-established and very ethical, this group truly responds to what the communities down there sincerely need. It was great to see how every person of the group was able to help as well, regardless of age. The people of Punta Gorda and surrounding villages are so kind, and it was very satisfying to return that kindness and help fill their physical and spiritual needs. One of my favorite moments of the trip was when some boys were leaving the school for the day and one threw some sawdust that was lying around the work site at another young boy. I leaned down to pick up just one handful in order to sprinkle it onto the head of a first grader who was standing next to me with his massive bookbag on his back....and before I knew it I was the center of a sprinting, hiding, peeking, racing, shouting game of throwing sawdust with 15 elementary aged boys – handfuls of it exploding in my face every 10 seconds and courageous little ones with determination running straight at me and the group of us using the entire area around the school buildings to evade and chase and pause to catch our breaths. I would recommend this trip to everyone!

Meredith Hollman

The 2016 mission trip had 13 people for the first week and 6 people for the second week. We built a school kitchen, painted the inside of a church, taught school children three songs for mass, spent an afternoon with seniors and were a part of a wonderful children's mass and a kitchen blessing in the Village of Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz has around 450 residents and 125 students in the elementary school and no electricity. But the most important thing was working with many villagers, the school principal and teachers. We laughed and talked about families, crops and their goals for the school and the kids. We met old friends from past trips and enjoyed time with the Sisters and the staff from St Peter Claver. We got to know other team members better and shared our feelings. It is easy to see God in the Sisters, the staff of St Peter Claver and the Belizean families, especially in the children. The simple lives and the happiness always impress me; it really makes you think what is important in life. I enjoy the work, the time for reflection and the closeness of God.

Bob Anderson

The Belize trip was not just good, it was awesome! I have been on other mission trips within the United States but flying out of the country, going to a distant land and the work that we did was even more gratifying.

The jungle was dense and very green. It was not uncommon to see a farmer walking down the streets with a machete which was needed to make a path through the dense jungle going to his fields or perhaps hunting for food with a rifle; or a woman carrying a load of bananas or wood on her back. But what impressed me the most were the smiles on the faces of the children and adults. It was fun being with the kids and teaching them songs that were used in the mass for the dedication of the kitchen. The children loved to play especially with these new people from the U.S.

Most of the people could speak English and are very easy to talk to. We laughed a lot with the Belizeans while working side by side. I often wondered who the missionaries on the trip were. The Belizeans gave us so much by their example and made us better people by this example. The people were very poor and some had no utilities such as running water and electric in their homes. Yet, they seemed to be so content with their lives.

When we arrived at a site to build a school kitchen or paint the inside of a church the people of the area were always there and had more knowledge of building than I. They also worked very hard and long hours.

The Holy Spirit inspired us all and I will remember praying with the people of Belize and the missionaries in our group from St. Theresa, St. James, and St. Joseph's from Wauwatosa.

If anyone has the health and desire they should go on a mission trip. It is not enough to donate money but also your talents. Of course, we do not have to go to a far off place to help God's people but we must be people who are physically engaged to do so. I know that personally I will return to Belize or wherever God inspires me to go. Paraphrasing a song that we sing at mass, "do not be afraid for I (God) am with you".

Jim Yourkovich

For more information on the
Belize Mission Trip, please contact

Linda Klingler 262-495-4999
linda.klingler@wi.rr.com

or Bob Anderson 262-594-2768
talofa1624@gmail.com

