



## CENTER for MISSION

Society for the Propagation of the Faith / St. Paul and Minneapolis

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# Inspired

Stories of encountering Christ in global mission

Spring 2020

*"We are truly called to be an Easter people and witness to the Good News of Christ risen among us. Let us all take heart and encourage one another in faith as we face our current struggles together."*

Immersion Journey to Jamaica and Partnership trip to Kitui, Kenya: Rescheduled

Erisman Family in Peru

Social Mission Outreach: Year in Review



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# Inspired

Spring 2020

Stories of encountering Christ in global mission



## Signs of Good News

By Deacon Mickey Friesen  
Director, Center for Mission



At the core of our Christian faith is our hope in the resurrection. Easter brings signs of new life. The Spirit of God has been poured out into our hearts and Christ is with us at all times and seasons. Life transforms death. Love is stronger than fear. This is the Good News of the Gospel that we have been given to share. And the world needs to hear the good news more than ever.

Today, as in ages past, our world faces great struggles, conflicts and uncertainty regarding the way forward. Today we are isolated and unclear because of the evolving COVID-19 infection that is ravaging our state, country and our world. In ages past it has been plagues, pestilence and war. It was during those times that Christians gave witness to the Good News of Christ among us, suffering with us and accompanying us through the valley of darkness and fear. And this message is so important today. This is what it means for us to be missionary by our nature. We can breathe in God's spirit of life and love and hope. Then, we can breathe out a spirit of care and support for those in need among us. We can be a sign of encouragement to those who struggle to see the light. No matter

the circumstances on the surface of life, God's spirit is deeper than our struggles.

Over the years, I have been so encouraged by Catholic missionaries who have left familiar comforts of home to go forth to many countries bringing the Good News of Christ. Minnesota has been a fertile place that has raised up many priests, sisters and lay people who have traveled to foreign lands as missionaries. For the past twenty years, I have had the pleasure of meeting these people before, during and after their missionary encounters and listening to their stories of love and service wherever they were sent.

We have been able to offer support to these Archdiocesan missionaries through our Mustard Seed Mission Endowment providing help to those living simple lives as they witness to Christ in many different ways and around the world.

In this issue of the newsletter you will meet Tami and Robert Erisman and their family of seven children. They left home to serve among the people of Peru as members of the Family Missions Company. Their story is an echo of many others who are making Christ known and loved by building

bridges of faith by sharing their lives.

We are truly called to be an Easter people and witness to the Good News of Christ risen among us. Let us all take heart and encourage one another in faith as we face this struggle together. Let us also pray in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world who also suffer the effects of our current health crisis and place our trust in God who brings life out of death as we will resurrect from our recent darkness to light and life through hope and love.



## COVID-19 and Mission Trips

By Eric Simon  
Mission Promotions Manager

The COVID-19 pandemic and restricted travel have had an unfortunate effect on mission travel planned by the Center for Mission. Our two big 2020 trips - Immersion travel to Jamaica and the Partnership trip to Kitui, Kenya - have been rescheduled for 2021. The Jamaican trip will now be the end of January 2021 for 10 days and the trip to Kitui, Kenya, which is currently full, is yet to be rescheduled.

As we recover from this time of struggle and hardship, the 2021 mission trips are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate in joy and thanksgiving with our brothers and sisters overseas.

Serving the global mission activity of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

## Erisman Family of Nine in Mission in Peru

By Tami Erisman



Robert and Tami Erisman, and their six children (with one on the way in this pic), are currently missionaries in

Peru through Family Missions Company. The Erismans are from the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. They have received grants from the Center for Mission to help with their financial needs.

My husband and my seven children are missionaries in the Amazonian Region of Peru through the Family Missions Company. After several months in training and language school, we were assigned to Tingo de Ponaza, San Martin, Peru.

Prior to our discernment to foreign mission, we lived like most other Catholic families: Church, prayer



and activities. Serving the poor was not a focus of ours or something we did often. However, recognizing the importance of this as a Catholic family, it was quite a turn of events when, in 2018, Robert and I decided to "take the leap" and make a point of serving the poorest. We sold everything, and with the help of the Holy Spirit during our discernment, we joined Family

Missions Company.

Our family has been in Peru for over a year now and we continue to feel confirmed about our life's call, even as we share our home with rodents and insects! We experience joy and peace when we meet Christ in the faces of the children and poor, even in very difficult situations.

During one visit in Belen, a very poor area of Iquitos on the Amazon river we encountered an area with no plumbing or waste control; homes were surrounded by sewage and garbage. As we traveled through the town, we found, as a large family with young children, that we were noticed by others. People were particularly drawn to our children. As we spoke to people, we discovered that our arriving there with our entire family was an outward sign of our care and concern for others. Our simple presence with kids seemed to give them a sense of value, worthy of attention.

Our children were gifts to others several times during our mission journey. We visited a very old, sick woman. The woman's face lit up when she saw our youngest child who was not yet one year old. She asked to hold him and said that it was so special for her to hold a baby in her arms. She began to cry what seemed tears of joy. We were honored to have the opportunity to share the gift of joy with this woman.

There were many other situations that were memorable and important, for example, the simple gift of water.

I never thought of water as much as I had since moving to Peru. At home in Minnesota, it was always present: clean and drinkable. But not in our area of Peru. Even in Lima, the capital, the "clean" water out of the faucet was

not drinkable. Purified water must be purchased in large plastic containers, and rainwater was collected in large buckets for bathing. After boiling the water for 10 minutes, it can be used



for dish cleaning and cooking. With all this, food and eating became for us a matter for hospitality and graciousness.

We were invited by a priest to Mass in a small chapel where he celebrated several times a month. Afterwards, we were invited to join the priest at a house for lunch. A woman hurried off to buy food in the market when we arrived. Once the meal was ready, everyone smiled and encouraged us to eat before them. We soon realized they did not have enough food for themselves but wanted us, as guests, to enjoy the meal. What a lesson in culture and hospitality! It was very difficult for us to accept their generous hospitality when they were without food. Of course, we realized it would have been rude and ungrateful for us not to accept and eat the meal. It was a gift of humility for us to experience this most humble family expression of Christ.



One very difficult realization for us during our mission encounters, was that in effect, we were raising "third-world" children. Our kids will develop a somewhat different set of cultural values and beliefs because of our decision to enter mission. They are not Peruvian, but they are not being raised in the U.S. either. Which culture and country do they belong to, which grounds them? This may be very lonely and isolating for the kids.

At the Center for Mission, missionaries have expressed how, once in mission, one can feel like they belong everywhere, yet nowhere at the same time. Robert and I are concerned about helping the kids through their mission experience. The Family Missions Company recognizes this situation for our kids and offers retreats and opportunities to support the family in mission when they return. We are very grateful for their support.

We feel like we have had the opportunity to encounter the peace and love that surpasses all understanding as we share our home and ourselves with others. We also experience an abiding joy as they share their gifts of love and acceptance with us. We are so thankful that we have been able to bring glad tidings to the poor. A big thank you to all those who have helped us on this journey, including the Center for Mission.



## Social Mission Office: Year in Review

By Adam Fitzpatrick

Social Mission Outreach Coordinator

Adam Fitzpatrick is in his second year as the Social Mission Outreach Coordinator for the Center for Mission. He has been very busy.

The Social Mission office had a great second year with the goals of building ministry areas and developing leadership teams throughout the Archdiocese. Activities included the successful completion of the Parish Social Ministry Survey that provided data and a situation

overview of social mission, justice activities and desires throughout the Archdiocese, and the launch of the Archdiocesan Care for Creation Team which was based on *Laudato Si*.

The Care for Creation team organized and ran the Earth Day program that included a day of enjoying God's creation in nature and concluded with prayer and reflections - of course a Zoom meeting! It was very successful and the team is continuing to build on this momentum that is so important to Catholic social outreach.

The Care for Creation team currently includes representatives of 10 parishes and the Sisters of Saint Joseph and

would like to add more, so if you have interest in playing a role in Care for Creation, contact Adam Fitzpatrick, fitzpatricka@archspm.org.

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) also had a successful

year as we highlighted a very successful past grant recipient: Urban Roots.

Financial support has remained steady even amidst the COVID-



19 pandemic and we have had 15 applicants apply for funding through the CCHD National and CCHD Local Grant Programs. Organizations selected for grants through these two programs will be notified soon as to whether proposals have been accepted.

On a final note, we are grateful for everyone's generosity and willingness to offer their time and resources toward our social mission outreach programs, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is challenging for many of us now and there will be a new reality of social responsibility for everyone in the near future. In response, the Social Mission Outreach office will begin, enhance and grow many activities and programs that reflect the needs of the Archdiocese. If you are interested in joining us, contact Adam Fitzpatrick at fitzpatricka@archspm.org.

Know that our prayers are with you during this time and that we will rise again in Christ to share with each other our joy and happiness. Thank you for all you do for our Social Mission Outreach.



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