

Friends & Disciples

Missionaries of Jesus-Americas

Thanksgiving 2016

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Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year!

¡Feliz Navidad, Prospero Año y Felicidad!



Missionaries of Jesus

Doing God's work
where others dare not go.

A photograph of two people, likely missionaries, hiking up a steep, grassy hill. They are seen from behind, wearing large backpacks and hats. The person in the foreground is wearing a green shirt and blue pants, while the person behind is wearing a brown shirt and black pants. The background is a clear blue sky and some green foliage on the left.

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We plan to build a **Capital Fund for Missionaries of Jesus** (\$1,500,000.00). **JOIN US** in our search for generous people who are willing to pledge at least \$1,500.00 every year for the next five years. The interest of this Capital Fund will help finance, for the coming ten years and beyond, the **MJ Seminaries, Missionary Sustenance, Homes for the retired and sick missionaries and MJ projects for evangelization and efforts to uplift the poor** through education, health and other services.

Because the Mercy of God Knows no Limits

Why Peñitas, in a colonia known as Pueblo de Palmas? Why such a remote area along the U.S.-Mexico border where many in our own Rio Grande Valley here in South Texas have never visited? And why would the Holy Father send a message to the people of a rural area that some say is “insignificant”?



These are questions Father Michael Montoya, a Missionary of Jesus priest, who is pastor of St. Anne Quasi-Parish in Peñitas, Texas and its three missionary churches, continues to hear as he was finalizing plans for a World Youth Encounter/Encuentro Mundial de los Jovenes on July 26. This local celebration, which coincided with World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland started off as an idea to help the young people in one of the poorest areas in the country see how they are connected with the Church and young people from around the world.

Given the extreme poverty levels in the community and their immigration status, it is impossible for most to travel. In Peñitas, explains Father Montoya, traveling even from their homes to church comes with risk. Some fear the real danger that if they are pulled over for even a minor driving infraction, they could be deported. Father Montoya points to what he refers to as a “military presence” in the area. There is a no shortage of local police, sheriff’s deputies,

state troopers, U.S. border patrol agents and National Guard patrolling the area located just miles from the U.S.-Mexico border.

“It’s a constant reminder to the people that something is not right. We live so close to the wall that divides families, it affects self-identity. All the images we receive from the outside are negative. It’s always connected to the border, always connected to the things we cannot do,” said Father Montoya.

Add to this the poverty and lack of basic infrastructure in some neighborhoods that do not even have sewage and water lines. “There are many circumstances,” Father Montoya said, “that make it difficult for the people. They think they are forgotten.”



But they are not forgotten. Today they are celebrating after learning that the Holy Father prepared a personal message for the youth of the diocese, specifically for the youth attending the Encuentro Mundial de los Jovenes at St. Anne Church in Peñitas.

“The parish of St. Anne is beyond happy. Things like this don’t happen to a place like Peñitas,” said Father Montoya. “The pope is sending a message to us! I think that is proof enough, that the love of the Church for our poor people is really palpable, it’s real.”

So even before they heard the message, the community celebrated the fact that a message was on its way, that the Holy Father took the time to think of them.

As Father Montoya stressed, the idea of hosting the encuentro in Peñitas was to help the people witness that “the mercy of God knows no limits within a Church that knows no borders,” “that it reaches even the remotest part of the world. We don’t have to be in the center of power to be recognized by the Church.”

Forgetting perhaps, that the infant Jesus chose to be born in the small town of Bethlehem and not a city center, many doubted that such an event like the encuentro could happen in such an “out of the way” place. The people of Peñitas and surrounding communities proved otherwise. “Not everyone can travel to Poland for World Youth Day,” explained Father Montoya, “but we believe that even in our area, a profound and meaningful encounter with the world’s youth can be organized.”

“It’s a re-imagining,” Father Montoya said, “of who we are. We are not defined by the border, we are defined by our culture and by our faith.”

This is truly a testament that the mercy of God knows no limits. It should also serve as a reminder to each of us that no matter where God places us, no matter where we stand in the world, we each



matter and must do what we can to reach out to those in need and foster a “culture of encounter.”

Some people may still be asking, “Why Peñitas?” Three Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who have been living and helping in the area for 12 years will tell you, because the people of God here have a deep faith that is not daunted by poverty or other hardships they may endure.

The rich faith of the people moved the ICM sisters – Sister Carolyn Kosub, Sister Emily Jocson and Sister Fatima Santiago to remain in the area after they arrived in 2004 to help rebuild the community after it was devastated by a tornado. Through an outreach center they started, Proyecto Desarrollo Humano, this underserved area started to blossom. They also built St. Anne Church in 2009. They never dreamed it would become a mother church of a parish four years later, or that one day, on the feast of St. Anne, the Holy Father would send a personal message to the youth of that parish. In the words of ICM Sister Kosub, “God has certainly worked wonders.”

- Brenda Nettles Riojas
The Valley Catholic





La misericordia de Dios no conoce limites

¿Porque Peñitas, en una colonia conocida como Pueblo de Palmas? ¿Por qué una zona tan remota a lo largo de la frontera entre Estados Unidos y México donde muchos en nuestro propio Valle del Rio Grande aquí en el sur de Texas nunca han visitado? ¿Y por qué el Santo Padre enviaría un mensaje a un pueblo de una zona rural que algunos dicen es “insignificante”?

Estas son preguntas que el Padre Michael Montoya, un padre de la congregación Missionaries of Jesus, que es párroco en la Parroquia de Santa Ana en Peñitas, Texas y sus tres misiones, sigue oyendo mientras finalizaba los planes para el Encuentro Mundial de los Jóvenes el 26 de julio. Esta celebración local, que coincide con la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud en Cracovia, Polonia empezó como una idea para ayudar a los jóvenes en una de las áreas más pobres del país poder ver cómo están conectados con la Iglesia y otros jóvenes en todo el mundo.

Dado a los niveles extremos de pobreza en la comunidad y sus condiciones inmigratorias, es imposible para la mayor parte de ellos viajar. En Peñitas, explica el Padre Montoya, hasta viajar de sus hogares a la parroquia implica riesgos. Algunos temen el peligro real de que si los paran por una infracción menor de tránsito, serán deportados. Padre Montoya apunta hacia lo que él denomina como la “presencia militar” en el área. No son pocos los policías, ayudantes del sheriff, policías estatales, agentes de la Patrulla



Fronteriza y la Guardia Nacional vigilando el área situada a pocas millas de la frontera entre México y EE.UU.

“Es un recordatorio constante al pueblo de que algo no está bien. Vivimos tan cerca del muro que divide familias, eso afecta la identidad propia. Todas las imágenes que nos dan del exterior son negativas. Siempre está conectado con la frontera, siempre conectado a las cosas que no podemos hacer,” dice Padre Montoya. Añadir a esto la pobreza y la falta de infraestructuras básicas en algunas colonias que ni siquiera tienen agua y alcantarillado. “Existen muchas circunstancias,” dice Padre Montoya, “que lo hace difícil para el pueblo. Ellos piensan que son olvidados.”

Pero no son olvidados. Hoy celebran después de enterarse que el Santo Padre ha preparado un mensaje personal para los jóvenes de la diócesis, en especial para los jóvenes que asistirán al Encuentro Mundial de los Jóvenes en la Parroquia de Santa Ana en Peñitas.

“La Parroquia de Santa Ana está más que feliz. Este tipo de cosas no suceden para un lugar como Peñitas,” dice el Padre Montoya. “¡El papa nos está mandando un mensaje a nosotros! Pienso que es prueba suficiente, que el amor de la Iglesia para nuestra gente pobre es palpable, es real.”

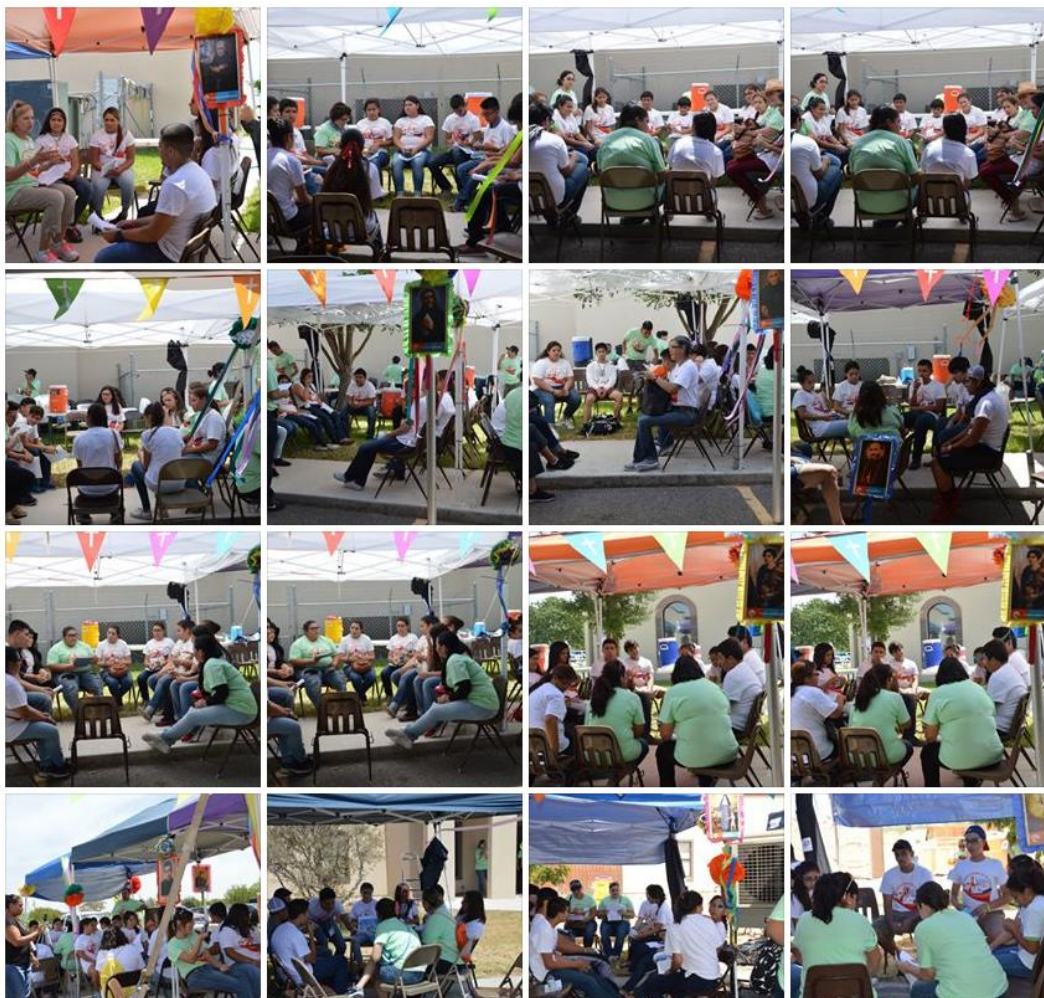
Aun antes de haber escuchado el mensaje, la comunidad celebró el hecho de que había un mensaje en camino, que el Santo Padre tomó de su tiempo para pensar en ellos.

Como recalcó el Padre Montoya, la idea de acoger el encuentro en Peñitas fue para ayudar al pueblo a presenciar que “la misericordia de Dios no conoce límites dentro de una Iglesia que no

conoce fronteras,” “que alcanza hasta la parte más remota del mundo. No tenemos que estar en el centro del poder para ser reconocidos por la Iglesia.”

Quizás olvidando que el niño Jesús eligió nacer en el pequeño pueblo de Belén y no en el centro de la ciudad, muchos dudaron que un evento como el encuentro podría llevar acabo en un lugar tan “fuera del camino”. El pueblo de Peñitas y las comunidades que lo rodean han demostrado lo contrario. “No todos pueden viajar a Polonia para la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud,” explica el Padre Montoya, “pero creemos que hasta en nuestra área se puede organizar un encuentro profundo y significativo con los jóvenes de este mundo.”

“Es una reconstrucción de imagen,” dice el Padre Montoya, “de quien somos. La frontera no nos define, somos definidos por nuestra cultura y por nuestra fe.”



Esto es realmente un testimonio de que la misericordia de Dios no conoce límites. También debe servir como recordatorio para cada uno de nosotros que no importa donde Dios nos ponga, no importa dónde nos encontremos en el mundo, cada uno de nosotros importa y debemos hacer todo lo posible por extender la mano a quien lo necesite y fomentar una “cultura de encuentro”.

Algunas personas seguirán preguntando, “¿Por qué Peñitas?” Tres hermanas de la congregación Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary que han estado viviendo y sirviendo en el área por 12 años te dirán, porque aquí el pueblo de Dios tiene un fe tan profunda que no se desalienta por la pobreza u otras dificultades que tengan que padecer.

La fe abundante del pueblo inspiró a las hermanas ICM – Hermana Carolyn Kosub, Hermana Emily Jocson y la Hermana Fátima Santiago a permanecer en el área tras su llegada en el 2004 para ayudar a reconstruir la comunidad después de ser destrizada por un tornado. A través de un centro de apoyo que ellas fundaron, Proyecto Desarrollo Humano, esta área de bajos recursos comenzó a florecer. También construyeron la parroquia de Santa Ana en el 2009. Nunca se imaginaron que se convertiría en iglesia madre de una parroquia cuatro años después, o que algún día, en la fiesta de Santa Ana, el Santo Padre les mandaría un mensaje personal a los jóvenes de esa parroquia. En palabras de la Hermana Kosub, “Ciertamente, Dios ha hecho maravillas.”

- Brenda Nettles Riojas
The Valley Catholic



Pope Francis addresses Rio Grande Valley Youth Via Personal Video Message

PEÑITAS — “God calls you to create hope. God calls you to receive mercy and to give mercy. God calls you to be happy. Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Risk it all. Life is like that,” said Pope Francis via a personal video message to the youth of the Diocese of Brownsville.

On July 26, as millions of youth from around the globe were



gathering for World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland, the pope’s message was viewed at St. Anne Parish in Peñitas where a local World Youth Day celebration was held.

Bishop Daniel E. Flores sat amongst the more than 450 ecstatic youth outdoors under a large white tent as the video message was played.

“He (the pope) is always mindful of those who can’t make a trip,” Bishop Flores said. “He has taken the time to really prepare a local message for the youth of this diocese.

“It’s also a sign of his awareness and his love for the people of the Rio Grande Valley because he makes the effort to offer a word of encouragement and a word of consolation.”

The Holy Father also told the youth to be happy, courageous and giving, regardless of any challenges they may face.

“Make the most out of life! Today take on life as it is and do good for others,” Pope Francis said.

The all-day event, the first World Youth Encounter/Encuentro Mundial de los Jóvenes, was organized by Father Michael Montoya of the Missionaries of Jesus, pastor of St. Anne Parish in Peñitas and Giovanni Ada, director of youth ministry for the diocese. Youth from as far away as Corpus Christi participated in the event.

When Father Montoya was asked about life in Peñitas, he noted that there is a lot of poverty in the area. Parts of the rural community, a colonia known as Pueblo de Palmas, lack basic infrastructure such as running water and sewage.

“They think that they are forgotten,” Father Montoya said.

Father Montoya also pointed out that in his community, “the faith life is vibrant, the people are generous and the people are hardworking.”

In planning the local celebration, Father Montoya and Ada were asked why they weren’t holding the event in a larger town or in a convention center.



“The idea of doing this in Peñitas is precisely to strengthen that message of the Church, that the mercy of God knows no borders, knows no limits, that it reaches even the most remote parts of the earth,” Father Montoya said. “We don’t have to be at the center of power to be recognized by the Church. I mean the pope is sending a message to us. I think that is proof enough that the love of the Church for our poor people is really palpable and it’s real.”

The youth who attended the event were blessed with the presence of more than 40 first-class relics of different saints and blessed, including a relic of Blessed Jose Sanchez del Rio, who will be canonized Oct. 16. The relic was provided by the Diocese of Zamora in Michoacán, Mexico, the home diocese of Blessed Jose Sanchez del Rio.

Del Rio was martyred in 1928 during the Cristero wars for refusing to renounce his faith. The future saint was introduced as a model for the young people of the Rio Grande Valley at the event.

- Rose Ybarra

The Valley Catholic



“¿Puede Algo Bueno Salir de Nazaret?”

El primer encuentro Mundial Juvenil realizado en la Parroquia de Pueblo de Palmas, Peñitas, Texas, ha sido un derrame sobreabundante de misericordia de Dios sobre todos nosotros.

En su libro “El Nombre de Dios es Misericordia” el Papa Francisco enfatiza el amor incondicional de Dios para cada uno de sus hijos. Con esta perspectiva el Papa Francisco nos ha manifestado esta misericordia cuando dirigió un mensaje a cada una de las personas que se encuentran viviendo en áreas marginales, asediados por la pobreza, violencia, narcotráfico y migración ilegal. El Papa Francisco se ha dirigido a una sociedad en donde aparentemente se ha perdido el horizonte, asediada por el individualismo, consumismo y muy personalizada.

En mi propia experiencia puedo decir que, el mensaje del Papa Francisco rompió con paradigmas negativos de la sociedad. Pude observar unidad, cooperación y solidaridad entre todos los integrantes de la parroquia y de otros lugares aledaños. De la misma manera como las hormiguitas trabajan: unidas, todas aportando de lo poco que tienen y pueden, con el objetivo de sobrevivir en tiempos de frío y escasez.



Durante el encuentro Mundial Juvenil, los feligreses de la parroquia motivados por el párroco Miguel Montoya, MJ, demostraron sus capacidades al organizar un maravilloso evento, en donde la misericordia de Dios se hizo presente y los milagros fueron percibidos durante esos días.

El día del encuentro – desde las 6 de la mañana – las personas empezaron a reunirse en la iglesia, esperando ansiosamente a los jóvenes. Aunque la mañana estaba calurosa con más de 100 grados Fahrenheit, todos estaban sonrientes y motivados por el gran evento que se iba a realizar: En una esquina un grupo de señoras ofreciendo tacos y salsa para el desayuno, mientras que los señores colocaban una carpa para proteger a todos del sol. El viento soplaba fuertemente y con la misma intensidad que los jóvenes seguían llegando.

Los participantes eran recibidos con alegres danzas y música dirigidas por la hermana Ginger, mientras la hermana Ángeles decoraba el escenario en donde pronto se estaría mostrando el mensaje que el Papa Francisco dirigiría a todas las personas. Aunque los presentes eran de diferentes comunidades, todos trabajaron unidos y felices.

Tan solo hacía unos días atrás había arribado a Los Ángeles, desde las Filipinas, donde estuve por más de dos años acompañando a los Misioneros de Jesús, en diferentes lugares del país y aún con un poco de dificultad para adaptar mi reloj biológico al nuevo ambiente, me sentía como en mi propio hogar, compartiendo este Encuentro Juvenil en Peñitas, Texas, con las personas de la Parroquia de Santa Ana.

Estaba contagiado de la alegría que inundaba el ambiente: Dios estaba presente en nuestros planes. Para mi sorpresa, encontré al Padre Joey Evangelista, el párroco de la casa de misión en Digos, Mindanao, en las Islas Filipinas, fue exactamente el último lugar de misión en el que estuve: los recuerdos de todos los jóvenes con los que trabajé vinieron a mi mente... la felicidad me embargó aún más, cuando dentro de las dinámicas del programa del encuentro, mostraron saludos de jóvenes de diferentes partes del mundo. Había saludos de jóvenes de Guatemala y recordé que siete años atrás había iniciado mi formación como seminarista, visitando a estos jóvenes

y; que, a pesar del tiempo, ellos aún continúan motivados trabajando en unidad y con amor.

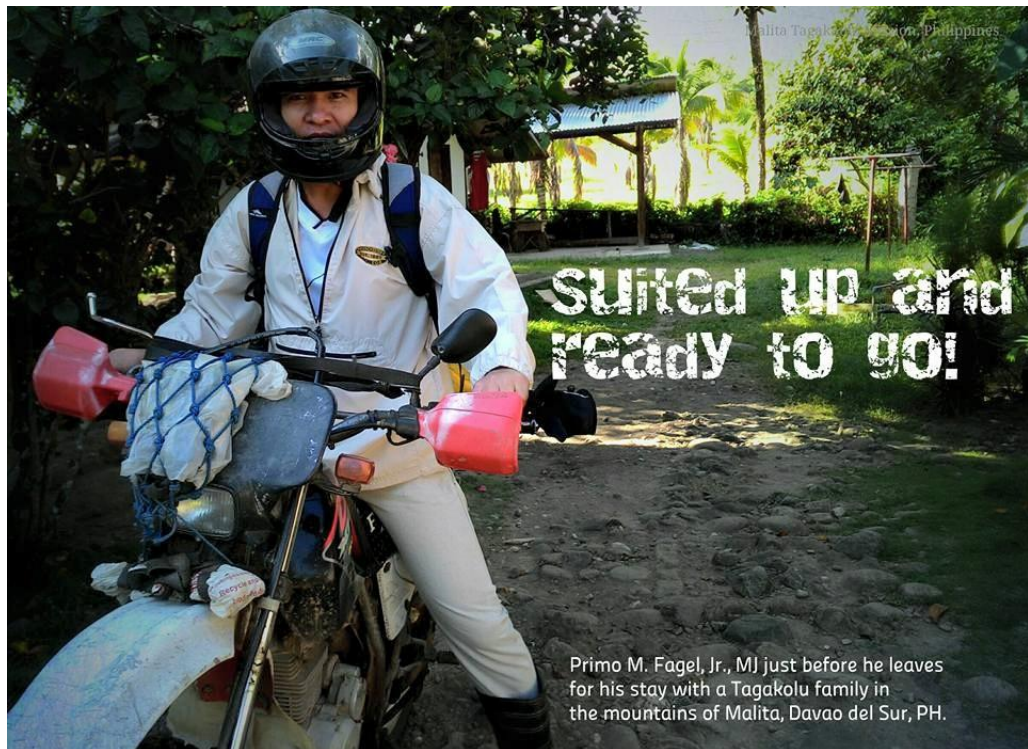
Para mí era un honor estar presente en este hermoso encuentro juvenil. Me sentía como un embajador de los Misioneros de Jesús, que después de experimentar las luchas y alegrías de jóvenes de Guatemala y de Filipinas, Dios me había invitado a presenciar su misericordia en este remoto lugar de los Estados Unidos.

Estábamos emocionados como si nos hubiéramos ganado el premio mayor de la lotería. Para nosotros, el mensaje del Papa Francisco ha sido el mejor premio que podríamos obtener. Nadie esperaba que un pueblito tan pequeño como Pueblo de Palma, el cual es discriminado por tanta violencia, pobreza, narcotráfico y migración ilegal, fuera el lugar en donde el Papa Francisco dirigiría su mirada. Durante el momento en que todos los participantes, incluyendo medios de comunicación, visitantes y voluntarios observábamos atentamente el mensaje del Papa Francisco, recordé el pasaje bíblico de Juan 1:46, cuando Nataniel dudaba del Mesías y decía: “¿Puede algo bueno salir de Nazaret?”

Dios nos eligió por medio del Papa Francisco para ser testigos de su amor. Y, aunque al finalizar el encuentro juvenil estábamos agotados, todos teníamos una sonrisa de satisfacción. Creo que, no solamente yo descubrí que cuando Dios nos elige, también nos envía. Y de la misma manera como Dios nos ha elegido para presenciar su misericordia, así también nos impulsa a ver más allá de las barreras egoístas e individualistas. Dios nos invita a expandir nuestros horizontes sin tener miedo, confiando siempre en Él.

- Bro. Jorge Aguilar, MJ





Malita Tagakolu, Philippines

**Suited up and
ready to go!**

Primo M. Fagel, Jr., MJ just before he leaves
for his stay with a Tagakolu family in
the mountains of Malita, Davao del Sur, PH.

Think of Mission in your Christmas donations



Malita Tagakolu, Philippines

Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also "macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones".

Pope Francis (Laudato si' 231)



Be Proud of Our Culture

To share and be proud of our culture that God has given us and to learn from our elders: this was the short video message of the youth of the Malita Tagakaulo Mission of the Diocese of Digos, Philippines to the youth gathered at Peñitas in the Diocese of Brownsville in Texas, USA. They made the video message upon the request of Fr Montoya, MJ, pastor of St Anne Parish in Peñitas and organizer of the youth gathering. This message was from the heart; it had come from the experience of four young Catholics living far up in the mountains of Mindanao doing their best to make a difference in their Tagakaulo tribe. When Matet, Mildred, Vilma and Richard, all Tagakaulo, made their short video production in late June of this year, little did they know that Pope Francis would have a similar message to the youth gathered in Peñitas, Texas: The Holy Father told the youth not to forget to look back at where they had come from, at the heritage they have received from their elders, their grandparents, their parents and the heritage of the faith, the faith that they now have with which they could look to the future.

In June, this year, Fr Michael Montoya, a fellow MJ in the Diocese of Brownsville, Texas, requested for a video message from



our Tagakaulo youth to their youth who would gather in Peñitas, Texas in August simultaneously with the World Youth Day gathering in Krakow, Poland. He gave a general description as to what the message was for to give our youth an idea what to do. With an iPad, they got together on their own and put together the video that was shown in Peñitas. The four Tagakaulo youth have never been to Texas; the only knowledge they have of the United States comes from movies, television and books. They did not know any of the youth who would watch their video and how Peñitas looked like. One thing was clear, though, they were going to give a message to their fellow youth on the other side of the globe. That was sufficient; they knew what their message would be and they would speak it from their heart.

Although the Tagakaulo youth and the youth who had gathered in Peñitas are worlds apart: the former is in Asia, the latter in North America; the former speaks Tagakaulo and Cebuano, the latter Spanish and English; and the former is used to being surrounded by mountains, the latter well at home on the flat plains, they also share something in common besides their age. Both groups of young Catholics are struggling to make their mark in a world and a society that is pushing them aside because they do not fit the mold that Hollywood and Wall Street has made as the standard of what it means to be human today: a slim, tall and well-dressed white person whose only aim in life is to be rich and famous.

This so called “good news” of progress has already reached the mountains of the Tagakaulo despite its distance and the lack of infrastructure. Matet, Mildred, Vilma and Richard are well aware of this and have been doing their best not to succumb to its allure. Their message was simple and had come from this experience. They had seen the effects of the influence of so-called progress to their way of life as Tagakolu and to their environment. It did not make the life of their people better: many have slowly discontinued practices that showed respect for the environment, families and communities had more access to cash and a few modern comforts while losing the bond that united them as family and community, and farmers had increased the output of their crops with the use synthetic fertilizer and pesticides at the expense of clean water. This so-called progress that had come to their land was slowly destroying their people and their environment. This kind of progress was designed to help big

businesses and not indigenous peoples like the Tagakolu. These four young Catholics believe that what could help them face this challenge is to engage it head on with the wealth of their culture as Tagakolu, which they see as a gift from God. This gift could give them strength and wisdom to face the changing world. The Missionaries of Jesus (MJ) have been helping in this engagement since it started its mission work among the Tagakaulo. We have been journeying with them and have been doing our best to be open and discover and appreciate what it is to be Tagakaulo. This was the message they shared with the youth who gathered at Peñitas. Their convictions were affirmed by the Holy Father through his message that conveyed a similar theme. Their message was not only from the heart but also inspired by God.

Pope Francis decided to address himself to an insignificant group of young people gathered in an insignificant place called Peñitas (small rocks in Spanish). His message affirmed the convictions of four insignificant Tagakolu youth from an insignificant place called Matamis. The message is powerful: these insignificant young Catholics that society did not even know were there, God is using as a corner stone in the building of the kingdom!

Joey Ganio Evangelista, MJ
Malita Tagakaulo Mission
Diocese of Digos
Philippines



Reencuentro 2016

Celebrating Faith and Commitment as Friends and Disciples



On October 16, 2016, Saint Anne Parish in Peñitas, Texas organized a gathering of the youth (a Reencuentro) that attended the Encuentro Juvenil three months prior. Out of the 70 youth that attended the July retreat, about 60 returned for this event and with some 20 animadores de amigos y discipulos (adult volunteers for the youth).

The Reencuentro 2016 was a celebration of faith and commitment of the youth and the animadores as friends and disciples of Jesus Christ. While the Reencuentro 2016 echoed back the experience of both the Encuentro Juvenil and the first Encuentro Mundial de los Jovenes, it was nonetheless a unique, joy-filled, and prayerful Reencuentro. The Reencuentro 2016 was such an opportune time since the Catholic church celebrates mission month and the month of the holy rosary in October. It was also on the very same day, October 16, 2016, that Jose Sanchez del Rio, the 14-year-old Mexican Cristero was canonized a saint. San Jose Sanchez del Rio is presented to the youth of the parish as their patron saint and model of faith. These three elements have framed whole event of the Reencuentro 2016.



Month of the Rosary

The Reencuentro began with group dynamics that highlighted the beauty and importance of the holy rosary, not only in the month of October but as an ongoing devotion that helps us grow in faith. Recalling the tradition often associated to the praying of the rosary as offering roses to our Holy Mother with each Hail Mary we pray, the youth gathered in groups to make a rosary made of mini-roses. We further intimated that with each rose linked together to form the rosary is a prayer offered, and asking our Blessed Mother to pray for



each of these intentions. As the roses are linked into a rosary, so our prayers are linked as well, as we offered them as fragrant offering of love and devotion to our Blessed Virgin Mother. Each participant was also given a rosary which was lovingly made by Hector Rene Valverde and his family from Miami. The Reencuentro was also ended with a prayer activity where the participants made a giant rosary made of balloons which was then released to the heavens.

Mission Month

“Mission is the heartbeat of the church,” Pope Francis affirms. Mission is that without which the church cannot exist. Ad Gentes 2 reminds us that the church is missionary by its very nature. It is not just an appendix to the life of the church but it is in its DNA. And all of us baptized into the church are baptized into the nature of the church which is missionary. All of us are missionaries by virtue of our baptism. As the youth of the parish, we furthermore affirmed that they are not just the future of the church but they are the present. As missionaries, the youth were challenged to look beyond the borders as Pope Francis reminded them in a personal message to them sent during the first Encuentro Mundial de los Jovenes. Mission challenges us to actively seek out and live a culture of dialogue and encounter. In highlighting these aspects of mission, we reminded them of the videos sent by the youth of the world during the first Encuentro Mundial de los Jovenes, their messages and challenges, and the need to continue the conversation with them.



We also highlighted the interconnectedness of our youth with the entire world, like the roses that were connected to form the rosary, so are we connected by the same mystery of love and mercy as friends and disciples, missionaries called to proclaim the Good News wherever we are. Reminding them of the questions raised by the youth from the Philippines (importance of identity and cultural heritage), Papua New Guinea (importance of education and the challenge of drugs and other form of delinquency), and Guatemala (role of the youth living along the border in proclaiming the Good News), the youth gathered to reflect, share and in turn, respond and asked questions to the youth of these countries, opening the opportunity for further dialogue and encounter. As we continued to reflect and deepen our mission perspectives during the Reencuentro we affirmed that it is within the culture of dialogue and encounter that we boldly proclaim the mercy of God that knows no limits within a church that knows no borders. As they have received the messages of the youth using modern technology, their responses and questions will also be sent to the youth of the world with the same means.

San Jose Sanchez del Rio

The celebration of the life in faith and the canonization of San Jose Sanchez del Rio is no doubt a very powerful highlight during the Reencuentro 2016. It was exactly on the same day, October 16, the day of the gathering of the Reencuentro 2016, that the young Jose Sanchez del Rio was canonized saint by Pope Francis. The reenactment of the life of Jose Sanchez del Rio, his strong and unyielding faith despite adversities and torture, and the manner with which he was martyred for our faith became a profound witnessing to the young people gathered. It is to be remembered that San Jose Sanchez del Rio was only 14 years old when he willingly accepted martyrdom, an age shared by many of the participants of the Reencuentro 2016. His resounding cry: “Que Viva Cristo Rey! Que viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!” echoed within the walls of Saint Anne Church where the youth were gathered, and sent a chilling



reminder and a compelling challenge to the youth to proclaim their faith at all times.

These shouts can no longer be understood as simply celebratory and triumphal proclamations of faith that are sometimes devoid of a palpable human commitment to that same faith. These shouts are no longer just fiesta cheers but are now one of a faith filled commitment to proclaim the Good News as friends and disciples of Jesus Christ despite the hardships and challenges that we face. The bloodied marks of the footsteps of San Jose Sanchez del Rio which eventually were imprinted on a piece of cloth became a powerful symbol of our youth's commitment to Christ, as well as a commitment of the adults that accompanies them. As each one of them is given a piece of cloth with a bloody impression of a footprint, they were reminded that commitment to faith cannot wait until when they get older or only whenever they feel like it. Like San Jose Sanchez del Rio, witnessing to faith cannot be delayed for the future because there is urgency in the now to respond to God's call to mission as friends and disciples of Jesus within the contexts of clear and present dangers to faith and life lived along the border. The expressions on the faces of the youth as they each sign their name on the symbolic cloth of commitment and then reverently and prayerfully touching that cloth on the first-class relic of San Jose Sanchez del Rio can only be described as a truly profound commitment to the same faith professed by the young saint – a sight that all of us, animadores de amigos y discipulos, are truly privileged to experience.

There is a sense of overwhelming joy and peace as we all each processed in the presence of 40 other relics of saints who, together with the newly canonized San Jose Sanchez del Rio, have all given their lives to God - a quiet but powerful reminder of our own faith journey to reach heaven.

This truly was, in all aspects, a Reencuentro to remember!

- Rev. Michael Montoya, MJ



Give a Christmas Gift to Mission

Give a Christmas gift to the **Missionaries of Jesus** to help them in their mission in bringing the Good News to the poor!

Remember the Missionaries of Jesus in your planned or deferred gifts that may include the following:

- ✚ ***A charitable gift annuity*** with Missionaries of Jesus.
- ✚ ***Bequests:*** You need to name specifically *in your will* the Missionaries of Jesus.
- ✚ In writing your will, choose to set up a ***living trust to avoid probate***. Give specific gifts from your estate to the Missionaries of Jesus.
- ✚ ***Make the Missionaries of Jesus heirs to your estate*** that consists of all the assets you own at the time of your death: cash, securities, jewels, art, your home or other real estate.
- ✚ Name the Missionaries of as one of the ***beneficiaries*** in your ***life insurance policy***.
- ✚ Name the Missionaries of Jesus as a beneficiary of your ***IRA*** or ***other retirement accounts***.

"Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."
(2 Cor 9:6-7).

For more information, Please contact
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Merry Christmas!





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Mission Statement

We, the Missionaries of Jesus,
Friends and Disciples of Jesus,
heard and responded to God's call to mission.
We are called to assist in the emergence
of a new face of the Church
and we journey together
integrating into the life of the people,
in reclaiming their stories,
in the struggle of self-determination,
in the celebration of life and culture.



Please remember the
Missionaries of Jesus during
the Combined Federal
Campaign.



Merry Christmas!

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