

VOICES

WINTER > SPRING 2013

Pilgrims to El Salvador share stories of new eyes, new hearts

Voices from the *JustFaith Ministries Delegation to El Salvador*

This past September, fifteen graduates of the *JustFaith* (JF) program left their daily lives behind to journey for a short time as pilgrims in El Salvador. The vision of two *JustFaith* grads, Mark and Claudia Brown, this experience was brought to reality through a collaboration between the Browns and Friends Across Borders, a mission outreach program of Maryknoll Lay Missioners.

The following are reflections from several individuals whose hearts were broken – and, as a result, opened – by what they witnessed in El Salvador.

Mark Brown

“When the church hears the cry of the oppressed it cannot but denounce the social structures that give rise to and perpetuate the misery from which the cry arises.”

—Archbishop Oscar Romero (8/6/78).

This quote by Oscar Romero, who was eventually assassinated for his outspoken support for the most vulnerable of society in El Salvador, encapsulates the mission of *JustFaith Ministries*: “to form, inform and transform people...to build a more just and peaceful world.” As the brutal assassination of Romero’s friend Fr. Rutilio Grande, who had simply shared his faith while creating self-reliance groups among the exploited in El Salvador, had a profound impact on Romero, the inaugural immersion trip for JF grads had a great impact on those of us who made this journey.

My wife and I were interested in pursuing this effort because it would provide JF grads an opportunity to witness first-hand some of the people, places and issues we’d all read about, seen in videos, and discussed during our *JustFaith* meetings.

We learned about the brutal civil war that raged in El Salvador from 1979 to 1992, during which thousands were murdered or disappeared. But what most impacted me was that I was an adult at the time this was happening, and I didn’t know much about it. How many injustices go on around us that we don’t know about because they are not newsworthy or of strategic importance or because we are just don’t listen closely enough?

Having experienced life in numerous economically poor and oppressed countries, I thought I was pretty sensitive to social injustices around the world. But this trip provided a wakeup call.

Hugh Menton

At mass the first week back from El Salvador, I heard – for the first time – the words I was singing: “Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see your face in places we have never known.” I saw the face of the Lord in the faces of the people we met who struggle so hard for their daily bread. They have no lack of faith or joy in life and offer to us who live more comfortably the face of



Leonardo Escobar, a member of the Nahuat community living in Santo Domingo de Guzman, displaying his bean harvest.

“May God break my heart so completely that the whole world falls in.”

— *Mother Teresa*

See page 8 for a list of 2013 Mission Immersion trips!

EDITORIAL CONTENT PROVIDED BY:



Did You Know?

In 2014, *JustFaith Ministries* will have been a national program for 10 years?

Christ. My journey provided new eyes, new ears, and a new heart.

After three months, I know the trip has become part of my journey of faith. I experience calls to voices that I previously may have ignored and now hear with the experience of the El Salvador pilgrimage. Without this group we would not have packed boxes of food or prepared for other needs of poor families living in downtown Los Angeles and the Cathedral parish. We would not have planned to walk from midnight to 4 a.m. before Christmas to provide clothing and greetings to those living on the streets of LA.

Our journey continues.

Louise Lynch

I still have a very real sensation of the feelings of the Salvadorans we met, as if the martyrs of the years of horror in El Salvador are still alive: Bishop Romero, Fr. Rutilio Grande, the four women missionaries, the Jesuit priests and the two women who were killed with them, and their own relatives who were murdered trying to escape to safer places. In each case, when the people we visited spoke of these martyrs it was as if, for them, these people had not died!

The young nun in the chapel where Romero was slain expressed it aloud. She said, "But Bishop Romero said, 'Do not mourn. I will not die, because I do not believe in death.'" And they believed him! It was a sensation that has stayed with me.

John Bostick

2012 began as a period of transition in my faith journey as I approached full-time retirement. It had been 8 years since I had enrolled in *JustFaith*, and I felt the need to reinvigorate my spirit and give God a chance to show me new ways to continue my faith journey.

As soon as I met some of our group at the airport, I knew I was among friends and it would be a special experience. By the time we returned, I had received all I desired and more.

Every day provided multiple highlights and memories:

- Meeting lay Missioners who were caring, dedicated and fun.
- Being with Salvadoran community members who were open, welcoming, and a constant inspiration.

- Learning about Oscar Romero's dedication to the poor.
- Standing where Romero stood when he faced his assassin!
- Celebrating Mass at the Archbishop's crypt and where the Maryknoll Sisters and Missioners were killed, and finding their continuing legacy in both places.
- Discussing with priests the similarities and differences with dioceses in the U.S. was both enlightening and surprising.
- Witnessing the spirit and courage of the laity of El Salvador, a true force for justice.

The Missioners and the Salvadoran communities we visited made a positive difference in my outlook and my life.

Kathleen Venne

I had never been to El Salvador and had no idea what to expect except "lots of rain." I knew no one else going, but during the trip I found a great bond with *JustFaith* graduates from all over the United States.

I was especially interested in the clinics, and at 67 years old, realize what a difference it makes to be able have access to medical help.

The guides on our trip were the best and were very familiar with the culture and the language. I am regularly in touch with the people from the trip and am looking forward to working on a new project.

Dagma Abbott

It was a profound experience for me, and sharing it with other *JustFaithers* made it more meaningful. Our meetings in El Salvador were in depth and meaningful, and we learned so much from each other's experiences.

Being in the place where so many people gave their lives fighting for social justice, peace and love was profound. Meeting the Missioners who work with such dedication and love was inspiring. And, being able to share food and prayer with those who struggle to have a dignified life is something I always will carry with me.

Andrea Voss

I am still too overwhelmed to totally understand and share my feelings about this experience. It was wonderful beyond expectation: life-changing and heart-opening.

I fell in love that first day as I watched the mist roll in over the cloud forest of our retreat

center and thanked God for the incredible beauty I was witnessing.

I expected the Missioners to be serious, quiet and maybe a bit pious, but no, what personality, vitality, wit, and charm each had! The two marvelous traits they all shared was their graciousness to us pilgrims and the love, care, and respect they offered the people of El Salvador.

Seeing the struggles of the people first-hand helps me better understand the option for the poor [Catholic social teaching]. We met many poor during our stay, but Luis stays in my heart. He is about to start high school next year if his family can find enough money to pay for school supplies and bus fare and to get the operation needed to correct his limp. What an asset he will be to the future of El Salvador!

In only ten days I fell in love with El Salvador: the land, the people, the church, the Missioners.

Jean Menton

Normally, I am not much of a traveler, so when I responded with interest to the GradNet announcement of a trip to El Salvador with the Maryknoll Lay Missioners, my husband was very surprised.

The trip far exceeded any expectations! We were guided through the pilgrimage by four Maryknoll Lay Missioners who patiently answered our endless questions about El Salvador, their call to mission work, and their present mission. It was also very evident how the people responded with respect and affection.

Overwhelmingly, we were greeted with warmth and hospitality by the Salvadoran people we visited. That was very humbling to me, knowing that our country had poured millions of dollars into the civil war in El Salvador during the 1990's, causing so much pain and suffering to the poor. Yet, among the continued poverty and ongoing task of healing, there was a feeling of hope evident among the people.

We also had the blessing of walking on the holy ground of the martyrs of El Salvador. We visited the sites where they lived and were assassinated; and, we heard powerful stories from people who knew them!

It was a prayerful, informative and transformative experience. *✠*



Making Room At The Table

by **Eric Bond**
Managing Editor, Bread for the World

Members of Bread for the World are preparing for their boldest effort to date – petitioning the president of the United States to unite the nation around a plan to end hunger and poverty.

Jeanette Salguero is the co-pastor of the Lamb's Church on New York's Lower East Side where she and her husband, Gabriel, minister to a flock with diverse educational, economic, and linguistic backgrounds. Often, the Sunday service is simultaneously shared in English, Spanish, and Mandarin. But the church is united around the idea that all people deserve a place at the table.

"The poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger cannot remain on the outskirts of our agenda," says Jeanette.

Jeanette knows something about how it feels to be on the outskirts. As a child growing up in Brooklyn, she lived in a family in which it was not always easy to put food on the table. Her father had moved the family to New York after a fire destroyed the Puerto Rican sugar cane plantation where he worked. With only a third-grade education, Jeanette's father found it difficult to find work that paid enough to support his family.

"The food staple was white rice and fried eggs," Jeanette recalls.

But no matter how little or how much they had, like other families across the world, Jeanette's family gathered around the kitchen table at least once a day to share their food, their laughter, their lives.

The family table is an important icon. Whether eating meals, playing a game, or discussing the household budget, families regularly gather at the table. Communion around a table exists outside of the family as well. Often, when people find fellowship, unity, or accord, it is around a dinner table, a coffee table, a negotiating table.

Bread for the World, a Christian anti-hunger nonprofit, began around a table in the basement of a different church on New York's Lower East

Side nearly 40 years ago. That gathering took to heart Jesus' message of abundance and sharing – exemplified in the story of the loaves and fishes.

In scripture, tables play a functional and metaphoric role in important events. Early in Jesus' ministry, he overturns tables being used unrighteously in the temple. Rather than uniting people in faith, those tables were being used to enrich a few.

Jesus met with his disciples around tables to share his teachings and fellowship. As passionately illustrated by Leonardo da Vinci, Jesus gathered his disciples to the table for a last supper – to gather strength and provide guidance before his fateful journey to Gethsemane. The communion of that event is repeated in churches throughout the world each week, inviting all to join Jesus at the altar – a table.

In the Old Testament, Isaiah reminds us that God's table is abundant for all people, "a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow...."

That vision of God's bounty informs the advocacy work of Bread for the World. We know that there is more than enough food for everyone in the world. Yet one in six Americans does not have enough to eat. More than 900 million people around the world struggle with hunger on a daily basis.

Bread for the World asks why so many people go hungry when others have more than enough. Local churches and community pantries try to deliver food to the tables of our most vulnerable neighbors. But those efforts combined only comprise 5 percent of the expenditures on anti-hunger programs here in the United States. The federal government provides the rest.



Reverend Jeanette Salguero sings during a Bread Sunday service at the Lamb's Church. As a child, Reverend Salguero was a recipient of the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and other government nutrition programs. Access to food and education helped Jeanette reach her potential as an adult.

Photo by Laura Elizabeth Pohl/Bread for the World.

During his campaign for re-election, President Barack Obama acknowledged this reality in a video statement to the Circle of Protection, a group of 65 national Christian leaders united in safeguarding the needs of hungry and poor people. "My faith teaches me that poverty is a moral issue," said the President. "When I hear the story of a single mom struggling to put food on the table or a child born into poverty or a dad who's gone months without a paycheck, I cannot sit idly by – not as a person and certainly not as a President." (Governor Mitt Romney submitted a similar video statement.)

Those words hearten members of Bread for the World as they prepare for their boldest effort to date. They feel that the President of the United States can and should use his White House pulpit to unite the nation around ending hunger and poverty. Thus, for the first time, Bread for the World's central advocacy tool, the Offering of Letters, will petition the President – in addition to soliciting letters to members of Congress.

Bread for the World members are asking President Obama to set a goal and work with Congress on a plan to end hunger.

As emphasized in Bread for the World Institute's 2013 Hunger Report, worldwide hunger and poverty have decreased by nearly half since 1990, due in large measure to efforts by the community of nations to meet the Millennium Development Goals. This fact illustrates the importance of goals and plans – complete with timetables and benchmarks.

To spur greater change around hunger, Bread for the World's 2013 Offering of Letters, "A Place at the Table," will launch on March 1, coinciding with the release of a major documentary of the same name by Participant Media and Magnolia Pictures.

The film emphasizes the hunger, stress, and complications in the lives of many Americans for whom putting food on the table is a daily struggle. Anti-hunger advocates hope that the film will raise awareness and build support for a united plan.

"Budgets are moral documents," says Jeanette Salguero, "and the President of the United States needs to get consensus around this issue and focus on the hungry, the stranger, the widow, and other individuals who are marginalized."

Members of Bread for the World encourage faithful people to gather around a table near them to sign a petition to the President and write letters to Congress telling them to make room at the table for all people.

To learn more about Bread for the World's 2013 Offering of Letters, "A Place at the Table," visit www.bread.org.

On the Bread site, you can sign a petition to the president, order an Offering of Letters kit, download resources, and watch videos about hunger, poverty, and hope. Look for the film *A Place at the Table* in theaters in March. Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. *AF*

The Road I Go?

El Salvador, the Savior's land

The invitation beckoned

How could I say, "no"?

Join pilgrims on a journey.

Restful garden, holy ground, field of sorrow.

Voices loud and clear, despite death's final knell.

Missing but not forgotten.

The truth, now mine to tell.

Martyrs rising from the ashes,

Their stories still unfold.

the church, Oh God, The Church!

Its future, what does it hold?

The faces never fading, the haunting poor live on.

The widow of the Gospel, she poured a glass of Coke.

She gifted me her mite,

It was her gift from God.

Hope arises from the ashes

Born anew along the way.

Life-giving beans and corn

The old woman smiled this day!

The future from the past

Long-forgotten words now sung

Will each child get to school?

Gun or gospel; one's fate, one's tool.

God called them each by name

He called me by my name.

He called us to be one.

Each for the other; all for the Son.

God's option for the poor

Our salvation intertwined

Hold on! Do I understand?

I must choose the road I go.

Patty Freeburg

JFM graduate participant in
Voices Across Borders delegation to El Salvador



“Oh, when will they ever learn...”

An opinion by Sr. Anne-Louise Nadeau,
SNDdeN, Program Director of Pax Christi USA

These are the haunting and plaintive lines from the 1955 Pete Seeger song “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” that have been a recurring loop in my mind since the December 14, 2012, massacre in Newtown, Connecticut.

On that day those who experienced and heard of this event concluded that madness had reared its evil and ugly head. In a country that boasts of a foundational principle of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” there also exists a madness where we choose to sacrifice our children, our sisters, our brothers, our mothers and fathers instead of placing limits on our right to bear arms. When will we awaken from this madness, this sickness that feeds our desire to own any type of weapon – without limit or restraint of any kind – over the safety and well-being of our children and of one another?

The topic at hand is not whether the Constitution gives us the right as citizens to bear arms. The issue is whether we as a society value each other enough to place common sense, reasonable restrictions on that right. Common sense and reason are in short supply when one examines the laws in our country related to gun purchases and gun ownership. To push for increasingly relaxed restrictions on gun ownership, gun sales, the kinds of weapons available for purchase, and background checks to the point where such restrictions have no power to keep guns from landing in the hands of the mentally ill, emotionally unstable, developmentally immature, or blatantly criminal is simply irresponsible and ignorant. Such efforts to loosen restrictions at every opportunity – and the groups who encourage such efforts – are, in fact, complicit in the very violence that we see in this most recent tragedy in Connecticut.

What further madness is it going to take to initiate a national conversation on gun violence so that we might break our nation’s denial on the need for reasonable, common sense gun legislation AND to demand that our elected officials pass laws that will regulate a radical gun lobby that is out of control?

The ripple effect of this tragedy has been felt around the globe. There have been outpourings of prayers, sympathy and solidarity from people in populated and remote parts of the world.

Yet, we have to face the fact that our nation’s obsession with weapons has far extended beyond our borders. In a recent reflection by Bill Quigley entitled “Remember the Children” (posted on the Pax Christi USA website on Dec. 18, 2012), he invites us to remember the 168 children who have been killed by U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan since 2006, the 231 children killed in

Afghanistan the first six months of this year, the 921 killed by U.S. air strikes against insurgents in Iraq, as well as the additional 400 children in the U.S. under the age of 15 who die from gunshot wounds each year. None of these numbers reflect the wounded, paralyzed or those traumatized by the senseless violence of a nation that makes the purchase of a lethal weapon as easy as that of a CD.

When will the madness cease? When is enough, enough? Are we fed up yet with the violence we see and experience in our neighborhoods, schools, movie theaters, college campuses, parking lots, shopping malls and the like? Are we appalled by the suggestion that we need gun-toting security guards in all of schools?

Does the Spirit of Goodness rise up within you passionately enough to break the silence of a nation gone numb to mourning?

I challenge the members of Pax Christi and JustFaith Ministries to put our commitment to justice at the forefront at this moment in our history. We need comprehensive gun reform legislation which includes restriction of gun sales

Does the Spirit of Goodness rise up within you passionately enough to break the silence of a nation gone numb to mourning?



Syrian refugee children in Amman, Jordan.

and a ban on all assault weapons, along with comprehensive background checks. We also must be engaged in a serious national dialogue about our use of weapons on other nations. The U.S. is selling arms and using technology that allows this country to wage war by remote control, and drone warfare disproportionately kills women and children.

We will be held accountable for our time in history and what we did to bring about the kingdom here on earth. We will also be held accountable if we do nothing!

Is this the tipping point? Pax Christi USA believes it is. This is the time when we inundate our elected officials with letters, visits and phone calls demanding that they take seriously their obligation to keep people safe and that they pass common sense gun legislation – even at the risk of losing their financial backing from the most powerful gun lobby.

It is not only the politicians that need to be challenged, but also ourselves. There are connections that need to be made when a violent event in a local community touches the most human parts of us, connections that point to an attitude that we have grown indifferent to. Children are allowed to watch cartoons where violence is the way the main characters become heroes. Our children buy and play video games with titles that leave no question as to the violent content. There are current movies, song lyrics and TV programming that glorify new ways of killing people. And, there is a deafening silence from the public as to how all of this is affecting all of us.

In an environment where violence exists, it breeds fear and fear cripples and paralyzes. Fear becomes an obstacle to full human growth as well as a block to feelings and learning. This culture of fear and violence is leaving all of us stunted and unable to establish genuine relationships and, consequently, our care for one another is not a priority.

If there was ever a time to do some serious reflection and dialogue about the violent culture in which we live, the time is now.

If there was ever a time to commit ourselves to non-violence and the struggle to remain steadfast in that resolve, the time is now.

“Oh, when will we ever learn...?”

Perhaps NOW *JF*

by Marie Dennis,
Co-president Pax Christi International

On Hope and Nonviolence

Two powerful explosives detonated, killing dozens and wounding many more, just as the students were beginning their exams at the University of Aleppo. Bread, a staple of the Syrian diet, had been scarce for weeks, bakeries and breadlines had been bombed, and the fighting seemed incessant, but they were sitting for exams nonetheless – talk about hope!

The Syrian situation is heartbreaking. In the cold weather, people had cut down trees from public gardens for heat and nearly 40,000 were facing the winter in tents. A friend of Pax Christi International from Aleppo recently described his added heartbreak at seeing the ancient city of Aleppo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, destroyed.

At the same time, he continued, all the world hears from Syria is the bad news. No one is talking about the courageous civilians who risk their lives to promote equality and freedom or to organize life in afflicted neighborhoods. No one is noticing those who are still writing about freedom and dignity in newspapers published in spite of great danger. No one will tell you that young Syrian activists who were forced to flee the country have nine radio stations broadcasting over the internet, including one promoting nonviolent tactics. Many Syrians, he said, feel abandoned by the world.

But what can we do, we who are heartbroken by the violence and inspired by the courage? That is the question faced often by Pax Christi International. How can we respond to situations of horrific violence or egregious human rights violations and remain committed to nonviolence?

Answers are not always obvious, and humility is essential. We can follow the lead of those who are most affected by the violence; be present in solidarity to those in danger; support existing nonviolent actions for peace. But we cannot not respond in violence. *JustFaith* Ministries graduates know that!

Despite its effective use in many contexts, the nonviolence tradition is woefully underdeveloped, both theologically and pragmatically, especially at an international level. We have the beginnings of theological thought – nonviolence is rooted in the value of every human life and in respect for creation; it is infused with hope; and, it is forged in the shadow of the cross. But politically and strategically there is much work needed to develop the capacity to respond nonviolently to mega-violence.

From the beginning of the Arab Awakening, Pax Christi – on the ground in the region – paid close attention to possibilities for nonviolent action in support of human rights, social justice and liberation. We wrote letters to the UN and others calling for the rejection of violence and prioritization of diplomacy. We issued public statements criticizing the repression of peaceful protests and the targeting of civilian communities. We urged the international community to send humanitarian aid through local organizations. And we launched a Lenten solidarity campaign of prayer and fasting to reassure the Syrian people that they are not alone.

But much more nonviolent action will be needed. Join us as we discern next steps on this challenging journey (www.paxchristi.net).

For Lent, For Life: CRS Rice Bowl

by CRS Staff

For many parishes and faith communities around the country, Operation Rice Bowl has been a program synonymous with the season of Lent. CRS Rice Bowl began under the name "Operation Rice Bowl" in the diocese of Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 1975 as an ecumenical response to the drought in the African Sahel region.

In 1976, the U.S. Catholic Bishops adopted Operation Rice Bowl as a national program of preparation for the 41st International Eucharistic Congress. In 1977, Operation Rice Bowl became the official Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services. This year, Catholic Relief Services is excited to announce that the program has been renamed CRS Rice Bowl and redesigned with new, exciting resources to bring Lenten spirituality to life for families, individuals, parishes, and schools.

Some of the features of this Lenten program that have attracted dioceses, parishes and families over the years are still the core elements of the program. CRS Rice Bowl still selects a country of focus for each week of Lent and also a U.S. diocese to highlight the work of the Catholic Church to address hunger in the local community, as well as communities overseas. CRS Rice Bowl will feature the following countries during Lent 2013: Burkina Faso, East Timor, Lesotho, Dominican Republic, and Pakistan. Additionally, the Diocese of Oakland will be featured to showcase the efforts of every diocese across the country.

CRS Rice Bowl will continue to teach participants about:

- Agriculture projects helping farmers improve harvests;
- Water and sanitation projects that bring clean water to communities;
- Microfinance projects expanding and supporting small businesses;
- Mother and child health projects that offer health and nutrition services; and
- Education projects providing resources and training leading to self-sufficiency.

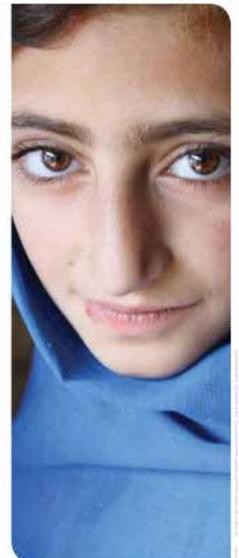
To amplify the global solidarity efforts of dioceses across the country, CRS Rice Bowl supports hunger and poverty alleviation efforts in communities around the world, but also encourages support of these very same efforts in the local community. CRS Rice Bowl's unique structure directs seventy-five percent of the funds to support CRS' programs around the world. The other twenty-five percent of the funds remain in the local diocese to support local programs, like the Delta Community Food Pantry in the Diocese of Oakland in California. If you would like to learn how the local twenty-five percent is used in your diocese, you can connect with your CRS Diocesan Director for this information.

One of the features of CRS Rice Bowl is the new website, crsricebowl.org. When you visit this

website you can activate your CRS Rice Bowl. By activating your rice bowl, your parish will appear on the CRS Rice Bowl participation map. The map is an interactive way to view all the parishes participating in CRS Rice Bowl across the United States. You will find a "participate" section on the website. In this section, you will find reflections for prayer, recipes from each featured country that you can enjoy while abstaining from meat, and other activities for the family. You also will find a calendar for daily reflections for the entire Lenten season.

If you are looking for materials in Spanish for your parish or community, please visit crsplatodearroz.org to access many of the same materials in Spanish.

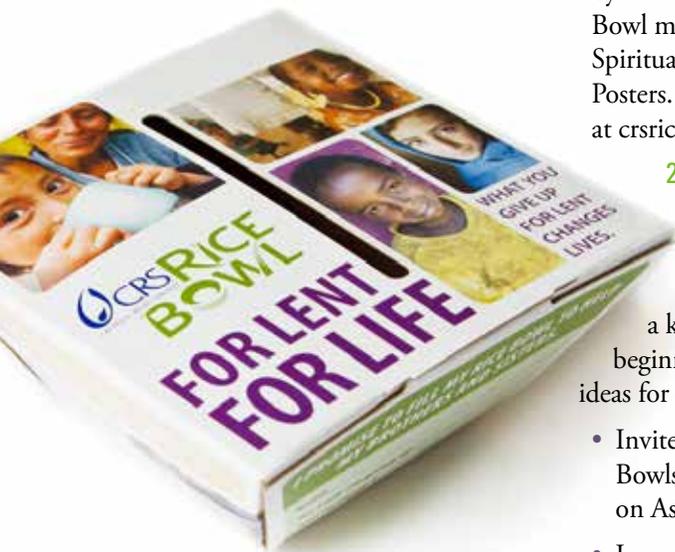
This year, the theme for CRS Rice Bowl is "For Lent, For Life." This simple theme reminds us that the things we give up or the practices we adopt during Lent can contribute to and change lives. *✠*



FOR LENT FOR LIFE

WHAT YOU
GIVE UP
FOR LENT
CHANGES
LIVES.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN CRS RICE BOWL



As you may know, Lent began on February 13, 2013. We still encourage you to participate in CRS Rice Bowl as a way to connect with our sisters and brothers around the world. Here are some basic steps for participating parishes.

1. ORDER MATERIALS

Check with your parish or school and tell them that you want CRS Rice Bowl to be a part of your parish community's Lenten observances. Parishes and schools may order CRS Rice Bowl materials free of charge online at crsricebowl.org or by calling 1-800-222-0025. CRS Rice Bowl materials include: Rice Bowls and Spiritual Guides, Educator's Guide and Posters. You will also find other resources at crsricebowl.org.

2. HOLD A KICK-OFF EVENT

Ensure that every family or individual receives a CRS Rice Bowl by distributing them at a kick-off event (especially for the beginning of Lent). Here are some ideas for distributing CRS Rice Bowls:

- Invite volunteers to distribute CRS Rice Bowls as people leave Mass (especially on Ash Wednesday).
- Leave a supply of CRS Rice Bowls out during the first few weeks of Lent so that families can pick them up if they did not receive one on Ash Wednesday.
- For schools, hold a school-wide assembly or prayer service and give a CRS Rice Bowl to each student, or distribute the CRS Rice Bowls through your weekly communication to families.
- If you run out of CRS Rice Bowls, order more by calling 1-800-222-002 or online at crsricebowl.org.

3. EXPLAIN THE CONNECTION WITH CRS RICE BOWL

- The best way to encourage parishioners to use CRS Rice Bowl during Lent is to tell them how their family will benefit from, and make a difference through, their participation.
- Explain that CRS Rice Bowl provides a fun and compelling way for them to experience Lent through the traditional practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving – while making a real difference for the poor in their own community and around the world.

4. ORGANIZE LENTEN ACTIVITIES IN YOUR PARISH

- Prepare one or more of the simple meal recipes and invite participants to share a meal as a community. Invite people to make a free will offering to CRS Rice Bowl when attending the meal.
- Use the CRS Rice Bowl Prayer Service found at crsricebowl.org with small faith sharing groups.

5. COLLECT CRS RICE BOWLS AND THANK PARTICIPANTS

- At the end of Lent, make announcements and place information in your parish bulletin to inform participants when and where to turn in their Rice Bowl donations.
- Share with your parish the results of their participation in CRS Rice Bowl. Place an announcement in your bulletin or newsletter, and list the total number of families participating and the total amount collected.

2013 Mission Immersions For JFM Grads

Friends Across Borders, the outreach program of Maryknoll Lay Missioners, together with JF grads Mark and Claudia Brown, are working on three mission immersion trips for *JustFaith* grads for 2013.

The three trips are ...

1. El Salvador, August 2-11 (\$950 plus airfare)
2. Cambodia, August 10-21 (\$1850 plus airfare)
3. Kenya, September 6-23 (\$2725 plus airfare)

During these immersions, participants will...

- Extend their *JustFaith* experience!
- Meet incredible people working to overcome poverty and build a better life for themselves and their families.
- Enjoy art, music, dance, stories and rituals of the hosting country.
- Gain a new perspective into their own life as they touch and are touched by the lives of people from another culture.
- Experience hospitality and warmth in ways perhaps never experienced before.
- Discover new avenues for dedicating one's gifts and talents in order to build a more just and peaceful world.

- Expand their world vision and understanding of mission.

All of the Friends Across Borders immersion trips call you to experience the presence of God in a sacred culture with graced people.

To learn more about each of these trips, please:

e-mail JF grads Mark and Claudia Brown (mcjdtkmbrown@hotmail.com),

or visit the Friends Across Borders web page for JFM grads at www.friendsacrossborders.org/JustFaith_Ministries_Immersion.html



CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Poverty Awareness

www.usccb.org/cchd

by **Dylan Corbett**,
Mission Identity Outreach Manager

The ancient Romans consecrated each New Year to the god Janus, customarily depicted with the image of a double-head looking forward and backward to past and future. The name January still recalls this past custom. January is not simply the beginning of a New Year, but is also **Poverty Awareness Month**, meant to stimulate renewed reflection on the realities of poverty in the United States and the demands that faith places on us as we confront its stark reality.

Concepts of past and future and of sight are deeply woven into the fabric of Christian belief and practice. Vision is a theme powerfully and artfully recurrent in the Gospel of Luke, and Luke is known as the evangelist of the poor. He writes of miracles of restored vision, sight as a cure for hypocrisy, seeing the Kingdom, and shepherds who hurry to see the Christmas miracle. He also writes of Zacchaeus, who having desired to see Jesus, restores fourfold to the poor from whom he has stolen.

In our media-saturated experience today, faith serves as an elixir for sight, offering a purifying corrective to the mixed currents of thought and action that impinge on our consciousness and how we view the world and our relationship to it. This intuition is at the heart of the Holy Father's recent proclamation of the Year of Faith. Since one can run the risk of a too easy familiarity with faith's content, including the Church's social doctrine, it's possible to become numb to its real demands here and now. As Pope Benedict XVI states in the apostolic letter inaugurating the Year of Faith, "The content to be believed is not sufficient unless the heart, the authentic sacred space within the person, is opened by grace that allows the eyes to see below the surface...."

The realities of poverty are stark. Census data indicate that 9.5 million families in the U.S. live in poverty. 20.4 million persons – 44% of all those in poverty – live in deep poverty, less than 50% of the poverty line. The younger one is, the more likely that person is to live in poverty; 6 million children under 6 experience poverty.

Poverty and joblessness go hand in hand. For every available job today, there are more than three jobseekers. When we add the underemployed, that number reaches nearly 6 jobseekers. 23 million persons continue to be without a job or underemployed, which is an effective unemployment rate of 14%.

To help Catholics penetrate these hard facts with the vision of faith, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), through the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development (JPHD), is underscoring the painful consequences of poverty and working to stimulate the search for solutions supplied by the rich tapestry of Catholic social teaching. The bishops' efforts in promoting poverty awareness, organizing low-income communities and advocating for the needs of the vulnerable are grounded in the Catholic faith tradition and stand at the service of the common good.

January saw the unveiling of **PobrezaUSA.org**, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development's (CCHD) Spanish language website, which provides education for economic justice and conduits for action. Like the English site, **PovertyUSA.org**, it offers an interactive map that details national and local poverty statistics as well as stories of hope featuring the efforts of self-help groups working with the assistance of CCHD grants. Poverty USA also takes full advantage of social media tools, including Facebook and Twitter, to connect people in the pews, CCHD grantees, pastors and others.

Given record unemployment, disorganized labor, income inequality and historic levels of poverty, CCHD has also unveiled its Strategic National

Grant Program, designed to provide significant funding to those efforts led by low-income persons and that focus on particular situations or issues where broader, strategic, innovative and focused action is needed. Because of the debilitating effect that the ongoing economic crisis continues to have on families, these grants will focus especially on the crucial links connecting family life and poverty. The downward pressures on families and workers today make the work of CCHD in catalyzing the organization of low-income communities as essential as ever.

With increased intensity, JPHD continues its mandate to advance the social mission of the Church through policy development and advocacy at the federal level. The crossroads at which we stand as a country has been revealed in a dramatic way by the latest economic recession and made urgent by the decisions we face as we determine our fiscal priorities. The bishops stand in solidarity with those most vulnerable to our country's economic insecurity, especially through initiatives like the Circle of Protection. The USCCB is a founding member of the Circle of Protection, which brings together a diverse group of faith constituencies to advance moral conscience in our nation's budgetary decisions, articulating in unison a common ethical imperative to protect the weakest among us.



The ongoing economic crisis has shed light on the many injustices on which our economy has long been predicated. At the beginning of each year, the Pope announces his Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace. In this year's message, he notes that "it is now recognized that a new model of development is needed, as well as a new approach to the economy." As we begin the New Year meditating on the demands of faith, fixing our eyes on the realities of poverty around us and working together, may we make concrete the Pope's desire for "sustainable development in solidarity with God as the ultimate point of reference."

To learn more about poverty in the United States, what the Catholic faith teaches and how to get engaged, visit PovertyUSA.org and PobrezaUSA.org, like us on Facebook (facebook.com/PovertyUSA) and follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/EndPovertyUSA). 

Aiming for Miracles

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED OUR WORK IN 2012.

We can't do what we do without you – half of our resources come from graduates of our programs! If you've not had an opportunity to contribute and would like to support our ministry, please go to www.justfaith.org/donate/

"I give to JustFaith Ministries because it not only aims at the miraculous – the conversion of hearts and minds – but it has proven its ability to achieve this end. There is no more central Gospel task than this, and there is no ministry better equipped to carry it out."

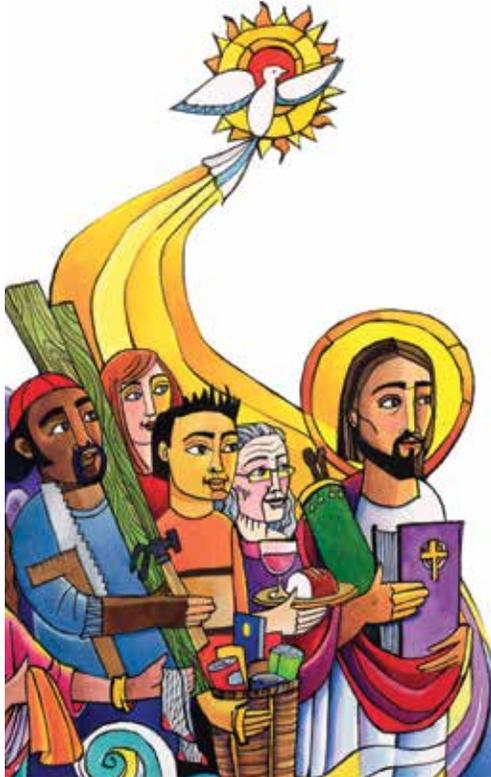
—David Golemboski, Washington D.C.

"Things must change, and things won't change until people change, and people won't change until there is change of heart. That is what JustFaith Ministries is offering and why so many of us are so excited and passionate about JustFaith. Because for us, JustFaith has been the best vehicle of transformation of heart we have experienced, period."

—Bill Brennan, Seattle

GoodNewsPeople

Bringing hope in hard times.



A journey to deepen faith, strengthen the bonds of community, and live out the gospel call to be good news people.

ANNOUNCING: A new program from JustFaith Ministries. The GoodNewsPeople Program!

JustFaith Ministries is pleased to announce the launch of a new program for parishes interested in empowering the Gospel commitment to be "Good News People." In the fall of 2013, the GoodNewsPeople Program will go live.

This new program is a dynamic capacity- and momentum-building program to engage entire parish communities. It is a 14-session program (7 sessions in the fall and 7 sessions in the spring, 1-½ hrs. each), incorporating prayer, scripture, reflection, catechism, and sharing.

The GoodNewsPeople program engages the head and heart along with the hands and feet, as it seeks to build the bonds of community, makes essential connections between scripture and tradition, fosters a deeper understanding of faith and the demands of discipleship, and leads to vibrant parishes alive in Christ and in mission to the world. GoodNewsPeople offers a unique way to promote the New Evangelization called for by Pope Benedict XVI.

The Program Includes:

- Promotional Strategies and Planning Materials
- Training Resources and Leader Guides
- A companion DVD produced by an award-winning film maker
- Participant Reader and Journal
- A specially commissioned song for use at liturgies and program sessions
- Ongoing staff support

Deeper Faith + Love in Action = Good News!

Encourage your parish to become one of the first "Good News" parishes in the country.

For more information, please go to: www.GoodNewsPeople-jfm.org

GoodNewsPeople groups, St. William Church, Louisville, KY



IMPACT.

It's what every good nonprofit organization strives for.

IMPACT.

What do you hope to heal and change in this world?

For people of Christian faith, we have a kind of rudder that steers our vision and sense of impact: it's called the Reign of God. It is a rich image and invites us to apply our hearts and minds, informed by our faith, to paint the picture of what the world might look like if God's presence was fully embraced.

In my own appropriation of the image of the Reign of God, I think of it as a "world around" and a "world within." The Reign of God must necessarily include a "world around" that has enough food, enough housing, enough education, enough healthcare so that every human being can live a full and dignified life. This "world around" has implications for the behavior of every person, every family, every neighborhood, every political and economic system, indeed every human institution. The Reign of God means that the world will be a good place for all people.

But that is not all. The Reign of God also speaks to a "world within." It means that people are different, not just on the outside, but starting from the inside. In other words,

we will make sure that everyone has enough to eat, not just because we pass some set of laws mandating that, but because we genuinely desire the good of everyone. The Reign of God means we will be transformed from private interest to the common good, from self-preoccupation to the nurture of community, from distraction to compassion, from fear to love. We will become a people who are good news to the world. We will change the "world around" because God has made new the "world within."

The Reign of God means that the world will be a good place for all people.

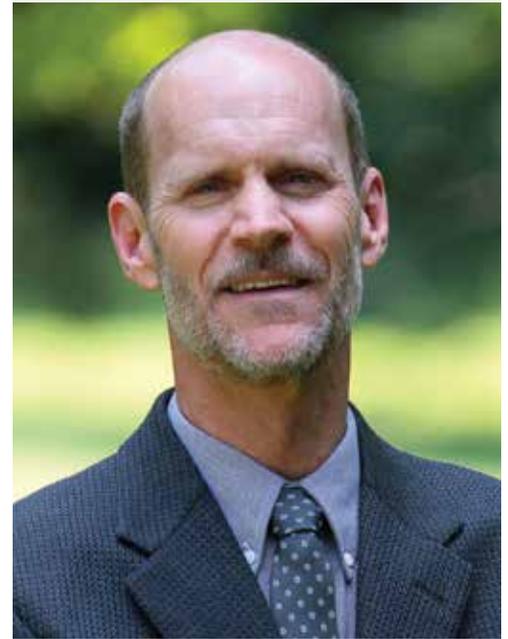
I can't help but think of the eight people who shared their stories about El Salvador in our cover article. I am repeatedly struck by how our graduates frequently make choices to put themselves in new and sometimes difficult places both because they care (the "world within")

and because they want to be informed and to be helpful with what might need to be healed (the "world without").

JustFaith Ministries, like all human enterprises, has only one small part to play in this great work called the Reign of God. Our work is to speak a Gospel vision of

Notes

From Jack



compassion, invite people to this vision, and encourage them to do the part that God has placed on their hearts.

The impact we seek is changed people. The impact we seek is changed churches. And, sooner or later, the impact we seek is all the good that changed people do in the world – whether it's across the street, across town, or across the ocean.

Impact.

It's what, emboldened by faith, we live for.

Jack



JustFaith Ministries provides an email network called **GradNet** to allow *JustFaith Ministries* graduates to stay connected.

To join, send an email to GradNet@justfaith.org

Be sure to give your name, the program in which you participated, the year you graduated and the parish where you completed a *JustFaith Ministries* program.

If you have comments, ideas or suggestions for an article, or if you would like to share digital pictures of *JustFaith Ministries* groups in action, please contact: david@justfaith.org

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OUR MISSION

JustFaith Ministries forms, informs and transforms people of faith by offering programs and resources that sustain them in their compassionate commitment to build a more just and peaceful world.

Graphic Design: PLOW Studio, Louisville, KY

JustFaith
Purpose. From A New Perspective.

**JustFaith Catholic
Repackaged and Renewed**

You've Told Us And We've Listened!

Each year, the staff at JustFaith Ministries takes your feedback to heart and responds with updates and revisions to our programs. We are now tackling the single most important piece of feedback we've heard about the JustFaith Catholic program over the years – that the most common and most difficult obstacle to getting JustFaith started in a parish is the challenge of recruiting people for a thirty-week program!

Beginning in August 2013, JustFaith Catholic will be more flexible in its implementation and will be able to be offered in as little as 24 weeks. We're doing some fine-tuning and reformatting that will help the program fit better into people's busy lives and into a parish's schedule, without losing the rich content, impactful journey, and community building that are at the heart of the program.

Key points about the JustFaith Catholic repackaging:



The program will remain the intensive program you know and love. The topics will still explore how poverty, discipleship, and social mission integrate with our lives and spirituality.



The 24 weeks are broken into four phases of six sessions each. The group can choose to take a small break in between each phase. These breaks are designed to allow participants to explore topics on their own or to give them time to process their experience.



The program will still contain opening and commissioning retreats and four immersion experiences.



The program can now start and end at any time of the year.

What about JustFaith for the broader Christian community?

JustFaith (ecumenical) will remain in the 30-week format for now. We'll be evaluating the success of the repackaged JustFaith Catholic program to

determine how to adapt the JustFaith program. This ecumenical program will remain ideal for groups with members from different Christian faith traditions.