

Dear Honduras Missionaries,

Christmas morning has come and gone as we stand at the edge of a New Year. Some of us look forward in excitement to the possibilities of the unknown challenges that lay ahead this year, while others hold their breath as anxiety rushes through them in fear of what this year might bring. Advent prepares us for Christmas and the coming of the Christ Child but the media rushes us past Christmas day and we seldom take the time to reflect on what Christmas really means before it rushes us into the New Year.

At a family gathering someone commented about re-gifting something's they had received in previous years and I had a passing thought that Jesus, who entered into solidarity with humanity, came to teach us about re-gifting. Jesus shares his love with us and then asks us to go out and re-gift his love with others by building the Body of Christ. No one would ever think of taking something that was broken, repairing it and then giving it to someone as a gift, but that is the very thing that Jesus did. Jesus came into the world and took the broken relationship that humanity had with God the Father and repaired it by his death and resurrection. In the same way, Christmas brings us together so we can repair relationships within our family and community.

My mission experience in Honduras has taught me to appreciate the meaning of "solidarity, re-gifting and repairing of relationships." These are things that I hope to pass onto those that I take with me to Honduras.

As with any challenge there are dangers and my first concern with taking missionaries to Honduras is their safety. Those of you that have traveled with me may think that I have been overly cautious and concerned about your safety but one incident could bring an end to a life-changing mission experience.

I know that many of you are planning on going to Honduras with me this year on a Medical Mission, Dental Mission, Youth Mission, Young- Adult Mission, or Parish Mission. However, due to violence in Honduras, the U.S. State Department issued a "Travelers Warning" on November 21, 2012.

The Diocese of Dallas has a policy that states it cannot support missions into countries that have Travelers Warnings. As a result of this warning, **all mission trips to Honduras are on "hold" until the warning is lifted.** The Embassy in Honduras has had several virtual on-line "Town Hall" meetings discussing the changes that the Honduras government has been implementing to improve the safety for Americans traveling in Honduras. This encourages us to think that a change may be coming about in the future. We went through this process in 2008 and I am hopeful that we will see a change in the State Department policy soon.

In this time that we are not able to travel into Honduras it is my hope that we can create new ways of supporting the mission by developing ways to support and scholarship education programs, providing medicine for the poor, even dreaming of building a Catholic Medical Clinic for the poor, and evangelization through RCIA. I would like to

continue to develop plans for our mission relationship and help prepare missionaries for when we can return.

Please continue to pray for our sisters and brothers in Honduras. We have learned from them to have faith that change can come about. Our parishes will be having the annual Second Collection for our Sister Diocese of Trujillo on January 6, 2013, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. Keep our faith family in Trujillo in your prayers as we continue the Christmas season.

You can access the U.S. State Department Honduras Travelers Warning at:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_5816.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5816.html)

If you have any questions about the issues in Honduras or how you can help in developing mission within the Diocese of Dallas, please contact me. I will try to keep all of you informed as to the progress of being able to return to the Diocese of Trujillo, Honduras.

In Christ,

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