

John Kazanjian
ST. LUCIA COUNTRY COORDINATOR



John Kazanjian's primary passion is spreading the Good News about Jesus. He works with Armenian and Catholic churches to conduct events that lead people into relationship with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

John and his wife Michelle run a deliverance prayer ministry based on the principles of the Unbound model. They have five daughters and three grandchildren.

Spreading the GOSPEL in St. Lucia



Country Coordinator John Kazanjian greeting the bishop when he arrived to say Mass at the prison.

Renewal Ministries' mission to St. Lucia in February of 2016 marks the third year we have done outreach in that country. Along with Country Coordinator John Kazanjian, the team ministers on the parish level and at the correctional facility on the island. A major focus of the missions is healing and deliverance ministry, using the [Unbound] Five Keys in an effort to help people grow in faith and a personal relationship with Jesus.

► Reflection by mission team member Caitlin Dillon:

It seems fitting that my third mission trip to St. Lucia happened during the Jubilee of Mercy. God used many opportunities there to speak to me of His great mercy.

I also saw God's mercy at work during my first two trips to St. Lucia. While I was pushing through my fear to carry out acts of mercy in the prison, He was increasing my faith and that boldness that comes with faith (Eph 3:12).

God gave me the courage to speak and to act, knowing I am not alone, but that God is behind all acts of mercy, and that I was accompanied not only by my visible teammates but also by our invisible companions, the angels and saints.

On the plane to St. Lucia for my third trip, I realized that the three rosaries I had with me were blessed by Pope Francis, Pope Benedict, and Pope Saint John Paul II. I thought, "Wow, three popes' blessings—and tomorrow is the feast of the Chair of St. Peter. I think I need to call on the popes for intercession during this trip—especially St. Peter."

At Mass the next day, we heard St. Peter's proclamation, "You are the Christ" (Mt 16:16). This was the very purpose of our trip—to proclaim the Good News. A couple days later, when it seemed like a young woman who had previously asked to receive prayer was not going to come, I asked SS. Peter and Paul to send an angel to bring her—to lead her like the angel led Peter out of prison (Acts 12:1-19). The young woman did show up, and after we prayed together, she said, "Tonight, I had decided not to come here, but I was just cleaning up after dinner and—I don't know, I just left my house and came here." Thank you, our companions, SS. Peter and Paul!

One afternoon, Michelle and John Kazanjian and I took a walk, and Michelle asked what I would be doing after St. Lucia, since my work in establishing literacy-development systems in schools was finishing up. However, while God had made it clear that it was time to complete that work, my next step was not as clear.

Michelle mentioned her recent surprise at learning she loves parasailing, despite the fact that she is usually afraid of heights. We discovered we are both afraid of standing along canyons or rooftops, and yet we enjoy the inspiring views from airplanes. I looked down at the waves hitting the shore in the distance, and said, "Being up so high right here doesn't scare me, because there's not really an edge—how about you, Michelle?" "No," she answered, and concluded,

“Hey, we're not afraid of heights; we're afraid of edges!”

The next day, John asked each of us to think of a witness story about performing a corporal work of mercy that we could tell that night at the parish mission. Although I had been learning to preach the Gospel more freely, I still didn't like to witness in front of a large group with a microphone—at that point, gutting a fish sounded better. But a story came to mind right away, so I practiced telling it during lunch as John had suggested.

My witness was about visiting a sick man in the hospital and, in doing so, learning to ask God boldly for whatever love seems to call for. Even as I told it, I began to doubt that this would be a good story and to doubt that the Holy Spirit could work with my telling of it. So, I was pleasantly stunned when I finished and heard John say, "Caitlin, tonight you need to tell that story, just that way."

That night, my twinge of nerves was overtaken by genuine excitement to proclaim God's mercy. Responding to God's call to witness was deeply satisfying, as were the thumbs-ups and words of encouragement from my companions afterwards. I began looking forward to the next chance to witness before I even sat down. **In speaking up boldly, and calling others to ask boldly when they pray, God graced me with more faith and confidence, and also with a joy in proclaiming the Good News.**

In the prison, however, God called me to something other than proclaiming the Good News. I did not go into the cell blocks with my teammates at all. Instead, I received permission to train potential reading instructors, in order to help increase the literacy levels among the inmates. It was a thrill to be able to use the gifts God has given me, even to the point of working with some of the inmates to model instruction, despite very little direct preparation and few materials.

I was in awe at all the doors that opened throughout the week. The patron of students, St. Thomas Aquinas, seemed to make many last-minute arrangements for us.



On our last day in the prison, the director allowed me to speak about my approach to literacy instruction and to give certificates to those who had completed the training—including one officer named "Aquinus Thomas."

Country Coordinator John Kazanjian and the prison warden superintendent congratulate each one of the participants in the prisoner/guard soccer match. John was given the honor of kicking out the first ball.



Mission team member Caitlin Dillon presents a certificate to one of the prisoners who participated in her classes.

Once again, performing acts of mercy led to God showering His mercy on me and giving me joy and the confidence to make plans to dive in even deeper, with the bold hope of ultimately maximizing the literacy skills of all the inmates there, and maybe in more places back home, too. God's plan for my path after St. Lucia seemed to be emerging, gently, in His time, at just the pace my confidence was growing. The next day, we even heard a pastor speak in a strong, deep, Gospel-style voice that felt like God the Father's message to me personally:

**Come on and walk on the water with me!
You will not fail! You will not fail!**

On our drive home that night, two teammates inspired me with ideas for further literacy instruction. I talked about those plans the next day at the airport when Joan asked me, "What's coming next?" Nodding her head slowly, she said, "You're at the edge."



The 2016 St. Lucia Mission Team

I thought back to Michelle's insight during our conversation. Afraid of edges? Usually. But this time, thanks to this mission trip, the team, and our God of mercy, I'm ready to step out in faith over the edge. I'm ready to boldly dive in, deep into the ocean. I know it's the ocean of mercy, and that I'm not stepping out alone, but with Our Lady, my angel, and many beloved saints, towards God's gently-calling voice, so that He can fill me with the grace of confidence and joy.

