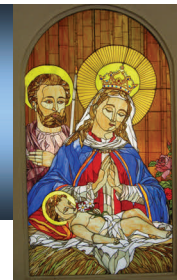




La Sagrada Familia



News from and about our family in the Dominican Republic

September, 2014

Sixth Issue

World Mission Ministries
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
PO Box 070912
3501 South Lake Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912

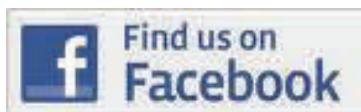
Antoinette Mensah
Director
(414) 758-2282
mensaha@archmil.org

Bashaun Wray
Administrative Secretary/Bookkeeper
(414) 758-2281
wrayb@archmil.org

Beth Lewinski
Administrative Secretary/Web Manager
(414) 758-2280
lewinskib@archmil.org

Fr. Martí Colom
Former Pastor La Sagrada Familia
Pastoral Consultant

Tom Roeder
Volunteer Newsletter Facilitator
troeder@wi.rr.com



World Mission Ministries is now on Facebook! Connect with us and 'like' us...find out what is happening in La Sagrada Familia and with other global mission efforts in our archdiocese.

Just click on the image below or you can go to:
<http://tinyurl.com/WMM-FB>.



Thanks for being a friend!

IT'S BACK! — Antoinette Mensah

It's Back! La Sagrada Familia News – new and enhanced to provide you with the stories behind the scenes of our sister parish in the Dominican Republic. For many of our faithful supporters there has been a void in communication about the happenings in our Sister Parish, La Sagrada Familia. Many of you have requested the LaSF Newsletter and I am happy to say it's back. Our goal is that this serve as a two-way conversation allowing all involved to learn and grow in solidarity. We hope to provide quarterly sharing of our relationship and it starts with you, the faithful of our respective parishes.

We welcome your input, stories, pictures and reflections on visits and connections made. With access to technology we can also share our newsletter electronically. The success of this newsletter is a collaborative effort. Your sharing of experiences will provide insight to others who have yet to visit; insights from the DR will also serve as a feature reflecting on life in the DR. We need and want to hear from you. Please e-mail your items to Tom Roeder, Newsletter Facilitator, at troeder@wi.rr.com.

NEW NEWSLETTER NAME CONTEST

Earlier I said this is the new and enhanced LaSF News. So what is being enhanced? – Our name! How so? We will have a competition and unveil the new name with our next issue. If you've been to La Sagrada Familia, think of what that experience meant to you and perhaps you will generate the new name.

Please e-mail your ideas along with your name to wmo@archmil.org. Indicate 'Newsletter Contest' in the subject line of your e-mail. We welcome your ideas!

Antoinette Mensah is the Director of the World Mission Ministries office of our Archdiocese

STILL THERE? OF COURSE!

— Fr. Martí Colom

It does not happen very often, but once in a while, when trying to raise or increase awareness about Milwaukee's sister parish in the Dominican Republic, someone will ask, "Are we still there?" "After more than 30 years of partnership, hasn't the Archdiocese done enough?" "Aren't the people of La Sagrada Familia self-sufficient by now?" These are important questions that should not be dismissed quickly. Why are we still there?

First of all, we are there because to be missionaries is in our nature, as Pope Francis keeps reminding us: the Church is permanently invited to "go forth". He writes: "In our day Jesus' command 'to go and make disciples' echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church's mission of evangelization, and *all of us are called to take part in this new missionary 'going forth'*. Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 20). In fact, we are only truly Catholic when we go beyond the boundaries of our own geography, culture, needs and problems. In this way, Milwaukee can be very proud of the lasting witness to the universal nature of our Church that our partnership with the Dominican Republic embodies.



Secondly, and equally important, we are still there because the people of *La Sagrada Familia* are our brothers and sisters: together we have developed precious bonds of friendship that are a treasure to us all. From that perspective, the "are we still there?" question really makes no sense. It would be as if someone would ask: why do you still spend time with your brother? Are you still married to the same person? Do you still love your parents, your siblings and your children? Of course!

Thirdly, yes, we are there because the needs remain huge and daunting. Do we think we have a problem with the shortage of priests up here? Well, the two priests from Milwaukee in La Sagrada Familia serve 22 towns and 30,000 people, the majority of whom have little Christian formation and live in poverty. The Diocese of San Juan de la Maguana, to which La Sagrada Familia belongs, has 500,000 Catholics and 28 diocesan priests; Milwaukee has 660,000 Catholics and 322 diocesan priests. In terms of their material needs, should not they be self-sufficient by now? While a lot has been done in that regard in the last 30 years, I would invite anyone with that question to travel to our sister parish and spend a few weeks there. To reduce dependency from Milwaukee (or from anyone else, for that matter) is the driving force behind all our pastoral programs there – yet, the goal remains distant.

Finally, and this is not a cliché, we are there because we need this partnership as much as *La Sagrada Familia* needs Milwaukee. Our presence there, the connections that keep developing between people from the DR and people from our parishes, the witness of so many Milwaukee priests who have been there, the experiences of so many groups who visit the parish every year, all this makes *us* a healthier, better, and if you will, more Catholic Church.

So, are we still there? Of course! Thanks be to God!

Fr. Martí Colom was pastor at La Sagrada Familia from 2003-2013.



THE FISHING ROD

— Fr. Esteban Redolad

If you give a person a fish, you feed him for a day. But if you give her a fishing rod, you feed her for a lifetime.

Nice, deep, and true words from popular wisdom. Words that we, here in La Sagrada Familia, take to heart.

There are, of course, nuances to the proverb. There are particularities that would call for some expansion to the original metaphor: *If you give a person a fishing rod make sure she knows how to use it. A fishing rod is useless unless you have the strength to hold it. Behind a fishing rod there is a person with her immediate and unique needs.*

Our mission is to build capacities (material, psychological, and spiritual) not dependencies. And yet there are many instances when we have to take care of the present moment, the *heres* and *nows* that don't understand about long strategies, planning, and fitting proverbs. A particular mother may need immediate transport to take her child to the hospital: she needs the fish. She probably knows that what makes a difference is the fishing rod, but for now she needs the fish.

We know that besides the urgent need to take care of the unavoidable symptoms of poverty, what is most important is providing the *fishing rod* to tackle its causes. And that is why for us education is paramount. Education is the one tool that can break the vicious circle of poverty, the one that can make people stop their need of asking for fish. That is why education is an aspect that runs through all the programs and projects we do. Let me name some:

Haitian Ministry. There are about 5000 to 7000 undocumented, exploited, neglected, and marginalized Haitian families living in the parish territory of La Sagrada Familia. When they arrive, the need to adapt to their new home is imperative. Language, legal status, and cultural differences are social barriers that need to be addressed quickly. So the fishing rod they need is education in language, legal procedures, health issues or faith related needs. Through workshops and seminars we give them not only information but a space outside their own where they can voice their fears, concerns and dreams.



Two children playing a game.

Literacy Programs. Part of our jail ministry is to educate the inmates. We coordinate a literacy program and workshops in several skills. We want to give the inmates a proper conducive atmosphere for the peace and quietness of mind, though this is still a project on the making. We are involved in coordinating a literacy program run by the government countrywide. For this year, we have several parish teams committed to teach reading and writing to around 250 people in the parish territory.

Student Support. For the youngsters we organize six homework halls in six towns of the area. These are spaces where any student who wishes can go and find a conducive atmosphere (quietness, light, and a tutor) to do their homework. We have also opened five mini-libraries where students can find and borrow text and literary books to be used for their studies and recreation. All in all, around 700 students are using these facilities.

This article is continued on the following page.....

THE FISHING ROD (continued)

Scholarships. Perhaps one of the most significant education projects we run is the scholarship program. We are able and privileged to help with the expenses of around 60 young men and women who are determined to finish their studies — especially high school students. It's a program run on case by case basis. The assistance provided depends on the situation of each student and his or her family. What they all have in common is that, one way or another, they must give back to the community what they receive. Some are involved in parish activities. Some will help others with their newly acquired skills, (computer, health field, accounting, etc.). And some will bring produce from their families' land. This is not about paying a debt or about making a profit, it's about building up the fishing rod of self-esteem and dignity.



Students at La Sagrada Familia

All of these programs are made possible due to support from many individuals and institutions. Some people help a particular student, but most of the time there are institutions, parishes or non-profits (from Spain, the US or local) who are able to help a group of students. We are equally thankful to all of them. We know education is an investment in the future, but is still expensive. What seems clear is one thing: no matter how many resources are available, there is always a need for more fishing rods.

Fr. Esteban Redolad is currently serving as pastor of La Sagrada Familia.

REFLECTIONS OF A PILGRIM — Kaitlin Leary, St. Mary Parish, Kenosha

Deacon Wilson Shierk, our mission leader, asked me to write a short reflection about my experiences on our mission trip to La Sagrada Familia. Instantly, I knew I would write about Jonathan, a ten year old Dominican child. While working at the eye clinic for three days, I noticed this child out the window. Every day he wore the same black shirt, ripped jeans, and no shoes.

Whenever I would go outside he would follow me around and we became friends. One night I invited him to Mass and asked him where his shoes were. He responded with “no tengo zapatos” or “I do not have shoes.” After Mass, Jonathan followed me back home. My house father recognized this boy and told me that his parents, who had psychological problems, neglect him and his sister. He also mentioned that the two children are frequently found in the street sleeping. The next day, I found Jonathan in the same spot as usual. I asked him when was the last time he ate, and he did not remember. At dinner, I took extra food to him and after that I did not see him again.

Some nights, I wonder why God decided to give me such a wonderful life and not Jonathan. What did I do and what didn't Jonathan do to deserve this. Even though Jonathan was poor and at times hungry, he always had the biggest smile on his face.



Through this trip, I realized that my bad days are nothing compared to what some Dominicans and Haitians have to face in their daily lives. I would like to ask that whenever you eat or say your prayers, thank our Lord for what he has blessed you with and ask God to help those in need in the Dominican Republic and others in the third world.

This article was reprinted with permission from the newsletter published by Deacon Wilson Shierk who leads a mission to La Sagrada Familia yearly.

REFLECTIONS OF A PILGRIM

— Jill Consolazione, Holy Apostles Parish, New Berlin

The relationship of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee with La Sagrada Familia (LaSF) has grown into something very special for me and for my parish. Two years ago the people of LaSF welcomed a small group from Holy Apostles Parish into their lives. It couldn't have been more appropriate for that visit to have been during Pentecost as I've never felt the Holy Spirit more than when I was there. I fell in love with the people and their spirit has never left me. Although life and living conditions are different than mine, I've never felt so at home and so I returned a second time.



I have a clouded memory of the many challenges the people of LaSF face because at the forefront of my memory is the people's spirit. To name a few of the challenges, inadequate housing, education, healthcare, child care, jobs, food and water. I don't intend to skip over or to minimize the challenges of life at LaSF, but I hesitate to expand on details. Please know and be aware that the challenges are real and many. Basic human dignities are lacking and much help is needed. When I reflect on my time at LaSF, however, I dwell on the hope and faith of how the people deal with the challenges, not on the challenges themselves.

Along with this article, I wish to share some photos I took. To the left is a young boy. Below is an old woman in a schoolroom and to the left below is a young family outside their home.

I have been witness to how essential the presence of the parish is for the community. The challenges of life and living conditions are managed in large part through the parish. At LaSF, the parish provides much more than daily liturgy, it lives the liturgy daily. The parish facilitates and supports programs that aid in better life and living conditions for all of its people. It provides in all social facets of daily living: housing, education, healthcare, childcare, jobs, food and water. Despite the people being so full of spirit, it's the parish that tangibly offers a profusion of that spirited hope for the future that would otherwise not be present.



I have been witness to people who have very little possessions but are hugely rich in faith. I have been moved personally by people with such faith and love and so have been moved to share what I've seen and what I've felt. Spreading awareness of the social needs is necessary, but an awareness of the loving spirit that comes from our sister parish is integral in sustaining our future relationship. We must acknowledge that we nurture the needs of one another. I share my hope that the friendship between LaSF and the Archdiocese of Milwaukee can continue to blossom. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee and LaSF are blessed to walk together on this journey to improve our faith in life and living conditions for generations to come.

Please keep the people of La Sagrada Familia in your thoughts and prayers as they do the same for us.

NEW FACES AT LA SAGRADA FAMILIA — Fr. Esteban Redolad

This is a new period for the La Sagrada Familia Newsletter. One of the many things that has happened since the last issue of the newsletter is that the leading team at La Sagrada is not exactly the same. I would like to introduce our team - all who are members of the Community of Saint Paul (CSP).

I will start with the one who has been here the longest, Dolores Puértolas. Dolores is from Spain but she left many years ago. She has a degree in German and English language and literature and Religious sciences. She has lived and worked in Bolivia and Kenya. Dolores started her new adventure at La Sagrada Familia in 2010 as a pastoral associate especially coordinating several development projects and women's groups. Dolores enjoys swimming in the beautiful beaches of the parish whenever she has free time to do so.

Another team member is Fr. Juan Manuel Camacho. He was born in Colombia and ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in May, 2012. Juan Manuel came to La Sagrada Familia when he was a young man discerning his vocation to the priesthood in 2003. He lived for 5 years here. Then he went to Kenya for yet another missionary experience and finally landed in Milwaukee where he joined St. Francis Seminary. This is his first assignment as a priest. Juan Manuel has been coordinating the Haitian ministry of the parish and is also running several development and pastoral programs. Juan Manuel loves studying and researching on the life of Saint Paul. He is a gladly frustrated economist but still an avid reader of global economy books.

Finally there is me, Fr. Esteban Redolad. I was born in Spain and ordained in Kenya where I lived for 12 years. In 2005, I went to Milwaukee to study my MA in Theology at Marquette University. Then, I was assigned to St Patrick and Cristo Rey parishes in Racine for two years. In August, 2013, I was assigned to the parish of La Sagrada Familia. Since I arrived here, together with Dolores and Juan Manuel, I have been coordinating several pastoral and development initiatives especially the Saint Vincent De Paul Conferences of the parish and the Jail Ministry. I love history and I enjoy sporting when possible and once in a while I enjoy a good movie.

Also, there is a group of six committed and hardworking young men and women. Some are members of the CSP and others are candidates of the CSP. They are in their formation period both academic and human. I can confidently say that, without them, we could not do half of the activities we are currently undertaking.



In the photo, Dolores is at the far right in the back row, Juan Manuel is in the front row, and I am third from the left in the back row.

Life at La Sagrada Familia has very enjoyable moments but also has its own challenges both at the pastoral and community level. I am sure I can speak for all of us when I tell you that living here gives us a deep sense of peace and meaning to our lives and ministry.

We know we are part of a bigger machinery of love that makes all the initiatives, all the successes, all the challenges, and all the dreams possible. We are thankful for the many faithful, hardworking, committed, enthusiastic people both here and in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and its many parishes. With your support, you are not just helping things happen at La Sagrada Familia, you are truly part of what is happening. Thank you!

NEW FACES AT WORLD MISSION MINISTRIES

There are two new faces in the three person team at our Archdiocese World Mission Ministries.

Antoinette Mensah, New Director. Antoinette joins the staff with a passion for mission and commitment to service that facilitates relationships. She has served in many capacities as volunteer in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee from Executive council of the APC, Chair of the Black Catholic Ministry Commission and coordinator of Mission Office pilgrimage to Ghana in 2000. A native of Ghana, West Africa, Antoinette came to Milwaukee at 5 months and has a heart for diversity and bridging cultures in faith. She joined the staff as director in October 2013. She is the mother of one son, Anthony, who is a senior attending St. Lawrence Seminary in Mt. Calvary. Currently she is working on a doctorate in Leadership for the Advancement of Learning and Service at Cardinal Stritch. The *Catholic Herald* has an excellent article on Antoinette. [Click here](#) for the article or you can go to: <http://tinyurl.com/CHN-Mensah>.

Beth Lewinski, Administrative Assistant and Web Page Manager. Beth is a Milwaukee native and graduate of the University of Notre Dame, where she had a special focus on web design and accessibility, media principles, and cultural studies. She has been with World Mission Ministries since 2006.

Beth visited our sister parish in 2008 as part of the yearly pilgrimage and was struck by the kindness and hospitality of everyone she met. She vividly remembers one encounter, when, after thanking a local hostess for her hospitality, the hostess replied: "All that I have is a gift from God, so I am happy to share it with all." Beth's favorite part of her job is hearing the stories of visiting missionary's work and helping to share those stories with the people of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.



Bashaun (left), Antoinette (center), and Beth (right)

World Mission Ministries



One Church One Community One Love

Bashaun Wray, New Bookkeeper. Bashaun brings her accounting background to her role as bookkeeper. She had previously worked as an Accountant and Office Manager for Milwaukee based engineering and communications organizations. Bashaun is a numbers person with great people skills. She brings coordination, customer service and understanding of accounting and finance principles to her job which allows the office to report its finances accurately.

Bashaun and her family are very active and engaged Catholics. She and her husband are certified archdiocesan FOCCUS (Facilitate Open Couple Communication, Understanding Study) facilitators as well involved with UMOJA – a program of the Black Catholic Ministry Commission. She and her husband are the proud parents of two young adult children that form a close loving family filled with faith.

WANT MORE INFORMATION? TRY THESE LINKS

To access the World Mission Ministries section of the Archdiocese website, [click here](#) or you can go to: <http://tinyurl.com/WorldMissionMinistries>.

To access the La Sagrada Familia section of the Archdiocese website, [click here](#) or you can go to: <http://tinyurl.com/SagradaFamilia-MKE>.

SOLES FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION – GET INVOLVED! — Antoinette Mensah

As the Nancy Sinatra song goes “These Boots were made for walkin!” kick off your boots and put on your sneakers and join the La Sagrada Familia Walk team on Saturday, October 25th for the 2nd annual SOLES FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION at Mount Mary University – 2900 N. Menomonee River Parkway. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m.; the walking at 10:00 a.m. This 2-mile walk will take us around the Mt. Mary University Campus and end with refreshments, music and children’s activities.

As we walk in Milwaukee, our brothers and sisters in Sabana Yegua will join us in solidarity and to do their part in raising funds for education. Why should you be involved – just check out Raquel’s story:



Raquel is twenty years old. She belongs to a family of 8. Her father is a farmer and her mother takes care of the house and the children. Raquel belongs to the youth group in the parish, where one of the things she likes most is to help needy people. She was happy a month ago when the group helped build a house for a sick family. Raquel thinks that being part of the youth group helps her learn many things and grow with values.

When she finished secondary school she approached the parish asking for support. She wanted to start university but her family could not support her. We agreed to help with the university fees and she would provide for the transport and materials. She started as a laboratory technician. After one year of studies, she asked to help on a volunteer basis in our clinic, so as to gain experience. So now she is learning with our lab technician three times a week. Raquel knows that she cannot miss classes and has to be one of the best students, because she has a chance that many others don't have.

Join our team to help Raquel and so many others achieve their goal of a quality education. The La Sagrada Walk Team Coordinating Group includes, from left to right: Stephanie & Jill (Holy Apostles), Judy (St. Catherine of Alexandria) and LeAnn (St. Anne). [Click here](http://tinyurl.com/LSF-Walk) to join our team or you can go to: <http://tinyurl.com/LSF-Walk> .

