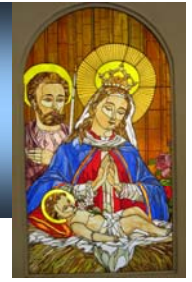




La Sagrada Familia



News from and about our family in the Dominican Republic .

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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.

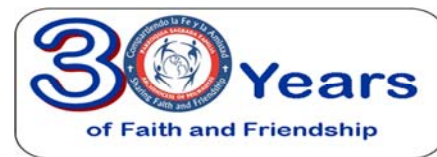
Just click on the image below and you will be taken to our Facebook page.



Thanks for being a friend!

OUR FOURTH ISSUE—MAY 2011

Yes! It has been 30 years since our archdiocese began its relationship with La Sagrada Familia. Throughout this issue you will see the 30th anniversary logo:



This issue begins with a reflection by S Fran Cunningham on these past thirty years. [Here.](#)

Page 4 is an invitation to the BIG CELEBRATION of these 30 years. An RSVP is needed, so check this out right away. [Here.](#)

Fr. Martí reflects on his 7 years at the parish and how he has "Discovered the Face of God" in his parishioners. [Here.](#)

A new parish Pastoral Associate, Dolores Puértolas, is introduced on page 6. [Here.](#)

Dolores follows with an article on the first parish Literary Contest. [Here.](#)

Next, we have articles on two missions to the parish. First, a group made up mostly of parishioners from four churches in Kenosha conducted an eye clinic and started a pig breeding project. [Here.](#)

This is followed by information on a Dental Clinic Mission sponsored by Compassionate Dental Care International. [Here.](#)

We end with a reflection from one of the pilgrims who just visited the parish during Lent. There are pilgrimages each Lent. It is a wonderful experience. You are welcome to join. This pilgrim was back for a second visit. [Here.](#)

Your reflections, your activities which support the parish, and your articles are welcome. Your feedback is always appreciated. E-mail your items to troeder@wi.rr.com. Thank you.

30 YEARS OF SHARING FAITH AND FRIENDSHIP MOVING INTO THE FUTURE - S. Fran Cunningham

An anniversary is an opportunity to dream about new ways in which to continue a meaningful relationship! In terms of a relationship between persons, it's an opportunity to describe how each wants to express his or her identity within the context of a deepening relationship. In a relationship between a diocese and a parish in different countries, an anniversary is an opportunity for both parish and diocese to create new ways in which to let people know that the life of each has become better because of the other.

In 1981 the Archdiocese began a relationship with La Sagrada Familia/Holy Family parish in the Dominican Republic. Since that time fourteen pastors and two lay missionaries from our archdiocese have ministered among the people there. Today our priests and their Dominican staff continue to minister among 30,000 people in 22 villages and a prison.

The day we broke ground for the church was a happy day for both the archdiocese and the soon-to-be parishioners of La Sagrada Familia. Please see the four photos of that wonderful day.



Among the tangible accomplishments in these thirty years there is now a main Church and pastoral center, small chapels in several of the villages, catechetical and adult formation programs and a center for Haitian ministries. To address the health needs, in addition to the primary health center with part time physicians, dentist, nurse, lab technician and pharmacy, there are two nutrition centers for children, first aid stations and health promoters. For other social needs there are agricultural projects, sewing, computer and literacy classes and educational scholarships for promising students. Due to the consistent attention of our pastors, the prison has pastoral and educational programs sponsored by La Sagrada Familia staff and parishioners. The buildings, programs and ministries provided by our priests and their staff are a tribute to the generous mission spirit of our archdiocese and to the Dominican people themselves.

(Continued on the next page)



30 YEARS OF SHARING FAITH AND FRIENDSHIP MOVING INTO THE FUTURE (CONTINUED)



Photos from 1981 of the area where the parish church was built.

In recent years the relationship between the parish and our archdiocese has become more personal and consistent. There are annual visits of persons from our archdiocese and some persons go more than once. Seminarians want to include an experience in our sister parish as part of their preparation for ministry. More professional persons including dentists, oculists, and water project advisors want to offer their skills to improve the quality of life. Parishioners from our archdiocese want to form closer relationships with individual villages in the large parish. School children want to interact with their sisters and brothers in the Dominican Republic. Thirty years from now another generation of parishioners from la Sagrada Familia and the archdiocese of Milwaukee may well say of themselves that each has grown in a spirit of mutual respect and trust that gives them strength and desire to work together to achieve a common good!



The parish church today.



COME, MEET AND CELEBRATE!

You are invited to meet Fr. Martí Colom and his companions from La Sagrada Familia Parish. Come and be a part of our modest effort to raise friends and funds for La Sagrada Familia while celebrating 30 Years of Faith and Friendship!

This is a rare opportunity to learn firsthand about our archdiocesan sister parish. You can also meet people who have visited our sister parish in the Dominican Republic, as well as those who are interested in learning more about the people and the parish.

Enjoy good food, meet great people and spend an enjoyable evening with friends!

Date: May 24, 2011

Place: St. Joseph Center
1501 S. Layton Blvd
Milwaukee

Time: 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Donation: \$25

Pre-registration is requested.

Click <http://www.archmil.org/parishes/Sagrada-Familia/ThirtyYears.htm>

Or, for more information call Beth at 414-758-2280

DISCOVERING THE FACE OF GOD - Fr. Martí Colom

It's been seven years since I moved from Milwaukee to Sabana Yegua to serve at La Sagrada Familia. I have been asked to write down a few thoughts about my experience as a priest in this context. The first thought that comes to mind is: "It's wonderful!"

Indeed, for me these have been very fulfilling years, both as a priest and as human being. Having to learn the dynamics of a new culture, immersing oneself in a social fabric previously unfamiliar to me and most of all, discovering the face of God in a human reality that I did not initially know, is a very healthy, positive process at many different levels. I would like to focus on the last aspect I just mentioned: discovering the face of God in this context.

The Southwest of the DR is not only the least developed region of this beautiful country, it is also the least Catholic one. Historically, the presence of the Church here has been quite limited - the diocese where we live was only founded fifty years ago. Most people are simply "unchurched".

Yet, maybe this is our greatest blessing. For here we have the opportunity to build on a Church that can take a fresh look at things. The lack of "churchy" language and practices has allowed us to see more clearly God at work in people's daily, secular, regular lives. We have learned that the absence of a Catholic culture does not mean the absence of God.

Here is where "discovering the face of God" becomes a joyful exercise. We may not see Christ in big Churches filled with hundreds of people (certainly not here!) But we do see Christ in the gatherings of so many associations (farmers, fishermen, women...) that work for the development of this area. And, in the children pictured at the right. We may not hear Christ in very well crafted prayers, but we do in the wisdom of people's advice to one another. We may not find Christ in well-structured formal celebrations, but we do in the dialogue that takes place under the shade of a mango tree at the end of the day, sharing a cup of coffee with a few families who are concerned about the future of their children. We may not celebrate many Church weddings - but that does not mean people do not love each other.

Obviously, all this is not to imply that we do not work to teach our people the richness of the Catholic tradition. We do, every day. But it does mean that God has found ways to be present here and to move people's hearts before the Church arrived - as God always does. Our task is to first recognize this presence with gratefulness and then help build a humble, welcoming Church, where ultimately the profound wisdom of our tradition and the daily lives of the people can enhance and enrich one another.



INTRODUCING DOLORES PUÉRTOLAS, OUR NEW PASTORAL ASSOCIATE - Fr. Martí Colom

An important piece of information about La Sagrada Familia, for all those interested in our parish, is that since last August we have a new and dynamic pastoral Associate - Dolores Puértolas. Dolores is from Spain and, like me, is a member of the Community of Saint Paul, the Public Association of the faithful based in Milwaukee. The Community also has several young men who are spending some time in La Sagrada Familia as part of their formation.

Dolores has been a missionary for many years, with experience in Bolivia, Mexico and Kenya. Before coming here, she lived for a few years in Spain, where she helped run an organization that supports development projects all over the world. Dolores is the woman wearing shorts in the photo.

With this experience, she has been a great addition to our pastoral team. She brings with her a deep interest in helping people to move on in life with their own resources, breaking free from any kind of dependence. Therefore, in the past few months she has been very active in fostering new educational programs for our young people in Sabana Yegua, aware – as we all know – that education is always the key to real development.

Dolores also supervises our Health Program, helps with celebrations of the Word in our various communities, has been coordinating the parish's ongoing effort to built latrines, and is involved in many other activities. Those of you coming to visit the parish in the future will surely meet her. We are all grateful for her willingness to come and share with us the daily life of our parish. One of Dolores' projects was a Literary Contest. She writes an article on the contest on page 7. The photo below shows participants.



Participants in the first
Literary Contest.

See article on page 7.

FIRST LITERARY CONTEST IN SABANA YEGUA - Dolores Puértolas

One of main concerns in Sabana Yegua and its surrounding communities is to find ways to improve the level of education. La Sagrada Familia is not directly involved in the school system. But, we are involved indirectly through our preschool education provided in the nutrition centers, our scholarships for youth to attend private schools, the job training centers and other adult education activities including literacy programs and the school for Haitian immigrants.

In addition to these more formal efforts that we have been doing for several years now, we thought of promoting reading for pleasure among the students. We had the idea of starting a small library where the youth could borrow novels, stories...books to enjoy, to learn the pleasure of reading. The library in Sabana Yegua is very deficient and is rarely open, making it almost non-existent for any practical purpose. The public library in the provincial capital of Azua is something better, but has been closed for renovation for about the last three years. So we thought we would give a small library a try. During the last few months, we were able to get a few donations from editors, publishers, and distributors in Santo Domingo in order to stock our newly installed shelves in the computer center. As of present, we have been loaning books for the last month and a half, and students have shown a definite interest.

Writing goes hand in hand with reading, so we discussed the idea of starting the first writing contest in Sabana Yegua to promote it. We began to announce it in masses in November, making sure to give importance to the prizes: three for each category, prose and verse, and for three different age groups, making a total of 18 prizes. The theme of the contest was "Sabana Yegua" (in part to avoid possible plagiarism), and the children and youth were required to sign with a pseudonym to avoid partiality on the part of the judges. Their real name had to be enclosed in an envelope stapled to the work. This helped to also enthruse the participation of children, who were fascinated by the aura of mystery!

The works soon began to arrive and the jury, composed by Fr. Martí, Mike Wolfe and me, enjoyed reading them and giving their scores. Even though spelling and grammar were not always very correct, some works were actually quite good, original, poetic or with some important historical content about Sabana Yegua.

The day of the awards 40 children and youth who had participated filled the parish hall with their friends and relatives, eager to know who the winners were. The ceremony started with a "defense of the word", including some citations from the acceptance speech of the most recent Nobel laureate, Mario Vargas Llosa, in which he proclaims the importance of reading and writing. It also included the reading of two poems by famous writers read with classical music in the background, to give it a bit more pizzazz. It was indeed a solemn moment that got the audience's attention.

Afterwards the prizes were given and the winners in the older category (from ages 18 to 21) read their works. All the participants who had not received any prize were given a notebook as a gift for participating. The celebration finished with some refreshments and a smile in everybody's face. We are sure that the second edition of the literary contest will have many more participants!

Please look at the photo on page 6.



MISSION MAGIC - Deacon Wilson Shierk

Each of us carries a lifetime of memories, sad and happy images that cram our long-term memory and often come spilling out when least expected. A chance comment, a long forgotten song, a detour to an old neighborhood, or some other prompt has the power to trigger our memory and pull out images that take us back to another time. Recalling past events often generate unforgettable images of past tragedies and treasures that we continually balance against our present day hopes and joys.

Jesus set the pace for missionaries as he struggled to balance the needs of others with his need for prayer and quiet time, allowing him the strength to bring God's love and hope to others. It was his love that brought that hope--- hope in him, hope for salvation, and hope for healing and forgiveness. Jesus provides us with the model for our faith journeys as well. It is our role as disciples to continue to bring that same hope to all whom we meet.

It is hope that motivates the members of the religious Community of St. Paul who are currently working to bring the love of Jesus to thousands of people in our sister parish, La Sagrada Familia. It is hope that brought our group of 24 to our sixth visit to the parish and the memories of that visit continue to interrupt my daily routine.



During our stay we conducted an eye clinic under the supervision of Dr. Steve Slana, providing over 500 people with glasses and eye care. The photos show the eye clinic in action. We also began a pig-breeding project developed by Ryan Ferguson, his wife, father and friends, who purchased and fenced in land and built a pig breeding structure. This project will eventually help a number of local families. We also had the opportunity to travel to other areas of the parish encouraging, directing, praying and celebrating liturgy. Our mission experience was both heartwarming and sad. There is so much need and so few resources. Yet, in the midst of great need, there has been some progress, great appreciation and, most important of all, hope!

Each of us is called to mission, wherever we find ourselves. In our struggle to understand and maintain a balance between what God calls us to do and what we might find more appealing, we learn the lesson experienced by all people on mission. Mission work is not all glitz and glamour, fulfillment and recognition. It is also not all work. Rather following Jesus requires quiet moments, prayerful reflection and a focus upon Jesus so that the suffering and rejection, the loneliness and the discouragement that are, at times, an inevitable part of belonging to Christ may be borne with grace and hope.



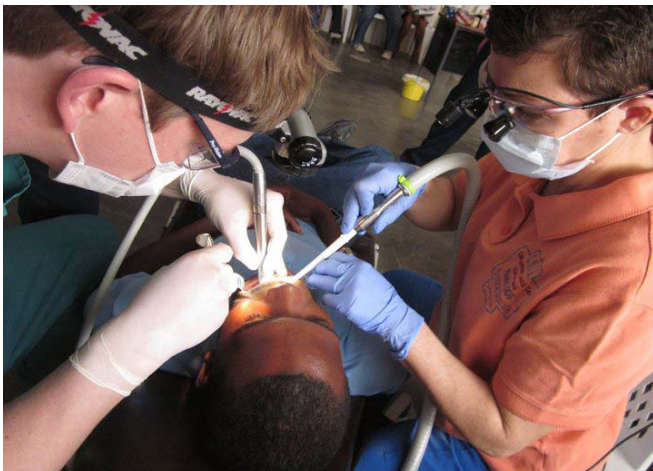
DENTAL MISSION TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IS ONCE AGAIN A SUCCESS

On November 27, 2010, a team of 17 dentists, dental students and dental staff members from all over the United States embarked on a seven day dental mission to Sabana Yegua with the goal of treating the underserved population in the area. The first such mission occurred in 2004 and has grown annually; both in numbers of participating personnel, numbers of patients treated, and types of dental procedures provided.

Compassionate Dental Care International, (CDCI); a grass roots non-profit organization is the sponsoring group that has supported this program since its inception. Many trip participants keep coming back year after year as the experience is extremely rewarding. All of the trip participants volunteer their time and donate funds to secure the necessary dental supplies, logistical and transportation costs in country as well as food and housing.

The generous and gracious attentiveness to the groups needs by the staff at La Sagrada Familia makes their "home away from home" comfortable and safe. This year Mike Wolfe coordinated the groups' logistical support. His attention to detail and his fun and energetic attitude was a true blessing.

This year's trip was once again a great success. Nearly 600 patients were treated. Though the goal is not to treat as many patients as possible, but to treat those with the most need in a compassionate and caring environment, the number of patients treated continues to increase annually. Dental services that CDCI is equipped to provide include extractions, fillings, dental sealants, fluoride varnishes, periodontal treatment and oral hygiene instruction. Nearly 1000 toothbrushes were also dispensed this year.



In 2008, CDCI funded and installed a permanent dental clinic on the Sagrada Familia grounds to add to the services the church is able to provide to the community on an ongoing basis. One local dentist has agreed to volunteer her time and provides free dental care to Sabana Yegua residents one half-day per week in this clinic. The dental needs in the area are tremendous and though both of these programs help, they have barely scratched surface. CDCI intends on supporting dental care in the area for years to come.

If you would like to learn more about CDCI, please visit their website at www.cdci.us.



REFLECTION ON LA SAGRADA FAMILIA PILGRIMAGE 2011

- Mike Melaney, Holy Angels Parish, West Bend

I was again blessed with the privilege of traveling to and being part of the community in La Sagrada Familia. These are a people of deep faith who truly live out the Gospel message of Love. I find this trip challenging because we live in a society of doing. But the trip to La Sagrada Familia is about just being with the people, being present for them and showing them that others care about them. It is also about seeing the progress that they are making in many areas. Progress made possible by the financial support of the people of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. The help provided is a hand up, not a handout.



I saw many areas where the people were provided with just such help. There is a beauty salon, sewing school, and bakery in the Parish where people can learn a skill as well as have a product that can be sold. The parish also provides scholarships for students of all ages to attend schools to further their education. There are also agricultural and irrigation projects that help the people to grow crops for themselves and for them to sell. In addition, of course there is an ongoing faith community. There are numerous baptisms from each of the villages each month and ongoing faith formation.

We could learn a lot from the simple, strong faith and trust in God that I witnessed in La Sagrada Familia. My goal is to work on my Spanish, and get back there in the near future.

PRAYER OF LA SAGRADA FAMILIA

God of all people
who blesses us wherever we are
with the wealth of the land you created;
with the water that nourishes our fields.
You bless us, especially
with generous brothers and sisters
in whom we see your face.
We give you thanks for these 30 years
of mutual care and support
between these two sister churches:
Sagrada Familia parish and the
Archdiocese of Milwaukee.
We have grown in this embrace
that we gave each other so many years ago.
Bless this relationship
and help us always serve without condition
those who need it most,
Amen!

THINGS TO DO (SUGGESTIONS)

After you have finished reading our newsletter, we have a few suggestions for you.

1. Pray for the parishioners and staff at La Sagrada Familia.
2. Register to attend the May 24th gathering. Information is on page 3.
3. Visit us on Facebook. Information is on page 1.
4. Consider helping out with a donation or starting a fundraiser at your parish. For example, the Tri Parish Communities or St John Kanty, St Alexander, and St Helen held an Advent fundraiser and contributed \$1,500. Every little bit helps.

Thirty years have passed and much progress has been made. Much more needs to be done. With your prayers and financial help, it can be done!

