



October 2018

St John's Mission, Peace, and Justice Society

Volume 1, Issue 2



### Upcoming Events:

- ~~Clothes Drive:~~  
~~Oct. 19th~~
- Adopt a Family:  
Dec 2018
- Blood Drive: Dec  
5th, 8-1 PM
- Talent Show &  
Auction: Mar 1,  
2019

### MPJ Team

- Enrique Piceno
- Emmanuel Delfin
- Brian Lazaro
- Jorge Tellez
- Simon Li
- Jorge Moncada  
Hernandez
- Christian  
Morquecho

### First Event Complete, More to Come

The MPJ Society completed its first community event of the semester. This month we completed a Clothes Drive with all clothes donated to The Arc Thrift Store in Oxnard. We collected a total of 6 industrial size trash bags worth of clothes and shoes. On behalf of the MPJ team thank you for your participation.

Next on the list of events is the annual Adopt A Family program. All of the classes have adopted a family and your MPJ Class Rep has all of the information. This is a program to help families in need, but also a way to foster class organizational skills and build cohesion amongst your classmates. This month's article is on the Maryknoll Society and Deacon Emmanuel's experience with one of their priests. Enjoy. ~Enrique Piceno, MPJ Lead~

### Maryknoll Ministry

By Deacon Emmanuel Delfin

#### Background:

Before entering St. John's, I was very involved with the South Bay Young Adults Group that ran from St. James Parish in Redondo Beach. I was one of the leaders who had helped coordinate our quarterly camping trip (aside from helping lead our Bible Study), which, at this point in time, happened to be at the Grand Canyon within the spring season. Having gotten up early enough to make it to Mass, we drank coffee, and started to get ready, all the while recalling our adventure that just happened the night before...

It was in the middle of the night and someone had woken up. She was so overwhelmed by the view of the clear yet brilliantly starry sky, that she started to wake her tent mates. They saw clusters of numerous stars filling the vast darkness, making the sky seem to tear apart. Although they tried to hush their excitement, they couldn't keep the rest of us from waking up in curiosity. Tent group by tent group, we started to venture off into the darkness trying to capture the beauty of the sky.

We ended up at the look-out point over the canyon, which was lit by the stars in its many hues of reds, browns and umber. God's creation spoke to us all and we all were inspired to worship our Lord in prayer. After praying the Rosary, one of us, a cantor, began to sing Schubert's "Ave Maria", bringing our praise of Creation into a plea for intercession to our Lord by our Lady. When we joined in, we felt all of Creation joining us through the echoes of our prayer coming from all around us.

Little did we know that Christ would send his Spirit to us that morning, inspiring us by the homily of a visiting Maryknoll priest, Fr. John Waldrep.

#### El Cristo Rey Chapel:

Finding the little chapel for Mass was, in itself, a bit of work. What we found was a building that might have been built as an officers' office some time ago and has since then, been converted inside to hold Mass. It was quaint, having an eclectic collection of Catholic images along its interior walls. In retrospect, that humble chapel for our Lord at the Grand Canyon, spoke well of the Incarnational aspect of our theology, manifesting before us the powerful God of all existence humbling Himself to not only share in our fragile human estate and not to be born of noble stature but into a simple family. Thus the modest Cristo Rey Chapel was in itself a prelude to the homily we were about to hear.



**“Man is himself the author, center, and goal of all economic and social life. The decisive point of the social question is that goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity.” CCC 2459**

### **Maryknoll Continued...**

Firstly as Mass was about to begin, Fr. Waldrep introduced himself as having just arrived from Tanzania and was very pleased to be able to celebrate Mass with others who found beauty and grandeur in God's creation. We looked at each other and admittedly nodded to each other, smiling with full recollection of experiencing exactly that to which Father just simply alluded with a few words.

After proclaiming the Gospel, Fr. Waldrep began his homily describing his daily life in Mtoni, a small village in Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania. The many comforts we take for granted here in the U.S. was not readily available to the less fortunate people there. Even the minimal way we lived while camping was far a lot easier than the way the poor lived in Mtoni. Fr. Waldrep was living with two other priests in what we would say was a shack but by Mtoni standards, it was a typical home. Mtoni was ninety percent Muslim and felt threatened by their Catholic presence. They often made it difficult for the Catholic center to survive. Eventually, through working in the community of both Catholic and Islamic faiths, Fr. Waldrep was able to build better relationships among them and to help them all improve their living conditions little by little, including those stricken with AIDS.

Being on leave here in the United States, Fr. Waldrep explained that he will soon return to Tanzania to begin another new endeavor for the Maryknoll Society. “I'm excited to be beginning a new ministry in Dar, most likely in the Kariakoo area where I've felt for some time that the Church should have more of a presence. There is a chapel there which was built in 1929, making it one of the oldest in the archdiocese. The Cardinal would like to see it turned into a center, which interests me, though I'm not sure exactly how that's to come about. In addition, there is the possibility of working with two diocesan priests in the area of ministry to urban youth.”

Upon returning from our camping trip, I woke up one day and remembered befriending, Fr. Waldrep from Tanzania helping those with AIDS and how those lives would be so different from ours. Then my eyes opened and my life in this country, the great USA, seemed unreal, a consumerist facade of the true reality that is full of suffering and pain. I realized that my life with its "luxuries" was a dreadful farce. I fell into a loathsome disgust. Yet, at breakfast, I had gained back most of my usual self: the American who is never really hungry and has the comforts of living. However, as I sat down, I was so thankful for such abundance and was so sincere in praying for the less fortunate.

### **Maryknoll Society, Tanzania**

Fr. Waldrep had been ordained in June, 1990, and had chosen to minister in Tanzania, Africa. He had training in linguistics and picked up Swahili very quickly. He was assigned to Kibaha at the beginning of 1991 to help the already established ministry of Fr. Lange.

Fr. Lange spent his last three years at Kibaha, taking on several new initiatives. One large-scale program was to build simple houses for the poverty-stricken, primarily elderly people and those with serious physical debilities that were too extreme to be allow them to stay and be cared by their families (immediate or extended). Two such ailments were a woman with leprosy and a man with elephantiasis, a disease most likely “caused by an infestation of the lymph glands and vessels by a filarial worm, which manifests itself by extreme enlargement of legs and scrotum.”

In all, before leaving Tanzania, Fr. Lange made sure of the construction of seventy houses within three to four-years. Due to the infestation of malaria and the toll the medicine took upon his heart, Fr. Lange discerned it best to take his person away from such a condition to be able to effectively carry out God's mission. “Here at Kibaha the people are educated and can talk on a wide range of things. We talk about politics, about world affairs, and it is much different than when you are dealing with small-holder farmers, who talk only about the rains and the land. And here, people live in rows of streets, so you can visit a lot of people in a relatively short time. There have been no great tensions here, making these the happiest years of my life.”

Fr. Lange was hesitant in leaving Kibaha solely to a newly ordained priest (Fr. Waldrep), with all the responsibilities the ministry there entailed. Yet, as time showed, God provided. Fr. Waldrep continued his work and additionally ministered in other parishes, providing much help to all the peoples in those parishes as well as beyond their borders, including the many Muslims who outnumbered them. He ministered there for 11 years before coming back to the U.S., giving his priestly service to the parishes of Kibaha, Pugu and Mtoni.