

May 2008



ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA CATHOLIC CHURCH
AUSTIN, TEXAS

Mission to Mexico News

June Focus: Fans

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



Food prices are going up everywhere. Unfortunately for our brothers and sisters in the colonia, this is a serious problem because of their low wages. On our April mission trip, I asked one of our helpers what he did for a living and how much he was paid. Juan is a painter and earns 500 pesos a week. Depending on the exchange rate, he makes about \$50.00 a week to support his family.

The people of the colonia count on us for help, and they are very grateful for what they receive. For many years, 600 families have received 4 pounds of rice and

beans, a bottle of oil, 5 pounds of flour, and 2 bars of soap. The groceries we distribute will last them for about two weeks. Because of the rising costs, **we were not able to buy everything for our last two mission trips.** My prayer is that we can continue to purchase these basic items for them to live on. *(Read Pat Gavia's breakdown of costs for a typical mission trip on page 3.)*

(continued on page 2)

How may I contact Rachel Fannin?

Phone: (512) 288-1621

Email: rfannin@austin.rr.com

Hotel Reservations—see page 4 & 5

What to bring with you—see page 5

June Special Needs

- CASH donations
- Children's Shoes (all sizes)
- Children's Socks (all sizes)
- VOLUNTEERS for June mission trip & their vehicles to haul the "love cargo"—especially on Friday morning
- Baby clothes
- Baby strollers

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Mission to Mexico Future Trip Dates

June 6-7, 2008

August 1-2, 2008

October 3-4, 2008

December 5-6, 2008

June Focus: Fans *(continued from page 1)*

Please remember our brothers and sisters in the colonia when you are donating to a charity. The costs are only going to get higher. Help us help them. Pray for our ministry to the poorest of the poor.



Focus for our June trip is to distribute **BOX FANS** to bring relief from the harsh

summer months.

NOTE: Because of space re-allocation, we no longer have storage space on site at St. Catherine's. Until further notice, the only clothing donations we can accept is for babies.

God bless you for your continued support for almost 12

years. We couldn't do it without you.

Amor y Paz,

Rachel



First-time MTM Experience

By Joanna Rostedt
St. Catherine of Siena, Austin, TX

My husband and I are newly married and relatively new to Austin. We both have a desire to help others and get involved in the community. One Sunday after Mass we saw in the bulletin that there was a mission trip to Mexico and volunteers were needed. We weren't quite sure what MTM would entail, but we were excited to take part in something that would make a difference to others as well as getting to know more people in the community.

As we arrived early Friday morning at St. Catherine's, we were introduced to many volunteers who were helping load vehicles full of items to take to Mexico. Among the many friendly people, we met our "carpool buddies", Greg and Stephanie Nelson. The Nelson's have been a part of MTM from the start and were eager to share their knowledge and experiences with us. They took us under their wing and not only shared their car, but their food as well. Everyone who took part in this experience was special. All were kind and made sure we were taken care of.

Friday and Saturday morning were spent setting up and organizing. Everyone pitched in, whether it was sorting baby clothes and shoes or setting up fences. My husband and I didn't see each other much on Friday and Saturday, because we were both so busy working in different areas. Even though we didn't see a lot of each other, the whole experience of helping others has taken our marriage to another level and has brought us closer.

After we finished all the preparation, it was time to let our friends from Nuevo Laredo in. Everyone was so appreciative. I remember a little girl who was barefoot and received a pair of shoes. She had a beautiful smile and her

eyes sparkled. I stood back for a second and let that moment sink in. It was at that point I got a true sense of the difference MTM was making in the lives of those in Nuevo Laredo.

There are so many aspects that make MTM unique and meaningful. It was a pleasure getting to meet the humble people of Nuevo Laredo, getting to know the generous volunteers, contributing to the needs of the people in Mexico, and strengthening my marriage. I hope others will take the opportunity to experience something truly special and join in the next MTM trip.

Joanna Rostedt

Unable to go on a Mission Trip? - Please Pray

For several years my wife and I joyfully made the mission trips to Nuevo Laredo. Unfortunately I can no longer go due to health problems. We are still a part of every mission trip as we offer up special prayers for the travel safety of the volunteers on the trip, for the people of the Colonia, and for God's loving presence and tender spirit during the weekend. If you are unable to make the trips to Nuevo Laredo, you can still be a missionary to the people there by praying for the success of each trip. Thank you. *Deacon Larry Terrell*

April Cost of Groceries and Sack Lunches

By Pat Gavia
St. Catherine of Siena, Austin TX

Mission to Mexico spent the following amounts for groceries and sack lunches which were distributed on the April 2008 trip.

Groceries (600 families)

Rice	\$ 1,028.41
Beans	1,097.45
Flour	451.86
Oil	1,195.42
Soap	<u>383.22</u>
	\$ 4,156.36

Sack Lunches (2,000)

Hot Dogs	\$ 220.77
Tortillas	98.80
Bananas	234.00
Cookies	272.33
Candy	129.60
Paper Bags	<u>29.12</u>
	\$ 984.62

Unfortunately, the cost of groceries has been increasing (and is expected to continue to increase). The above amounts increased approximately \$800 over the amount spent for these items on the February trip.

We are so very grateful to our faithful contributors who give money each month to Mission to Mexico. With the increase in food cost, we need your help now more than ever.

In order to continue to serve the same number of families, we will need more funds. If you are not currently donating monthly to Mission to Mexico, please prayerfully consider doing so.

Refer to information in the box on the right about how to make a monetary donation to Mission to Mexico.

Thank you so much for your help.

Pat Gavia

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



Checks can be made out to "**Mission to Mexico.**" Put in the collection baskets at Mass or mail to:

St. Catherine of Siena
4800 Convict Hill Road
Austin, TX 78749-2202



Why We Continue To Go On Mission Trips

By Judy Maldonado
St. Catherine of Siena, Austin TX

My husband, Frank, and I have been going to the MTM trips for almost six years. There is always one incident on each trip that melts my heart.

The first time I went, I was working in the baby department and there was a young boy, 8 or 9 years old, looking longingly at some baby clothes. He told me through Frank, who speaks Spanish, that his mother was home with his sick little baby brother, and he wanted some clothes for him. I thought what an unselfish

child! He didn't want a toy or bike, but clothes for his baby brother.

During the April trip, I again was working in the baby department with Mary Moreno and Bernadette Muras. There was a young mother carrying her severely handicapped son. He was probably 2 or 3 years old, but could not support himself. The mother probably had been waiting in line a long time. When she got up to us in the baby department, all that was left was a dou-

ble stroller and a few baby clothes. She didn't ask for anything, so I asked Mary if we could give her the double stroller even though she only had one child. Mary is a soft touch like me and said, "Yes." The young mother was thrilled.

These are just a couple of reasons why Frank and I continue to go the mission trips.

God bless you all,

Judy Maldonado

Another Trip, Like So Many

By Deacon Mike Meisner
Sacred Heart, La Grange TX

April's trip to the colonia was another typical venture into the world of the extremely poor—just like all the other trips. As with all our trips, God moved over the neighborhood and poured out his Holy Spirit onto so many. Hearts were warmed and souls were touched, and love was shown to a world of suffering and pain. Conversely, the suffering poor provided an avenue for an advance in grace for us, and we grew! Some of us (both volunteers and the poor) saw the face of the Lord and recognized his many identities. Some of us caught sight of the Divine and we thirst for another look or a chance to again em-

brace the Savior. Just another trip like so many.

If it's been a while since you've worked a Mission To Mexico weekend, come see the changes in the colonia; come serve the Lord who waits in line all night to get a bag of groceries. Come and pray your way over the bridge into a land that may both be accurately described as "Purgatory" and as "Heaven." Lots of changes there, yet so much stays the same—the poor, they're always there; they're as desperate today as they were a century ago.

Join in with the volunteer missionaries and rub-elbows,

work side-by-side with saints and with those on the way to sainthood. Share a smile and give a greeting to our brothers and sisters to the south. Give Father Tony a handshake or a bear-hug; give of yourself to the God who waits, who hopes that you, especially YOU, will be there.

Every missionary trip into the colonia is the same—we always find God there and sometimes we find ourselves. Every time we volunteer, it's a totally different adventure that brings our souls up nearer to Glory.

Deacon Mike

June 6—7 Mission to Mexico Trip

Are you planning to be a volunteer on the June 6-7 MTM trip?

Please notify **Rachel Fannin** or **Kelly Contois** at least one week prior to the mission weekend, that is, no later than Friday, May 30. 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



June 6—7 Mission to Mexico Trip *(continued from page 4)*

Monday, June 2 (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.

Website—Check the Mission to Mexico website at www.stcatherine-austin.org (select "Community Ministries," "Organizations" and then "Mission to Mexico") for the current newsletter, future mission trip dates and "Video: See the Mission in Action."

Mission to Mexico Newsletter

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:**

jeanettetterrell@austin.rr.com

512 444-3179 (home)

or 512 426-4363 (cell)

What to bring with you -

VOLUNTEERS please bring these personal items with you for Friday and/or Saturday:

- Enough drinking water and a sack lunch for Friday and/or Saturday to be consumed while at the colonia
- Comfortable clothing, shoes, cap, hat, etc.
- Legal document(s) for border crossing purposes (passport, photo ID, driver's license, birth certificate, etc.) Check for details and updated information on the website for the U.S. Department of State at

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

Transporting Supplies & "Love Cargo"

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, June 6 to load the vehicles (cars, trucks, SUVs, vans, trailers, etc.). We will be leaving for Laredo as soon as vehicles are loaded. Thanks.



Rachel

