

FMS CELEBRATES 20 Years OF INTERNATIONAL LAY MISSION



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Sr. Barbara Fried and the SMIC community received the Anselm Moons Award.

To sum up the evening of October 23, 2010 in one word, it would have to be "joy." Amidst the echoes of the bamboo pan pipe and vocal styling of Andinay, the musical accompaniment of the evening, over 400 guests gathered to celebrate FMS's 20 years of presence, of serving in the Spirits of Saints Francis and Clare, and of caring for God's beloved.

What a blessing it was to have so many important figures in the history of Franciscan Mission Service in one room, in particular Fr. George Corrigan, OFM and Sr. Barbara Fried, SMIC, our two award recipients of the evening, who have brought so much to our organization's cause over the years.

"Mission is rarely about location," Fr. George commented, upon receiving his award, "Everyone of you, called by your own baptismal vows have that call to mission, a willingness to "cross over" to enter into the depths of suffering and joy with one another."

The evening was a reunion for many as returned missionaries embraced and shared memories. It was also a grand gathering of several different orders of Franciscans, which led Kim Smolik to comment, "It has been said to be a challenge to get Franciscan orders in one room, but we are honored to have with us here tonight OFMs, OFM Conventuals, Capuchins, Secular Franciscans, and Third Order Regulars."

The event was also an opportunity for individuals new to FMS to learn about the ministry of presence. Around 150 attendees learned about our lay mission program through their interest in hearing and meeting Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, internationally known Franciscan author and our keynote speaker during the event.

"If we don't find a way of overcoming fear of the mysterious, the problematic, the different... Frankly we stop growing. Brothers and sisters, this is most of the world," said Fr. Richard Rohr during his keynote address.

It was remarkable to witness the energy in the room, to see the smiling faces and the enthusiasm of the staff and the guests, excited for the efforts of our missionaries and for the success and direction of Franciscan Mission Service. We look forward to another twenty years of service because we are confident in the dedicated and faithful individuals who stand alongside us.

*Thank you to everyone who was able to share this blessed celebration!*



Kim Smolik welcomes Fr. John O'Connor, OFM and Fr. Larry Janezic, OFM



Adam Rudin from Andinay



Fr. Joe Nangle gives Fr. George Corrigan his award.



Fr. Richard Rohr discusses the important role of lay missionaries in transforming the world.



With over 400 guests in attendance, this is FMS's largest event to date.



Did You Notice?

This issue of *Franciscan World Care* is full color AND it is less expensive than our previous newsletters. We have formed a partnership with [www.uprinting.com](http://www.uprinting.com). They provide significant discounts to nonprofits. **We hope you enjoy it!**

FMS LAUNCHES TWO-YEAR OVERSEAS MISSION PROGRAM

Nothing is certain but death and taxes, as the old saying goes. The world is always evolving around us, and we have the challenge of re-envisioning the truths that never change, the truths that we, as Christians, live and act by. Over the last 8 months, the FMS board and staff has invested in a comprehensive strategic planning process which has reaffirmed the life giving role the mission of FMS has in our world today, while assuring its relevance for years to come.

After much prayer and consideration, we have decided to move to a two-year overseas mission program, with an option to extend up to six years. Until now, FMS missionaries made a three year service commitment upfront, along with five additional months dedicated to a combination of preparation and re-entry programming. In the original model, the mission cycle allowed for a half a year in language school, a year to adjust culturally, a year to truly thrive in their mission site, and a half a year for letting go and preparing to come home.

Under our new model, we are deliberately matching missionaries with mission sites where they have language and possibly cultural experience already. We are also providing enhanced cultural adaptation training both before departure and in-country. With these steps in place, the enculturation process will be reduced, allowing for more time spent "thriving in mission". This new model

also emphasizes the importance of missionaries building and fostering a U.S. based support network; we have found that the accompaniment of friends and family at home aids a missionary's preparation to return home.

We believe the two year program will also attract more mission candidates to FMS. In recent years, we have seen an increase in missionaries opting for programs that require a two year commitment and overlooking programs like FMS that require a longer upfront commitment.

As we make adjustments, some things remain constant. We place our faith in our greatest strength - the comprehensive formation program that we provide to our missionaries before and during their time of service. This will not change. Again and again, we hear positive feedback from our missionaries, from their service sites, and from our Franciscan partners regarding the preparation they have received. When you're far from home, there is no substitute for good training and support when entering an unfamiliar culture to engage in ministry with those who are vulnerable.

We envision that in the years to come, FMS will send an increased number of well-prepared missionaries overseas - missionaries who will continue in the Franciscan tradition of walking in solidarity with the poor, living simply, and seeing the face of God in the most unexpected places.



FRANCISCAN

world care

*A Garden of Friendship*

One lesson I've had to learn living at the Franciscan Social Center in Bolivia is that while building true friendships with my neighbors can take time and effort, it can happen without realizing, without warning, like a breeze drifting past your face.

Between 12 and 17 kids who are recovering from severe burns also live at the social center. Some have been burned in work accidents and others have been purposefully burned by their parents with electrical cables or set on fire. Whatever their past, they are still kids with similar needs and desires and they make just as much noise, if not more noise than any other kid!

Like most children they test limits, but what I didn't foresee was how persistent several of them would be in trying to get us to "gift" them our belongings.

*It finally occurred to me that their only interactions with foreigners of white skin involved receiving presents, getting ice cream, or being taken places their parents could rarely afford to take them.*

I felt frustrated and sad about the situation, wanting to have a genuine mutual relationship with my neighbors, wondering how to change their view of who I was and what I value.

One day, I was spraying the center's rosebushes to rid them of aphids, when one of the girls asked what I was doing. I explained to her how the aphids were killing the roses and I was there to defend the flowers. I asked, "Would you like to spray them with me?" Of course she did and pretty soon seven other kids were squeezing their way over the fence into the garden so they could help too.

They just loved trimming the bushes, shoveling and being told what a good job they were doing. It was a blast. Every day that week, whenever I'd come home, they'd latch on to me asking when they would get to work in the garden again.

As much as I dislike aphids, I'll forever be grateful to them for giving me a doorway into developing a better relationship with my neighbors. They've provided me an opportunity to genuinely "be with" these kids without perpetuating the image that someone who looks like me is there to give them things and then leave. Through getting to know these kids in the garden, I see how it is truly possible to build mutual relationships and alter fixed perceptions, which gives me hope.



Nora Pfeiffer with her friend, Christian, working in the Franciscan Social Center garden.

**Domestic Volunteers Serve FMS and the Local D.C. Community**

While our missionaries abroad serve out an international mission, our domestic volunteers Rachel Roa and Susie Zagar have taken on service roles near our national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Rachel Roa volunteers weekly as a tax preparer for the DC Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program, helping low-income families to fill out their tax forms. "While working at FMS, I felt encouraged by the missionaries' stories and experiences to join an organization that provides a free service to those less fortunate in the local community. It has been amazing to meet my DC neighbors and make the tax season go by just a little bit easier."

Susie Zagar tutors every week for the Literacy Volunteers and Advocates, an organization that provides classes for local adults learning to read and write. "My experience with FMS has helped me to reflect upon how I can be truly present to the student tutor each week, not only to work on reading skills with him, but also to listen to his story and his perspective."



U.S. Catholic Mission Congress Signifies *Renewal in Lay Mission*

"Mission is a grand expression of communion - of being the body."

These words come from Cardinal Óscar Rodríguez, who gave a keynote address at the 2010 Mission Congress in Albuquerque, NM, which took place back in October. Kim Smolik was invited to co-facilitate this conference which brought together integral leaders from all over the world to dialog about mission in the Catholic Church. Throughout the conference, religious and lay examined emerging trends in mission, celebrated the many enterprises and accomplishments over the last year, and came to see mission as growing in communion with one another.

The theme of the Mission Congress was "God's Mission, Many Faces: A Portrait of US Catholics in Mission." During the weekend, those present reflected on how mission brings together a variety of individuals, each contributing their own personal "brushstroke" to make strides in social justice worldwide. With FMS' strong emphasis on community and solidarity with impoverished communities, our vision is on the forefront of mission today.



Kim Smolik and His Eminence, Cardinal Óscar Rodríguez discuss his keynote address.

The Mission Congress was a model of community and relationship building among the religious and laity, a witness to the possibilities of partnership in mission. The congregation and leaders in attendance acknowledged the challenges of partnerships between religious and laity and envisioned how they could work together to make mission truly transformational for everyone involved.

One of themes that emerged during the Mission Congress was the essential role of laity in mission. "The laity," said Cardinal Rodríguez, "should be involved in all levels of planning and carrying out mission."

In creating effective partnerships and providing appropriate service overseas, Kim Smolik, in her address, stressed the need for mission formation for all missionaries, whether they are preparing for short term or long term mission. In particular, Fr. Gary Riebe-Estrella, SVD, emphasized the need for training in social analysis and Catholic Social Teaching. These teachings create a foundation for missionaries to reflect upon the challenges faced in mission, such as poverty, racial discrimination, and their own cultural misunderstandings.

The Mission Congress was also a time to reflect on the current identity of mission, how it has become less about "building institutions" and more about "building relationships."

"(Mission) is about being with," said Sr. Janice McLaughlin, M.M., another keynote speaker, "it is about accompanying and advocating alongside those we come to know in mission."

In closing at the Mission Congress, Kim Smolik noted the progress that had been made over the last ten years in mission, in how we have learned to grow deeper in relationship with others through an emphasis on the ministry of presence. "Let us be encouraged," Smolik said, "that we are able to see right now, our own growth. We are already on this journey together."

Your faithful prayers and financial giving are the reasons why FMS missionaries are able to serve in places of great need around the world. We ask you to please consider a gift at this time, particularly as we prepare to train a new class of missionaries. A donation of any size makes a difference. Thank you!

Visiting Our Lay Missioners in Bolivia

By Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM

To spend time in the field with FMS lay missionaries has to count as the greatest benefit one derives from membership on our Board of Directors. At least that was my conclusion after a week I spent recently in Cochabamba, Bolivia visiting with Clare, Nora, Catherine, Lynn and Joel.

Consider: I got to observe these dedicated people "on the ground", doing what all FMS missionaries do best - interfacing with some of the neediest people in the world; I saw the efforts each of them makes to live sparsely, even poorly, so as to identify with those with whom they are living and working; and I recognized how fully our lay missionaries have appropriated the Franciscan approach to mission.

For example, on several occasions a missionary would take me to her worksite on public transportation rather than ride in a taxi. To put that in perspective, the taxi would typically cost just over a dollar - not exactly a fortune. Our folks regularly choose to move about on buses (15 cents a ride) just as ordinary (poor) Bolivians do.

The work which our missionaries carry out is equally impressive. A couple of snapshots: Nora engages in basic and much-needed ecologically sensitive water and soil projects, modeling them for the neighborhood where she is located; Clare has become "auntie" to several at-risk teenage girls, offering them by her example a model for dignified and fulfilled young womanhood; Catherine carries on empowering pastoral work with a small Catholic community, which only occasionally has the services of a priest; Lynn and Joel continue to bring their academic backgrounds to centers of higher education in Bolivia, serving now as pastoral ministers at a university in Cochabamba. As mentioned, I came away from those grace-filled days newly inspired by our lay missionaries and quite in awe of what the Holy Spirit is doing with and through them. The experience has moved me to a renewal of my own commitment to building God's Reign of solidarity and love in the corner of the earth where I live and work.

**Thank you, Clare, Nora, Catherine, Lynn and Joel.**



(l to r): Catherine Giller, Joel Vaughn, Lynn Myrick, Nora Pfeiffer, Clare Lassiter, Fr. Joe Nangle, OFM.

A Warm Welcome to Zambia

Our newest missionaries, Sandra and Bryce Bradford, arrived in Zambia in February to begin their ministry in the local community in Itimpi, a rural part of Zambia. They have both begun teaching at the local high school, which is run by the Franciscan friars with over 700 students. Bryce has already started a computer club at the school while Sandra has been busy preparing rooms at the friary's retreat center and providing food and safety lessons for the kitchen staff. Both are looking into helping with health ministry with a city clinic for HIV/AIDS patients.



Unbunto Working Together in South Africa

Tim and Cecilia Marcy continue to carry out their faithful ministry at the St. Francis Care Centre - a hospice and clinic for people living and dying with HIV/AIDS. In a recent reflection, Tim Marcy remarked how amazed he was that despite the desperate situations they live in, not having enough supplies and being short-staffed, they are still able to make the most of what they have to genuinely help the patients. "We're all in this situation together," Tim wrote, "we laugh together, we mourn together, we work together, we play together; we care for and love one another. We share the African idea of unbunto -- of caring, sharing, and loving those around us."



*New Faces* on the FMS Board of Directors

We are overjoyed by the addition of four new members to the FMS board of directors. They bring their talents, gifts and enthusiasm to the work and mission of FMS.

**Rebecca Lynes** learned about FMS through Fr. George Corrigan, an individual who she says has always opened her eyes to new endeavors. She looks forward to helping to "direct the organization on its path to being an important source of Christ's peace, companionship, and acceptance to all people."



(l to r): Rebecca Lynes, Sr. Cathy Cahill, OSF, Jack McHale, Evelyn Mercantini.

**Sr. Cathy Cahill, OSF**, who also learned more about FMS through Fr. George Corrigan, loves being able to work with the people at FMS. One of the things she admires about FMS is that it is rooted in the ongoing transformation of individuals and society.

**Jack McHale**, who learned about FMS through returned missionaries Don and Pat Clausen, hopes to ensure the continued viability of the organization. "I love the commitment of everyone involved. The spirit in Casa San Salvador is contagious and brings vitality to every aspect of my life."

**Evelyn Mercantini** became a board member following her dedicated work on FMS's 20th anniversary event committee. "I genuinely enjoy being around the FMS team, board, and domestic volunteers. They are teaching me about social justice, sacrifice, and having fun in the Franciscan spirit."

St. Camillus Franciscan Parish - *FMS Thanks You!*

Every year FMS missionaries stand before a congregation to make their pledge to carry out overseas mission service with compassionate and willing hearts. It has become an honored tradition at FMS to hold this ceremony at St. Camillus Parish in Silver Spring, MD, a Franciscan community that shares in FMS's mission of fostering social justice and celebrates diversity.

At the most recent ceremony in November 2010, Bryce and Sandra Bradford, and Susan Slavin were commissioned for international service. After Mass, a parishioner shared with us that she looks forward to the commissioning ceremony every year, "It is one of my favorite Masses of the year. It inspires me to give more of myself to others, and to listen more closely to God's voice in my own life."



(l to r): Bryce Bradford, Sandra Bradford, Rhegan Hyypio, Susan Slavin.

It is the parishioners at St. Camillus who hear the pledge and promise of the missionaries to follow their baptismal call to service. The parishioners are the ones who respond their "We do" on welcoming the decision of FMS missionaries to enter into the service of God overseas. They also welcome the missionaries back upon the completion of their mission term. Many parishioners also pray regularly for our missionaries and support them financially.

We are ever grateful for ongoing support from and partnership with St. Camillus. We hope to continue sending our missionaries with the blessings of the St. Camillus Parish community for years to come.

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