

MISSIONARIES IN ACTION

DOMINICAN MISSION FOUNDATION

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Choose the Path that Feeds Your Soul



*To stay
on task
or stop
to
TikTok?*

To stay or leave, to hold on to the present or risk the future?
Round brown faces with broad foreheads, full cheeks, and dark eyes:
Such are the proud descendants of this isolated, colonial town of Rabinal,

Now living contentedly in their small villages hidden in the surrounding mountains,
The descending rough, rocky, serpentine dirt roads their only path into town.
Rabinal, at the heart of the long, dry valley, hidden away, wrapped in the blanket of history
Like a precious child strapped on its mother's back--This cradle of the Mayan Achi People,
This seedbed of Mayan culture with its dances, customs, confraternities, art, ceramic, weavings, and religion
Spins a web of mythic thinking and being. Every funeral, every event commemorated with offerings;
Prayer men always passing with their incense burners on the way to the Church;
Even the rocks and trees breathe the air of prayer. Children grow up with fiestas, processions, and stories.
Youth absorb the emotion, the spirit of the mystic trance, having watched every year the Dance of the Deer
With a troupe of wildly cavorting, bizarrely-dressed, masked dancers, playfully and rigorously celebrating
the triumph of nature. Randomly milling and vigorously interacting with the crowd,
All are mesmerized by the lively music of the marimba.
Rabinal lives in peace with its dead who keep the holy bond of family, culture, and Church alive in its heart.

Yet youth are subtly pulled away by purveyors of distant voices, the raucous audio on their phones
blaring violent, hedonistic, lurid, sadistic, mind-bending, incoherent nonsense.
Music videos of anarchic, prurient, monosyllabic dribble along with iconoclastic dress, gestures, and nudity,
Rejecting the timeless values of decency and respect that had been preserved in this ancient culture.
Alas, invaders are already here, denouncing tradition in place of the values and religion of social media.
This is the first generation of fully digitalized youth. I preach on the coming wave of gender identity theory
but no one listens. They don't understand the ensuing tsunami, like the plagues that devastated
their forefathers. The old is slipping away and no amount of cultural dilettantism with the hope of
reigniting the flame of past ages can withstand the onslaught of the culture of demonic death.

Do you see the dichotomy that tears at the heart of Rabinal? What are young people to do?
They can stay and be nurtured with a prayerful spirit; or leave and be lost in the world turned inside out.
Or stay and escape in alcohol, drugs, or basic survival; or, like most, seek jobs elsewhere and forget,
Or remember—it makes no difference. No one can fully penetrate that struggle of the mind and the heart.
Like Don Quixote, we desperately, if not foolishly, fight on to preserve the honor of this great union
of family, culture, and Church, confident, however, in knowing that only the Lord Jesus Christ
is the truth, the way, and the life.

Some Much-Needed R & R
(More “Risks and Rewards” than “Rest and Relaxation”)

Dear Mission Friends:

I am sure you are aware education is a long term investment. I have had 9 former students, now professionals with advanced degrees, come back this year to introduce themselves and their careers to our students. Our scholarship program looks for new candidates who have serious long-term goals, but these days it's not easy. So many youths have left to go to the USA, it is hard to find those who want to further their education or learn skills to stay and better their community. And El Salvador has cracked down on gangs so they are infiltrating Guatemala. Deportations from the states continue, but the number is very small in comparison to those who remain there. I try my best to keep them here, helping them get jobs in order to take responsibility for and partially invest in their education; keeping them on track as far as the best schools and classes for their interests; and teaching them the computer skills that they will need in college. After years of repairing and replacing parts on dozens of old donated computers, I broke down and bought a couple of new computers this year, giving away 20 older computers to young students and offering courses to help them get started.

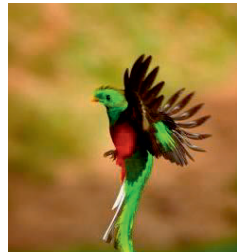
Another important incentive of our program is the bi-annual excursion that we take to sites that are off the beaten track and certainly ones they've never seen. The excursions are a small part of our curriculum, but they can provide a much-needed way to get beyond our safe zones--yes, mine too! Their lives and scope of travel are so limited that I hope these educational trips will help them grasp the value of their country's culture and natural beauty which they might never have known. I am the driver so I can't pay attention to their constant chatter and laughter, but they seem to find endless delight in retelling stories about all we see. Usually five or six youths go with me. I call them “boys and girls” but they are in junior college or in 3rd and 4th year university. I realize the places we visit are not on a list of popular tourist sites, but that is the point. They are appreciative of any new opportunity and they make the most of it. Some places we've visited on our last two trips include:

The city of Coban, about three and a half hours north, traveling by way of cloud forests and coming out in large valleys set below majestic mountains with waterfalls in the distance.

An orchid preserve in a forest and the reserve of the colorful national bird, the Quetzal.



The Caves of Rey Marcos, requiring a long hike up a very steep mountain trail. (It had been at least 5 or 6 years since I had been there and I found that the trail had gotten a good bit steeper in those intervening years.) The cave tour takes the group in the dark, walking in a stream of water for about 50 yards; they wear rubber boots to keep dry and head lamps to keep oriented. Along the way they see fascinating deposits of stalagmites named according to shapes familiar to us but new to them, such as the Leaning Tower of Pisa.



The hidden home of a wood carver who had just moved to what I'm sure is the most isolated place he could find, up a narrow rough road from the Caves of Rey Marcos. I was aware of him because I had just hired him to carve the door of the bell tower of our new chapel for a modest sum. I had already asked if he could give our group a small demonstration of how his computerized carving machine works. He was delighted since he is really isolated and looking to get the word out about his work. He demonstrated by carving a scene of the Last Supper on wood. He then asked if I could bless his new workshop, which sits on the precipice of a hill supported by posts on the slopes below, so a blessing was definitely called for.



A community recreation center with pristine swimming pools filled with a constant torrent of fresh cold mountain water and a grand waterfall flowing under a pedestal holding the Virgin Mary. There is also a zoo with one great big tiger with whom you can actually come face to face, separated only by a cyclone fence.

The town of Tactic, where we climb a very steep road to the towering church of the Lord of Chixiim which overlooks the whole valley and town. The sanctuary is a popular visiting place for devotion to the Crucified Lord with many reported miracles.

The mountain pass of St. Helens and descending to the valley of Salama, climbing through desert and forests.

The town of Salama, its streets dangerously alive with parades and onlookers on the day after the national election.

The Park of Quirigua which is 5 football fields long and at the bank of the Motagua River, the largest in the country, known for its jade and obsidian. The park is filled with towering carved rock formations called stelae and enormous round carved stones of animal figures with human figures super-imposed, called zoomorphs, celebrating the gods and forces of nature. Their power lay in their ability to control the commerce on this important route between the great Mayan centers on the coast. There is also an acropolis and a Mayan ball court, proving the presence of inhabitants dating back 3500 years.



The Museum of Dinosaurs, spectacular with its 40 foot long by 15 foot high skeletons of two dinosaurs, dug up from that very area of town.

Two 17th century churches with ancient, ornate altars in the small towns of San Cristobal and San Agustin.

A hotel in the town of Estanzuela, with big beds and air conditioning, a new experience for the students and also for our excursions. I would always try to get back before dark since it is really hard for me to drive at night, but the trip to Quirigua is 5 hours down and 5 back, so we were forever hurrying. This year my sister Judy, who is quite practical, said I should stay overnight. That would never have occurred to me since I try to save money, but I realized hers was the voice of inspiration because we could get a lot more out of the trip if we weren't always rushing.



Old Car Tunes

(Sometimes you just have to laugh.)

My life is often immersed in the knotty details of things like my car. I am always worried about failing to get the 20-year-old car, which I have had for 13 years, to complete the trips with the students and am ashamed of the many mechanical feats it takes to get there and back safely. Last year I had to cancel one trip when the students arrived as instructed at 5:30 am because the car was overheating due to a water leak in the cooling system. A few weeks later, after I figured out how to keep water in the radiator, we were able to take a make-up trip, but not without a dangerous water leak.

because the car was overheating due to a water leak in the cooling system. A few weeks later, after I figured out how to keep water in the radiator, we were able to take a make-up trip, but not without a dangerous water leak.

This year I bought new tires after 7 years and then took the car to a shop for wheel balancing and alignment. When the students arrived the next day for the trip, again at 5:30 am, I could not find my keys. When I finally caught sight of them in the ignition, where they had been all night, the battery was dead. I painfully told them that we could not go, the same thing I had told them six months before. There was dead silence. (They really do look forward to our trips...) Then one girl (in 4th year medicine) gently suggested that maybe her cousin could help since he had a garage. But it turned out that he did not have a charger. I suddenly recalled getting my battery charged in a shop a couple of blocks away, so two boys took the battery and woke up the fellow, who put it on his charger for an hour. He lost one small but essential nut, but we took the bolt to a hardware store, bought a matching nut, and finally took off like a wounded turtle at 8:30 am. After driving for two hours, we stopped for breakfast, but when we got back in the car, the battery was dead again. Thank heaven, there was a nearby tire repair guy who took one of the boys on his motorcycle to buy a new battery, and we were on the road again.



I have had the privilege of celebrating 6:30 AM Mass almost every Sunday for the last 24 years in the beautiful church founded as a Dominican parish 400 years ago. Mass is broadcast on radiosanpabloraibinal.com and on our facebook page. The homilies are in the cloud to encourage young preachers to preach in Spanish. They are in very basic Spanish, which is all I am capable of, but the people are very supportive since they feel you are making an effort for them and their culture. I'm hopeful that the true message gets across from the heart. Please keep us in your prayers and be assured of mine for you.



Peace,
Fr. Tim

If you decide to just go with the flow, you'll end up where the flow goes, which is usually downhill, often leading to a big pile of sludge and a life of unhappiness. You'll end up doing what everyone else is doing.
– Sean Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens

If you are faced with a mountain, you have several options:
You can climb it and cross to the other side.
You can go around it.
You can dig under it.
You can fly over it.
You can blow it up.
You can ignore it and pretend it's not there.
You can turn around and go back the way you came.
Or you can stay on the mountain and make it your home.

– Vera Nazarian, The Perpetual Calendar of Inspiration

St. Martin de Porres Feast Day Triduum

In honor of the November 3rd feast day of St. Martin de Porres, the patron of our missions, Masses will be offered at St. Dominic's Church in San Francisco on November 1, 2, and 3.

We invite you to fill in and return the enclosed list of petitions which will be placed on the altar and remembered each day. And please join us in praying the Triduum in his honor.

All Souls' Day Remembrance

November is the month for us to pray especially for our loved ones who have gone before us. You are invited to list the names of your departed family members and friends on the enclosed slip and send it in to be placed on the altar at St. Dominic's Church in San Francisco. Your loved ones will be remembered at daily Mass throughout the month.

St. Martin de Porres Triduum (November 1, 2, and 3)

First Day: *St. Martin, you always had sympathy for the poor and those who were suffering. I need your help and now ask for it with great confidence in your goodness and power. Please remember me, as you adore God. Amen.*

(Your petitions, followed by Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Closing Prayer.)

Closing Prayer: *Dear St. Martin, I turn to you in my sorrow and anxiety to seek your friendly me with our merciful Father in heaven so that I may be truly sorry for all my sins and be freed from the evils that shackle me. Ask that I might have something of your spirit of love and self-sacrifice, and so be at all times reconciled to God's holy will. Oh heavenly Father, in the name of your Son and of His blessed Mother, and by the merits of your faithful servant Martin, help me in my trouble and do not forsake me. Amen.*

Second Day: *St. Martin, we praise God for the manifestation of His love. The favors you received from God encourage us now to seek your intercession and help. We ask you most humbly to befriend and assist us from your place in heaven; but most of all, we beg you to commend us to our beloved Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

(Your petitions, followed by Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Closing Prayer.)

Third Day: *Brother Martin, when you were here on earth, you spent your life loving God and your neighbor. This we know from the testimony of your own Dominican brethren. Now that you live in the presence of God in paradise, intercede for those who stand so much in need of the healing help of God and beg the Divine Physician to give us health of the soul and body. Amen.*

(Your petitions, followed by Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Closing Prayer.)

