

January 2008



ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA CATHOLIC CHURCH
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Mission to Mexico News

2008: A New Mission Year

By Rachel Fannin
Mission to Mexico, Ministry Director
St. Catherine of Siena, Austin TX

As I reflect on all of the mission trips of last year, my gratitude and appreciation increases for all of the volunteers who give of their time, talent and treasure in support of our brothers and sisters in the colonia. Year 2007 was a very successful mission year, and I look forward to working with many of you as you continue to help in year 2008.

I hope to see many of you on our next mission trip—February 1-2.

How may I contact Rachel Fannin?

Phone: (512) 288-1621

Email: rfannin@austin.rr.com

Hotel Reservations

—see page 5

Inside this issue:

2008: A New Mission Year	1
<i>By Rachel Fannin</i>	
Kentucky MTM Volunteers	2
<i>By Mary Chism & Mike Judd</i>	
The Abundance	2
<i>By Peggy Gornik</i>	
Volunteers...Are Like Angels	3
<i>By Deacon Mike Meisner</i>	
Mission Not Possible Without Prayer...	4
<i>By Eddie Tamayo</i>	
Mission Needs More Spanish Translators	4
<i>By Jeanne Meier</i>	
Passport Will Be Required!	5
<i>By Jeanette Terrell</i>	
February 1 & 2 Mission To Mexico Trip	5 & 6

God bless you and your loved ones.

Amor y Paz,

Rachel

February Special Needs

- CASH donations
- Baby items
- VOLUNTEERS for February mission trip & their vehicles to haul the “love cargo”—especially on Friday morning
- Bikes
- School supplies

Mission to Mexico Future Trip Dates

February 1-2, 2008

April 4-5, 2008

June 6-7, 2008

August 1-2, 2008

October 3-4, 2008

December 5-6, 2008

Kentucky MTM Volunteers

By Mary Chism and Mike Judd
Kentucky

This was our first trip with Mission to Mexico. My husband, Mike and I were both very impressed with all our fellow volunteers and all the wonderful people that we met on our trip to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico November 30 & December 1.

The people touched our hearts like nothing we have ever experienced before. They were so appreciative for all the donations and all the hard work that was put forth.

We want to thank everyone for making us feel a welcome addition to your group. And most especially, thank Frank and Judy Maldonado for including us in such a marvelous experience. If it had not been for them, we would have never known about your group. Frank and Judy

made it all possible for us to share that awesome day with you. Judy and I walked down the road where people were waiting for the gates to open, and you could not help but be touched with the people and the need there in that small town. The people seemed so happy despite their desperate situations and lack of health care and material possessions. It really made you realize how blessed we are on our side of the border in this wonderful United States and how much we have to be thankful for. Mike and I both hope to make this an annual trip.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We will keep your mission in our prayers that you will be able to continue to do such good deeds and help so many beautiful

people.

Sincerely,
Your Kentucky friends,

Mary Chism (*Judy's cousin*)
& **Mike Judd**



The Abundance

By Peggy Gornik
St Catherine of Siena, Austin, TX

When I want to know in my heart if the mission is serving to the best that we can, I step back and take time to acknowledge and appreciate all the blessings God gives to us.

Since the Dec. mission, I have felt overwhelmed—in a happy way. Our MTM board works year round raising money, collecting donations, organizing donations, and brainstorming how can we serve our people better. Well the December mission was the culmination of all our labor. How has God blessed us as a mission group—by showering us with abundance. Everything was more this mission.

We had more money to buy

blankets—enough for 900!

We had more toys that multiplied before our eyes. It was like the miracle of the loaves and fishes. We served approximately 2,000 children!

We had more nurses than we anticipated and we had the biggest line for medical I have ever seen.

We had more strollers. A wonderful couple collects these used strollers every mission for the mothers in the Colonia.

We had more baby blankets because the word was spread that we have a need. Someone from Florida even answered the call.

We had more volunteers—90+,

and what a fantastic team it was.

The community in the colonia count on us, and the word has spread. There were more colonia people. We passed out 700 adult tickets. By my estimate, 2,000 children came to see Santa. The line was huge.

So, God blesses our mission. I feel overwhelmed with the awareness that we do hear the cry of the poor. We are listening, Lord.

Thank you God, for the abundance.

Peggy Gornik

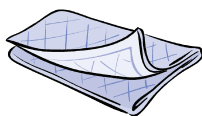
Volunteers...Are Like Angels

By Deacon Mike Meisner
Sacred Heart, La Grange TX



After a much-too-long absence from the colonia, I made the December trip and was met with warm embraces from so many. The study/senior citizens group (formerly called the “prayer group”, then the “bible study group”, etc.) hovered over me like mother hens will over a newly-hatched chick. After a hundred tears and what seemed both like hours and yet seconds, we moved on with a study of the Virgin Mary and distribution of a few sacramentals which are always appreciated by the poor. The last sacramentals I had for them were two prayer blankets.

The prayer blankets are small lap blankets, about the size of a baby blanket, made by sweet little senior citizens in rural Fayette County. They meet in the church hall on certain afternoons to cut and hem these blankets while praying and singing hymns. When they have enough blankets made, they are brought up to the altar and blessed during a special Mass. Then the ladies distribute the blankets to the sick and elderly. Some blankets have a prayer card attached. To use, drape one over you and simply pray. I don't know where the idea of a prayer blanket came from but the sick and elderly just love them!



After we explained what a prayer blanket was, every member of the group was almost desperate to have one. Then came the difficult decision as to who in the group of 35 individuals would receive these two prayer blankets. Berta (Garcia)

and Dexter (Serrano) had the answer—Deacon Mike would pick the two individuals! So, one blanket went to a young paralyzed man and the other blanket went to an elderly, arthritic woman.

Our little group was anxious to get to the distribution of goods, get a visit at the MTM clinic, or to watch their grandchildren meet with Santa who was expected shortly. So, we broke-up early. But still, every member of our group had to get or give me a hug. They each talked to me at length—something I did not understand. It sounded like a scolding, telling me to return more often and not miss any trips into the colonia.

I was saddened in that my brother Esteban did not come to the distribution. He and I have become very close and I looked forward to our visits. His daughter was instructed to tell him to come the next time, in February, when his brother promises to be there.

I noticed how many volunteers we had on the December mission; so many came from so many places. There was a large number from San Marcos. These volunteers, wherever they are from, are like angels. That's how many of the poor in the colonia see you! But, talking about angels, the two angels, Bertha and Dexter—now these are two angels!

And now a mystery: To the angel or angels who provided that spe-

cial stuff for me (if you did it, you know what I'm talking about), God bless you and keep you close to His loving heart!

Anyone feeling called to individually or as part of their club/group make prayer blankets, feel free to do so. These blankets are so wanted among the poor and sick in Mexico.

Deacon Mike

How may I make a monetary donation to the Mission to Mexico effort?



Checks can be made out to:

“Mission to Mexico”

St. Catherine of Siena

4800 Convict Hill Road

Austin, TX 78749-2202



Mission to Mexico News

Do you want to add someone to the Mission to Mexico Newsletter list, have you changed your e-mail or mailing address, or, are you having difficulty receiving the newsletter?

Notify **Jeanette Terrell**: jeanetteterrill@austin.rr.com, 512 444-3179

Mission Not Possible Without Prayer...Or God's Grace

By Eddie Tamayo
San Jose, Austin TX

(Eddie Tamayo is Mary Moreno's brother.)

...this mission is not possible without prayer...or God's Grace...

The MTM ministry team is never alone. In my first few years on this mission, I prayed for God's protection because I almost always traveled solo, and I prayed for the safety of the team. I always prayed to Jesus.

But, when I found out about the power of the rosary, I would pray the rosary on that long stretch between San Antonio and Laredo. On one occasion while on this trip, my truck seemed very heavy, and I was feeling alone and very fearful—an excessive amount of fear within me, and I talked to the Blessed Mother about the awful way I was feeling. I continued to pray. A short time later, a very powerful calmness and peace came over me. She showed me a vision. I

couldn't understand at first—it didn't seem very clear. But as the peace within me grew, the vision within became brighter and clearer. The vision was of the thousands of Guarding Angels traveling with the MTM team, for our protection and our safety. It didn't matter if the vehicles were traveling alone or in a convoy. The protection was plentiful. What an awesome vision She shared with me. The peace was long lasting and plentiful also...

Now...isn't God good...He's always taking care of his children.

God is still in charge. He will always be and He will always reign, even if we get stopped at the border checking station.

The MTM ministry team and their families, their efforts and their protection are always a part of my daily prayer requests even when

they are not on the road. In between trips, there's always planning, preparation and simple prayer...

The families, which we serve, are always in need of some type of nourishment. Sometime it's food, sometime it's shelter, sometime it's a little more faith, sometime it's hope, sometime it's friendship and sometime it's a much needed big hug from someone who truly cares.

Next time you visit the colonia and give an old lady, a child, or an old man a hug, look into their eyes and really experience the power of your hug within them, and allow them to feed and nourish you too.

Gracias y con todo Amor...

el Perjuicio

Eddie Tamayo

Mission Needs More Spanish Translators

By Jeanne Meier
(RN and volunteer, August 2007 MTM trip)

(This article was originally submitted to editor, Jeanette Terrell, in August 2007. The MTM newsletter was not published in September or November 2007 due to Terrell house damage and repairs.)

The August mission trip to Mexico had many of the qualities of the previous trips I have been on—piles of supplies generously donated, an air of excitement, a huge line of people waiting patiently in the sun, and enthusiastic, willing volunteers hurrying this way and that. The one thing we did not have for this trip was a good supply of Spanish speaking volunteers. This slowed our efforts considerably. The few Spanish speakers we did have were in great demand

and were given quite a work out by the rest of the volunteers. They would no sooner get involved in a task, when someone would interrupt them to request help with some other activity. They spent their time rushing from one request to another all Saturday. I'm sure they slept well that night!

I am an RN and I work in the medical clinic. I can do nothing without the translators. There is no way I can know why the patient is asking for help and what their symptoms are, unless I have a translator. I also

need them to explain medications given to them and treatment recommendations. Without a translator, I am pretty much useless in the medical clinic.

It is my sincere hope that all future trips will have many Spanish speakers. You Spanish speakers have no idea how much you are appreciated.

Please come on the next trip to Mexico.

Jeanne Meier



Passport Will Be Required!

Jeanette Terrell
St. Catherine of Siena, Austin TX



Eventually, travel by land between Texas and Mexico **WILL REQUIRE A PASSPORT**. That means MTM volunteers participating on mission trips **WILL NEED A PASSPORT!** This includes all adults and children.

Currently, for land travel between Texas and Mexico, adults

must have a passport or a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license, plus proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate. Children (ages 18 and younger) must have a passport or proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate.

Soon (depending on the govern-

ment), a passport will be the requirement for adults and children.

Please check for details and updated information on the website for the U.S. Department of State at:

<http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvlsec/>

Jeanette Terrell

February 1 & 2 Mission to Mexico

Are you planning to be a volunteer on the February 1 & 2 MTM trip?

Please notify **Rachel Fannin** or **Kelly Contois** at least one week prior to the mission weekend, that is, no later than Friday, January 25. It is vital to know ahead of time how many volunteers to count on for the weekend, so that mission activities can be planned for Friday and Saturday. It is very important to know if you are willing to help haul "love cargo."

Rachel Fannin—(512) 288-1621 or rfannin@austin.rr.com

Kelly Contois—(512) 291-1623 or rkcontois@sbcglobal.net

Budget-minded? Share a Room!

We try to keep your expenses down to a minimum by making arrangements for you to share a room with other volunteers if you request it.

Please work out details regarding roommate(s) and payment arrangements when requesting a hotel room reservation with **Kelly Contois**.

Riding Back to Austin—

In the interest of not leaving anybody behind in Laredo, we try to keep track of who is riding back to Austin with whom. Please let Rachel Fannin know who you are riding back with.



Want a room reserved at Marriott's SpringHill Suites at MTM's special church group rate?

Marriott's SpringHill Suites group rate is \$70 per room—2 beds, sleeper/sofa, refrigerator, microwave, continental breakfast, etc.—no limit on guests per room. Notify **Kelly Contois** no later than Monday, January 28 (preferably prior to that date), if you want a room reserved at MTM's group rate.

Driving directions to Marriott's SpringHill Suites:

I-35 south to city of Laredo; take exit 4, stay on I-35 access road/San Bernardo AVE. The hotel is next to Golden Corral.

Address: 5940 San Bernardo AVE, Laredo TX

Phone: (956) 717-0800

Late arrival, after 10 p.m.?

Notify **Marriott's SpringHill Suites Hotel** directly at (956) 717-0800; request to **HOLD** your room.

Cancellation of hotel reservation—

If cancellation is necessary (for whatever reason), notify **Kelly Contois AND Marriott's SpringHill Suites Hotel** (956) 717-0800 and request to **CANCEL** your room reservation.



February 1 & 2 Mission to Mexico Trip

Transporting Supplies & "Love Cargo"

THURSDAY – Those volunteers who are unable to load their vehicle at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, February 1, and want to assist with transporting “love cargo,” may load their vehicle on Thursday, January 31. Please make arrangements (where & when) with Rachel, phone 288-1621 or rfannin@austin.rr.com.

FRIDAY – Those volunteers who will be helping to transport supplies to Mexico on Friday morning, please be at St. Catherine’s parking lot (near garage area) by **7:30 a.m.** on Friday, February 1 to load the vehicles (cars, trucks, SUVs, vans, trailers, etc.). We will be leaving for Laredo as soon as vehicles are loaded. Thanks.

Rachel

