

FAITH INTO ACTION



Spring 2014

A Publication of Peace & Justice Ministries and the Office of Creative Connections

Going Where Transformation is a Way of Life

by Matthew Rhodes

Transformational Journeys is an All Saints Ministry that invites all parishioners to participate in local and global trips that challenge us to go outside of our comfort zone to encounter people of different cultures who live in challenging circumstances.

On March 7 the TJ Ministry led a day-trip to visit two very special organizations dedicated to serving high-risk youth and adults who have become disengaged from the hope of pursuing a better life or continuing with their education.

Part of the day was spent touring Homeboy Industries, created in 1988 by Jesuit Priest Father Gregory Boyle to provide a jobs program in one of LA's toughest neighborhoods for those caught up in the violent gang culture. At Homeboy former gang members work side-by-side, even among their old rivals, choosing an alter-

native to gang life and supporting each other for a chance to become a successful contributing member of society. Homeboy's services, along with their strength of community, help to infuse hope, self-care, and motivation to reach goals.

Former gang member, Matthew, who had been involved with his Homeboy transformation only for the last 8 months, led our tour. He told his story of a broken family life, his introduction to gang culture, and a personal battle to overcome the challenges of drug addiction, incarceration, and a lifestyle of violence. With confidence and a joyful enthusiasm he spoke about coming to Homeboy and how he gained skills and the courage to begin raising himself out of a self-destructive lifestyle.

Matthew guided us through the Homeboy building showing us their employment possibilities and resources for job search,

education, and legal services.

We also saw the tattoo-removal area where employees can erase the marks and branding that may painfully represent the life left behind. The spirit of transformation and community was evident as we walked through Homeboy.

Afterwards we enjoyed lunch at HomeGirl Café, which along with their renowned bakery, is staffed and managed by former gang members.

The second part of our TJ day-trip was spent visiting the wonderful Learning Works Charter School, founded by one of our All Saints parishioners, Dr. Mikala Rahn. Learning Works, in conjunction with Public Works and Community Works, seeks to motivate and create opportunity for disadvantaged students and dropouts so that they can graduate with their high school diploma.

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Father Greg Boyle and our tour guide, Matthew, talk to the Transformational Journey visitors.

El Salvador Transformed Us

by Norm Thomas

We were nine International Election Observers from All Saints. Sarah Forth, our leader; Dorothy Christ, Nancy Berlin and I had visited El Salvador previously in solidarity with the peoples' struggle for peace with justice. Charles Haig and Barbara Potter were transformational journeys' veterans. Pam Brubaker, Roland Christ, and Janet Kimbrough were new to both.

We joined almost 200 people from 14 countries recruited and trained by CIS. CIS stands for Centro de Intercambio y Solidaridad (Center for Exchange and Solidarity). Founded in 1993 after the signing of the Peace Accords ending the 12-year civil war, CIS promotes people-to-people solidarity in the search for development and human dignity. CIS has provided election monitors since 1994. Deeply respected by the El Salvador Election Tribunal, CIS proposals have helped to make elections increasingly fair, free, and transparent.

The Feb. 2 election was the first in which all voters were able to vote in polling centers near to their homes. We observed other changes from the previous election in 2012. A redesigned voting booth facilitated privacy and accessibility for persons with disabilities. For the first time there

was a call to respect and guarantee the participation of sexually diverse people. We observed the prohibition on painting and posting of propaganda near polling places—a significant change that CIS reported had “transformed an electoral process that was previously chaotic and sometimes violent to a civil process.”

To be elected President, a candidate had to receive a majority of votes cast. With three candidates running, we knew that a runoff might be required. That's what happened.

The FMLN's candidate, Sánchez Cerén, received 48.9% of the vote—close but not close enough to avoid a runoff between himself and Norman Quijano, the ARENA party's candidate, on March 9.

Before the election we visited rural communities. That's where CIS for twenty years has supported grassroots organizing to empower communities, especially women and youth. We met 16 high school and 8 university students in San Pablo Tacachico helped this year by scholarships from Pasadena donors.

The local community chooses the neediest of students to receive scholarships. We visited three of their homes—small, crowded, very basic—and their gracious families. What a contrast with modern

San Salvador with its Intercontinental Hotel and the largest mall in Central America.

Water is a major problem in El Salvador. Only 25% of the population, mostly in the capital, has drinkable tap water. Water companies are privatized. We got to see the results of CIS' clean water campaign helping 25 communities with family water filters and 13 purification units in schools and community centers.

We saw how CIS works with women to form businesses in order to improve their family economy. One community has a hen cooperative that produces 1,000 eggs per day. In others women are making beautiful jewelry out of coconut shells, watercolors of Salvadoran scenes, tie-dyed clothes in the vivid blue indigo for which El Salvador is famous, and woven goods.

In Cinquera Don Pablo, a community leader, shared with us the history of Christian base communities and the war in which over a hundred from that village lost their lives. We climbed the mountain through what is now an ecological park to a guerrilla encampment, and learned of the sufferings of the people and our government's complicity in that war.

All this took place while the papers told of civil strife from Syria to Egypt and Chad to the Ukraine and Thailand. We marveled that El Salvador has been able to move slowly but surely toward greater political participation by all its citizens.

That second round of voting on March 2 proved to be the greatest test of El Salvador's democracy since the 1992 Peace Accords. Like our 2000 presidential election, the runoff was the closest in San Salvador's history. Only 6,364 votes separated the candidates out of 3 million ballots cast. ARENA, the party of the “haves,” called for a complete recount and for the army to intervene. Unlike Thailand and Ukraine where democracy is threatened, El Salvador remained peaceful and true to the democratic process. I was glad that I chose to help and observe at such a pivotal time for El Salvador.



Our El Salvador Team

2013 Christmas Flashback



Homeboy Trip

cont. from P.1

The school leadership and staff uniquely embrace the principles of forgiveness, unconditional love, honesty, joy and fun for the students and their families. They provide a fresh start and a safe haven for 'at-risk' youth and high school dropouts throughout Pasadena and beyond.

I think we were all touched by the impact each of these organizations had on creating hope and nurturing promise in the lives of those marginalized in our communities. Hope and promise for youth and young adults who had been defeated in shame and gave up ever participating in mainstream society. It was great to see how the inspiration and creative labor of one individual could make such a difference. I will always remember our tour guide's self-commitment to his new purpose and a commitment to those he serves with, realizing that we cannot do it alone. We need each other.

Thank you to Father Boyle, Lauren Grubaugh, Matthew our guide, and the community of Homeboy Industries and to Dr. Mikala Rahn and the staff of Learning Works for the generous welcome of our large group! Anyone interested in learning more please visit <http://www.homeboyindustries.org/> and <http://www.publicworksinc.org/lw/>.

by MJ Johnston

2012 was a stellar year for the Alternative Christmas Market and in 2013 All Saints parishioners continued to support peace and justice in the world by sharing Christmas love that made a difference. In total, over \$31,300 was raised for non-profit organizations that help children in foster care, people living in poverty, and many other fellow humans in need.

Our top five ministries received the following amounts in donations: Middle East Ministry, \$3,205; Homeboy Industries, \$2,856; Heifer, \$2,350; Habitat for Humanity, \$1,875 and Doctors Without Borders, \$1,782

As with other ministries at All Saints, the Alternative Christmas Market is made possible by the generous donation of time



ACM Co-Chairs Michelle (MJ) Johnston and Carmen Valdez

by volunteers. This event is so successful year after year because of our wonderfully creative and dedicated group of volunteers, with the assistance of our youth ministries and All Saints staff.

To all those who helped make the 2013 ACM such a success, thank you, thank you, thank you! If you would like more information please email ACM@allsaints-pas.org.



Above: Lunch at Homegirl Cafe.

Below: A visit to one of the Learning Works classrooms.



Transformational Journey Group Storms China

by Erica Tamblyn

Last spring a group of All Saint parishioners ranging in age from early twenties to mid-eighties journeyed to China for 10 days. Oh, what a trip it was! Led by Erica Tamblyn, who travels to China on business regularly, we visited 5 cities in 10 days.

Some of the members had been to China before, some not. On Our first full day we visited Tian'an Men Square, the Forbidden City and visited families who live in Beijing's quickly disappearing Hutong, riding on Pedit cabs and attended an Acrobatics show.

While Erica went to work and got food poisoning, everyone else went to the Great Wall, visited the Olympic sites and enjoyed a Peking Duck Banquet. Before we left Beijing we spent time at a beautiful Old Catholic church where our country guide, Erica's good friend Hui Xiao "Mike" Li, is acquainted with some parishioners.

A sleek high speed train shuttled the group to Xi'an at speeds of more than 300 KM per hour. Seeing the Terra Cotta warriors was for many of us a dream of a lifetime as well as overwhelming in scale, meeting the farmer who discovered them was a treat, and some of us bought scaled reproductions which were shipped to our homes.

We climbed the beautiful city Wall with its great vistas of the city and rode bicycles (or golf carts) around to get a feel for the old and the new that is so typical of China. Next, we visited to Hangzhou, boated on lovely West Lake, visited the Temple of the Bhuddas, and went to a green tea farm.

In Suzhou, we explored the entire process of developing and processing silk. Boating in small canals and visiting lovely gardens such as the Humble Administrator's Garden topped off our day.

Our last stop was Shanghai with its old



fashioned shops and gleaming skyscrapers; this is the financial centre of China and a multicourse delicious banquet provided the perfect wrap up for our glorious trip.

We met many lovely people, came to have a deep appreciation of a beautiful rich culture, and now understand the paradox of old and new China.

Planning for 2015

We are working hard to plan another transformation journey to China in 2015 which will include a visit to the Panda research Center in Chengdu where we will have the opportunity to hold a baby panda.

Even better, our annual Transformational Journey luncheon this summer will feature a presentation by our country guide Li Xiao "Mike" Hui. He and his family (wife, Sweet Pea and son, Buckshot) are coming to America for the first time for a visit and we hope you will welcome them warmly and join us at our lunch. Watch for the save the date announcement.

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Cooking Up a Storm at Bad Weather Shelter

For more than 20 years, All Saints Parishioners have been making dinner for the guests at the Bad Weather Shelter serving the homeless in Pasadena.

The shelter is open from after Thanksgiving to mid-march and offers a hot meal and a place to sleep. In previous years it was open every night, but this year lack of funding reduced services to nights when it was raining or below 40 degrees.

Pasadena Covenant Church provides the kitchen and the gym for the shelter and various local churches provide food and volunteers to prepare the meals.

All Saints has four teams, coordinated by Dorothy Christ, that rotate covering Thursdays when the shelter is open.

If you would like to be involved in this ministry, email dichrist@gmail.com

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