



# CENTER for MISSION

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

777 Forest Street, St. Paul, MN 55106

NON PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
TWIN CITIES MN  
PERMIT NO 594



# Inspired

*Stories of encountering Christ in global mission*

Fall 2020

*"Bridges of mission are an expression of our Catholicism as we, like angels, reach beyond ourselves and our communities to encounter Christ in mission."*

Next Immersion Trip

Encounters of Social Mission Activities

Reaching Beyond Borders

Immersion Encounters



Please visit our website:  
[www.centerformission.org](http://www.centerformission.org)  
as interesting content is continually added.

Save postage, you can now donate online by credit card.

If you have received this mailing in error, or would like to discontinue receiving newsletters from us, please contact: Bonnie Curry-Gabel at [curry-gabelb@archspm.org](mailto:curry-gabelb@archspm.org) or 651-291-4451

# Inspired

Winter 2021

Stories of encountering Christ in global mission



## In The Company of Angels at Christmas

By Deacon Mickey Friesen  
Director, Center for Mission



Center for Mission Director since 2001.

Advent and Christmas tell many stories of angels bringing the good news to the poor. An angel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the savior and an angel offered encouragement to Joseph in a dream. Angels declared the good news of the messiah's birth to the poor shepherds tending their flocks in the field. Yes, an angel is that messenger of God bringing good news to the poor and the marginalized. Our word for the Gospel and for evangelizing comes from the same root word as an *angel* - one who brings good news.

Jesus came as the good news among us who lived on the margins of his society. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free" (Luke 4:18).

Like the angels of the Bible, missionaries still bring good news to the poor. Missionaries make their homes among those who live on the margins. They spend their lives providing the necessities of life. They join in bringing healing to the sick and comfort to those wounded by the



Missionary Annmarie Barrett in Bolivia traumas of war and strife. To be a missionary means offering words of comfort and encouragement of God's love through their witness, prayer and sacramental ministry. They are the hands and feet, the voice and the face of God among those they serve. Missionaries stand in solidarity with those who face threats to their human dignity and accompany them as they seek a more just world.

During this season, we celebrate how close God has come to us. In a similar way, missionaries stay in close proximity to those they serve and remain a living witness of Emmanuel - God with us. Proximity with others can bring us closer to the margins of society so that the



Deacon Friesen visiting family in India

margins can be erased.

In this newsletter we highlight examples of how the Center for Mission offers many opportunities to bridge in solidarity with and through missionary encounters for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, locally and globally. These bridges are an

expression of our Catholicism as we, like angels, reach beyond our selves and our communities to encounter Christ in mission. As the Letter to the Hebrews states, "Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have knowingly entertained



Maryknoll missionary Liz Mach in Tanzania

angels" (Heb.13-1-2). Christmas is a time to give thanks for the good news of God's love given to us and our

chance to join in the chorus with those missionaries who bring good news to the poor in our day.

## Next Imersion Trip Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica

By Eric Simon  
Mission Promotions Manager

With COVID easing next year, we pray, we will begin opportunities for immersing ourselves in cultures throughout the world and broadening our Catholic perspective through global solidarity.

The planned trip to Jamaica is currently scheduled for the end of January and beginning of February, 2023. The trip is unforgettable as you encounter Jamaicans and Jamaican families as they celebrate their Catholicism in very poor mountain areas. You will experience schools, clinics and visit the aged...and will bring back these experiences and memories to enhance your own Catholic identity.

If you are interested in joining the delegation to Jamaica, contact Eric Simon, [simone@archspm.org](mailto:simone@archspm.org).

## Encounters of Social Mission Activities

By Adam Fitzpatrick  
Coordinator, Social Mission Outreach



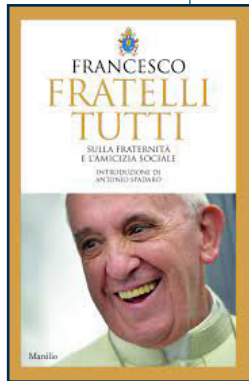
*As Social Mission Outreach Coordinator for the Center for Mission, Adam focuses on activities that bridge individuals and communities in solidarity with those on the fringes of society.*

The Social Mission department of the Center for Mission has been active in 2021, connecting Catholics to activities of solidarity with the poor and those on the fringes.

Events of 2020 left us with a number of deep challenges related to equality and justice, particularly in Minnesota, as we develop the next steps of our growing social mission in response to these challenges.

This year we wanted to create space where people were able to engage in deep social questions relevant today. For example, the *Fratelli Tutti*, encyclical by Pope Francis 10/2020, dialogue series on Zoom was an opportunity to hear presentations and discussion regarding what *Fratelli Tutti* teaches us for today's issues.

Another example of reaching beyond our selves for a more humane and just world is the Care for Creation team. Given the unprecedented climate



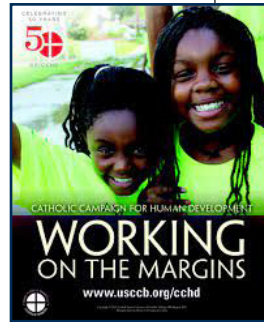
Care for Creation Retreat- 2021

disasters throughout the United States, the eco-consciousness of many individuals was raised and they desired a way to respond. The team created retreat resources for parishes and initiated dialogue regarding renewable energy. Additionally, college students are raising their voices expressing their desires and hopes for the future. The Team is attentively including them in activities that are relevant to them.

The Care for Creation teams' objectives are to inspire participants to act through education, advocacy and a deeper spiritual understanding of Care for Creation issues, especially through the Papal book, *Laudato Si*. People are concerned and anxious and the Care for Creation team is an outlet for that concern.

As it is important to help the poor and needy, beyond our borders, the USCCB Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) distributed \$225,000 to organizations formed to break the cycle of poverty by encouraging low-income people to make decisions and participate in activities and planning that affect their lives. Our CCHD teams are growing and developing new ministry activities to help the poor.

Future activities will focus on the importance of solidarity enabling us to bridge to encounters of Christ. Topics discussed will penetrate the surface of issues that have marred human dignity and provide opportunities that enable a deeper connection with those in our communities.



CCHD 2021 Poster

## Reaching Beyond Borders

By Janine Ricker  
Global Mission Outreach Coordinator



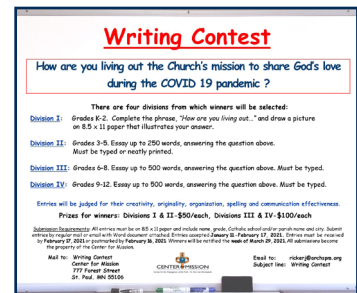
*Janine Ricker focuses on activities of encounter that animate our Catholic spirit by reaching beyond our borders in solidarity with global cultures and communities.*

Reaching beyond throughout his papacy, Pope Francis has consistently encouraged Catholics to live a culture of encounter. The global mission outreach efforts of the Center for Mission are one way we respond to Pope Francis' call to encounter Christ in one another.

So what does global mission outreach include at the Center for Mission? We offer a variety of opportunities to encounter others. We encourage and support parish

partnership ministries through an annual workshop, where staff and lay leaders are invited to encounter and learn from experts and one another. We provide educational resources and programming to schools and parishes, like our annual Writing Contest which encourages K-12 students in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis to reflect on their personal call to mission, and our annual Living Water Program, which invites local youth to encounter our partners in the Diocese of Kitui, Kenya by learning about their lives and the importance of access to clean water during drought. Children are encouraged to raise funds to help.

Finally, we offer additional opportunities for reaching beyond



Water tanks

our borders through our relationship with the Maronite Archdiocese of Damascus, Syria and delegation trips through the Archdiocesan partnership with the Diocese of Kitui, Kenya. By hosting visitors from our partnership parishes and archdioceses, and by visiting those same parishes and archdioceses in return, local Catholics are able to form relationships with our Christian brothers and sisters in other parts of the world, learn from them, and walk in faith with them.

Gregg Darr, member of the Damascus partnership leadership team and mission recruiter for Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers,

said his experience with the Damascus partnership has opened his eyes.

“Not only has this experience made me aware of the suffering of sisters and brothers in Syria,” Gregg said, “but also to their incredible faith, perseverance and hope. A partnership works both ways; we can learn from and be inspired by those who pray for us from abroad, even in the midst of their own sorrows and joys.”

Mary Jo Voxland, Chair of the Delegation Team for the Kitui Partnership, described receiving visitors from Kitui as a family reunion.

“You can see the love that we all have for each other,” Mary Jo said. “When I returned to Kitui in 2014 for the 10-year anniversary [of the partnership] it was like going back home to my extended family. Being involved in this partnership has helped me not only to build new relationships but to see that we are all one in our Lord, Jesus Christ.”



Mary Jo re-igniting Kitui friendship



Children at schools in Kitui

### Shorter Immersion Encounters

Reaching beyond our borders is important as Catholics as we encounter Christ in mission and experience and bring home those, often transformative, experiences.

Eric Simon at the Center for Mission organizes and supervises these experiences in several global mission archdioceses and dioceses that have included Jamaica, Northern Alaska and India.

Encounters through these shorter-term Immersion trips have touched the many delegates on the trips.

For example, Ann Matson joined the delegation to Northern Alaska, which had an incredible effect on all. Our immersion trip touched the Athabaskan native community. She stated, “This journey to northern Alaska made us all appreciate our ‘easier’ lives, and yet we envied the Alaskans’ and Athabaskan’s focus and joy of their Catholic faith. This was a renewing experience causing me to examine my involvement and commitment to my own parish and to ponder how I could share it best with others. It was a gift that I brought home and I am thankful for the experience through the Center for Mission.”



Ann Matson visiting with native Athabaskan elderly in Alaska

And read about Lisa Simon, educator for Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, “I didn’t know what to



Lisa enjoying curious Jamaican children

expect and when I experienced the elementary schools and children who learned through joy and curiosity, I was amazed and touched. The teachers were so gifted and the work that the children produced was quite good, even in situations that would be less than ideal. This experience re-ignited a passion in me to work with children and teach again.”

Transformational experiences like those above are common for delegates during trips and have led to inspired activities afterwards. The next planned trip is to the mountains of Jamaica in the Diocese of Mandeville. This trip will be for eight days at the end of January, 2023. We are still affected by COVID as Jamaica has been, so we plan on 2023 in the hopes of traveling safely.

If you are interested, or have questions, please contact Eric Simon at [simone@archspm.org](mailto:simone@archspm.org).



**CENTER for MISSION**

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