



Via CARITAS

Through God's Love

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CARITAS Visits Belize: New Program on the Horizon

After these past years of not being able to travel, we finally had the opportunity to visit Belize once again and reengage with our Catholic brothers and sisters who need our support. **Our mission for this trip had many purposes.**

The first is that we have collected funds to help with the maintenance and renovation of a school on Caye Caulker Island. We were there to physically see what the needs are and speak to a contractor about how much the total costs would be for the needed projects. As of right now, the main concern is the roof that is leaking on the north and south side. They also have security concerns because their fence is dilapidated and even has holes in it. The school would like to build a concrete wall instead of a fence; however, the roof will come first as it is of most concern. We will keep you informed as to how the project continues in future letters.

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Arnold Lezcano, Donna and Joel Nettesheim, and Chris Hoar

**FOLLOW US HERE TO
SEE WHAT OUR KIDS
ARE UP TO!**



The second and most exciting reason we traveled to Belize was to visit poor schools that could certainly benefit from a child sponsorship program. Although many people know Belize as a wonderful vacation spot with beautiful islands, beaches, and many tourists, there are also many people on the mainland who live in poverty and cannot afford to send their children to school. Like other countries where we serve, some of these kids are used to going hungry to bed and have little hope for a brighter future.



Poor School in Belize City: Our Lady of the Way



We traveled to these areas with Celia Usher, the Director for Catholic Schools, who showed us inside the schools and the surrounding neighborhoods. Celia introduced us to the principals and children, and opened conversations to discuss the needs of the people in the area. We met several other people including the bishop's representative (Father Chi) to discuss how best to create a Catholic child sponsorship program in Belize. **Before the year ends, we will have profiles of several children on our website** who are in desperate need of a sponsor and will be welcomed in the schools which we explored. *(Cont. on page 3)*



CARITAS with Celia Usher and Father Chi

Additionally, we're also hoping that because Belize is such a beautiful and accessible place, more sponsors would love to go visit their child. This should create an even deeper relationship than regular pictures, letters, and videos. **We are also envisioning more opportunities for mission trips as Belize is generally a safe area, is centrally located, and is relatively quick and easy to travel to.** During our trip, we stayed at a retreat center where missionaries would be welcome to stay in the future.



Belize City: Our Lady of Guadalupe Mercy Center

Thanks be to God, this trip was a success, and we accomplished all that we planned. We now have more steps to take for both the building project and the child sponsorship program and will keep everyone in our CARITAS family informed with new developments. Please pray for the success of this new program!

PTPA Conference in Nashville: Parish Twinning Program of the Americas

Several members of our CARITAS Team were edified after attending the Parish Twinning Program's national conference held Aug. 26-28 in Nashville, TN. During the conference we learned that **the [Parish Twinning Program of the Americas](#) (PTPA) has established almost 300 twinning relationships between parishes in the U.S. with parishes in Haiti and Latin America.**

Of course, while we were impressed with their accomplishments over the last 40+ years, we were most touched by the missionary spirit, the desire to evangelize, and the generosity of all the members we met during those three days, both within the PTPA staff and among parish members from all over the U.S.

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Meeting with mission-minded parishioners

We certainly felt what Nashville Bishop J. Mark Spalding said to the attendees: *“Our moment here is to remind us once again the good news is what we are about...The good news of Jesus Christ always keeps our eyes open and our hearts as well.”*

During these days, we were introduced to many brothers and sisters whose hearts have been radically changed as they encountered the hearts of the poor people in Haiti and Latin America. Since then, they have been focused on **emphasizing relationships between the sister parishes, not just supporting the poor with material resources.** This building and nurturing of relationships is exactly what CARITAS For Children believes is the key to mission, ministry and evangelization.



Theresa Patterson (Founder) and David Siler (President)

We believe that charity is best accomplished in relationship, not simply

through one-sided giving or anonymous donations - though of course these too are vital! From our experience, we have seen that both the beneficiary and the benefactor are filled with the streams of God’s love (*caritas*) when the relationship is allowed to flow both ways.

The USCCB also mentions this in a document titled [Partners in Mission](#): ***“If the partnership is based solely on resources, then the partner with few material resources is excluded from full and mutual participation. When the relationship itself is highly valued, it allows for mutual participation and transformation, and all are invited to participate equally, as we all have the ability to love and pray and be present to one another.”***



Doug Blake singing "All Things are Possible"

To show solidarity with us, Haitian musician Doug Blake came to lead us in song, remembering that **although mission and ministries involve challenges, all things are possible with Christ.** Together, we all sang the song he wrote, titled [All Things Are Possible](#), and it became our theme song during the whole conference and beyond.

Reunion With Our Beloved Haitian Sisters

In late August, we were blessed to visit four sisters in Chicago from the congregation of the Little Sisters of Saint Therese of the Child Jesus (PSST). **These sisters have been the Ministry Service Providers for our sponsored children in Haiti since 2010**, and it's always wonderful to see them.



Chris Hoar, a sponsored child, and Sr. Lops in 2015

This meeting was bittersweet because of the topics that we needed to discuss. We made sure to **remind the sisters repeatedly that children's pictures and letters are extremely meaningful for their sponsors**. Since the COVID restrictions in 2020 and even more so since the earthquake last summer, the ability for our Sponsorship Coordinator to travel the country to gather letters has been increasingly compromised.

As you may remember from our [Fall 2021 Newsletter](#), our Sponsorship Coordinator Felix was robbed by gang members at gunpoint while he was traveling to a school. It is not being mentioned much in the news, but **things are very dangerous in Haiti as gangs are taking over territories and major roads**. A few months ago, Felix was forced to move his family away from his home and now is living in a different location where he feels safer, but he is still very cautious about traveling.

The sisters agreed that Haiti has been having a lot of political unrest which has increased heavily since Covid began. **They also told us stories of two sisters in their congregation who were recently kidnapped by bandits, and the congregation was forced to pay a ransom to have them returned**. They too are being much more cautious these days as they have also faced several burglary attempts.



Chris Hoar's recent visit with Sr. Lops in Chicago

Even though we are saddened by the situation in Haiti and pray for our sisters, children, and team members, we cannot ignore the fact that a major component of our sponsorship program is the building of relationships. We made this absolutely clear and asked them to **work with Felix by first acquiring the letters and pictures from the children within their schools. The sisters can then send them electronically to Felix who will print them, translate them, scan them, then send them electronically to our main CARITAS office.**

Sister Lops agreed that this was doable, but they will need some training. **We will be working during the next couple of months to train a sister in each school to help in this process.** We are hopeful that this will be a great solution to the issues we are facing in Haiti. We ask that in your prayers you remember the Little Sisters of Saint Therese and our children in Haiti.



Chris Hoar with the Sisters before their return to Haiti

Seminarians' Celebration: Final Profession of Vows

Joyful news! 3 of our sponsored seminarians – Brs. Simon, John and Robert – have recently made their final vows as Capuchin Brothers

before becoming priests! They made their Perpetual Profession to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi with the Capuchin Franciscan Order. This is their final big milestone before their ordination as they journey to the priesthood, which will be in another 3 years.



The Brothers lie prostrate before the altar

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Br. Robert Bwambale



Br. John Martin-Opio



Br. Simon Muyunga

Our Ministry Coordinator, Alon, was blessed to attend the Profession and witnessed the profound joy of these young men, their community, and their families. He tells us that the **family members who attended, even those who initially did not support their decision to join the priesthood, were moved by what they saw!** They feel proud that they are soon to be the relatives of priests. Thanks be to God for their change of hearts!

Please enjoy these photos taken by Alon of the Profession and celebration and continue to pray for our sponsored seminarians as they journey towards the priesthood.



Spotlight on a Child in Need

Denis Kamyá and his six younger siblings lost their mother some time ago. Their father, a peasant gardener, has been working hard to support his large family on his own by growing enough food for them to eat. He was not able to send his children to school, but thankfully, all of his school-aged children received CARITAS sponsorships for their education, including Dennis.

Denis is now on his way to becoming another CARITAS success story. He recently finished secondary school and was accepted to vocational school to study Agricultural-Veterinary science in hopes of becoming an Agro-Vet doctor! His wonderful sponsor of many years was able to support him in beginning his new program but sadly cannot afford to finish. **Denis will need a new sponsor to help him complete his degree.**



[Denis Kamyá, 21](#)

He is a tenacious young man who is learning a lot, keeping his grades at a high level, and doing everything he can to one day be able to support his younger siblings.

To help Denis finish his education, he will require another sponsor at the level of \$72/month for two years, or two sponsors at \$36/month. **He is in great need of finding a new sponsor soon so that he can continue his program.**



Denis hard at work with fellow students in his Agro-Vet program

[Click Here to visit Denis' profile on our website!](#)