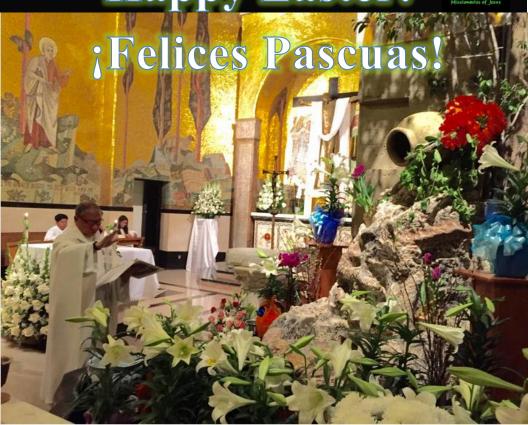




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Happy Easter!





Doing God's work where others dare not go.



We want 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.

Happy Easter! Happy Missioning!

The first two stories in this issue, "Forgiving is Twice a Blessing" and "God Will Find a Way" narrate how the Missionaries of Jesus, through Fr. Efren Reyes, MJ, are instruments of Easter experiences. Behind darkness and death is the promise of life and light. Fr. Greg Domilies' "Missionary Journey" is another experience of death and resurrection – dying to one's language and culture and embracing new ones, those of the welcoming communities. Fr. Enrique Ymson's "Celebrating Our Cultural Differences" underlines just that; what with the different cultural groups in the parishes of Precious Blood and St. Kevin willingness to welcome the others in their lives. Missionary life is a constant dying and rising – an Easter experience that leads to missioning – bringing the joyful message of Easter: forgiveness, unity, peace, well-being, hospitality....

These stories and many others are signs that Jesus is risen! In our small ways, we can proclaim through our life and deeds that indeed there is resurrection from the dead. Read the MJ Easter Greetings.

Help the Missionaries of Jesus help other people rise from the situations of death and darkness. Continue sending your donations as you partner with us in bringing the joyful message of the Risen Lord. Please do your part also in reaching out to your friends, relatives and acquaintances to make them *Friends and Disciples* of Jesus through the Missionaries of Jesus. This can be part of your mission.

Imagine how many lives we can touch and change, if every reader of this bulletin and every friend and co-disciple of the Missionaries of Jesus reach out to one or two persons who would donate at least \$5.00 a month. That will be of great help to our missionaries working with the different Christian communities in remote places in this world rebuilding the lives of the poor and the

indigenous people. Together, let us help the lost, the last, the least, the lowly rise from the dead.

Jesus is risen! Happy Easter! Happy missioning!

- Fr. Melanio Viuya, MJ Director, MJ Promotion Office



Some weeks ago, I received a text message from my husband informing me that our sons, Rodel and Jomar, had visited him and that they even gave him some money for his daily needs. It was truly a happy surprise for me. The Holy Child has answered my prayer. Mercy has slowly and finally overcome the anger and resentment in their hearts.

It was in 2004, more about twelve years ago, when my husband, a jeepney driver, left us to live with another woman. For a year, he gave us some financial assistance. Then, he completely abandoned us.

When I came to see him to ask for help I was even physically abused by some relatives of his live-in partner.

We have five children. Three were then in the secondary school and two in the elementary. To survive I had made a deal with my children. I would work to find money and they would do the household chores, including cooking.

Almost every day, I would leave our house at four in the morning and come back home at nine in the evening. I peddled rugs along the street in the nearby city. Each day I had to dispose 1, 000 pieces of rugs. If I was able to meet my quota for the day early, I would sell cigarettes till 9 p.m. John Paul, my youngest son, would usually join me after his school classes.

Coming home one evening, we passed by the former parish church of Sto. Nino, a new parish entrusted to the Missionaries of Jesus. John Paul noticed the joyful people inside. He asked me that we come inside for a while.

One of the ladies inside told me that it was the Couple for Christ group and I was invited to join them. Curious and also hoping it would be of help to me, I attended their seminars and soon became a member of the CFC's Handmaids of the Lord.

My coming to the church had broadened my horizon. There I met so many loving and compassionate people. I stopped peddling rugs and cigarettes in the city street. Instead, I started doing the laundry for some people I had met and got acquainted with in the parish. Until now I do this.



When Joyce, who was then 11 years old, became among the first beneficiaries of the Student Assistance Program created by the Sto. Nino Parish in 2004, I became more involved in the church. I joined the Mother Butlers Guild. I also encouraged my children to participate in parish activities, whenever possible, as way of showing our gratitude to the God of Mercy and Compassion who had always been with us and for us.

Despite trials and financial difficulties, Ronel and Rodel finished their vocational course and now work as electrician and linesman, respectively. Jomar who had temporarily stopped going to school to work as a server in a fast food chain, is now taking up a course in Hotel and Restaurant Management. Joyce and John Paul both have now graduated from college. John Paul is now working in the Human Resource Office of Goya Company; Joyce, in a bank.



Joyce is also now a member of the Student Assistance Program Committee of Sto. Nino Parish.

I have already forgiven my husband. This was difficult to do. For many years, it was hard for me to pray "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us". Thank God I have learned to forgive. And, indeed, forgiving is twice a blessing; a blessing to the forgiven also to the one who forgives. Being merciful had opened my eyes to the many blessings God had bestowed on me and my family which I simply could not see before because of anger and indignation.

I have told my husband Fernando that I have forgiven him but not all our children are ready for his coming back home. They were wounded in different degrees. For some, healing will take time a longer time. Thus, how great was my joy when I heard that two of them came to pay him a visit some weeks ago and gave him help.

My involvement in the parish has been of great help to me and my family. Indeed, the church is sacred place where the heavenly signal is excellent. The best place to heed Pope Francis' exhortation "Download the best link of all; a heart that sees and shares goodness without getting weary."

Ofelia Afable Reyes
 Sto Niño Parish, Rizal

GOD WILL FIND A WAY

On May 31, on the Feast of the Visitation, Fr. Efren Reyes, M.J., came to celebrate the Holy Mass in our Christian Community in Lumintao, Calintaan, Occ. Mindoro, Many people, mostly farmers, attended the thanksgiving celebration. I, together with my mother and sister Janah, joined our community in praising and thanking God, our ever-merciful Father.

Life is full of challenges, trials and difficulties but also of countless blessings from our loving God. Joyful people are those who know how to recognize, count, cherish and make the most of God's multiple blessings, instead of sulking and crying over what is missing.

Being the eldest of three siblings, I dreamed of obtaining a

college degree in accountancy, pass the board exam and land a job to support my family. But some years ago, even before I could finish my secondary education, my father left us and lived with another woman. To make both ends meet, my mother had to work part time as saleslady and as a laundry woman. And when she got sick, and had difficulty using her swollen right hand, my younger brother stopped going to school to earn some money by working in the fields of our friends and relatives.

When my father, a carpenter, stopped sending us financial assistance and totally abandoned us, our life became a daily struggle, and my dream an almost an impossible dream. Yes, an almost impossible dream, but I kept on dreaming. I firmly believed in God's loving mercy. God would a find a way.

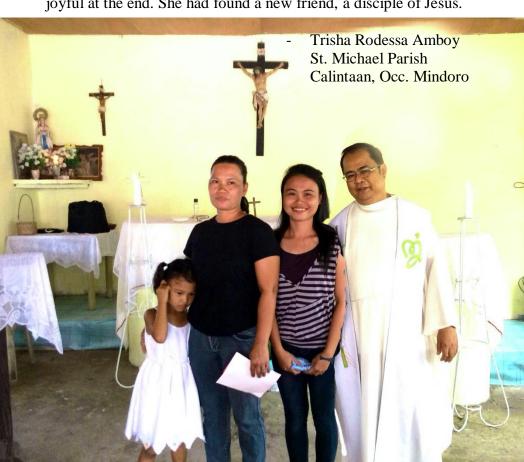
In January 2014, a couple of weeks before my high school graduation, I met Fr. Efren, the newly assigned co-pastor in the M.J. parish in Calintaan, Occ. Mindoro. I shared with him my almost impossible dream. He told me not to be afraid of dreaming beautiful dreams no matter how impossible they may seem to be. Because God is compassionate and merciful, especially, to the little ones, the

poor, the abandoned and the humble. He told me not lose hope, and that I should pray for him that he would have the courage and humility to beg from his friends to support my college education.

Just a week before the start of the school year 2014 – 2015, Fr. Efren was able to solicit enough money for the first instalment of the tuition and miscellaneous fees that I had to pay for my enrolment in the Divine Word College in the nearby town of San Jose, Occ. Mindoro. Thanks to our merciful God, and Jesus' friends and disciples, my almost impossible dream has started to be realized.

This coming school year 2016 - 2017, I will be in third year college, taking up B.S. Accountancy in the Divine Word College, Occ. Mindoro. Thanks to the friends of Fr. Efren. God indeed is merciful! He sends His friends and disciples to bring hope and joy to the poor. Truly, the Missionaries of Jesus are Messengers of Joy!

After the mass on the Feast of the Visitation, Fr. Efren came to our humble abode. My little sister Janah who was usually timid, gradually, could overcome her shyness. She too was smiling and joyful at the end. She had found a new friend, a disciple of Jesus.





As people of Easter, we are on the road to proclaim that Jesus is Risen from the dead!

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Twelve years in Cameroun, Africa; ten years in Papua New Guinea... hopefully, another ten years in Guatemala, Central America.

I was expressing this dream when I was leaving Papua New Guinea (PNG). Although deep in my heart I was experiencing the pain of leaving PNG where I was already at home. Despite all, I was hopeful and willing to face again the challenges of mission knowing that it will not be easy to start all over again like a child especially in learning the language which is Spanish.

I arrived in Guatemala last December 8, 2015 and since Christmas was approaching, we decided to start my language study after the Christmas season in Antigua. During the weekends, I stayed with the Missionaries of Jesus in the city to practice my Spanish with the members of the formation community. It was quite challenging commuting with the full packed public buses; being new in the city and with language difficulty. Three months of language study was tough! Everything was in Spanish – spending eight hours at school and the rest of the day with the host family.



After the formal language study, I had the opportunity to further integrate in the Parishes of Jacaltenango and Conception, Huista in the Diocese of Huehuetenango – practicing Spanish and discovering people's culture. It was indeed an enriching experience with the simple and kind hearted people including pastoral agents of the Diocese (Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini; Frs. Orville Morales and Angel Dias who welcomed me in their communities. After two months in Huehuetenango, I came back to our Parish, San Marcos



Evangelista in Tierra Blanca, Sayaxche, Petén. I live and work with Fr. Aris Villanueva, MJ.

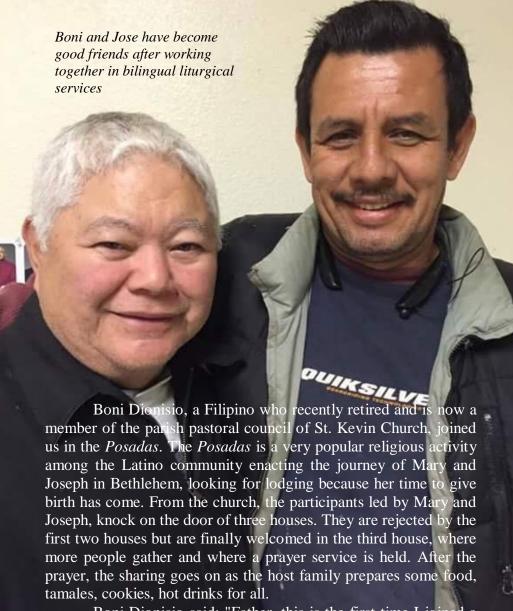
Looking back at my experiences, I thank God and all people I have encountered along the journey for I survived the challenges of starting anew here in Guatemala. I also thank God for all the learnings I had during this first year of mission. For the moment, I can at least express myself in Spanish and celebrate masses with the people. Now, the next challenge is another language, Q'eqchi, which spoken by majority of the people here in the Parish. Thus, we celebrate the sacraments with the people in this language. I need to learn this language. For the moment, when I celebrate with the people, I just read the liturgical prayers in Q'eqchi without understanding it. Will I start learning it? The advice is to concentrate on Spanish first!

With this, I would like to tell you friends and co-disciples, "Bienvenidos en nuestra parroquia y muchísima gracias a Dios y ustedes" (Welcome to our parish and thank you very much to God and to all of you).

- Fr. Gregorio Domilies, MJ San Marcos Evangelista, Petén



Celebrating our Cultural Differences



Boni Dionisio said: "Father, this is the first time I joined a Posada. I did not know that it was this beautiful and meaningful. I think I will join the Posadas from now on." Later on, he shared this in the Parish Pastoral Council meeting: "I think we Filipinos should participate in the Posadas. It is good to reflect on the theme of being





Celebrating our cultural/traditional differences has always been part of the mission/vision of our twin parishes of St. Kevin and Precious Blood. We have promoted the celebration of San Lorenzo Ruiz (the first Filipino Saint), the bilingual celebrations of important liturgical feasts, bi-lingual rosaries and stations of the cross in the homes, the celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe (a very popular feast for the Latinos) and in Christmas time, the Simbang Gabi and the Posadas. We wanted these different celebrations to be sources of mutual enrichment rather than a cause of division. For this reason, we made it very clear that these were not exclusive celebrations but celebrations for the whole community. In our bi-lingual masses, it is very inspiring to witness people from different countries praying together. During these special masses, we often invite the congregation to pray the Our Father in their own language. And they do. From the altar, you hear a loud mixture of different languages bursting into prayer. You could not understand much. But that does not matter. The Father is not only bilingual...He is multilingual. He understands all languages.

But as in any ideal, this is easier said than done. It has always been a struggle to animate people to participate actively in these celebrations. You hear many arguments of excuses from people: Why make things complicated? We do not understand the language used, so why attend? In spite of our insistence that these are not exclusive celebrations, some are accustomed to exclusivity...that this is for the Filipinos only or that is for the Spanish-speaking only. Some want to keep things simple. For many, keeping things simple means just attend the mass and never mind the fellowships or activities that follow after.

But for those who have given themselves the chance to experience these activities, they have come to appreciate the different cultural ways of celebrating, sharing different foods and drinks. Many Filipinos have started to acquire the taste for *tamales*, *horchata*, *tacos* and *pupusas* while many Latinos have become enamored by *pansit*, *lumpiang shanghai* and *adobo*.

The parish of St. Kevin has a Cafe San Kevin. Every Sunday, different cultural groups are assigned to prepare food for the churchgoers. *Tacos* and *pupusas* are prepared. *Barbecue*, *okoy*, *pansit* and *adobo* (popular Filipino food) are sometimes offered too. In Precious Blood Church, three or four times a year, an international food is held. All kinds of food and drinks are offered. Again, while some prefer to buy the food they are used to, others have started to try other foods they are not familiar with. Only after trying them did they discover how delicious they are. Once we brought our Guatemalan house helper to a buffet restaurant for lunch. Guess what she ordered...*pansit* and *fried bangus*!

Over the years, we have realized that celebrating our cultural differences goes beyond simply tasting the food of others or going through the sometimes boring and confusing bilingual liturgical celebrations. It involves a meeting of hearts...it demands a deep appreciate of the other, how different he or she may be from me. It is daring to get out of the narrow confines of "me, mine and myself" and experience the freshness and richness of the other.





Celebrating our cultural differences comes from a deep conviction that we may come from different parts of the world, we may speak different languages, we may eat different kinds of food, we may think and do things differently, but ultimately, our differences were never meant to divide but to complement, not to complicate things but to be a source of enrichment.

And when this happens, the words of the wise man from India, Rabindranath Tagore once again can come true: "Once we dreamt we were strangers. We wake up to discover that we are dear to each other...I have come to your shore as a stranger, I lived in your house as a guest, I leave as a friend."

When we are finally able to celebrate our cultural differences, then strangers become friends.

Fr. Enrique Ymson, MJ
 Associate Pastor St Kevin and
 Precious Blood Churches



Thomas and the other disciples, we respond, "My Lord and my God." Happy Easter! Shalom! Salam!

- Roger del Rosario, MJ (Malabang, Lanao del Sur)

Easter reminds us that no matter how difficult or bloody our journey with Jesus may get, it would surely have a happy ending. Happy Easter to us all!

- Efren "Wren" Reyes, MJ (Antipolo City, Rizal)

May this season inspire us to give a part of ourselves to others for them to live! Happy Easter to all!

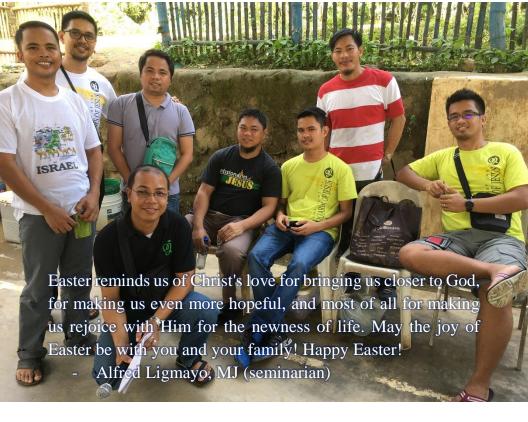
- Ely Ubag MJ (Novice Socius, Davao City)

With the risen Christ springs our hope for true freedom, joy and wellbeing! Happy Easter!

- Elmo Tactacan, MJ (Formator of seminarians)

As life triumphed over death, may you have life in its fullness this Easter season and for always. Happy Easter!

- Primo Fagel, MJ (Malita, Digos)



Let us not just say, "Christ is risen", but "We will rise." Happy Easter, friends & disciples! - Ariel Bulan, MJ (seminarian)

May this season of Easter usher us into a life that is joyful and fulfilling because it is anchored into the spirit of the risen Lord. Happy Easter to all! - Arsen Sumeg-ang MJ (seminarian)

Christ is risen. May you find the renewal of hope and love of the risen Lord! happy Easter! - Carlo Arabit, MJ (seminarian)

They said "walang forever," ("there is no forever"), but not with God! He is out of the tomb! May this Easter season be an experience of being fully alive with the Resurrected Christ for you and your loved ones! Happy Easter! - MJ Paguyo, MJ (seminarian)

May the Risen Christ inspire and challenge us to bring mercy and hope to those whose lives are broken and destroyed by hatred and violence. The resurrection event is a call to live our radical faith in God who refuses to accept the death of the poor and the excluded and who nurtures the power of transforming love in and through us. We rise with him every time we are engaged with the Risen Christ overcoming death in all its ugly manifestations in our time.

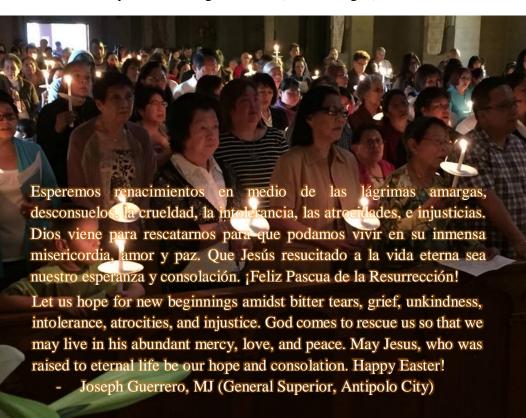
Que el Cristo resucitado nos inspire y desafíe a traer la misericordia y la esperanza a aquellos cuyas vidas están rotas y destruidas por el odio y la violencia. El evento de la resurrección es un llamado a vivir nuestra fe radical en Dios que se niega a aceptar la muerte de los pobres y los excluidos y que nutre el poder del amor transformador en y a través de nosotros. Nos levantamos con él cada vez que nos comprometimos con Cristo resucitado venciendo la muerte en todas sus manifestaciones feas en nuestro tiempo. - Percy Bacani, MJ (Los Angeles, CA)

I greet you all a joyful Easter! May this be the season of feeling hope and remembering love especially for the poor among us. May the spirit of the Risen Christ live on in each one!

- Eugene Cañete, MJ (Formator of seminarians, Vicar General)

Following Jesus does not end at the cross ... we rise with him at Easter to proclaim that our God is the God of Life! Happy Easter!

- Joey Ganio Evangelista, MJ (Malita, Digos)



Que la victoria de Cristo sobre el pecado y la muerte nos empuje a promover y defender la vida de los excluidos. May the victory of Christ over sin and death push us to promote and defend the life of the excluded ones. - Benedicto Lagarde, Jr, MJ (San Mateo, Rizal)

May Jesus' resurrection impact us to new life. From weariness to renewed enthusiasm, discontentment to compassion and from despair to hope. He rose from the tomb to join us our community's journey to better life. Joyful Easter to you and your community.

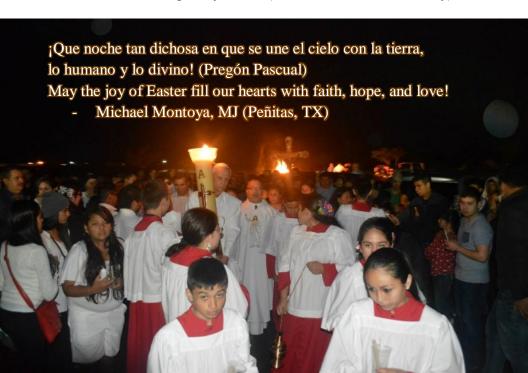
- Noel Octaviano (Balabagan, Lanao del Sur)

Pascua de la Resurrección:

Un recordatorio de que somos como las semillas: de vida, de fraternidad y de justicia. Es necesario que se mueran para que dèn una cosecha abundante. Somos semillas del Reino de Dios. ¡Un saludo de paz para todos!

- Melchor Villero, MJ (Lae, Papua New Guinea)

With God, there is nothing impossible! HE LIVES! Kwa nguvu ya Mungu, hakuna matata! YESU ANAISHI! Sa awa ng Diyos, mangyayari ang lahat! BUHAY SIYA! May we all live and celebrate life in its fullness with the Risen Lord! - Efren "Peng" Reyes, MJ (Novice Master, Davao City)



Easter reminds us of something very basic in our lives... there is always a reason to be humble and be thankful! Happy Easter everyone!

Pascua nos recuerda algo muy básico en nuestras vidas... siempre hay una razón para ser humilde y agradecido! Feliz Pascua a todos!

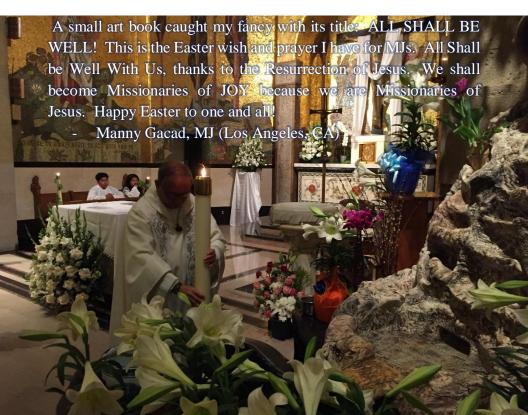
- Crespo Lape, MJ (Los Angeles, CA)

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55). In the midst of darkness and in the seeming triumph of the culture of death, the daily rising of the sun reminds us of Jesus destroying death; restoring life. This is the joy we bring as we hit the road as Missionaries of Jesus, Missionaries of Joy! Happy Easter, Happy Missioning!

- Melanio Viuya, Jr, MJ (Los Angeles, CA)

A blessed and glorious Easter to all our MJ brothers, lay associates, family, friends and benefactors! May the experience of Easter (Jesus alive and present in our midst) bring hope and courage as we journey through the Good Fridays of our lives.

- Ike Ymson, MJ (Los Angeles, CA)



Give an Easter Gift to Mission

Give an Easter 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.
- ♣ 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).





Mission Statement

heard and responded to God's call to mission. We, the MJ of the District of the Americas, We are called to assist in the emergence Friends and Disciples of Jesus,

Missionaries of Jesus

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> integrating into the life of the people, in the struggle of self-determination, in the celebration of life and culture. in reclaiming their stories, and we journey together of a new face of the Church

Please remember the Missionaries of Jesus during the Combined

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