

LA SAGRADA FAMILIA

Mission Newsletter

MISSION 19

April

MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH

"Most of us were taught that a "true" story is re-telling of historical facts. Believing in a story means trusting that it actually happened in the past. However, biblical truth is about so much more than historical facts. A story's most important truth lies in as much in its future as in its past.

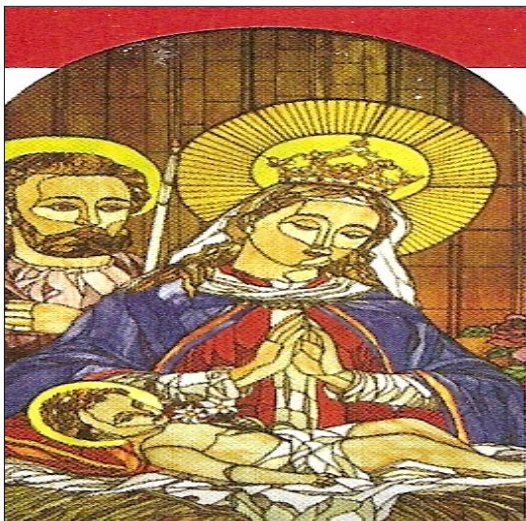
We find the truth of a story by living out what the story calls us to do. We go from a focus in historicity to a clear focus on mission. The Scriptures are full of stories that call us to live more deeply in the love of God. Whether they are parables, myths, histories or poems, these stories all reveal a divine way of life that we are called to embody.

The future of a story is the mission it calls us toward. It is in living our mission that we fully know the truth of the Gospel."

——David Turnbloom, Professor of theology,

**May I come to see my
life as a quiet sacra-
ment of service which
awakens around me a
rhythm where doubt
gives way to the grace
of wonder, where
what is awkward and
strained can find ele-
gance, where crippled
hope can find wings,
and where torment
enter at last into the
grace of serenity"**

**Diane Ortiz, Ursuline mis-
sionary**



The Holy Family La Sagrada Familia

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MISSION 19 - JANUARY — 2026

ONE IN CHRIST—UNITED IN MISSION

On October 18, 2026, Catholics around the world will mark an historic milestone : the 100th anniversary of World Mission Sunday, the Church's annual day of prayer, reflection, and solidarity with the young and growing churches in mission territories.

Instituted in 1926, World Mission Sunday has for a full century, reminded the People of God that the Church is missionary by her very nature...and that the task of evangelization belongs to all the baptized. This centenary celebration invites the entire Church to pause, give thanks, and renew the commitment to Christ's mandate to *"go and make disciples of all nations."*

In his message for this special World Mission Sunday, Pope Leo XIV, the first pope to have served as a missionary during most of his priestly ministry, offers a profound meditation on unity, mission, and love under the theme *"One in Christ, united in mission."* Writing as a pastor and as one who spent most of his priesthood as a missionary, the Holy Father reminds us that mission does not begin with strategies or programs, but with communion...our living union with Christ and with one another. From that communion flows the Church's capacity to proclaim the Gospel with credibility and joy.

This message is addressed not to a select group, but to every member of the Church. Whether priest, religious, parent, young person, catechist, benefactor, volunteer or prayerful supporter of the missions, each of us shares...by virtue of our baptism...in the Church's missionary mandate. World Mission Sunday is a privileged moment to rediscover that call, to pray for missionaries serving ad gentes [], and to support, in concrete ways, the proclamation of God's faithful love to the poorest and most vulnerable.

As we prepare to celebrate one hundred years of World Mission Sunday, this October 18, may Pope Leo XIV's message inspire renewed participation in the Church's universal mission...so that...united in Christ. We may continue to bring the light of the Gospel to every corner of the world. [Monseñor Roger Laundry,]National director of the Pontifical Mission Societies, USA]

MISSION 19 – HOME BUILDING



A NEW HOME



Fr. Javier reports that the mom's name is Judy and she takes care of her three grandchildren besides receiving kidney dialysis daily.

MISSION 19 EYE CLINIC



MISSION 19 EYE CLINIC



NEW HEALTH CENTER



On March 8th took place the blessing of this new health facility belonging to La Sagrada Familia Parish. The Health Center originated more than 40 years ago, and this expansion into a new space will provide greater capacity to serve the local population.

High levels of poverty hinder prevention, care, and medical treatments. The new space will expand services, including general medicine, laboratory services, dentistry, gynecology, pediat-



MISSION REFLECTIONS

this year's eyeglass mission was unique. Several of us had flown in a few days before the rest of the team and thank goodness we had as sixteen of our team members were delayed for a couple of days in Miami due to severe weather conditions throughout the country. So, Monday evening, the local doctor and her husband (Dr. Leidy and Emilio), Maya (a church employee), Dr. Slana, and I set up the clinic so that we would be ready to roll on Tuesday morning, when the first group of clients arrived.

Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, our small team of volunteers were able to serve everyone who had registered for those days. When the rest of the team arrived, along with much needed supplies, we served a total of 877 clients in the next three days. Having the whole team together also meant that we could take a break here and there and tour the community, clinic, and children's center.

As always, the kindness shown to us by community members is most rewarding. Daily, we received fruits, vegetables, and pastries from clients grateful for our work. And who can resist the mid-morning and afternoon aroma of freshly baked bread, next door to the hall, just in time for a snack.

One cannot overlook the importance of volunteers like Ramon and Cristian who were inside keeping order as clients came in. "El Joe" posted outside handling crowd control, and the two nuns, Sister Patricia and Sister Antonia keeping track of registration. Without them and the local volunteers, those first two days would have been most difficult.

Attending mass in the various communities is so inspiring! Sometimes it was in the middle of the street, and other times, under the shade of a tree. We got to see the church of San Antonio de Padua, funded by the wonderful community of St. Lucy's in Wisconsin, and the new clinic set to open in March, thanks to the dedicated work of Lion's Club International. We were also entertained by the children and youth of the community, as they hosted a talent show on Saturday evening. Talk about amazing talent!!!

On a very personal note, I am so grateful for the many birthday blessings from my fellow missionaries and my host family and [Rosario Rojas, Mission 19neighbors. All those blessings will be carried in my heart. [Rosario Rojas, Mission 19]

MISSION IMAGES



MISSION MEMORIES CONTINUED

VISION MISSION TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Sunday, January 25th was an all-nighter driving to Kenosha, meeting part of our group, and driving together to O'Hare Airport. We checked our personal bags and the second bag with supplies for the mission and went through customs, which took longer for me since I did not have the e-check for the Dominican Republic completed. The travel agent had booked the group under three bookings making it difficult for me to find out any information about my flight, seats, etc. since I was using the wrong booking number. We took off at 5:00 AM. The crew announced that due to weather conditions we would have no water when using the restrooms and no coffee. The pipes in the airplane were frozen. I ate breakfast in Miami while waiting for our connecting flight. American Airlines announced that our flight was delayed 1 1/2 hours. After several delays, our flight to the Dominican Republic was canceled. The next available flight would be two days from now on Wednesday. Our group tried to find alternative airlines and other airports to fly from with no luck. As a result, 14 of our group were stranded and tried to figure out what to do next.

After many calls to the travel agent in Kenosha, we decided to find a hotel to stay at until we could get a flight. It took many calls to find a hotel since many people were doing the same thing after their flights were canceled. I had heard that there were over 14,000 canceled flights yesterday and 11,000 today. When we were in the American baggage claim area trying to get our luggage, the staff were friendly but frustrated that they would be unable to find our luggage due to so many suitcases being lost in the storage rooms.

We got a ride to the Holiday Inn. Since the flight was canceled due to weather conditions, we were on our own for expenses. Some people had travel insurance so they may get some expenses reimbursed. We ate at the hotel, had a couple drinks, played games, etc. The one Uno game lasted about 2 hours. During the day, people walked around the area, visited the shopping center, visited restaurants, sat by the pool, read books, etc.

On Wednesday, we arrived at the Miami Airport mid-morning after an hour plus drive in the rush hour traffic. After trying to check on our luggage, we saw over an estimated 500 to 1000 bags in one area and the same in another area plus store rooms filled with luggage. Some of our group found some of their bags, some did not find theirs, and gave up after hours of effort.

American sent several texts changing our flight time and gates, but finally our plane arrived. After cleaning, we were able to load and fly to the Dominican Republic. With the delays, we knew that we would get to the airport later than scheduled. Also, we had the 3 hours bus trip to Azua. Some of our luggage was still lost. We heard that the 8 people that had gotten there on Monday did 160 vision screenings yesterday and 82 so far today. Our vision mission trip to the city of Sabana Yegua in the Dominican Republic is not following the planned schedule.

Wednesday evening, I walked to my host family's home without luggage. Steve Slana, a mission eye doctor, acted as an interpreter as we sat on their front porch. They were playing dominoes and drinking shots, I think that it was rum. I joined them for two shots. I later went to bed. Since I had no luggage, they offered me scrubs to wear since their son was a surgeon. They also provided a tooth brush and tooth paste. The host family would be considered middle class by our standards.

Thursday morning, Steve and I walked to the church compound. I noticed that there were no stop signs. The pavement was broken up making walking and driving difficult. All roads had speed bumps to control speeding. There were few curbs making parking a challenge. Along the way we met many people walking. We saw many dogs, humming birds, and other birds. Often, the poor and well-off lived-in homes within the same block. After breakfast, I found out where we were working and what I would be doing while vision screening. I learned that the church had provided tickets to the people wanting screening. This helped control the flow of people.

One highlight was going to the child daycare center with 2- to 5-year-olds. The children were full of so much energy. They ran around, hugged us, sang to us, and smiled a lot. We helped distribute their noon meal and did cleanup after they were done eating. I helped feed two youngsters. In the other room, two boys acted like they did not want to participate. I decided to crawl over to them and started to tickle them. They were so happy and hugged me. They started running around to avoid being tickled. We also visited the old and new medical centers which will open in March. The area around the village appeared very scenic with the mountains in the background, but many people were poor.

It was a long day screening from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. I think that we did 242. The doctors worked very hard completing eye examinations. Other volunteers kept things moving as they administered eye drops, ran the auto-refractor, did near vision testing, far vision testing, and dispensed readers and prescription glasses. We had Mass daily after screening. I sat and rested in a rocker until I felt like eating. After dinner, we had some Presidente beer and fellowship.

Several of our group walked around the neighborhood. We walked past many homes of the poor. People were friendly and we felt safe. At a local store, I bought a bottle of rum for my host family as a thank you gift. After returning to the church, I walked to the host family's home. No-one was home so I visited with a neighbor until someone brought a key and unlocked the door. Finally, I was able to take a shower. I have a wonderful host family and they are Lions. My family did the laundry today so I had a change of clean clothes.

Friday, it was the normal up at 6:30 and breakfast at 7:00. We usually had scrambled eggs, cheese, bread, juice, hot chocolate, and plenty of coffee. We started screening at 8:00 and had people from Haiti, some spoke Spanish and some Croeo. We depended upon the interpreters to assist us. While talking to an interpreter, she indicated that some people from Haiti were afraid to come because they thought that there might be immigration police there to arrest em. Also, our building was maybe 20 feet by 40 feet filled with many people talking loudly, which could be very intimidating. Also, the various testing stations could appear as running the gauntlet.

Several people could not read closeup or distance when tested. I was surprised at the vision improvements for some people. We had people that could not see better than 20/200 receive glasses and were able to read 20/30. Of course, not everyone could benefit that much. Many had diabetes which may cause significant changes in their vision. Other had cataracts and various eye illnesses that would require surgery or special treatment that we could not provide. We have had many people appeared to be blind. It was rewarding to see that our group were able to improve or significantly change people's lives.

I am new to this group, but I am surprised at how well we have bonded. We can help and support each other while teasing and joking around. We have been working all day and you can see the fatigue and exhaustion in each of us, but all you could see was smiles and compassion as more people walked up to you. After working on vision screening from 8:00 am to 6:30 pm, we relaxed over dinner and enjoyed presidential beer, Buffalo Trace whiskey and Basil Bayden whiskey. Our fellowship included singing happy birthday and sharing a birthday cake. I think that we did 242 today.

Another highlight was Saturday; our crew was full of smiles with lots of laughter at breakfast. We screened some of the church staff followed with what seemed to be senior citizen day. Many people appeared fragile and frail. People were in wheel chairs, used crutches, used canes, and some appeared blind. I found that I needed to assist people out of their chair at near vision, assist them to the far vision that Dave and I did, assist them to sit down, and when done by us, assist them out of our chair and assist them to the chairs by the doctors.

Another highlight today was visiting a local village. Later that afternoon, the two priests were going to different communities to conduct Mass. I went on the expedition to a small community toward the mountains. It was a very rural and poor area with many goats and dogs. We saw various fruit trees including banana trees and mangos. The government had built dams to control water runoff allowing irrigation of farm crops. People had tied cattle in the fields to allow them to eat without someone being there. We drove through many small villages and saw people sitting under trees. The roads were unimproved dirt. We saw a man walking with a bunch of bananas on his shoulder. A few people were in the fields collecting fruit, possibly to eat. Looking around I saw that everyone was poor and homes had no electricity.

In the village, I saw a building on the hill that looked like a government building and appeared to have restrooms and where they could get water. What was used as a road was only a path over the dirt and sloped going over the hill with abundant rocks of all sizes and shapes. It was not graded or improved in any way. People were riding scooters and cycles everywhere.

We had Mass by a home and 6 or 7 young girls sang various hymns. Later I was told that they were poor and could not even afford garments under the dresses that they wore. People seemed very happy and welcomed us. We visited a home that was maybe 12 feet by 20 feet with cement walls and had a second story. We walked through the front door into a room with little furnishings, basically people sat on the bare floor. The next room looked like the kitchen with a beat-up stove, probably gas and they had no electricity. The children showed us their 7 goats raised in the backyard. I guessed that they might get some milk from them and probably raised them to eat. I was told that 9 or 11 people lived there covering several generations.

Sunday was a day of rest. After breakfast filled with fellowship, we attended Mass to honor saints and prayed for a new baby. Father Javier introduced our mission group. We received a warm reception. They clapped and shook our hands. After Mass, many people shook our hands and hugged us. We had a group mission picture taken.

You might wonder what happens to the eye glasses that you donated to the Lions Club in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Lions Foundation center cleans, sorts and labels them for distribution. At a minimal cost, the glasses are made available to groups working with the poor, etc. This vision mission to the Dominican Republic received glasses from the Lions. Our mission helped 877 people improve their eye sight with reading or prescription glasses. Your donated glasses changed their life. Daily we assisted 160, 162, 240, 242 and 73 during the week. Our group of 22 included 3 interpreters, 3 doctors, 7 Lions and represented 8 Catholic church parishes from Texas, Illinois and Wisconsin.

We drove through mountain passes and small villages. To make a living, many people had roadside stands selling a variety of items. We drove through another police roadblock. The east-west road between Haiti and Dominican Republic is known for drug traffic and human traffic. Everywhere we saw litter and garbage. While driving, we saw clusters of people living in WOW!!! After waiting since last Monday, I finally got my suitcase. While driving to the resort, poverty homes. I define a poverty home as one built without walls compared to the poor homes that had walls. The poverty homes had sheet metal, canvas, boards, or nothing for sidewalls. Schools are painted yellow and are surrounded by barb wire fences. While driving, there were crews cutting weeds and brush with machetes. No machinery was being used. Guard rails along the road were never repaired after being hit by vehicles. We saw fields of sugar cane, mangoes, bananas, etc.

At the resort, we enjoyed sitting on the beach, walking up and down the beach, and just relaxing in comfort at the Sunscape Resort by Hyatt. While walking the beach, I stopped to watch the fish, crabs, waves, and listened to the waves. I usually walked about a mile. The beach has many rocks to walk over allowing the waves to splash over me. The Caribbean water is warm and the rocks create paths for the waves to splash. I did go down the water slide in the water park and swam in the Caribbean.

We continue to enjoy fellowship while eating an abundance of food at every meal. During dinner, we had plenty of white and red wine, rum, bourbon, other special drinks, and after dinner drinks. We continued talking sometimes for hours after dinner. Tomorrow, we take the 1 1/2-hour bus ride to the airport. Then we will spend almost a day traveling back home. I expect to be home for breakfast Thursday Morning.

We got word that one of the 22 volunteers got back to Wisconsin, but the luggage was in Miami.

To summarize my trip, I began to think about the contrast in lifestyle that we experienced during this vision mission. I remember seeing poverty and how they lived. In contrast, I now see the lifestyle that the tourist industry has created. I do not see shacks to live in, poor clothing, and people sitting on the ground doing nothing. The poor are still second, but are hidden away from the resorts on the backroads. If you look carefully, you can see their homes hidden in the woods. Many resort workers are multilingual busy helping people enjoy the Caribbean, the beaches, the food, the pools, the water park, and many of the special amenities supplied at the resorts. They work to maintain the grounds and the buildings while wearing better clothing and probably live better than the poor. The difference makes me appreciate life more.”

[Al Frankensteen, mission

19]



I was sitting in church on the last Sunday we were in Sabana Yegua, and I noticed one of the parishioners was wearing a T-shirt commemorating the 40th anniversary of the parish's founding. It was the summer of 1981 when the church was founded. I don't remember the exact date on that T-shirt, but I recall my mind wandering back to that summer and what I was doing then.

I was young and excited about life, with big ideas. I was in the final stages of planning my wedding, which took place in August of 1981. I was in nursing school, busy with clinicals and trying to finish everything on time to graduate. We were deciding where to live after the wedding, enjoying friends and family, and a privileged life in the US in the summertime. To be honest, I knew nothing about the Dominican Republic back then and, of course, had no idea of what was unfolding in Sabana Yegua that very summer.

I look back now and can hardly believe my journey. How did I get here? Forty-five years later, here I am. How did I find this small city and its lovely people, whom I have grown to love over the years? It's been a long journey, and one I cannot elaborate on here, but what a blessing it has been. God truly worked a miracle in my life, taking me from that naïve 20-year-old to a 65-year-old with a grateful heart and an appreciation for what really matters in life. Certainly, it is not a fancy wedding, or self-indulgence, or turning a blind eye to those in need. Indeed, it is the opposite. Service, acceptance, and love for those who are suffering is what it means to be truly human and to live a gratifying, God-centered life.

The big lesson I have learned, and what I reflected on that day in church, is to listen to God's small voice and follow his path wherever it may lead, because that is where you are meant to be.

Toni Roucha, Mission 19

THANK YOU...

Fr Javier, Delores and the LSF team for hours of planning and preparation-
Doctors Steve, Leidy and Francisco, for their mission planning and professional expertise-
Dr. Pat for the 30 pair of new glasses-
Patt, and the Lion's Club affiliation for the financial support--
Corinne Dillon for maintaining the glasses and meds inventory, pictures and video-
The Kenosha County St. Vincent DePaul Council for **their contribution to build a home in the DR-**
Steve laMotte for his many financial gifts to our mission efforts-
Mission 19 members all for their time, talent and patience during difficult travel challenges-

CORINNE'S VIDEO:

Here is the movie from Mission 19. Pass it on to people who might be interested in going on Mission 20 in 2027 <https://youtu.be/xW9DwddIzXg>

REMEMBER...

Please keep in mind the following quote from Nancy Dallavalle, professor of religious studies, Fairfield University. “”Moving from engaged to committed is no small thing. The comfort of the full belly is not so much different than the lulling effect of a consistent diet of outrage and denouncement; both are designed to subvert integrity and will. As Christians we are called to the harder path of the committed life, called to be disciples rather than spectators, witnesses rather than partisans. ...Let us put down the snack plate, shut down the aptly named ‘browser,’ and get up off the couch. We have a mission, we are designed for a purpose. The day for casual feasting and useless chatter is past. Go out to the world dear friend, be not afraid. Your face is radiant.”

Thanks and blessings to all

Wilson

