

# Friends & Disciples

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## Ten years of making our missionary dream come true

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Way back in my theology years, I encountered this quote which has stayed with me since: *“The great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in the direction we are taking.”*

Ten years ago, we said goodbye to a well-established and comfortable missionary life and dared to begin with nothing. That was *something*! And yet, the great thing with the Missionaries of Jesus is not what we did together ten years ago. That we are still moving on towards making our missionary dream come true ... that is what makes MJ great ... and exciting !!!!!

I can still hear the sharp *c-r-a-c-k* of the clay pot that we smashed during our liturgy marking our ‘big bang’ ten years ago. Although fearful and anxious about an uncertain future, that

*c-r-a-c-k* fired me up to breakout of missionary life-style that was no longer life-giving. Right now, I find that at times, it’s my own views and my attitudes about doing mission or about my own views and attitudes towards fellow MJs that need smashing. The sooner and the more I get out of such hardened attitudes and views, the better for me and for everyone. This sounds great to me ... and still exciting!

- Fr. Manuel Gacad, mj

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## Diez años realizando el sueño misionero

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Tiempo atrás, durante mis estudios de teología, encontré una cita que quedó grabada en mi memoria: *Lo que importa en este mundo no es tanto donde estamos, sino la dirección que tomamos.*

Hace diez años dijimos adiós a una vida misionera bien establecida y confortable y nos arriesgamos a comenzar de nuevo

con nada. ¡Eso sí que era una aventura! Sin embargo, lo excepcional de Misioneros de Jesús no consiste tanto en lo que hicimos juntos hace diez años. Lo que vuelve MJ grande ... ¡y excitante! ... es más bien el hecho que seguimos caminando hacia la realización de nuestro sueño misionero.

Oigo todavía el explosivo estallido [*c-r-a-c-k!*] de la olla de barro que estrellamos durante la liturgia que marcó nuestro “big bang” hace diez años. Aunque yo estaba preocupado y temeroso de cara a un futuro incierto, aquel “estallido” me entusiasmó para escaparme de un estilo de vida misionero que ya no daba vida.

Ahora mismo, descubro que a veces son mis propias ideas y actitudes sobre la misión o mis opiniones y actitudes para con mis compañeros MJ que necesitan un estallido. Cuanto antes y cuanto más salgo de tales ideas y actitudes endurecidas, mejor para mí y para todos.

Todo ello me suena estupendo... ¡y aún muy excitante!

- Padre Manuel Gacad, mj

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## *Crossing Boundaries*

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Dr. Rene Calugcugan and his wife Dr. Priscilla, nurses, Corazon Lamila, Lulu Juco, Geraldine Quidayan, an accountant, Planeta Canaveral, a lawyer, Maria Crisilda Yapchapco and a businessman, Carlos Juco, all from Los Angeles, U.S.A., crossed boundaries when they

came to lend medical-dental services in three centers of San Marcos Evangelista Parish, Tierra Blanca, Sayaxche, Peten, Guatemala. This experience had been intense for them; however, they had expressed joy because they have felt the presence of God accompanying them in their short journey with the people in that parish where majority is Maya Q'eqchi'.

Crossing boundaries is always an intense experience because one is forced to leave behind what are familiar, comfort zones and personal concerns and one takes the risks to be understood, welcomed and comforted by the other.

God had to cross boundaries too in order to reach us in a very personal manner. He did not only listen to the cries of loneliness, poverty, sickness, sufferings and misery, caused by injustice and oppression, of the people he loved so much on earth. He came personally to speak and prompted words of welcome to those who are excluded, blessed those who were deprived of the fruits of this earth, healed the sick so that they may never be abandoned and proclaimed liberty to those who were enslaved in many ways. But then, he had to risk; and being God he humbled himself and even gave up his life for the love of his friends (Fil 2:6-8).

Today, we don't have to go to other countries to experience the crossing of boundaries. The headway of globalization is heightening multiculturalism in many countries through immigration. Evangelization may mean reaching out to the other who is different from us in manifold ways – history, culture, world view and, most probably, of other religion. Reaching out to them will mean risking many things from us. The more we want to love them entails that we become radically selfless. We want to learn their language, we want that their history will touch also our lives, we are open to see a facet of God in their life, culture and religious belief.

We dream that one day we will truly treat each other as brothers and sisters in the one realm of God. However, we do not make this vision come true as long as we still consider some people as belonging outside our circles. As disciples of Jesus who send us through his Spirit to keep on envisioning and accomplishing this dream, we are sent to welcome through hospitality the other who is especially different from us and reach out to those who are even more marginalized each day through our inhuman visions of economics, politics, society and partial ways of believing.

- Fr. Joseph Guerrero, mj

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## A Life-Changing Mission Experience

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***Tuesday, February 14, 2012***

The plane landed at the Aurora International Airport around 8:00 a.m. Full of excitement, we put on the green *Missionaries of Jesus* shirts upon entering the airport. Outside the terminal, Fr. Melanio Viuya, Fr. Joseph Guerrero and Fr. Aris Villanueva were waiting for us. We were introduced to Don Manuel Arreaga, a local MJ Lay Associate, who would drive us around throughout the duration of our stay in Guatemala. We dropped our luggage at the Archdiocesan Retreat House where we would sleep. We went to the Cathedral, Central Park, Archaeological Museum and other places in the city.

The museum tour was a prelude to what we would see and learn later about the Mayan culture and traditions in Tikal (*ruins of a Mayan civilization*).



At 6:30 p.m., we met more local MJ Lay Associates at the residence of Don Manuel. Despite the language barrier, we had a very enriching sharing – thanks to Fr. Joseph who translated from English to Spanish and vice versa. We told them of what we do in Los Angeles. They in turn told us what they do in Guatemala.

Among those present were: Julia, Linda, Sylvia, Maria, Victor, Evelyn, Mario, Delia, Matilde Cindy, Bernardo and Marina, the wife of Don Manuel. Tamales and hot cocoa were served. The night ended with picture takings, hugs and handshakes.



### ***Wednesday, February 15, 2012***

As soon as everyone was seated in the van, we started praying. Cora Lamila led the prayers, starting with the joyful mystery, followed by the three other mysteries, led by Rene Calugcugan, myself and the Chaplet of the Divine Mercy by Caloy Juco. We felt safe in our travel knowing that God's protection was with us. Fr. Joseph and Fr. Aris, in another vehicle, picked up Humberto Turkheim, a parishioner of Precious Blood Church, along the way; he was supposed to give a carpentry workshop in Tierra Blanca together with Jose Angeles. The latter had knee surgery and thus the workshop was postponed for other time. Humberto would, instead, help us.

Breakfast was at Sarita Restaurant where Chi (Priscilla Legaspi-Calugcugan), Rene, Deng (Geraldine Quidayan) and I, had a few lessons on Q'eqchi language from Francisca Muxtay, an MJ Lay Missionary working with the MJ's in Tierra Blanca.

Along the road, we saw women in native attire and children walking from school. We also saw cornfields, cows, and children



carrying plastic and colorful vessels on their heads. The scenery was awesome!

We reached a church on top of a hill in Taktik. The group had so much fun at a store near the church, looking for souvenirs and buying votive candles. We lit the candles of different colors in the church. The Black Christ is the main image at the altar.



After what seemed to be an eternity negotiating the rutted and rugged roads, we finally reached Tierra Blanca. Some elders welcomed us in silence – swaying some burning incense. We walked with them up to the church altar and prayed. This was followed by getting to know one another. After blessing, breaking and partaking bread in the Eucharist, we broke tortillas with one another over a delicious kak-ik (turkey soup).

### ***Thursday, February 16, 2012***

At exactly 5:45 a.m., we left Tierra Blanca en route to Santa Isabel. It took us some hours to reach Santa Isabel because of the bumpy and muddy roads. We had fun singing and practicing songs for the daily masses while traveling. Our joy-filled voices sung Gods' praises. In between our singing, Chi and Rene would sing

funny songs that prompted outbursts of laughter from everyone. Rene and Caloy's jokes made our long journey easy and enjoyable.

Fr. Joseph and Fr. Aris, took pictures as the van slowly crossed the deep, muddy roads. We were afraid that the vans' axle would be damaged. Luckily, with God's guidance and Manuel's expertise, we arrived safe and sound – after crossing a river with a barge.



The chapel was filled with people. Fr. Joseph introduced us to the people. After praying, we set up the needed tables and chairs. Rene and Chi, our two dentists, set up their portable machines at the altar; Deng and Lulu Juco, our two nurses, got ready for the registration and screening for allergies and hypertension while Fr. Melanio and Plan (Planeta Canaveral) prepared the things needed for the cleaning and sterilization of dental tools. Initially Cora and I assisted Rene and Chi but much later, Plan worked with Chi. I handled the distribution of toothbrushes and toothpastes. Caloy was the marshal for the day, maintaining order when children cramped up the work areas. Fr. Aris, Fr. Joseph, Francesca, Manuel and Humberto acted as interpreters.

We had lunch at 2 p.m. We continued working at 2:30 p.m. Francesca and Fr. Aris took turns in explaining to the people what





Lulu and Deng were telling them. Manuel, Humberto and Francesca much later assisted in the registration. Later, Rene gave Francesca instructions to show the children the proper way to brush their teeth. Through the use of stuffed toys, Francesca enjoyed demonstrating to the children while they looked with bewilderment.



A total of 108 people received medical and dental services. During the days' evaluation, the elders of the community and local leaders expressed their gratitude to the lay missionaries. They requested for

more days due to the unavailability of such services in the area. While we were having the evaluation, Lulu and Deng were still attending to a lot of people.



Fr. Aris celebrated the mass. Everyone shared their thoughts and feelings. Everyone repeated that this was a life-changing experience. Chi said she was emotional. Her feelings and thoughts were beyond words. The group agreed that teamwork was excellent. More than 100 people were attended to without anyone feeling exhaustion due to extreme heat. This was seen as the Holy Spirit at work; this was Rene's and Chi's firm belief. It was an amazing faith-in-action.

Tortillas and local dish were served for dinner. We expressed our gratitude to those who prepared food. We took turns taking shower in the health center, some meters away from the chapel where Fr. Aris and Francesca prepared the cot beds. They provided us with beautiful and multi-colored mosquito nets. With pails and boxes as walls, we improvised a toilet inside the chapel because it was a long stretch to the health center and some of us were afraid to walk in the dark. There was an orchestra of different rhythms and volumes of snoring.



*Friday, February 17, 2012*

En route to La Ceiba at 6:00 a.m., we traveled the same bumpy roads. We said our daily prayers. We arrived at 9:30 in yellow MJ shirts. With the experience at Sta. Isabel, each one already knew what to do this time. The days' activity was marked with order. Children came with their parents. People received numbers with their names. For each table there was at least one interpreter. Rene and Chi were both perspiring due to humidity. They had to work near the door to have some air.







We had a fifteen-minute break. To our delight, we had some young coconuts. After lunch, services resumed mostly for children who came from school. The group agreed to finish the services at 4:30 to avoid travelling back to Tierra Blanca in the dark. Before reaching Tierra Blanca, we were stopped by heavily armed men, who, we learned later were doing their usual control for possible drug trafficking. We were not sure whether they were local authorities, insurgents or drug traffickers in disguise. We continued saying our prayers in silence. Eventually, they allowed us to pass which was a great relief for all. We arrived safe and sound in Tierra Blanca; mass was celebrated with Fr. Melanio and we dined with very special tamales.



***Saturday, February 18, 2012***

After some days of eating tortillas, Lulu and I prepared our breakfast: fried rice, omelet and spam. The activities for the day started at 8:30 a.m., with Fr. Joseph giving a short introduction. The people sung joyful songs. An elder said the opening prayers.



Everyone did the same assignment one had the past days. The headcount at noontime was already 52. Majority of the patients were children. At the end of the day, the total headcount was 108. Plan's untiring, non-stop and prayerful support to Chi was highly praised by the group. Lulu assisted in cleaning children's teeth. That was the joy and bonus of the day. However, the unforgettable case of the day was a child with a tooth on her palate. She was very grateful after it was extracted. Before dinner, we witnessed a sacred dance known as the Deer Dance. Cora prepared pork *sinigang* for dinner.







To sum up, the medical-dental mission was a life-changing and a very fulfilling experience for all of us. We can only thank God for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to work in us, such as love, kindness, patience and joy. Our eyes were opened to see the needs of the little people, our brothers and sisters in Guatemala. The experience was a small step to effect changes in the world, to bring light into darkness. Our journey goes on. The group promised to spread the good news and recruit other possible lay missionaries.

- Ma. Crisilda (“Ida”) Yapchapco

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## *Reflections on the Mission Experience*

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In this journey, something definitely happened. Something was born out of this journey: the groups’ interaction during the cross-cultural mission. The group of eight was slowly but strongly bonding together as we were ascending and descending mountains, enjoying the green farmlands, and balancing on bumpy and muddy roads that shook our bodies. In our long hours of being together, a new direction had taken place. A new perspective was given to us by the power at work that brought people together– irrespective of race, culture, family upbringing and status in life – to live and work together as brothers and sisters, as one family of the living

God. The mission experience brought us together and helped us develop friendship, mutual support and understanding. God spoke through the faces of other races. We believe that this mirrors the mission of Jesus, the Mission of God.

It was not easy to work in extreme heat without the comfort of air-conditioning that we are accustomed to in the United States. Yet, setting aside the desire for comforts, we tore down the barriers of cultures and ways of life. God cracked open the protective shells we wrapped ourselves around.



It is noteworthy to say that all of us but especially the dentists and the nurses became all things to the people. They showed charity and availability that knew neither exhaustion nor restriction. The situation was far less comfortable than their clinics in Los Angeles. Yet they did not complain, but worked with humor and enthusiasm.

Rene said that he did not feel tired because he put love to what he was doing. Even with the large number of people they serviced, Chi said she had felt that the Holy Spirit was working through her. Both added that they saw the many faces of Jesus in the people they attended to. Chi said she felt very happy and fulfilled, which was quite visible because when she felt tired, she would burst into songs. She always had a ready smile for the patients. Despite the enormous pressure due to the multitude of people waiting and the

extreme heat, we all enjoyed what we did. The dentists' energies were contagious and affected the group in a very positive way, so that every one of us did not mind the passage of time. We all worked tirelessly and selflessly.

- Ida Yapchapco

"Many are called but few are chosen." I was chosen to go to this mission for a reason. I have been longing to serve the poor, abandoned and marginalized people; but I did not know what or how to do it concretely. When I saw our brothers and sisters in Tierra Blanca, I felt a sword shoved in my heart, and my eyes filled with tears. I could not explain the emotions engulfing me. They were very patient waiting for their turn without complaining while I easily complain waiting for only ten minutes in the doctor's office. I was standing almost the whole day. I really tried to be patient because of what I saw in them. That night, I asked God to double my patience in the future; to keep me cool and not grumbling or complaining for things beyond my control. I am very thankful to God for the mission experience really changed my impatient attitude.



God revealed His many faces through the poor. I saw in them simplicity, sincerity and humility. God opened my eyes and made me realize that aside from my prayers, I can do some concrete

things to help. That night, I told myself: "I have almost everything in my life; yet there are times I am still not satisfied of what I have." The experience changed my perspective in life. I need to be thankful and be satisfied of whatever God gave; gives and will give in the future – and I have to share whatever I have. I am praying now how I can help more my brothers and sisters out there. I am convinced that God will show me the way.

For me it was a very rewarding experience because God opened my eyes, mind and heart. I am very happy to have joined in this mission to serve God's people. I am happy that God used me as His instrument in bringing joy to His people. And in return, I cannot describe the joy I feel. I will treasure this for the rest of my life. I am full of gratitude to God for the experience He gave me and the team. Indeed, this was a life-changing mission experience.

- Cora Lamila

Blessings to all! Thank you so much for the wonderful short-term experience I had in Guatemala. I could not find words to express my feelings. Being able to work with the TEAM was a sense of gratification for me. You are all wonderful people.

- Planeta Canaveral



Though it was a first time for me to do missionary work, the warm and wonderful welcome that each of you and the people we worked with gave me an overwhelming joy. The trip was a success in every way. There was no boring day. It will always be remembered. Thank you and God Bless!

- Geraldine Quidayan



I am truly blessed! “Many are called but few are chosen”. This allowed us to bathe in the light of our calling. We are indeed “the chosen few”. To think that we started as 13 would-be participants and ending with only 8. The MJ8, as we named our team, is really a grace from God. Divine intervention was definitely a big part of it all.

I find many opportunities to put my faith into action but this was extremely extraordinary. Not only that it was spiritually guided, but it was also well manifested with signs and symbols, in our everyday readings. God was talking to us, answering our questions instantly. I saw Him and I felt His presence. This was another Gods' visit and a blessing to me. In response to my growing desire to be with Him, in His mission, He has empowered me with enormous strength, courage, unlimited ability and resources to be able to hear the cry of the poor. And ultimately I saw the face of Jesus in them and I believe they saw the face of Jesus in me.

- Priscilla Legaspi-Calugcugan



"Yes we will go to Guatemala" this is what I told my husband during the initial planning of the mission but there was an obstacle that was getting greater as the date got closer. I left everything in the hands of the Lord.

We went to Guatemala because the Lord willed it and I am very thankful to the Missionaries of Jesus who made our stay there possible, comfortable and memorable. They are the instruments of this mission of God. I am proud to say that I played a key supporting role in this mission. I was lucky to have been called and was able to share my God given knowledge and talent with the needy. I saw happy and grateful faces on every child and adult we helped. I felt love overflowing. Despite the long and bumpy travels to the villages, and long hours of work, we remained energetic.

The people in the villages are poor, humble and grateful. They are very simple people with simple needs. They lack material richness but God provides for their basic needs.

I will go on a mission again if given the chance.

- Lulu Juco





## *Participating in God's Mission*

Good afternoon Brothers and sisters:

I would like to thank you for giving me and our group, the Lay Associates of the Missionaries of Jesus, this opportunity to share with you a glimpse of our experiences in the just concluded medical-dental mission in Guatemala. Our journey to Guatemala reminded me of the poem of Robert Frost entitled “The Road Not Taken” – it is about the dilemma of a person making a choice. “Two roads diverged in the wood and I took the one less travelled by, and that made all the difference.”

Why Guatemala? That was the burning question that kept popping up in my mind. Why not in the Philippines? God revealed to us that we did not have to look far! The face of Jesus is present in anyone and anywhere even in the simplest person sitting next to you: maybe a Filipino or a Guatemalan or of any race.

I thank the MJ's (Frs. Joseph, Aris, Mer, Manny, Ike) and the people who travelled with me – my wife Priscilla, Mommy Cora, Tita Ida, Caloy, Lulu, Tita Planeta, Geraldine, and Humberto. I am grateful because our eyes were opened and our ears heard the call of God to go to mission! Nobody ever hesitated and as soon as everyone said yes to the mission, we met with Fr. Joseph to discuss what things to bring *into* Guatemala. Even our itinerary and daily

activities were well planned. The road to Tierra Blanca, our home for some days, was a harrowing eight hours drive from the capital. A never ending journey of bumps and grinds, with someone commenting a Zumba exercise that seemed to be endless! We took our first medical-dental mission to Sta. Isabel which was the farthest, a more than two-hour drive from Tierra Blanca. We were overwhelmed with so many people (the many faces of Jesus) that were already waiting for us.



With the grace of God, we never experienced breaking any of those long and crooked teeth despite the limited number of instruments that we brought. We have attended to about 320 patients in the three centers we have been to. It really made a big difference when people assisting us were also praying to make the procedure easy and quick. The glow in the faces of the children after each treatment was enormously gratifying.

On the last day of our mission, a mother and daughter came to me for extraction. Through an interpreter, the mother said that her daughter could not chew her food thoroughly because of her teeth. So when I examined the girl's teeth, I saw that her canine erupted right on the center of her palate. It was long and sharp that every time she tried to close her mouth it poked and irritated her tongue, leaving a big sore on her tongue. So right after I removed the tooth, the mother was leaping with joy, and crying, praising and thanking

God because finally her daughter can now eat normally! The simple task of removing the tooth gave immense joy to the mother and daughter and to all of us!

During the course of our mission, when we felt that our energies were running out, my wife would burst into a song, “For thine is the kingdom and the glory and the power....” and we would sing with her and we would feel rejuvenated again. The people just stared and smiled at us.

Like any other group, living in the same roof with fourteen different personalities, one would expect chaos, right? But we never had problems with everyone, because we only have respect, bonding and love for one another. A friend will see us at our worst, as well as at our best, but our love and care will not waver or falter even if we failed to show our most positive features. Now, I consider them my special friends, because our friendship will last a long long time! They are my new BFF's (“best friends forever”). The three MJ priests are also our BFF, Best Fathers Forever!



The spiritual side is another story. The mission experience was truly our Epiphany! It changed our whole being and it woke up our senses because we believed that those people of God deserved to be helped as anybody else. Quite an amazing ride for the eight of us and we marvel on that wonderful experience! We were touched by the chance that God allowed us to participate in a mission that



we thought we had planned ourselves but in reality, it was Him who facilitated and guided everything!

From the signs and symbols alone, God's presence was felt by us and He spoke to us through readings in the Holy Eucharist that concluded each day's activities. One night, I was assigned to read and I was moved by Psalm 34, "The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor." It says, "The Lord listens to their pleas, through hearts broken, God is near, who hears the cry of the poor." It struck me so much that I never realized that I was already in tears! And as we shared our reflections that night, words like fulfilling, rewarding, amazement, inner joy, awe, euphoria, epiphany, revelation and teamwork were uttered several times. So we came up with an acronym on the word TEAM, "To Evolve As Missioners!" We have never felt to be missionaries before, so working with the MJs and Francisca and the people of Guatemala was a privileged and a delight and we are forever grateful for the encounter!



Do you remember when you sent us off, a day before we left for Guatemala? You all prayed for the eight of us for a safe and successful mission, didn't you? Fr. Manny even blessed us and sprinkled us with Holy water! It just occurred to me that the night before our departure back to Los Angeles, God poured rain on us! The rain was so hard that I felt the roof was going to break open. Surely, God has His way of saying, "Thank you to all of you for



sharing with and serving my people in Guatemala!” He blessed and showered us with a downpour! That was amazing!

In closing, the MJ8, our group, we are in awe and in deep gratitude to all of your prayers of support, and these we brought and manifested to the people of Guatemala. And for that short time that God showed His love and compassion to the eight of us; we will treasure it forever! We hope that to all of you who are listening and contemplating to experience what we have experienced, I say, join our MJ team! Get involved and evolve as missionaries of God! Stand up and be counted!!

“Follow where the path may lead you and leave a trail!” For we may never pass this way again! From the bottom of our hearts, thank you and God bless you always! Mabuhay po kayong lahat!!!

- Rene Calugugan



One night, I was assigned to read and I was moved by Psalm 34, “The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor.” It says, “The Lord listens to their pleas, through hearts broken, God is near, who hears the cry of the poor.” It struck me so much that I never realized that I was already in tears! And as we shared our reflections that night, words like fulfilling, rewarding, amazement, inner joy, awe, euphoria, epiphany, revelation and teamwork were uttered several times.

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## *Una Experiencia que Cambia el Modo de Vivir*

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¡Buenos días, hermanos y hermanas!

En nombre de los Laicos Asociados de los Misioneros de Jesús, les agradezco por permitirme compartir con ustedes nuestra experiencia misionera en Tierra Blanca, Petén, Guatemala. Vamos a echar una ojeada a las jornadas medico-dentales que hicimos allá. Nuestro viaje me recordó el poema de Robert Frost: “Dos caminos se bifurcan en el bosque y escogí el menos caminado; y eso hizo la diferencia”.

¿Por qué iremos a Guatemala? Fue la pregunta ardiente que quemaba todos los labios. ¿Por qué no iremos a las Filipinas? Dios nos reveló que no debíamos ir tan lejos. El rostro de Jesús está presente en cualquier persona y en cualquier parte aun en la persona más sencilla sentándose a su lado: sea un Filipino o sea un Guatemalteco o de otra nacionalidad.



Agradezco a los miembros de los Misioneros de Jesús (Los Padres José, Aris, Rey, Melanio, Manuel y Enrique) y a todos los que viajaron conmigo y con mi esposa Priscilla: Cora, Ida, Carlos, Lulú, Planeta, Geraldine y Humberto. Nuestros ojos se abrieron y los oídos escucharon la llamada de Dios que nos mandó ir a la misión. Ninguno dudó ni vaciló. Tan pronto como dijimos sí, nos

encontramos con el Padre José a fin de saber más de lo que necesitaríamos para las jornadas. Planificamos el itinerario y el horario cotidiano.

La terracería que nos llevó a Tierra Blanca estaba punteada por hoyos y charcos llenos de lodo. Fue un viaje de ocho horas de sacudidas debido a una carretera llena de baches – como si bailáramos el Zumba dentro de la camioneta.



La primera jornada fue en Sta. Isabel, la aldea más lejana – a algunas horas de Tierra Blanca. La muchedumbre que nos esperaba en la capilla nos abrumó. En seguida, vimos los varios rostros de Jesús. Gracias a Dios, no quebramos ningún diente a pesar de los instrumentos limitados que habíamos llevado. Atendimos a más de 300 personas en los tres centros en los que estuvimos. Hizo una gran diferencia cuando las personas que nos asistían rezaban para que el proceso fuera fácil y rápido. El resplandor en las caras de los niños después de cada tratamiento fue enormemente gratificante.

El último día de nuestra misión, vinieron una madre y su hija. Por medio de un traductor, la madre me hizo comprender que a su hija le costaba masticar la comida a causa del problema de dientes. Examiné los dientes de la niña pequeña y descubrí que tenía un diente en medio del paladar. El largo y afilado colmillo le molestaba para masticar y le irritaba la lengua, dejando una gran úlcera en ella. Tan pronto como lo extraje, ambas saltaron con

alegría llorando, alabando y agradeciendo a Dios. Al fin, la pobre niña podría comer sin dificultad. El sencillo acto de sacar un diente dio un gozo inmenso a la niña, a su madre y a todos nosotros.

Cuando sentíamos que nuestra energía se estaba acabando, mi esposa empezaba a cantar: “Tuyo es el reino, tuyo es el poder y la gloria por siempre. Amen” y todos nosotros cantábamos al unísono con ella. Así, nos sentíamos revitalizados mientras la gente nos miraba sonriendo.



Con catorce personas distintas viviendo en una casa pequeña con un baño, un caos fue previsto, ¿No fue así? Sin embargo, con respeto, amor de uno por otro y la unidad del grupo, nunca tuvimos ningún problema. Ahora, considero a los siete compañeros mis amigos y condiscípulos. Son mis BFFs (“best friends forever” – los mejores amigos por siempre). Los Misioneros de Jesús son también mis BFFs (Best Fathers Forever! – los mejores padres por siempre).

El lado espiritual es otra historia. La experiencia misionera fue una Epifanía. Ella cambió nuestro estar entero y nos sacudió. Nos cambió el modo de ver y vivir nuestra vida. Hemos estado emocionados por la experiencia maravillosa. Hemos estado conmovidos por Dios quien nos permitió participar en una misión que pensábamos haberla planificado nosotros mismos, mas en realidad Dios nos la facilitó él mismo.



Veíamos, sentíamos, escuchábamos y experimentábamos la presencia de Dios durante estos días por los signos y símbolos; por las lecturas diarias de la Eucaristía que concluía las actividades de cada día. Una noche, me tocó leer las lecturas y mientras leía el Salmo 34, “Él Señor oye la queja de los pobres”, no me di cuenta que ya yo lloraba. Compartimos lo que sentimos y todos nosotros describimos los sentimientos con las mismas palabras: satisfactorio, gratificante, sorprendente, gozoso, estupendo, eufórico, revelador.... Acordamos que trabajamos en equipo. ¡Nunca nos habíamos sentido ser misioneros antes! Trabajar con los Misioneros de Jesús y con quienes trabajan (Francesca y la gente de Guatemala) fue un privilegio y nos deleitó. Estamos agradecidos por siempre por el encuentro.

¿Se recuerdan del día que ustedes nos despidieron antes de ir a Guatemala? Rezaron por nosotros para que tuviéramos una misión con éxito y sin riesgo ni peligro alguno. El Padre Manuel nos bendijo y nos roció con agua bendita. Me recuerdo que esa noche, llovió mucho. Dios nos bendijo también con la lluvia torrencial. Como si Dios nos dijera “gracias por haber decidido participar en ésta misión en Guatemala”.

Para terminar, les agradecemos por sus oraciones y apoyo – todo esto lo llevamos a Guatemala. Esperamos que todos ustedes que escuchan y contemplan ahora tengan la experiencia que tuvimos, yo les digo: ¡Acompañennos! ¡Involúcrense! Y ¡evolucionen siendo misioneros de Dios! Sigán caminando en el sendero y dejen caminos para los demás. Tal vez nunca pasemos por aquí otra vez.

- Rene Calugcugan





## Prayer for the Missionaries of Jesus (MJs)

Lord Jesus Christ,  
Let the Holy Spirit take hold of  
all the Missionaries of Jesus.

Consume them with the fire of your love  
as you did with the First Apostles at Pentecost,  
always lead them where you want them to go.

Enable them to proclaim God's reign  
to those who seek you.

Son of God and Son of Mary, show them the way  
to our brothers and sisters where the need  
for you is felt most.

Inspire young men to join  
the Missionaries of Jesus,  
to live as friends and disciples,  
and to proclaim your Good News.

O Provident and Abiding Love,  
guide and protect the Missionaries of Jesus  
both now and forever.  
Amen.



## Join the Missionaries of Jesus Lay Associates as:

*Missionaries of Jesus PRAYER PARTNERS:*  
*Commit to pray with and for the Missionaries*  
*of Jesus.*

*Missionaries of Jesus MISSION*  
*PROMOTERS:*  
*Commit to help the Missionaries of Jesus raise*  
*funds for the mission as you raise other*  
*people's missionary consciousness; and*  
*recruit vocations for the Missionaries of Jesus*  
*and for MJ Lay Associates.*

*Missionaries of Jesus LAY MISSIONARIES:*  
*Commit to work with MJ in the missions*  
*(Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Guatemala*  
*and the USA).*



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## *Help the Missionaries of Jesus*

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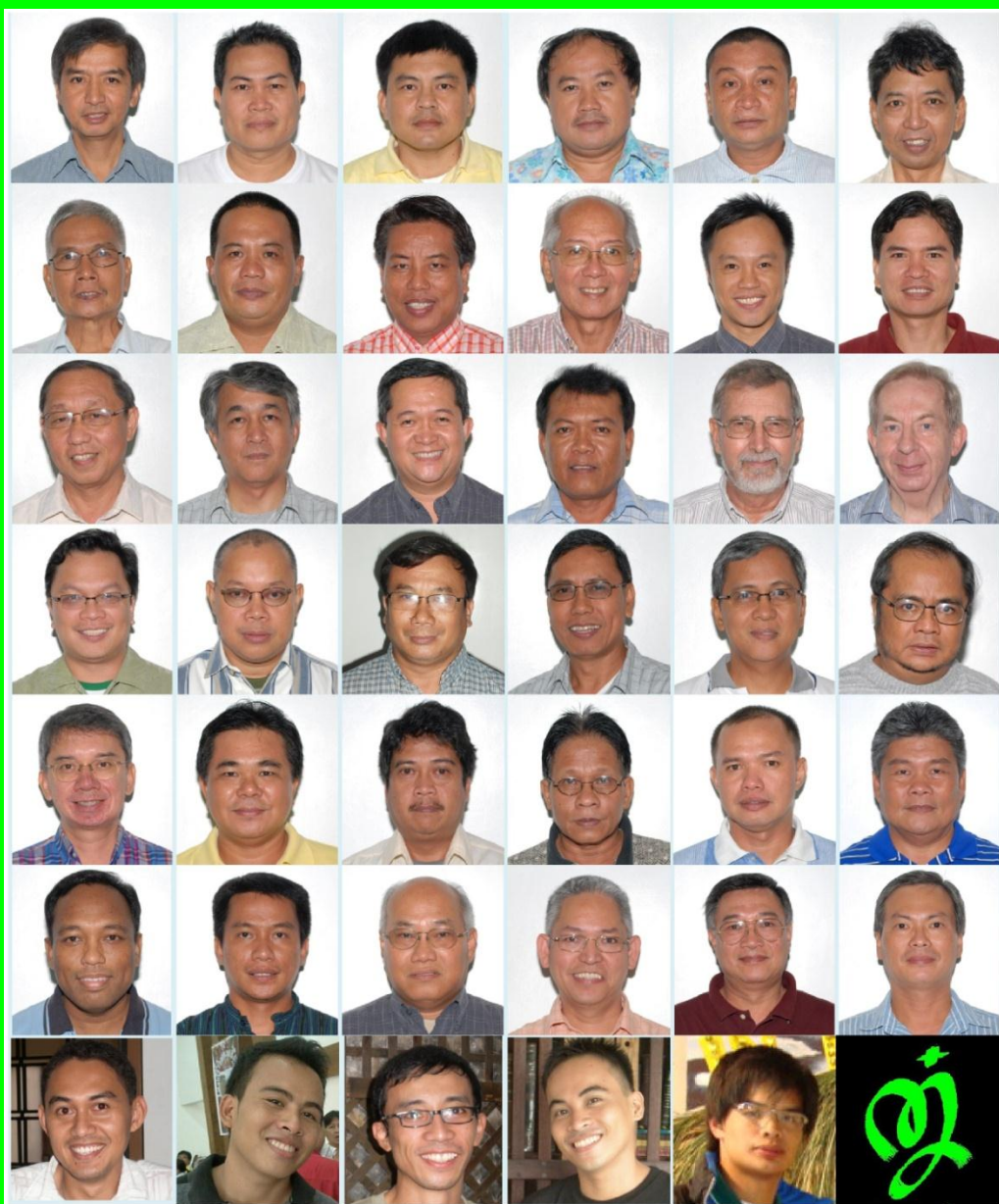
Help the Missionaries of Jesus in their mission to bring the Good News to the poor and marginalized children, women and men!

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

- ✚ You can establish 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. You can list specific gifts from your estate to Missionaries of Jesus.
- ✚ Your estate consists of all the assets you own at the time of your death: cash, securities, jewelries, art, your home or other real estate. Any of these assets would be an acceptable gift to make to the Missionaries of Jesus.
- ✚ Missionaries of Jesus can be named as one of the beneficiaries in your life insurance policy.
- ✚ Missionaries of Jesus can be named as a beneficiary of your IRA or other retirement account.

For more information, please contact  
Fr. Melanio Viuya, MJ  
435 S Occidental Blvd,  
Los Angeles, CA 90057  
[info@missionariesofjesus.com](mailto:info@missionariesofjesus.com)  
Tel: 213 389 8439 ext 19; 213 327 8793





*Happy Tenth Anniversary  
to the Missionaries of Jesus*

*Friends and Disciples 31*



## Mission Statement

We, the MJ of the District of the Americas,  
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.

435 S Occidental Blvd  
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